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THE BARD OF THE DIMBOVITZA.

*First Series.*

**T**HE BARD OF THE DIMBOVITZA. Roumanian Folk Songs, collected from the Peasants by HÉLÈNE VACARESCO. Translated by CARMEN SYLVA and ALMA STRETTTELL. With an Introduction by CARMEN SYLVA. Printed on hand-made paper, crown 8vo, cloth. 10s. 6d. (*Out of print.*) New and cheaper edition. Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s. *Edition de luxe, limited to Fifty signed and numbered copies, on imperial Japan paper, bound in vellum.* 42s.

“The poems have the wild melancholy and the fierce simplicity of all true popular ballads, with an undertone of ghastly mystery that reminds one of the Highland second-sight and Irish fairy tales. . . . They are directly, passionately, fiercely human; rich with a poetic sympathy with external nature, but regarding it almost as the comrade and friend of man. . . . There are elements of the Greek joy in all beautiful sights and sounds . . . but there is also a fierce love of battle and of blood, such as rings through the Nibelungen epic.”—FREDERIC HARRISON in *The Fortnightly Review*.

*World.*—“A real treasure-trove, a valuable addition to the literature of the world.”

*Notes and Queries.*—“We know nothing in folk-songs and little in literature like these productions. They come straight from the heart of a people, and have a passionate intensity and poetry like nothing else with which we are familiar. . . . In the way in which they fulfil that highest function of imaginative poetry, eliciting from inanimate nature sympathetic response to human aspiration and passion, they are almost unique. Thus each poem is wrung out of the heart of a peasant—a passionate, suffering peasant—the expression of coarse enjoyment of life is marvellous, and the poignancy of anguish is expressed in language that can only be beaten, and rarely then, in the Elizabethan drama.”

*Manchester Guardian.*—“Few translations of the same type can stand comparison with Fitzgerald’s embroidery of Omar, yet one certainly receives something of the same keen impression of freshness and choiceness from these songs.”

*Times.*—“The translation is full of poetical feeling, and does credit to its joint authors. The Dimbovitza is now a classic with which every person of intelligence ought to possess some acquaintance.”

LONDON: OSGOOD, McILVAINE AND CO.,

45, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

**T**HE BARD OF THE  
**DIMBOVITZA** *So So*  
ROVMANIAN FOLK-SONGS  
*SECOND SERIES*  
COLLECTED FROM THE PEASANTS BY  
HÉLÈNE VACARESCO  
TRANSLATED BY  
CARMEN SYLVA  
AND  
ALMA STRETTELL

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OSGOOD, McILVAINE & CO.  
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## INTRODUCTION.

THE appreciative reception given by the English public to the first volume of translations made from Mdle. Vacaresco's remarkable collection of Roumanian Folk-Songs, has encouraged the translators to put forth another series of poems rendered into English from the same source, in the hope that they may be received with equal favour.

Those who are familiar with the first volume of the "Bard of the Dimbovitza," will remember that the songs were collected in this one district of Roumania, to which they are peculiar, and that Mdle. Vacaresco laboured for several years, with great perseverance and skill, to note them down from the lips of the peasantry.

Such readers will not need to be told again of the "Heiduck," the traditional hero and warrior of Roumanian legend, the central figure of the romantic dreams of every peasant maiden—or of the luteplayer, on whose lips most of these songs may be heard, as he wanders from door to door, accompanying himself on the lute or "cobza," from which his name is derived.

They will also be familiar with the peculiar construction

of these poems, which are generally unrhymed, and "depend more for rhythm on the cadence of each phrase, than on any definite poetical form." It would be both difficult and unsatisfactory to give examples of the monotonous chants to which they are usually sung, as on the peasants' lips they are unaccompanied by any instrument, the Cobzar only singing to his lute.

In the present selection will be found one poem which is sung by the youths, the maidens, and the Cobzar, alternately, during the "Hora," or national dance, and while the dancers move slowly round and round in a circle.

Another poem, "The Incantation," bears witness to the belief in witches and spells still existing in Roumania; and Mdle. Vacaresco herself was present at just such a scene as the song calls up before us, when the witch began her "spells" by waving a bough of hazel-wood over the dead ashes on her hearth.

The poem called "Mad" has a pathetic interest from the fact that it is not an imaginary composition, but was actually overheard, and noted down, from the lips of a woman who had gone distraught upon the loss of her lover. This poor creature could never be got to stay in her cottage, but haunted a wood near the Vacaresco house, where she would, of an evening, "light the fire" that she speaks of, and could be heard singing her song beside it.

A few explanatory notes have been added for those readers who are not familiar with the first volume of the series.

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LUTEPLAYER'S SONGS.



## LUTEPLAYER'S SONGS.

### THE LUTEPLAYER'S AUTUMN SONG.

*To-morrow the leaves will fall,  
But I only think of the gold of the harvests to come ;  
So glorious the splendour will be of those harvests to come,  
That we never think again of the leaves that are falling.*

WHEN she comes by

I go from hence, for then she must know that I love her ;  
If she cross my path, I grow dumb, and beneath my fingers  
I bid the cobza to hush, till the songs all ask me :

“Why dost thou bid us keep silence ?”

“Hush !” I make answer, “for now my love goeth  
by.”

But when she abideth afar, oh then ! as the summer  
Doth sing of the fleeting springtide, I sing of her.

I love her step in the dance, and its stir and rustle,

For it bids her girdle dance, and the flowers in her  
hair.

When thou goest, O maiden, past the hut of thy Cobzar,  
Let fall the flower from thy hair beside his door,

For then it will strike root before my threshold,  
 And be to me a memory of thy soul.

The apple-tree felt light wings among its branches,  
 And said: "How soft and light!"

Soft is the hay, that lies on the plain, to the footfall,  
 Yet thou dost not sit thee down 'mid the new-mown  
 hay.

When thou drawest water, O maiden! thou dost not suffer  
 The water to keep the image it hath of thee,  
 And yet thou hast told my heart to keep it for ever.

As I wander on, I sing, if thou be not near me;  
 I know full sure, the spell that would chain thee to me,  
 But I do not say the words, when thou goest by me,  
 For I love the stir and rustle of thy dancing  
 When it sets thy girdle gaily dancing too.

The gentle dreams of thy sleeping hours, I love them,  
 As I love the whirring of thy spindle fleet.

Refresh me with cool drink from the wooden pitcher,  
 For the weary wanderer's thirst is dear to thee;  
 And whoso doth quench such thirst is beloved of Heaven,  
 That blesses the springs and rivers, which be not sparing  
 Nor from the wanderer cruelly turn away.

Beloved of Heaven, too, are the stars, that never  
 Withdraw themselves, nor hide their light from any,  
 Even from those who ne'er have looked on them.

I will pass away into Death, if thou let me die,  
 And never betray the place of my burial to thee;

*The Luteplayer's Autumn Song.* 5

Thou shalt ask the paths: "Which way doth lead to his  
gravestone?"

And other men's graves shall answer thee aloud:

"We are not his grave."

Then among the graves thou wilt wander with airy  
footfall,

For I ever loved the rustle and stir of thy dancing,  
That bids thy girdle dance, and the flowers in thy hair.

*To-morrow the leaves will fall,  
But I only think of the gold of the harvests to come;  
So glorious the splendour will be of those harvests to come,  
That we never think again of the leaves that are falling.*

## "ACCURSED."

*The heavens lower, and the ravens fly.  
Are ye forerunners of the snow, dark birds?  
And shall we soon have snow upon our fields?*

IT was not me he cursed, he cursed my house.

And when I leave the house, my soul hath rest;  
But when I enter in again, the curse  
Awaits me at my door.

Would I might sleep beneath the open sky!

But at the moonlight hour, One saith to me:

"Go back into thy house."

Nor can I answer: "Nay, a curse is on it."

It was not me he cursed,

He only cursed the bed whereon I sleep;

Would I might lie upon the ground to sleep!

But at the hour of sleep, One saith to me:

"Lie down upon thy bed."

It was not me he cursed, he only cursed

The food that was to nourish me,

The water that I drink.

Would I might die of hunger!

But at the hour of hunger and of thirst,

There crieth One aloud within me, saying:

“ Eat then, and drink ! ”

It was not me he cursed ;

He only cursed the paths I wander by ;

Would I might stay my steps !

But at the hour of sunrise cometh One

And openeth wide my door and saith : “ Go hence ! ”

It was not me he cursed,

Only my chain, my girdle and my spindle ;

Would I need never touch them !

But then One saith : “ Take up

Thy girdle and thy spindle and thy chain.”

It was not me he cursed ;

But only all I see and touch, and those

To whom I draw me near.

And I would fain see nothing more, nor touch,

Nor draw me near to any.

And to the graves I go, that I may die ;

Then from the graves One riseth and saith : “ Live ! ”

*The heavens lower, and the ravens fly.*

*Are ye forerunners of the snow, dark birds ?*

*And will there soon be snow upon our fields ?*

## THE ORPHAN.

*One scarce can see the moonlight in the gloaming,  
 But when night falls, it lights up all the heavens.  
 The rivers, they are sisters, since they flow  
 Down from the self-same mountain.*

Go not at night-time through the village ;  
 The dogs sleep not—thou mightest, too, meet souls.—

But yet I bade my mother's soul to wait  
 Beside the well for me.

Into the well I shall look down to see her,  
 Yet shall not dare to gaze upon her face ;  
 But she will take a long, long look at me,  
 To see my face, my girdle and my shift.  
 And then upon my girdle there will be  
 Many more pearls to-morrow, on my shift  
 More golden spangles.

Upon the house, too, she will look, and then  
 Sunshine will linger round the house to-morrow.  
 Upon my heart, too, she will look, and then  
 My heart will be at rest.

And I shall ask : “ How is it in the grave ? ”  
 Then shall I see her image, in the well,  
 With finger on its lip.

And I shall ask her : " Dost thou yearn for me ? "

Then shall I see her image in the well,

Drying its eyes ;

And in her girdle I shall see the flowers,

Yea, all the flowers I cast upon her grave.

And nothing will she say to me, but I shall feel her glance.

Then she will make a sign to me, that I should give her  
drink ;

And in her name

I will bring drink to all the village huts.

And oh ! how I shall grieve, because the well

Is all too deep for me to kiss her image.

I shall still seek her after she is gone,

Then shall I hear the stone that falls again

Upon her grave, as though it struck my heart.

For by the well I bade my mother's soul

To wait for me.

*One scarce can see the moonlight in the gloaming,*

*But when night falls, it lights up all the heavens.*

*The rivers, they are sisters, since they flow*

*Down from the self-same mountain.*

## THE NECKLACE OF TEARS.

*The Luteplayer sang before my cottage door ;  
I hearkened to his lay and said: " Sing on !"  
But the Cobzar, he only knows one song.*

THE little maid was fain to make herself  
A necklace fine,  
As silv'ry as the moonlight's silver glance,  
Or as the river when the moonbeams shine.

And so she asked the river : " Speak, wilt thou  
Give me thy waves that in the moonlight dance ?"—  
And then she went and asked the moon : " Wilt thou  
Give me thy glance ?"

" Not so," the moon replied, " because the night,  
My glance doth need."—

" Not so," the river answered her, " for I  
Must keep my waters for the thirsty mead."

The little maid was fain to make herself  
A necklace fine ;  
Then said the sons of men : " Come, take our tears  
To fashion this bright silver chain of thine."

*The Necklace of Tears.*

11

Then each one gave her his most precious tears,  
And glad were they  
To deck the maiden's throat ; and all the tears  
Thus whispered low together, and did say :

“ Whence art thou, sister, from what heart dost come ? ”  
Then each one told the grief that did befall  
Her parent heart, and each one thought herself  
Saddest of all.

So now the maiden had her necklace bright,  
More silvery than yonder river's wave,  
Or glance of moonlight, yet when she put on  
That necklace brave,

The tears all told her whence they came, and grew  
So heavy, that beneath the burden sore,  
The maiden died, and on her grave that chain  
Weighs evermore.

*The Luteplayer sang without my cottage door ;  
I hearkened to his lay and said : “ Sing on ! ”  
But the Cobzar, he knows one only song.*

## THE SOLDIER'S SONG.

*The leaves all strove together in the forest,  
 Because the wind passed through ;  
 The leaves all strove together in the forest,  
 And sore the forest grieved ;  
 Yet in the forest strove the leaves together  
 Because the wind passed through.*

ERE I go to the wars, O mother mine,  
 Take thou me by the hand,  
 And bless my weapon, and softly lay  
 Thy finger on my brow,  
 And the sign of the cross thou dost make thereon,  
 Watch over me shall keep  
 The while I sleep.  
 The ways shall be white that I travel by ;  
 The maidens shall come forth  
 And stand at their doors and give me smiles ;  
 And forth the sun shall come  
 From behind the clouds, and be all amazed  
 When he sees how cheerful I can be,  
 Cheerful as he.  
 For when he is dying, he hides him not ;  
 And when my hour is nigh,

*The Soldier's Song.*

13

I will shine, O mother, and glow with light  
Because I go forth to die.  
The bird that gave me its plumes for my cap  
Will be glad of it by and by,  
For one of those plumes shall be reddened with blood,  
Because I go forth to die.  
And thy kiss, my bride, my little bride,  
That close on my mouth doth lie,  
It will not be loth to rest on my lips,  
Because I go forth to die.  
And the sign of the cross that thou mad'st o'er me,  
Will be glad I go forth to die.

When I am dead, little mother mine,  
Then charge the heavens, the sun, the stars,  
To look yet on me in my death,  
So that they surely all may know  
How brave a child, O mother! thou hast borne.  
And go thou by my bride's low door  
What time she makes the old well shriek  
In drawing water up ;  
Or when she calls the turtle-doves about her  
In going through the wood ;  
Then tell her of the soldier's death,  
Speaking as of some other man  
Unto some other maid ;  
But if my sweetheart drop her spindle, saying :  
"That was a hero !"

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

Then shalt thou speak my name to her ;  
For then she will forget to weep,  
But will begin to bless me, rather.  
And thou shalt say to our dear Earth,  
That I have given my blood for her,  
Therefore she, too, shall give to thee  
    Most bounteous harvests ;  
For I, I shed my blood for her !  
And tell thy heart thy child is very happy,  
Happy to die, even as the sunshine dieth,  
    In glowing, radiant light,  
    Thy cross upon his brow.

*The leaves all strove together in the forest,  
    Because the wind went through ;  
The leaves all strove together in the forest,  
    And sore the forest grieved ;  
Yet in the forest strove the leaves together  
    Because the wind went through.*

AT THE HOUSE.

*Take whichever way thou wilt, for the ways are all alike ;  
But do thou only come—I bade my threshold wait thy  
coming.*

*From out my window one can see the graves—and on my life  
The graves, too, keep a watch.*

AND hast thou, sister, asked the wind from whence he  
comes to-night,

That such strange things he tells ?

Him whom I love, I never knew—yet I knew that if he  
came

He would bring pain to me.

A bridge across the river lies, and the river every spring  
Doth bear the bridge away.

Oh sister, hark ! to-night the wind from far away doth  
blow !

To-day he saw a house that stands with windows open  
wide.

And lo ! the house forsaken was, and black the threshold-  
stone.

There stood two men and they did point their fingers at  
that house,

And on his finger one had blood; the other's finger  
shook.

"How many kisses?" asked the one, and then the other  
asked:

"How many tears?" A maiden, too, stood there and  
watched the men,

And with the spindle in her hand, she pointed at the house.

A bridge across the river lies, and the river every spring  
Doth bear the bridge away.

The spindle in the maiden's hand, it shook and trembled  
too. . . .

White was her shift—about her neck a crimson chain of  
blood.

"That was my house," she spake—once more: "That  
was my threshold-stone."

Then back she wended to her grave, and to her grave sank  
down.

And still the men did stand and point their fingers at that  
house.

*Take whichever way thou wilt—the ways are all  
alike;*

*At the House.*

17

*But do thou only come—I bade my threshold wait thy  
coming.*

*From out my window one can see the graves—and on my life  
The graves keep watch.*

## THE INCANTATION.

THOU little hazel-bough,  
Thou that dost grow so near the river  
That it is fain to kiss thee,  
Thou that wilt never see the sun,  
Because thou growest all too near the river,  
I plucked thee when the sun knew nought thereof,  
Upon my left breast I did bear thee hither,  
And 'twixt my fingers took thee.

Fall on the ashes gently—do not stir them,  
For ashes love to slumber ;  
Hide close beneath them—and then go thy way,  
Thou little hazel-bough ;  
Then shall the tree from which thou camest forth  
Bear loveliest buds in April,  
If thou wilt go, thither where I shall bid thee,  
Where my belovèd dwells.

He sleeps. Now shalt thou ask him if he dream,  
And bid him dream of me.  
Thou shalt become the sorrow of his heart,  
O little hazel-bough ;

*The Incantation.*

19

And tell him that the sorrow of his heart  
    Dreams but of me ;  
Thou shalt disturb his life with a desire.

Where is my sweetheart ?—speak, when will he come ?  
    I have charged sleep to leave him ;  
The water that he drinks, to bring before him  
    In every drop mine image ;  
The fragrance of his bread, to call my kiss  
    To his remembrance.

His couch shall murmur all my songs to him,  
The whiteness of my veil encompass him  
    Even as the light ;  
My step shall sound unceasing in his ears,  
    And it shall seem to him  
As though he saw me always coming toward him,  
    Yet never reach the goal.

And when his house saith : “ Hither come and rest,”  
Then shall he answer : “ Rest dwells not in thee ;”  
And to the threshold’s stone he thus shall speak :  
    “ Thou dreary stone !”

And to the merry birds : “ How sad ye are !”  
And to the sorrowing grave : “ How glad art thou !”  
Nor ever shall he taste his bread’s sweet savour  
Without complaint, till he hath had my kiss.

    This shalt thou do, thou little hazel-bough,  
    Thou that dost grow so near the river

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

That it is fain to kiss thee,  
Thou that canst never see the sun  
Because thou growest all too near the river.

"MY MOTHER WENT AWAY FROM ME."

(GIPSY SONG.)

*My mother went away from me—so wide and vast the plain ;  
My fire will soon be dying out, as stars at daybreak wane.  
Art thou not coming back, O love, to feed the fire again ?*

BESIDE my fire the wand'rer sat him down,  
Since then it dieth out.

And with the wand'rer, too, my soul went hence.

Whither my soul went, now I ne'er can know,

Because he told not, whither went his steps.

The forest saw him pass, and said to me :

"I could not keep the wand'rer in my shade."

The river said : "Nor I upon my banks."

A Heiduck he was, I know, one of the race of the  
Heiducks,

Who are never weary of fighting, whom the sun doth love  
to see ;

And whom the dreams of maidens do also love to see !

"What shall I bring thee back from the wars ?" he asked  
me—

"Wilt thou the finest veil—wilt thou the slend'rest  
spindle ?

A girdle all full of pearls, or a silver necklet heavy  
To lie on thy little heart, and burden it with its weight ?  
A bracelet wilt thou have, that shall ring upon thine arm ?  
Or wilt thou have my heart, wherein thy heart hath  
    nested ?

What shall I bring ?” Then I said : “I would rather  
    have blood than all ;

That will redden my girdle so white with the reddest of  
    pearls,

That will weigh down my necklet of silver, and make my  
    bracelet

    Ring merrily on mine arm.

I will lay it, too, on the heart whereon my heart hath  
    nested.

And shall not then both hearts grow warm thereby ?”

    I said ;

    —“I would rather have blood than all !”

*My mother went away from me—so wide and vast the plain ;  
My fire will soon be dying out, as stars at daybreak wane.  
Art thou not coming back, O love, to feed the fire again ?*

ON THE ROAD.

*Her veil is soft as a summer-cloud ;  
And when she passes, the flowers are sad  
That they cannot follow her.*

ONE can see the road from the river's edge ;  
    Always I look along the road,  
For down it something always comes  
Towards me, something that doth smile,  
    And something that doth weep.  
It is a woman, and a child.  
And the weeping woman faster goes  
Than doth the smiling child.  
And both would give a drink to me,  
But the woman doth fetch the water up,  
    And handeth me the pitcher full,  
    Quicker than doth the little child.  
The pitcher's rim is broken.  
Then both go hence—and I only think  
    Of the woman that weeps—but I forget,  
Always forget, the smiling child,  
    Because it did not still my thirst ;  
And every day I go and watch  
    The road, to see them coming.

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

*Her veil is soft as a summer-cloud ;  
And when she passes, the flowers are sad  
Because they cannot follow.*

CRADLE SONG.

THE wind came flying through my chamber,  
And when he saw me, he was joyful,  
    Because I looked on thee.  
Thou didst not heed the wind's rejoicing,  
For thou wert hearkening to my song.

    I will sing to thee  
    Of the soldier-host  
That yestereven marched hence to war,  
And to whom with homage we bade farewell.  
The earth was proud to feel their footsteps,  
The sunshine proud to be their sunshine.  
Thou too shalt be a soldier, child,  
So that thy land may love and bless thee.  
The corn upon the fields grows fairer  
    When rain hath fallen,  
Yet blood the earth hath need of too;  
Therefore I give thee to the earth.  
Thou wilt become so brave a soldier,  
That even the mountain, to behold thee,  
Will one day draw her veil of mist aside.  
And o'er thy lot I will not sorrow,

Nor mourn the days thou didst not live.  
O Earth, I give my child to thee !

When thou shalt see thy foe lie dying,  
Thy thoughts will turn toward Death, and kindly  
Thou wilt look back, and tenderly, on Life,  
    Since Death is in thy thoughts.  
Along white roadways thou shalt travel,  
    Whereon men thirst,  
    Beneath the tent lie down at even  
    In bitter cold.

Glorious thy lot will be—yea, even  
    Like to the eagle's and the sun's ;  
Men raise their heads when they would look at them.  
Thou mayst not think of maidens' girdles,  
    Nor of their eyes,  
    And thou shalt say to them :  
    " I must go hence."  
For thou wilt be a soldier, O my child !

The wind came flying through my chamber,  
And when he saw me he was joyful,  
    Because I looked on thee.  
Thou didst not heed the wind's rejoicing,  
For thou wert hearkening to my song.

## STILLBORN.

*Amid the springing grain flowers, too, spring up,  
Therefore they drink the dew  
That the sky sends upon the springing grain.  
The threshold of the cottage was all wet  
Because last night such heavy dew hath fallen.*

WOMAN! take up thy life once more  
Where thou hast left it;  
Nothing is changed for thee, thou art the same,  
Thou, who didst think  
That all things would be wholly changed for thee.  
No dirge doth echo through thy dwelling-place;  
One cannot mourn as dead  
That which hath never lived.  
Yet had I made for him a dirge so sweet!  
Telling therein, that he was all thy hope,  
And that he did not well  
To go ere he had looked upon the world—  
To think so ill of what he ne'er had seen.  
Woman! while thou didst bear him, hast thou ever  
Told him of graves? or spoken of the sorrow  
Of barren wombs?

Didst thou not tell him of thy womb's rejoicing  
 Over his life ?

And that spring sometimes comes upon this earth,  
 And that some souls there are, that do remember ?

Nay, thou didst think on sorrow  
 While thou hadst joy within thee ;

And sorrow frightened him.

Thou didst not tell him, that thy cottage-windows  
 Looked toward the plain ;

That rivers love the flowers upon their banks,  
 And that the storks come home ;

That there are birds that sing, and men as well,  
 And that their songs are sweet.

Nay, but thou spak'st to him of graves, and so  
 Their rest grew dear to him.

Now can I make no tender dirge o'er him.

I never saw him live.

Return thee to thy hearth,  
 And think of him before thine empty hearth ;

Saying, while thou dost muse of him :

“ How empty is my hearth ! ”

Toward thy husband stretch thou forth thy hand  
 With gentle smile, that he

May smile again, and think of Death no more.

For Death it was not

That passed through this thy house—but it was *Life*  
 That would not take up her abode therein.

Thou didst but ask him from afar :

“Wilt thou indeed be mine?”—

As one may ask the stars;

The stars reply: “Nay, we belong to no one.”

Thou didst but say to him from far:

“I love thee!”

Even as one may say it to the sky;

The sky makes answer: “Nay, the love of men

Is nought to me!”

Go, woman, to thy daily work again—

Nothing is changed for thee.

*Amid the sprouting seeds flowers, too, are growing,*

*And so they drink the rain*

*That the sky sends upon the sprouting seeds.*

*The threshold of thy cottage is so wet*

*Because last night such heavy dew hath fallen.*

## THE HORA.

(TO BE SUNG DURING THE DANCE.)

## THE MAIDENS.

HE turned his head away,  
 That he might not see my hut ;  
 My apple-trees were all in bloom,  
 The dogs were sleeping when he passed.  
 He turned his head away.

## THE LADS.

And do ye know which way he went,  
 Or the likeness that he bore ?  
 What shape his glistening daggers were,  
 The fashion of his mantle's hem,  
 The colour of his steed ?

## THE COBZAR.

He was a Heiduck, yet he passed  
 So swiftly by, we ne'er shall know  
 What skill he showeth in the dance,  
 Or what the shape his daggers wore.  
 He drank from out the river clear,  
 And cast no glance upon the maidens.

THE MAIDENS.

Oh speak ! why looked he not this way ?  
What was it he misliked in us ?  
Our girdles' hues—our merry songs ?

THE COBZAR.

He loves another woman !

THE MAIDENS.

Oh speak ! where is her threshold ?  
What flowers grow by it ?

THE COBZAR.

This woman hath no threshold,  
For flowers she careth not ;  
But yet she danceth smiling,  
And to her the Heiduck goes.

THE LADS.

And was his way yet long ?  
His steed seemed weary.

THE COBZAR.

Soon to a cloister he will come ;  
And he will knock upon its door,  
Asking if she be there.  
Then will the cloister answer him :  
“ Go further.”

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

And through the forest he will go,  
 But will not find her.  
 And even sleep will not bring back  
 Her image—for she danceth, smiling ;  
 And in the dance she whirls so fast,  
 That none can hear her heart a-beating.

## THE MAIDENS.

More slowly had we danced for him.  
 Speak ! do his fingers love the spindle ?

## THE COBZAR.

They love the dagger more.  
 And the Heiduck knows full well  
 That she doth but wait for him  
 That she may kill him ;  
 And that, when he shall be dead,  
 In her mantle she will shroud him ;  
 That her dancing and her smiling  
 Will cease but to this end,  
 That she may kill him.  
 But the Heiduck's soul thereat rejoices ;  
 He goes to her—and when he sees her,  
 Thus will the Heiduck speak : “ Now kill me,  
 For I have come.”

## THE LADS.

Tell us no more, Cobzar ;  
 We had loved this woman too.

THE MAIDENS.

Tell us no more, Cobzar ;  
Lest we should love the Heiduck.

THE LADS.

But green is yet the maize,  
And of our sweat hath need.

THE MAIDENS.

And we at evening-tide  
Must be upon our thresholds.

THE COBZAR.

This woman hath no threshold.  
For flowers she careth not ;  
But yet she danceth, smiling.

THE LADS.

The flowers she treadeth down  
Must surely love her dancing.

THE MAIDENS.

And he must love her dancing,  
The young Heiduck, far better  
Than the dancing of our spindles.

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

He turned his head away  
That he might not see my hut ;  
My apple-trees were all in bloom ;  
The dogs were sleeping when he passed.  
He turned his head away.

THE MOON.

*A green, green tree in my courtyard stands,  
The sunshine loves it, the breezes rock it ;  
But when snow hath fallen, the tree forgetteth  
That April once was here.*

THE moon, she fears the sunshine sore,  
Because the sunshine knows full well  
Wherefore the moonlight is so pale.  
The moon is loth that the sun should tell  
Her secret ; and she hides away  
When the sun comes forth, that so, perchance,  
The sunshine may forget.  
But I am brother to the sun,  
He telleth me his secrets all—  
How he hath taught the birds to sing,  
The ears of corn to turn to gold,  
The forests to grow green.  
And thus he hath betrayed to me  
Wherefore the moon is pale.

The moon, she is a maiden's heart,  
And love once dwelt therein,  
Ah, in those days the maiden's heart  
Was sunshine through and through ;  
But when love left the maiden's heart,  
'Twas then that it grew pale.  
And Heaven took it up on high,  
Yet sadly still it looketh down  
Upon the earth, where love did dwell,  
And paler grows the while.

The moon, she fears the sunshine sore,  
Because the sunshine knows full well  
Wherefore the moonlight is so pale.

The rivers say, when she appears :  
" O little maid's pale heart,  
Come, rest in us ! " and in their sleep  
The birds all say to her :  
" Come, go to sleep in our nests with us ! "  
The grave saith : " Maiden's heart,  
Pale heart, make me grow paler too ! "  
And everything to slumber turns  
That so that heart may sleep.  
Yet though she see them slumb'ring all,  
She slumbers not, nor nods her head,  
But stands and watches Sleep.

*A green, green tree in my courtyard grows,  
The sunshine loves it, the breezes rock it ;  
But when snow hath fallen, the tree forgetteth  
That April once was here.*

## THE TWO KNIVES.

*White blossoms hath the acacia-tree,  
 My necklet hath blue beads.  
 The Cobzar's voice goes echoing through the night.*

Two gleaming knives my brother had,  
 That, glistening, on the wall hung crossed ;  
 And why he loved those knives so well  
 I could not ever think.

When down into the river cool  
 The sun hath sunk, the plain grows red.  
 And if my Love had love for me,  
 All my life long I'd sing thereof,  
 And spin him shirts so fine.

When in the chamber night is black,  
 I hear the knives that talk together.  
 One saith : "'Twas I that pierced the wife ;"  
 The other : "I that killed the husband."  
 Saith one : "Such lukewarm blood had she,  
 Like eggs beneath the mother's wing !"  
 The other : "Such red blood had he,  
 As red as wine in glass !"

“ And whosoe’er would reach that house  
Must wade the river through.  
The house, it knew not that we came  
To kill that man and wife.  
Her white veil round her head she wore,  
Bracelets were on her arm,  
She listened to the river’s flow,  
And with it her last hour flowed by.

And ever since that time, the souls  
Of wife and husband hither come,  
At night, to curse us both.  
They say : ‘Why gleam ye on the wall,  
Crossed on the wall, ye knives,  
What have ye done with that our blood ?’—  
Then we make answer to the souls :  
‘The river washed the blood away,  
The river hurries hence.’—  
‘What have ye done with our blood ?’ they ask—  
—‘We dried it in the sun, and yet  
The sun is shining still.’—  
‘What have ye done with our blood ?’ they ask—  
—‘We drank it, and we gleam !’”

*White blossoms hath the acacia-tree,  
My necklet hath blue beads.  
The Cobzar’s singing echoes through the night.*

## THE SPRING.

*The snow has fallen, and we shall not find  
The path that leads unto the huts again,  
Yet we look up and see the clear blue sky,  
From whence the snow has fallen.*

I CHARGE thee, drink no water from that spring,  
Thy soul would burn ;  
For in the evening late, the maiden's soul  
Did drink therefrom.  
Snow-white the soul is, and it thirsteth ever.  
"Happy are ye," it saith unto the flowers,  
"That every night drink dew !"  
And to the rivers, too, it saith : "Ah me,  
The plains are happy, for ye water them."  
Then to the spring the soul draws nigh, lamenting  
That it must pine so sore,  
And saith : "I surely thought to still my thirst  
There in the grave,  
But Death is arid, so I have come back."  
  
And when two lovers chance to meet that soul  
The while it drinks,  
They too for ever thirsting will remain,

*The Spring.*

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And down into the grave, to still that thirst,  
They too will go.

I charge thee, drink no water from that spring,  
For in the evening late, the maiden's soul  
Doth drink therefrom.

*The snow has fallen, and we shall not find  
The path that leads back to the huts again.  
Yet we look up and see the clear blue sky,  
From whence the snow has fallen.*

## THE SONG OF THE YOUNG MAIDEN.

*A star hath fallen on the spot  
Where thou art singing—  
Thy bracelets' ringing  
Keeps all the birds awake.*

THOU that dost watch o'er children's sleep  
And gently rockest them,  
Thy voice is dear to sucking babes,  
The aged love thy voice ;  
Come now and sing a song for me,  
Thy voice, I love it too ;  
Yea, like the river's rippling sound  
As through the maize it flows,  
Or like the poplar's whispering  
That by my threshold grows.  
Sing me the song of the young, young maid,  
That bids her spindle dance, and sets  
Her heart a-dancing too.—

A horseman rode across the ford,  
Into the water fell his sword.  
What would become of the maiden's heart  
Once empty of its love ?

What will the swordless horseman do ?  
I lay and drank at the water's edge,  
The sword came swimming by me ;  
I thrust it into my girdle fast,  
And dear is the weight of the sword to me,  
It sings me songs of battle.  
Horseman that wentest through the ford,  
Wouldest thou fain get back thy sword ?  
Then come and sit thee down by me,  
Beneath my threshold's poplar-tree.  
There dance my heart and spindle both,  
Because the sword of the fight doth tell ;  
I will give it thee back, but yet I trow  
Thy thoughts are all of my spindle now !

I have sung the song of the young, young maid.

*A star hath fallen on the spot  
Where thou art singing—  
Thy bracelets' ringing  
Keeps all the birds awake.*

## THE WIDOW.

*The sun is hidden far behind the willows ;  
The willows shivered, for they hid the sun.*

IF a knock sounded on my door at even,  
First I should think that it was him returning,  
But soon I should remember he was dead,  
And know it was his dear soul home returning ;  
Then should I bid it enter at the door  
And come close, close beside me.  
And his dear soul would ask me :  
“The children, and the maize-fields, and the cattle,  
How fare they all ?”  
And I would answer his dear soul : “All well ;”  
That it might rest and fall asleep in peace.  
Yet would I not, that his dear soul should ask me :  
“How fares it with the sorrow of thy soul ?”  
For since unto the dead one may not lie,  
I must perforce give answer : “’Tis not healed.”  
Then his dear soul  
Never again could fall asleep in peace.  
Moreover, his dear soul will surely ask  
For flowers of me, and I will give it flowers,  
Yet would I not, it asked me for a drink,

For one can give the dead no drink save tears,  
And I would not it should perceive that these  
Were tears of mine.

Then his dear soul

Were fain to see our children, and the house,  
To know if all were yet unchanged, and I  
Would show him house and children, for they all  
Are yet unchanged.

Yet would I not, that his dear soul should ask me  
To show my face—quick-sighted are the dead,  
And he would see my face all drawn with sorrow.

Ah no! for when upon the door at even

His dear soul knocketh,

I must be able thus to answer him :

“All here within goes well—yea, in my heart,  
And on my face ;

I have forgotten thee, go hence and sleep

In peace again,”—for ne'er the dead must weep—

“All here goes well.”

Then his dear soul would wend its way again

Back to the grave, nor turn to look behind ;

And never more would his dear soul arise

To knock upon my door at eventide.

*The sun is hidden far behind the willows ;  
The willows shivered, for they hid the sun.*

## THE FLOWER-CHILD.

(OR FOUNDLING.)

*To-day is Sunday, come away and dance!  
I passed the lads anon, and they were singing.  
The forest said: "Oh hearken, how they sing!"*

SHE will not come to-morrow,  
Nor came she yesterday,  
She who could end the stranger's life I lead.  
Perhaps I meet her every day,  
And she doth turn away her face  
To hide her tears from me; for if I saw  
That she was weeping, straightway I should cry:

"Lo, this is she!"

She turns away from me her face  
That she my sorrow may not see,  
For if she saw my sadness, then  
She never could refrain from crying:

"Thou art my child!"

Perhaps she sees me standing at his side,  
And dares not say: "That is thy father!"  
For fear that I might hate him,  
And, with him, hate her too.

Yet both I love, even as the flower its root.  
I curse them not—I say to them in dreams :  
“Blessed be the hour, wherein ye loved each other.”  
And never would I tell them of my sorrows.  
And if they asked concerning them,  
I would reply : “But I am happy !  
And to the graves I never go ;  
The graves beguile me not.”  
This would I tell them, and my sorrow  
Within my heart’s depths I would hide,  
As rain in hollow stones is hidden,  
As one who dies, doth hide the secret  
Of his last suffering and woe.  
And those who see me never say :  
“How full his heart is !”—rather all men think  
That it is empty, empty quite, my heart.  
I love the happy children of the mothers,  
Because I hear them say : “My mother !”—  
I listen, that I too may learn to say it,  
And when I am alone, repeat it low.  
But when I say it, ’tis as though I had  
A different voice from them, the mothers’ children,  
For whom the mothers pray upon their knees,  
And weave them shirts so fine, the livelong day,  
And sing them off to sleep with lullabies.  
O mother, whom perchance I see  
In every path, and every day  
Washing the hemp beside the river—

If thou wert dead, how would I love thy grave,  
How gladly linger by it,  
And cover it with flowers,  
Not naming thee, but saying :  
“ I am a son of Earth, and love this grave  
Because a little earth doth cover it,  
And who it is sleeps here, I do not know.”  
Oh mother, nay ! thou never canst be dead,  
For surely, ere thy death, thou wouldst have called me,  
And bidden me love thy grave.  
Thou surely wouldst have feared  
To be so cold therein  
Without thy poor child's love !  
Nay, but thou livest, mother ;  
Then come one evening, while I am asleep,  
And look upon my sleep ;  
Then in the morning I can say : “ At least  
She looked upon my sleep.”

*To-day is Sunday, come away and dance !  
I passed the lads anon, and they were singing.  
The forest said : “ Oh hearken, how they sing ! ”*

THE HEIDUCK'S FLOWERS.

*Look never upon me in my sleep  
The while I dream,  
For then thou wouldst see upon my face  
The smiles of my dream, or else its tears.  
The wind hath driven the clouds away.*

TO-DAY I waked early, and first of all  
I saw the sun, and then the road  
Where men went by, with pipe in mouth.  
One was a Heiduck, and in his hand  
He carried a flower—and his youth it was.  
In his mouth he carried another flower—  
And his song was that ; and another flower  
He bore in his girdle—and that was his love.  
I went with my spade to dig on the plain,  
From the well I drank water,  
And looked at the trees ;  
And then in the shade of the trees I slept.  
And at even I came to my house again,  
I saw the moon rise as I went ;  
And again on the road I saw men pass by,  
One was the Heiduck.

A faded flower

He bore in his hand—and that was his youth.  
In his mouth he carried a faded flower—  
And that was his song.

And a faded flower  
He bore in his girdle—and that was his love.  
I bade him not enter my dwelling-place ;  
He went on through the darkening night.

*Look never upon me in my sleep  
The while I dream,  
For then thou wouldst see upon my face  
The smiles of my dream, or the tears of my dream.  
The wind hath driven the clouds away.*

THE ROAD TO PRISON.

*Onward floweth the water, onward through meadows broad ;  
“ How happy,” the meadows say, “ art thou, to be rippling  
onward.”*

*And my heart is beating, beating, beneath my girdle here ;  
“ O heart,” the girdle saith, “ how happy art thou, that  
thou beatest ! ”*

THE road that I tread, is not dusty from wanderers' foot-  
steps,  
Nor from the oxen, that go their way to the ploughing,  
Nor from the passing of lovers—  
Nay, but the footsteps of prisoners have left the road full  
of dust,  
And the clang of their chains hath brought sorrow to all  
the trees by the way ;  
The clang of those chains the trees never more can forget,  
Nor can they in their prison yonder, forget the trees and  
their sorrow.  
And there in the way the prisoners met the young maiden,  
And they wept when they saw her so young—  
And the maiden gave drink to them all, and went hence  
with their blessing.

They thought of their houses, that over them wept, and  
of those

Who wept in the houses.

And the dust of the road, and the scorching fire of the sun,  
They felt them no more, the while they thought on these  
things ;

They strained their ear to catch the song of the birds,  
The last they might hear for so long ;

And they blessed the birds, because they had been the last  
To sing on their way.

So wearily went they hence, as though all their life they  
must wander,

And already had wandered for long.

To the men they did meet they said : " And yet we are  
all your brothers ; "

And the clang of their chains went with them.

And one on his brow yet bore the tears of his mother,  
Another the kiss of his wife—and the brows were all  
darkened alike.

Yet each one smiled, as though he would say : " See, I  
smile ! "

They dreaded the threshold, awaiting them there at the  
end ;

Yet were they in haste to o'erstep it, and hide from the day  
Their weariful smile and their chains.

And over the threshold, one following another, they stepped,  
And the first one that crossed it, did envy the last, for  
that he

Had yet to o'erstep it.  
Of their homes they thought, and their sins, yet they  
sorrowed more deeply  
For their homes than for all their sins.  
Their dreams were distraught with anguish, and each one,  
awakening,  
Would say to his fellow: "I know not whereof I have  
dreamed—  
I dreamed that so white was the road, and that prisoners'  
footsteps  
Had left the road full of dust."

*Onward floweth the water, onward through meadows broad,  
"How happy," the meadows say, "art thou, to be rippling  
onward!"*

*And my heart is beating, beating, beneath my girdle here;  
"O heart," the girdle saith, "how happy art thou, that  
thou beatest!"*

## THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

*Know'st thou what the harvest-fields are saying?  
"We have loved the sunshine all too dearly;  
Therefore now they mow us down, for loving  
The sunshine over-much."*

HE slept beneath the lime-tree, and it looked upon his  
sleep.  
Fresh from the battle he had come, and home with him  
he brought  
The scent of blood upon his clothes; and all the flowers  
were sad  
Because the wind loved that the best,  
Better than all their scents.  
Ah! soldier, thou young soldier, coming from the battle,  
Thou didst not see me going by, with the rustling of ripe  
grass,  
For thou wert lost in dreaming only of the battle,  
And dearer is thy sword to thee than any glance of mine.  
The eagle loves the sunshine better than his eyrie,  
And dark the hut would seem to thee after the glee of  
fight,  
The joy of breaking like a storm over the fields of dead.  
And dearer is thy wound to thee, than any kiss of mine.

Now wilt thou yet require of me, that I our son should  
    give thee,  
To join the hosts of war.  
Thy courser speeds as swiftly, as clouds before the storm-  
    wind,  
And scarcely have our women the time to reach their  
    threshold,  
To see him flying onward, or ever he is gone.  
But thou no more dost love it, the quietness of the thres-  
    hold ;  
    Thou lov'st thy sword, he knows it,  
And as for love of women, he biddeth thee forget it,  
    And saith : " Touch not their veil."

When wilt thou be returning to this thy home again ?  
The morning marvels not to find thee,  
The evening saith : " What, not yet come ? "  
My hand hangs idly rocking the cradle, while I muse  
    Upon him in the battle ;  
And who will give him drink, I wonder,  
And who will lull his sleep, or wailing  
Will sing his dirge when he is dead.  
The plain is wide, and o'er it the little birds go roaming,  
So doth my heart, but thou no longer  
Dost love the loving of my heart.  
    Thy courser speeds so swiftly,  
That e'en the moon can scarcely from out the clouds come  
    gliding

In time to see him flying, or ever he is gone.  
But thou no more dost love it, the moonlight's restfulness.  
And thou upon the earth wilt slumber gladly, thinking  
    That it shall be thy grave ;  
Even as the rain, rejoicing to know that thou shalt sink  
    Down into earth.  
My voice is dumb and silent, since thine I hear no longer ;  
My step is slow and heavy, since thine no more I follow ;  
Nor do I any longer put flowers in my girdle ;  
    My necklet, too, now slumbers,  
Because it hears no longer the beating of my heart.  
Thy courser speeds so swiftly, I scarce have time to loosen  
My veil to see him flying, or ever he is gone.

*Know'st thou what the harvest-fields are saying ?  
    " We have loved the sunshine all too dearly ;  
Therefore now they mow us down, for loving  
    The sunshine over-much."*

## MAD.

*We shall not see again the foot of the willows  
Until the river is low.*

I NEVER bade him stay, because it was written,  
In my fate it was written, that I should see him go.

And still the fire burns on, as though it could warm me.  
To-morrow is Sunday, the peasant-folk will be joyful.

Then do not think, that I bade him stay beside me ;  
He went—but he returned, and returns every evening.—  
Sit by the fire, draw closer yet, beloved ;  
Thou art not as cold as I, it still can warm thee.  
I am so cold, dost see, that to me it is nothing,  
For I am always cold.

Ah ! but how good thou wert to return, my beloved,  
To return to me—and which was the way that thou  
camest ?

Was it there, where beside the road the mill-wheel is  
singing ?

Or down by the path all entwreathed with the raspberry-  
bushes,

The boughs that have reddened my lips with their beauti-  
ful berries ?

But, nay! how good thou art to return, my belovèd!  
 And if the dead should return, one would say to them  
 surely:

“How good ye are to return!”—yet I love thee far better  
 Than all my dead over whom I lament with sore weeping.  
 How good thou art, that thou livest, nor lettest me  
 weep.

And know, that the moon, too, is here, and her stars  
 without number;

I love thee far better than them, nor do look at them ever  
 The while thou art with me, but lo! when thou leavest  
 me, straightway

I look at them then, and of thee we hold converse together.  
 I lighted the fire, for I knew that thou wouldest be coming,  
 And beside it with thee I sit whispering, whispering softly.  
 Then my sorrow flies hence;—but I put the fire out when  
 thou goest.

“For wherefore, indeed, should I burn without him?”  
 saith the fire.

When thou comest again, take the path by the raspberry-  
 bushes,

Inquire not thy way of another, nor ask of another  
 To give thee a drink—nay, ask of no other woman,  
 Keep all thy thirst for me.

The other women, they have their veils<sup>1</sup> and their spindles.  
 What song shall I choose? what song wilt thou have me  
 sing thee?

<sup>1</sup> Note 1.

The river went by and bore hence the tears of the widow.  
The leaves of the nut-trees will soon be sere in the forest ;  
And I am young and yet old, and I waken pity.  
Yet why have men pity upon me—since I am so happy ?  
I lighted the fire, for I knew that thou wouldest be coming.

*We shall not see again the foot of the willows  
Until the river is low.*

## GIPSY SONG.

WITH trembling hand I touched the shift's white fold,  
The beads of blue that clasped thy neck about.  
Before my tent the fire burnt bright of old ;  
See now—the fire is out.

Beneath the hill, at witching eventide,  
Thou gavest me thy fresh, sweet lips of yore ;  
My heart within my breast for gladness cried ;  
Hark now—it beats no more.

As o'er the grass, beneath the poplars there,  
We gaily stepped, the high noon overhead,  
Then Love was born—was born so strong and fair.  
Knowest thou?—Love is dead.

Because thy soul was dark, to evil turned,  
Therefore it was Love had no power to hold.  
Before my tent the fire once brightly burned ;  
See now—the fire is cold.

THE WATER OF PRAYER.

*Go not forth at the time the flowers are sleeping,  
The flowers mislike that one should watch their sleep.*

EVERY morning

There came a child, and set without my door  
A pitcher filled, and said: "Oh! pray for her,  
Oh! pray for her, the while ye drink this water."  
"And is her grave already green?" I asked;  
The child made answer: "Nay, it still is young."  
I looked among the graves until I found  
The youngest grave—and then I prayed for her,  
The while I drank that water.

*Go not forth at the time the flowers are sleeping,  
For flowers mislike that one should watch their sleep.*

## NO SON.

*The furrows my oxen draw are the straightest of all;  
 And in my belt I carry so many knives  
 That they girdle my waist about.  
 The rain doth bid the birds fly home to their nests.*

I HAD a dream, that at last thou wert born to me,  
 Thou for whom 'tis so hard to be born to me.  
 That was a waking dream that I dreamed, at noon,  
 With eyes fixed long on the furrows all full of seed.  
 Some shoots already were breaking forth from the furrows,  
 And said: "We, we are born!"—  
 Then did I envy my field for its fatherhood;  
 It seemed to me, as though I were now the father  
 Of a brave, strong son, who was setting forth for the  
 battle—  
 And I wept at parting, yet gloried over the fight.  
 And then it seemed to me that I was the father  
 Of a shepherd-lad, who drove his flock to the mountains;  
 I saw the mountain smiling upon my shepherd,  
 And saw that the heart of the shepherd was smiling too—  
 And I rejoiced.  
 Then it seemed to me that I was a father's father;  
 I saw the children greeting him on his threshold,

And the kindness of that greeting filled my soul,  
 And all his house, too, overflowed with it,  
 And like a sun, his joy shone forth to me.  
 But the real sun sank down beneath the furrows,  
 And I seemed to myself the father of my sorrow,  
 And of my loneliness.

These to my hut I carried back with me,  
 And to my wife I spake :

“Wife, we are all alone and full of sorrow !”

Silent was she, for she knew not how to answer ;  
 Silent were both our hearts, for they were empty.  
 Then of all loneliness, and pain, and sorrow

I felt myself the father—

The son of the graves I felt myself, and the husband  
 Of yon dumb woman, whose womb would be silent ever,  
 As were our hearts.

Then, that we might forget, we looked at the furrows,  
 All full of seed—and some shoots already were breaking  
 Forth from the furrows, and said : “We, we are born !”  
 Nor did one of us ask the other : “Whereon art thou  
 looking ?”—

We only looked at the growing seeds together.

*The furrows my oxen draw are the straightest of all ;  
 And in my belt I carry so many knives  
 That they girdle my waist about.  
 The rain doth bid the birds fly home to their nests.*

## AUTUMN SONG.

*The birds have flown, because the mists were falling ;  
 As night drew on, I saw them passing by.  
 The fire burns bright and louder howls the wind,  
 The wind is sad because he is so cold.*

UPON my leathern belt thy hand was resting,  
 I felt it touch my knife.  
 I told thee then to let my heart sleep on ;  
 My heart needs rest so sorely.  
 But yet those eyes of thine, they would not suffer  
 My heart to sleep in peace ;  
 Thou saidst to me, that thou perchance might'st die—  
 And then I pictured how thy death would be,  
 And felt that at the very thought thereof  
 My heart grew sad—as sad as wandering birds  
 When mists are falling.  
 The burden of thee is most dear to Earth,  
 Therefore thou must not die.  
 But if thou didst, the whole wide world would wish  
 To die, and be a sharer in thy death.  
 Thy grave would draw me to it and entice me,  
 Beside thy gravestone I should sit me down,  
 Or roam around thy house,

To see thy dear soul roaming round the house.  
Then to thy soul I would cry out: "Oh! stay,  
Oh! stay by me," with such a strength of love,  
That strong thy soul need be to break away.  
But know, the soul that wanders round a house  
Is never happy.

Thou wouldst not that thy soul should be unhappy?  
Then stay thou here on earth; for see, the stars  
Are all too far for thee.

And even the stars, too, must be glad to feel  
They have a little sister here on earth.

Come, touch my knife, that I may be a hero,  
But never touch my heart,  
For then it will not sleep, and human hearts  
Must sleep, that they may live.

*The birds have flown, because the mists were falling ;  
As night drew on, I saw them passing by.  
The fire burns bright and louder howls the wind,  
The wind is sad because he is so cold.*

## SLEEP.

*Beneath the poplars by my door  
 Didst sit thee down,  
 And on my door didst look, but never enter.  
 Why dost thou love the poplars' shade so much?*

SLEEP said: "I know so many things;  
 Dreams do I know, and sighs.  
 More than the forest that ceaseless murmurs,  
 More than the river that weeps, I know,  
 More than the wind that sings.  
 And I know more than the hearts of men,  
 Since I can silence their hearts."  
 So then the forest, the wind, and the river,  
 And the hearts of men, all said to Sleep:  
 "Come, tell us what thou dost know."  
 Then Sleep replied: "I will tell you softly"—  
 And he said to them: "Rest I know.  
 And I know, besides, what the maiden hideth—  
 What the wife doth not dare to tell;  
 From the breath of their lips I guess it.  
 Death envies me, for whoso would find me,  
 He need not go down to the grave.  
 And Death speaks thus to me: 'Why dost thou let them

Awaken again?' But I let men awaken  
That they may hold me more dear.  
And I lay a smile on their lips, moreover,  
Instead of the tears they have shed.  
'Thou hast the face of my heart's beloved,'  
The maiden saith to me; and the wife:  
'The voice of my husband hast thou.'  
Death suffereth me to seek through the graves,  
And bring forth those who long have slept  
    To those who sleep but an hour.  
And those who sleep but an hour, they bless me  
For giving back those who for long have slept.  
'Thou hast the taste of the freshest water,'  
The thirsting traveller saith to me.  
'Thou hast the look of my home,' saith the wand'rer.  
And in his shade the Past doth let me  
Seek those who have suffered sore, and bring them  
Up before those who made them suffer;  
And those who made them suffer, tremble  
At sight of those who have suffered sore.  
'Lo! thou hast blood upon thy hand!'  
Saith the man who hath stained his knife, to me.  
'Thou hast a dagger in thy hand,'  
Saith the man who hath betrayed, to me.  
I am so gentle, yet so dread,  
That all mankind is fain to have me,  
Because they love me and yet fear.  
I dwell in nests, since they are lofty;

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

In graves, because grass covers them.  
And the hearts of men have need of me ;  
And I have need of their joys and sorrows  
    To fashion dreams of them.  
And he who lies asleep is sacred.  
Men say of one who sleeps : ' Heaven loves him ;  
    For see, he sleeps.'  
But he who cannot sleep, arouses  
Uneasiness in all men's hearts,  
    They say of him, ' He cannot sleep.'"

*Beneath the poplars by my door  
    Didst sit thee down,  
And on my door didst look, yet never enter.  
Why dost thou love the poplars' shade so much?*

FORGOTTEN.

*At the tree's foot a hay-fork hath been left,  
And all day long it hears the birds a-singing.  
Beside the mill grows thyme.*

I AM forgotten—

And if the sun doth glance in through my window,  
I am amazed that he remembers me.

The grass but grows from custom in my field,  
I too from custom let my spindle dance.

The road that leadeth to my house, doth hear  
The echo of no footstep. And the morning  
Saith to me: "Thou art the forgotten one."

He whom I loved, he took his horse, his mantle,  
And, singing, rode from hence.

At night I dream

I see him ride through river and through forest  
Until he reaches a great village. There

At the third hut he stops,

And on the threshold waits for him a maiden ;

The maiden speaks: "Thou from afar that comest,  
Riding through streams and forests,

Hast thou no wife, far off in distant lands,

Who sorely mourns for thee?"—

He answers: "I have none." And then the maiden  
 Doth smile on him, and he beside her tarries.  
 Anon he takes his horse once more, and cometh  
 Unto another village, and there stops  
 At the third hut, wherein men laughing drink.  
 And the men give him drink, and ask him, saying:  
 "Is there not one thou dost the while remember,  
 In emptying this glass?"  
 He answers: "There is no one."  
 Again he mounts his horse and comes a-riding  
 Through a wide meadow, full of naught but stones;  
 At the third stone he stays,  
 And there beside the third stone standeth One,  
 Her arms outstretched toward him,  
 And asketh him: "Or ever thou embrace me,  
 Say, is there no one thou wouldst fain embrace?"  
 He answers: "There is no one."  
 For surely, the forgotten one am I—  
 And he I love, can ne'er remember me.  
 The earth remembers not the golden maize  
 When it is cut. The sky forgets the cloud;  
 The furrows, even, do forget the rain.  
 And if the sun doth glance in through my window,  
 I am amazed that he remembers me.

*At the tree's foot a hay-fork hath been left,  
 And all day long it hears the birds a-singing.  
 Thyme grows beside the mill.*

TO THE MAIDEN.

*I weep because the wind is sighing,  
But thou, thou singest in the sun.  
Two little birds came past us flying—  
Why I am weeping, asketh one ;  
The other asks why thou art singing ;  
One answer makes the sky : “ In sooth,  
For very wantonness of youth ! ”*

OH ! do not ever from a grave pluck flowers,  
The dead have naught but flowers left to-day,  
The while our youth is ours.

Thy hand is toying with thy necklet gay ;  
And all the boughs—their little nests have they.

Oh ! let no laugh the graves' deep silence break,  
Silence alone is left unto the dead.

Thy belt six turns doth make <sup>1</sup>  
About thy waist. And when didst bend thy head  
To drink—“ Oh, drink again ! ” the river said.

Tell not the graves, how fair are the spring days,  
Forgetfulness is all the dead have here.

I shut thine eyes' deep gaze  
Within my very soul's recesses, dear ;  
Thy spindle's whirring ceaseless fills mine ear.

<sup>1</sup> Note 2.

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

The threshold of thy house I love to tread,  
The threshold smiles amid its flowers at me.

But do not tell the dead  
That Love endureth, and may constant be.  
They never would believe or list to thee.

*I weep because the wind is sighing,  
But thou, thou singest in the sun.*

THE SONG OF THE CROSS-SISTERS.<sup>1</sup>

*Along both of the roads there are copses of nut-trees growing ;  
On one they are yet green,  
But on the other, their leaves have dropped already—  
See, we will take the road where they yet are green.*

O SISTER ! speak, why didst thou not straightway tell me ?  
Three distaffs we emptied together, and yet, thy hand—  
I saw it not tremble.

When I spoke of him  
Thou didst bend thy head to drink from the wooden  
pitcher—

I thought thou wert parched with thirst.

O sister ! was it from graves thou didst learn to keep  
silence,

That thou hast kept silence so ?

And dost thou not think that the graves would be far, far  
happier

If they could only speak ?

When I told thee of him

Thou didst but toy with my girdle's fluttering fringes,  
And I thought thy fingers were idle.

How it is in his dwelling-house, thou hast never asked me,

<sup>1</sup> Note 3.

For hadst thou asked, I straightway had understood thee,  
 And known thou didst love him too ;  
 Then with all my heart I had striven not to love him ;  
 But now we love him both, we two together,  
 And these two loves of ours are even as the river,  
 That weeps because of its eternal flowing,  
 Yet cannot cease to flow.

Now I begin to hate thee, and thou art hateful  
 In all thou dost, to me ;

I cannot hear my thoughts for thy spindle's whirring,  
 And my heart, what time it hears thee singing, deemeth  
 Thou singest but a dirge.

We glance at each other, whene'er he comes towards us,  
 To mark which hoped for him most ;  
 And she hath smiling lips, to whom he shows favour,  
 But knives beneath her eyes the other beareth.  
 And when he goeth hence, we glance at each other,  
 To mark which sorrows most.

#### THE CROSS-SISTER.

O sister ! sister ! of glass so white are thine ear-rings,  
 And when thou dancest, upon the face they caress thee ,  
 Then fain would I dance by thee.  
 But now I am fain to see thee dead, yet am fearful  
 Lest thou shouldst die, for then he might weep for thee,  
 And then I should know, it was thee alone that he  
 lovèd ;

And if that be so indeed, I will not know it.  
The tree knows naught of the axe that shall come to  
    fell it,

    And rejoiceth in the sun.—

If I ask of thee, why thou wearest so many a necklet,  
    No answer thou givest me.

But every day I seem to see thee grow fairer,  
And fear that thou, indeed, art she whom he loveth,  
And that it is thy heart's rejoicing makes thee  
    So passing fair.

The wool upon thy spindle doth seem far whiter ;  
And when beside the well I see thee standing,

    I ask : " Why stands she there ? "

Fearing, lest thou be there but to await him.  
Nor am I even at rest when thou art sleeping,  
Because thou surely in thy dreams must see him,  
And he, perchance, in dreams doth say he loves thee,  
When my image is not there to say : " Thou liest."  
O sister, sister ! when didst thou grieve thy mother,  
Or I forget to give drink to the thirsty wand'rer,  
That God now sends such punishment upon us ?  
Far rather would I die with no holy taper,  
Or see from off my cottage wall to-morrow

    The flowers wiped away,<sup>1</sup>

Than have a sorrow, that only grows more heavy  
    When it is shared with thee.

Nay ! I would bless the woman who would sing me

<sup>1</sup> Note 4.

Dirges upon my threshold, that Death might take me  
    Within a month away.  
And yet I will not die, for he would not sorrow ;  
Then should I surely know he loveth thee.

*Along both of the roads there are copses of nut-trees growing ;  
    On one they are yet green,  
But on the other, their leaves have fall'n already—  
See, we will take the road where they yet are green.*

DIRGE OF A MOTHER OVER HER SON.

I SAW a floweret on the meadow—  
It grew among the new-mown hay ;  
The golden maize was not so fair,  
Yet, seeing that flower, the little birds all wept.  
Thou floweret on the meadow,  
How comest thou among the new-mown hay ?

Cast down thy mantle,  
Down by the road-side here ;  
Cast down thy sickle,  
There, on the other side,  
And get thee home ! Go home—  
Stay not upon the bridge,  
Stay not beside the well,  
And stay not at the crossways.

So I went home.  
I found the door half-open,  
And the door spake : “Not from the wind that bloweth !”  
I found the chamber darkened ;  
The chamber spake : “Not because night hath fallen !”  
Then I remembered yonder little flower.  
I saw thee sleep—

And understood right well  
 That yonder little flower was thy soul,  
 That sent me to thy body,  
 And I was not to stay upon the bridge,  
     Nor stay beside the well,  
     Nor loiter at the crossways.  
     Yet had I known  
     That yonder little flower was thy soul,  
 I gladly would have stayed by it awhile;  
     Only thy soul was fain  
     Quickly to consummate its blossoming,  
     And therefore sent me hence  
     That so it might not have to take its flight  
     Before my very eyes.

And here am I—what willest thou of me?  
     Lo, nothing any more!  
 What knowledge now is thine?  
     A deeper one than ours.  
 Where art thou going, thus, without us all?  
 And which of us hath ere forsaken thee,  
 That thou shouldst so forsake us?  
 Hast thou not ever shared our water with us,  
 And wilt not now share Death?  
 What will the seeds be saying  
 Thou didst entrust to Earth,  
 When they come forth and find thee here no more?  
 Beneath thy casement, see, the maidens pass,

The river passeth too ;  
And on the morrow is a festival ;  
Hast told thy grave thereof ?  
Perchance, if thou hadst told it,  
The grave had left thee to enjoy the Day  
    For that one day.  
And didst thou tell thy grave thou hadst a mother ?  
For she, the mother of all flowers and harvests,  
    Had surely felt some pity.  
Nay, rather hast thou told the Earth, perchance,  
    That we are rich in tears,  
And since the Earth was dry and lacked refreshment,  
She took thee hence that she might drink our tears.  
Ah, but thou didst not tell her  
    That bitter are our tears,  
Or she had feared to taste such bitterness,  
    And ne'er had taken thee.

See, here am I—  
Yet dost thou not so much as raise thy head.  
One hour already have I cried to thee,  
And yet shall cry for many weary hours.  
    See, here am I, yea, here !  
But it is naught to thee that I have come,  
And stayed not on the bridge,  
Nor stayed beside the well,  
Nor loitered at the crossways.  
    See, I am here !

I saw a floweret on the meadow—  
It grew among the new-mown hay ;  
The golden maize was not so fair,  
Yet, seeing that flower, the little birds all wept.  
Thou floweret on the meadow,  
How camest thou among the new-mown hay ?

THE SONG OF THE OLD WELL.

*Thou too wilt soon go hence from me once more,  
Oh thou, who camest once to me before ;  
My threshold will see my sorrow, and it will know  
That I am weeping for that thou didst go.*

I SLEEP, yet I love to be wakened, and love to see  
The fresh young faces bending over me,  
And the faces of them that are old, I love them too,  
For those as well in the days of their youth I knew.  
The song of the wind in the trees, and the voice of the bird,  
I hear them not—and yet 'tis as though I heard,  
For I feel that the birds are singing, there on high,  
And I feel that above the strong wind bloweth by.  
I sleep, yet I love to be wakened, day by day,  
For I am the comforter, here beside the way ;  
A welcome sight to the weary wand'rer's eye,  
As to the maidens, who at eve draw nigh  
To sing their songs to me—and I know them well,  
Yea, all their songs—and all their dreams could tell.  
Whoso is tired, I love his weariness,  
And I love the wand'rer's grief of heart no less,  
Who comes from far. The thirst of the herds I love,  
And to hear the pipe of the shepherd's flute above.

And he who fain would wake me from my sleep  
Must stoop him down to me, for I am deep,  
But yet, when one doth speak to me, his quest  
I answer from the depths of my deep breast.  
I love the moss that round my brink grows green,  
Whereon the young folk come and sit, I ween,  
And that the maids sometimes, with idle hand,  
Stroke gently with their spindles as they stand.  
In joy and sorrow, they all of them come to me,  
And I welcome them all; for though asleep I be,  
I love to be wakened. And something in me doth sleep—  
Something I know not, 'tis my soul—so deep  
That none can draw or drink it, for the Earth  
It was, that gave my soul, her daughter, birth.  
My soul in my depths doth sleep, and it is she  
Who maketh answer, when they awaken me.

*Thou too wilt soon go hence from me once more,  
Oh thou, who camest once to me before;  
My threshold will see my sorrow, and it will know  
That I am weeping for that thou didst go.*

MOTHERS' TEARS.

*On the bank beside the ditch he laid his mantle,  
That he might sleep the whole long night therein.  
Didst thou give water to the oxen yonder?  
For they were sore athirst.*

I LAID me down in the grass, where it was trackless ;  
Then a woman came by through the grass and spake to  
me :

“ Canst thou tell, where lies the path ? ”

I said to the woman : “ I know not. ” And she replied :

“ Never yet have I found a path beneath my feet,  
And the villages always are far away from me ;

I never can reach a threshold, and even the graves  
Are always far off from me. ”—

Then I asked : “ Did thy womb bring forth a son, or a  
daughter ? ”

And she answered : “ A son it was came forth from my  
womb ;

Since then my husband has shunned me, and I went forth,  
Forth to the plains—and my child hears my voice no more ;  
But upon his father he smiles.

I was fain to hinder his smiling—and wept over him,  
Yea, covered his face with my tears.

Since then the child is accursed, for a mother's tears  
Weigh heavily on her children—the child is accursed.  
And lo! the child has cursed me too, for my weeping,  
So then I fled forth o'er the plain."

*On the bank beside the ditch he laid his mantle,  
That he might sleep the whole long night therein.  
Didst thou give water to the oxen yonder?  
For sore athirst were they.*

THE LAST DAY.

*When thou hast passed her by  
And seest her no more,  
I will tell thee who she is,  
And thou wilt grieve to hear ;  
Thou wilt not turn again to look upon her.*

I CAN so well remember  
That, thy last day on earth.  
So well do I remember,  
That everyone keeps saying :  
“ Why dost thou think of it ? ”  
And every day that dawneth  
I see, as on that day,  
The sunshine in my chamber ;  
And every day that dawneth  
Is like that day to me.  
Since then have all my days  
Belonged but to the grave—  
Even as of yore, to earth  
Each of thy days belonged ;  
But that one day alone,  
That thou didst live for me.  
It was thy last, I knew it,

And so I took it all ;  
Nor would suffer thee, a moment  
To look upon the courtyard,  
And the apple-trees in blossom,  
Or to glance toward the plain ;  
Nor to gaze upon the faces  
That thou so soon wert leaving ;  
But I came and stood before thee,  
And said : " To them thy life,  
Thy whole life, hath belongèd,  
    This, thy last day, I take !"  
And thou didst not weep nor sorrow,  
Thou didst answer : " It is well ;"  
And that day, for me didst live it  
    With all thy heart.  
This I remember ever.  
I knew the grave was waiting,  
But I bade it wait a while.  
There was something on our threshold  
That watched with fierce impatience  
The setting of the sun.  
And One called out upon me :  
" See there, the sun is setting !"  
And as the sun sank down  
Thou hadst lived out for me  
That, thy last day on earth ;  
And thy first night of death  
Belongs to our first sorrow.

*The Last Day.*

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Now to the grave, to-morrow,  
And all the endless future,  
For ever doth belong.  
The grave said: "I have finished—  
Everything have I taken,  
Now therefore I may close."

*When thou hast passed her by,  
And seest her no more,  
I will tell thee who she is,  
And thou wilt grieve to hear.  
Thou wilt not turn again  
To look upon her.*

## HER PITCHER.

*Now the sun takes leave of us—and after him, as he goeth,  
We gaze, and see the plains that sorely mourn his departing ;  
It snowed this morning, yonder upon the mountains.*

FRESH water my sweetheart hath in her pitcher always,  
And on her shoulder beareth the little pitcher,  
Tarrying on the way to give drink to all men.  
And thus she speaks to each one as he drinketh :

“In the name of the dead, then, drink.”

And when she sleeps in the hut, she leaves on her threshold  
Her pitcher standing.

Then the widow doth go by and drink from the pitcher ;  
And there came at night a dead man, too, to drink ;  
He spake : “How sweet it is, the maiden's water.”

Then the dead man lifted the pitcher upon his shoulder,  
And bore it to the graves, that he might extinguish

The graves' undying thirst ;

And thus the dead man spake to the others, saying :

“In the name of the living, drink.”

*Now the sun takes leave of us—and after him, as he goeth,  
We gaze, and see the plains that sorely mourn his departing ;  
It snowed this morning, yonder upon the mountains.*

THE HEART-STEALER.

*The moon glides on above the willows gleaming,  
And now the willows all night long keep dreaming  
Of that, the moon's soft ray.*

GIVE me thy heart, O maiden, let me hide it  
Where hides my heart, the dagger close beside it  
That, 'neath my girdle here, doth keep it warm.

And so thy tender, fluttering heart I'll carry  
Far through the night from hence, nor ever tarry,  
But o'er the plains and through the forests storm.

And as I pass them like a flash, unheeding,  
All men will say: "See yon bold rider speeding,  
Who bears from hence his loved one's heart afar."

Thy heart shall feel, in fight, mine thrill with gladness.  
I'll show it all the world, its joy and sadness—  
Yea, those that weep and those that blessèd are.

The huts, the graves, and all things, I will show them,  
Thy tender, fluttering heart shall see and know them,  
While thou dost tarry by thy door and say:

“ Will he, who stole my heart, be soon returning ? ”  
 My steed storms on—thy envious heart is yearning  
 To see it all, this world so far away ;

Nor will return till then—and there's no knowing  
 But thou wilt have, O maiden, to be going  
 To fetch it back again thyself some day.

Then to the forest thou wilt say : “ Hast spied him,  
 The rider who bore hence my heart beside him ? ”  
 The forest answers : “ Hence he bore it fast.”—

Then to the plain thou sayest : “ Hast thou spied him,  
 He who went hence and bore my heart beside him ? ”  
 The plain replies : “ He !—he long since is past ! ”

Then wilt thou weep—and not thy spindle's dancing,  
 Thy red, red pinks, thy silver necklet glancing,  
 Nay, nor the maize fields, e'er could comfort thee

For this thy heart—and therefore thou art keeping  
 It safely locked within thy bosom sleeping,  
 Beneath thy girdle, nor wilt give it me ;

For well thou know'st, my courser loves his speeding,  
 And I am one of those who flies unheeding  
 Along his onward course, that none can stay.

*The moon glides on above the willows gleaming,  
 And now the willows all night long keep dreaming  
 Of that, the moon's soft ray.*

"IT WAS NOT SLEEPING TIME."

*Oh, go not forth to-night,  
A star has fallen ;  
'Twere better thou shouldst wait until the sunrise.  
The fragrance of the new-mown hay  
Arises from the plain.*

THE child with milk-white teeth  
Bore a dagger too near his heart ;  
And the dagger pierced its way  
Deep down to the heart of the child ;  
The heart fell asleep in its blood.

Then forth from the heart his mother drew the dagger,  
But the heart awakened not ;  
And she said : "Who will give me my child again, or  
beside him

Lay me in the grave to sleep ?"

Yet the heart did never awaken.

Then down in the earth they laid him,  
The little child whose heart had fallen asleep ;  
But as it lay in the earth, behold, it awakened,  
And thus it spake : "'Twas not yet time for sleeping ;  
Little mother, come tell me why  
I have gone to sleep or ever 'twas time for sleeping.

Had I told thee, then, I was weary,  
That thus thou hast put me to sleep?  
And wherefore art thou not beside me, little mother,  
To sing me lullabies, since I have awakened?  
I yearn for thy smile, and for flowers, little mother,  
For our dwelling-house, that looketh toward the forest,  
For my father, coming home with spade on his shoulder.  
Little mother, oh tell me why  
I have gone to sleep or ever 'twas time for sleeping!"

*Oh, go not forth to-night,  
A star has fallen;  
'Twere better thou shouldst wait until the sunrise.  
The fragrance of the new-mown hay  
Arises from the plain.*

FORSAKEN.

*More softly the moon looks down on thee, than on others—  
Would she tell thee a secret, then,  
That she looks more softly down on thee, than on others?*

IN thy girdle wear a flower,  
And make believe to all that thou art happy—  
Yea, and look up at heaven, for it alone

Can understand thy sorrow.

The birds sing songs to thee, but vain is their singing,  
They cannot make thee smile,

For thou art she, whom smiles have all forsaken.

Thou dost hear his step, that goeth hence to that other—  
And thou know'st his step, as it sounds on that other's  
threshold ;

And the heart of the wife is full of rising tears,

As the buds are full of sap.

But yet from thee there shall come no blossom forth,

A desert is thy heart, like a grave forsaken ;

Thy heart is like a field where falls no dew,

For the dew of thy tears no more doth touch thy husband,

And his wife's white veil is fair to his eyes no more.

His eyes love that other's veil, that other's smiling ;

And thou art she, whom smiles have all forsaken.

“Mother,” the children ask : “ why dost smile no longer ? ”  
 Then dost thou say to them : “ Lo, ye are his children ! ”  
 And weepst sore, and his house with thy tears is darkened,  
 As the mist doth darken the plains.

Then thy husband flees from the house, because it is  
 darkened,

And saith to that other : “ Behold, my house is darkened.”  
 And when thou seest her, then dost thou start and tremble,  
 As though thou didst love her, whom thou durst not hate ;  
 For ye twain have the self-same love.

Her sin, that begets thy sorrow, thou sorely hatest,  
 Yet dost envy her her sin,

For heavier weighs on thee thy sinless sorrow,  
 Far heavier, than sin.

And thou dost grieve that thou hast no curse upon thee,  
 That thou canst not say : “ I suffer through the curse.”  
 And thy children thou dost not love, for they are his  
 children,

Yet lovest them all the more, that they are his children ;  
 Thou dost hear his step, that goeth hence to that other,  
 And knowest that he helps her draw the water  
 Up from the well, and loves the path she hath trodden,  
 The while he shuns the path that thou didst take.  
 For his wife's white veil is fair to his eyes no longer.

*More softly the moon looketh down on thee than on others ;  
 Would she tell thee a secret, then,  
 That she looks more softly down on thee than on others ?*

HE WHO REMEMBERS.

*The cow has fall'n—the little cow-herd weeps.  
The rain has washed the pebbles upon the way.  
Black flowers have I upon my mantle white.*

I SAID to him who remembers,  
“What is it that thou dost see?”  
He answered: “I see my heart.”  
Then I said to him: “Look at the mountains,  
Look at the plains, and the mill  
That waits to rest till the sunset,  
And waits till the sunrise to waken;  
Then look at the houses, their pitchers  
All brimming over with water,  
And everywhere mats on the ground,  
And daggers upon the wall.  
Or see the fountain, that boweth  
And raiseth itself again,  
Like the forest when wind is blowing;  
The streets, where behind their waggons,  
The men call aloud as they go.  
Oh, do but look at it all!”  
“I see only my heart,” he answered,  
“And it is so dark therein

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

That I scarce can tell what it holdeth,  
But if I turn for a moment  
Mine eyes away, there is Something  
Moveth within, and that Something  
Saith to me : Look at thy heart."

*The cow has fall'n—the little cow-herd weeps.  
The rain hath washed the pebbles upon the roads,  
Black flowers have I upon my mantle white.*

THE COBZAR'S LAST SONG.

THE merry Spring, he is my brother,  
And when he comes this way  
Each year again, he always asks me :  
“Art thou not yet grown grey ?”  
But I, I keep my youth for ever,  
Even as the Spring his May.

To ride and hunt the whole world over  
I want no flying steed,  
For I have seen it all, each village,  
And every flowery mead ;  
Men's hearts and their desires, though never  
They showed them me, indeed !

No cloud I need be, through the heavens  
From end to end to fly—  
For just as though it were my dwelling,  
I know the broad blue sky ;  
And thus I say to all the people :  
“My house is there on high.”

And once, indeed, a little maiden  
    Would give her heart to me,  
Her tender heart, but I made answer :  
    “ Thus do I counsel thee,  
O maiden, keep it for some other,  
    Mine it may never be ! ”

As onward through the whispering forest  
    Upon my way I sped :  
“ Whence didst thou get, I prithee tell me,  
    Thy songs ? ” the forest said.  
“ From each one of thy leaves, ” I answered,  
    “ Thy green leaves over head. ”

Upon the luteplayer's grave red flowers  
    In freshest bloom shall keep,  
The sun will love to look upon them,  
    And even be fain to creep  
Down to the grave where lies the Cobzar,  
    To see him in his sleep.

There with his songs the Cobzar lieth,  
    Nor feeleth lonely so ;  
And Earth will thank him for his singing  
    Who did her beauty know,  
And sang of it—her springs and winters,  
    Her joys, her hopes, her woe.

Then will the luteplayer awaken  
With joyful heart and young,  
Because his songs, amid the living,  
Are still on every tongue ;  
And tales of his, by children's cradles,  
To lull the babes are sung.

“Where is my lute ?” he will be asking,  
When he awakes once more ;  
“My mantle, that was wont to cover  
My heart so well before ?  
Where is my heart, indeed, that treasured  
So many songs of yore ?”

And when the grave to him remembrance  
Of that his death doth bring,  
Then will he smile, as dead he lieth,  
O'er that and everything ;  
And turn him with a smile to slumber  
Again, remembering.

As for his songs—a dewy blossom  
Shall spring from every one,  
The dew men drink for hearts' refreshing ;  
His grave beneath the sun  
Will be so green, that all the weary  
Shall sit them down thereon.

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

And all shall take him for their brother,  
Who wept with them and smiled ;  
And Mother Earth shall claim him, saying :  
“ Behold, this was my child.”  
The luteplayer's grave, the sun doth love it ;  
And shines thereon so mild.

The merry Spring, he is my brother,  
And when he comes this way  
Each year again, he always asks me :  
“ Art thou not yet grown grey ? ”  
But I, I keep my youth for ever,  
Even as the Spring his May.

## ALONE.

*For when a little flower beholds  
For the first time the snow, it wonders  
To see it white, so white.  
And the flower says: "The snow will never  
Do me a hurt, will never harm me,  
It is so white!"*

THOU toldest me some tale, one evening,  
Beside the fire,  
And I looked out upon the plain.  
The maize was ripe, and round about  
Maize covered all the plain.  
And I looked out and watched the plain,  
That in thine eyes I might not look ;  
I broke into thy speech, to give thee  
A drink, and once again, to show thee  
The maize upon the plains out yonder.  
When wilt thou come again, to tell me  
Some tale?—I know not what thou toldest,  
And yet thy voice I can remember ;  
I know, that now thou art gone hence,  
And I were wrong to follow thee.  
Thou wouldst not tarry here amongst us ;  
But if the house seemed sad,

Why didst thou never speak of it?  
For then I would have laughed—and straightway  
Glad would the house have been.  
And if to thee the threshold-stone  
Seemed dreary, why didst never say so?  
I would have planted flowers around it,  
Till thou no more couldst see the stone.  
And if thou didst not love my presence,  
Why didst not tell me so? and straightway  
I had gone hence into my grave,  
That thou might'st tarry in the house.  
Because, for feet of wayfarers  
All roads are long;  
Strange villages know not his heart;  
The wand'rer's sadness makes not sad  
A stranger's heart;  
They have their hearth, their wife, their mother,  
The river, too, from whence they drank  
Since childhood's days;  
And so they ask the wanderer:  
“Why hast thou left thy mother and thy wife?”

Beside the fire thou toldest me  
Some tale, and thou didst watch the fire,  
'That so thou might'st not see my tears.  
Into the fire my tears flowed down,  
Then to the tears thus spake the fire:  
“And would ye quench me?”

Thou toldest me some tale—and I,  
I broke into thy speech, to give thee  
A drink, and then once more to show thee  
The maize upon the plain.

*For when a little flower beholds  
For the first time the snow, it wonders  
To see it white, so white ;  
And the flower says: " The snow will never  
Do me a hurt—will never harm me,  
It is so white ! "*

## THE SONG THAT WAS ACCURSED.

*I never told the wind I loved him well,  
And yet I love so well  
To hear him rustling sweep across the forest.  
The long spring evenings will come back again,  
Then will the meadow to the blossoms say :  
" Here are ye, once again ! "*

AND who can ever know, how much I weep  
Here in my empty house ?  
No one can know, since empty is the house.  
I used to sing a song, whereof my love  
Said to me once : " Oh, never sing that song !  
Bad fortune it will bring me."  
But then my love went hence, and I, I thought  
So much on him, always so much on him,  
That to my lips the song came back once more.  
Then there did stop one evening by my door  
A wayfarer—and thus I spake to him :  
" O thou, that comest from the ways afar,  
And further yet along the ways shalt go,  
Where is my heart's beloved, dost thou know ? "  
His knife was stained with blood—and yet I felt  
No fear, because I thought upon my love.

Then said the wand'rer : " Sing that song to me,  
And I will tell what hath befallen him,  
Yea, then I'll speak to thee of him, thy love."

So I forgot and sang—  
I even forgot the promise that I swore—  
The wand'rer, trembling, listened at my door ;  
And then I saw his face was wan and pale—  
" Lo, I," he said, " am thy belovèd's soul !  
Since thou hast sung this song—accursèd be !"  
I said : " And I have sung it unto thee,  
All for love's sake !" But still his soul went hence  
For evermore—and I, I am accurst,  
And now, all round about me, everything  
Sings me that song he bade me never sing.

*I never told the wind I loved him well,  
And yet I love so well  
To hear him rustling sweep across the forest.  
The long spring evenings will come back again,  
Then will the meadow to the blossoms say :  
" Here are ye, once again !"*

## THE LAMENT OF THE ORPHAN.

*A woman passed  
Who craved a drink, and I gave her a draught of water ;  
She blessed my threshold, and went upon her way  
Blessing the threshold.*

I WILL tell it my little mother in her grave ;  
For as she lay a-dying, she said to me :  
“ What time thou hast a sorrow, come and tell me  
There in my grave ;  
For deep in my grave I shall not ever suffer,  
And thou wilt think, because I keep silence always,  
That I understand ;  
And so with me thou wilt have shared thy sorrow,  
For half of it I'll take into my grave,  
Yet never cease my slumbers, the while thou weapest,  
But thou wilt cease thy tears when thou seest my slumber.”  
I will go to my little mother in her grave,  
And say to her: “ Art thou sleeping, little mother ?  
It is only I—I that have brought my sorrow ;  
For thou alone must know it—to thee I trust it,  
Even as we trust  
The dead to Earth, that never gives them forth,

But with indifference receives them all.

Mother ! my little mother ! how well and wisely

Thou didst to die, that thou might'st not know my  
sorrow—

In thy grave now canst thou say : ' I am she that died

That she might not look upon her daughter's sorrow.'

My little mother, thou didst never know him !

And I am glad

He was unknown to thee, for thou wouldst have loved him

Even as I love,

Yea, wouldst have wept for him, since I am weeping.

I have never asked : ' Who is it shall be his wife ?'

I have never sought out her path, that I might meet her ;

I will not say, when it comes to pass I meet her :

' Thou hast taken my share of earthly bliss from me,

Broken my bread, and drained my pitcher dry ;

Thee, thee I have to thank for all my tears !'

I will not tell her this, but will go, and leave her.

Nor will I say to him, if I needs must meet him :

' Be thou accurst, that thou didst take this woman !'

Nor will I even try to turn him from her,

Since she it was, that Fate for him appointed.

I will but say to him : ' Do not look upon me,

Because I weep—

Yet not for thee I weep, but for my mother,

My little mother in her grave, I weep.'

This will I make him think, that his heart may rest,

That with all his heart he may smile upon that woman,

And that remorse through me may never creep  
Into his house.

But thou, little mother, since thy heart now rests,  
Let me tell all, all, here before thy grave,  
That I may keep the strength to tell him never !  
Ah ! for it matters nothing more to thee,  
My little mother, and thou dost sleep so soundly  
That I may wail aloud, and thou need'st not think :  
' My child it is that wails, who is forsaken  
Of him she loved.' ”

*A woman passed*

*Who craved a drink, and I gave her a draught of water ;  
She blessed my threshold, and went upon her way  
Blessing the threshold.*

GIPSY-SONG.

*Two blades upon my knife there be,  
One love my heart hath, only one;  
The heaven hath one only sun,  
My heart hath twofold misery.  
O dagger-blades, O sun in heaven,  
Ye gleam and burn from morn till even,  
And my heart's woe is killing me.*

I ASKED the river: "Tell me why  
Thou art so sad?" It made reply:  
"I drank those tears that thou didst shed."  
—"O river," once again I said,  
"What did those tears then whisper thee?"  
—"We drank thy glance," it answered me.  
And then I asked the river's flood:  
"What wouldest thou yet drink?"—"Her blood!"  
I spake: "O river, flowing past,  
What will her blood say?"—"Cold I grow."  
I spake: "O river, flowing fast,  
What wilt thou answer?"—"Better so."  
I asked once more the river's flood:  
"What wouldest thou yet drink?"—"Her blood!"

*Luteplayer's Songs.*

*Two blades upon my knife there be,  
One love my heart hath, only one ;  
The heaven hath one only sun,  
My heart hath twofold misery.  
O dagger-blades, O sun in heaven,  
Ye gleam and burn from morn till even,  
And my heart's woe is killing me.*

THE STRANGER.

*I passed before her house,  
She stood upon her threshold, and did not see me pass,  
And far and long the way stretched out before me.*

A STRANGER came into my dwelling-place,  
I gave my hand to him ;  
He sat him down beside my hearth, and leaned  
His brow upon his hands ;  
And then he asked me : “Hast thou many oxen ?”  
His feet were full of dust.  
I did not ask him : “From what village com'st thou ?”  
Beside my door he had set down his sack,  
And in the sack was nothing, save a stone.

*I passed before her house,  
She stood upon her threshold, and did not see me pass,  
And far and long the way stretched out before me.*

## SOLDIER'S SONG.

*The long days are over, and now the long evenings  
Have come, and we sit by the fireside and sing ;  
We sing in remembrance of them, the dead heroes,  
And all round about us their souls, too, do sing.*

I SLEEP 'neath the stars with my hand on my heart,  
I go on my way in the glow of the sun ;  
I say to the stars : " And when dead ye shall see me—"   
I say to the sun : " Thou shalt yet see my blood ;"   
For the stars love to look on my slumbers so peaceful,  
And the sun loves to see, when I valiantly fight.  
My weapon is light as the leaf to the tree is—  
As the first of white blooms on the apple-tree's bough ;  
And I would die young, in the apple-tree's shadow,  
That so its white blossoms might rain upon me.  
But if I should die in the maize, all wind-withered,  
Yet still would the maize rustle on in the wind ;  
And if I should die by the old well, down yonder,  
They still would draw water there, just as of yore.  
But there on thy breast, where thy tears, O beloved !  
Would rain down upon me—there must I not die ;  
For I am of those who would journey hence gladly,  
In the glow of the sun, with a smile on their face.

No woman there'll be to wail dirges above me,  
But only one man, that shall dig me my grave.  
How fair and how soft the moon shines on this evening !  
Perhaps, my heart's love, it has looked upon thee,  
And stands all amazed at the sight of thy beauty,  
And is gentle to all amid whom thou dost dwell.  
But swift as a swallow the wind fieth over,  
Perhaps he has lifted thy veil even now,  
And loves all the world, since so fair it doth flutter.  
The grave of the hero is dear to the wand'rer,  
As dear as though o'er it thy footfall had passed ;  
For it gladdens the graves when thou passest across them ;  
And the wanderer loveth the grave of the hero ;  
And the hero is glad in his grave, when the wand'rer  
Makes the sign of the cross o'er the place of his rest.

The remembrance of men goeth forth with the hero,  
And beareth him company unto his death ;  
And his dying is sacred and blest, as the cradle  
Where lieth a child ;  
Yea, the banner above him is pure as the wrappings  
That cover the child,  
And the kiss that Death gives him is sweet as the kisses  
Of mother to child.  
In all men's remembrance his slumber is hallowed,  
And blest by the songs that they sing on their hearth ;  
Men say in the spring, when the blossoms are opening :  
" He sees them no more."

They say to his mother : " We greet thee, O mother !  
For thou art his mother."

They say to his wife : " Be thou blessèd, O woman !  
For thou art his wife."

They say to his children : " His children are ye."

Then, like pilgrims, these go to his grave, and they thank  
him

For being their son and their husband, their father ;  
And he doth rejoice, for he feels them beside him,  
Yea, there by his grave.

The stars love to look on his slumbers so peaceful ;  
The sun loves to see, when he valiantly fights.—

*The long days are over, and now the long evenings  
Have come, and we sit by the fireside and sing ;  
We sing in remembrance of them, the dead heroes,  
And all round about us their souls, too, do sing.*

SPINNING SONGS.



## SPINNING SONGS.<sup>1</sup>

### I.

*The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.*

COME down to-morrow to the river-side,  
We will pluck flowers together,  
The white ones thou, and I the crimson ones ;  
And thou shalt put the white ones in thy hair,  
The crimson I will cast upon the road,  
That they may wither 'neath the wand'rer's step.

—Oh, sister,  
Why hast thou no compassion for the flowers ?—

*The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.*

Into the maize-field come with me to-morrow,  
There we shall see the sun, and then the moon ;  
The sun will be for thee, for me the moon.  
And thou shalt bless the sun,  
But I the moon shall curse.—

Oh, sister,  
Why hast thou no compassion for the moon ?—

*The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.*

<sup>1</sup> Note 5.

Come to draw water from the well to-morrow,  
There will we fill our pitchers ;  
And thou shalt drink from one till it is empty ;  
The other I will break.—

Oh, sister,  
Why hast no pity for the crystal water ?—

*The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.*

Shalt come with me to-morrow to the fields ;—  
There we shall find two lads,  
One very sad, the other one right merry.  
Thine is the merry one, and mine the sad.  
Thou on the lips wilt kiss the merry one.  
The sad one I shall slay.—

Oh, sister,  
Why hast thou no compassion for his sadness ?

*The child was weary, it has gone to sleep.*

II.

Oh, look no more on me, I have grown old.

—And thou dost yearn for youth.  
Then dost thou come and stand upon thy threshold  
That thou the yearning mayst forget ;  
But it forgets thee not—and follows thee,  
Speaking with voice as of a little child :  
And lo ! thou seest thyself as once thou wert,  
When very young thou wert—  
Three flowers in thy girdle,  
Two flowers behind thine ear.—

Oh, look no more on me, I have grown old.—

Yet will I look, for I would see thy sorrow.  
The plain is budding, through it flows the river ;  
Why dost not sit thee down beside the river,  
And beg of it to bear thy pain away,  
Away from thee, far out into the world,  
That thou mayst hear no talk of it again ?—

Oh, look no more on me, I have grown old.

Let be my pain,  
For it belongeth to the house ;  
What would the house do without pain, I wonder ?  
It brings me Night—and every day it brings  
Three flowers for my girdle,  
Two flowers for mine ear.  
In vain I say to it : “ Why, dost not see  
How old I am, and have no use for flowers ? ”  
Beside the window I lie down and watch  
The dawning of the day.  
And the day wonders at the world’s fair splendour.  
Time was, the day did wonder at my beauty,  
When I was young.

Oh, look no more on me, I have grown old.

III.

*I had two flowers. One is withered now ;  
The other mourneth for her sister.*

WHY dost thou tremble, neighbour?—

—I saw One pass—  
No wanderer it was.—

Who was it then, that thou art trembling thus?—

—It was the child, the child  
That I yet bear within me,  
That from my womb escaped,  
To look upon the world before its birth.—

—Neighbour ! Thou didst but dream it.—

*I had two flowers. One is withered now ;  
The other mourneth for her sister.*

Now will the child be sad, here in my womb,  
For it has seen the earth ;

*Spinning Songs.*

And seen that I am wan with bearing it ;  
Yea, seen that Earth is reeking with man's sweat,  
And that she covereth the dust of man.—

—All this it will forget, oh, neighbour, neighbour !  
When once it sees the sun.

*I had two flowers. One is withered now ;  
The other mourneth for her sister.*

## IV.

BE silent ! for my sister slumbereth,  
And if she be awākened, then she weeps.—

—I will not wake her, have no fear ; but this,  
This only, I must tell thee :  
'Twas at the season of the linden's flowering,  
'Twas then she died. And they did take her from me,  
Leaving me naught of her, except her necklet,  
The necklet from her throat,  
That once was warmed all through by her warm blood.  
Upon a nail I hung it, on the wall  
And put a spray of basil over it.  
The little necklace never moves, and yet  
The beads all talk together,  
Whene'er the sun peeps in and makes them glitter ;  
Then do they look like tears upon the wall.  
And when the sun comes in, one sees full well  
That withered is the spray of basil now.—

Be silent ! for my sister slumbereth,  
And if she be awakened, then she weeps.—

I will not wake her, but just this alone—  
I must yet tell thee, that the beads all say :  
“ Why do they leave us hanging on the wall—  
Beside this withered branch ?  
The whole day long do we await the sun,  
And when he comes, he makes us look like tears.  
The tears run down, and then the tears dry up,  
But we remain for ever.”  
She died, and they have taken her away,  
    Away from me, and left me naught of her,  
        Except this necklet.—

Be silent ! for my sister slumbereth,  
    And if she be awakened, then she weeps.

V.

*The fire is slumb'ring,  
Who will waken it?*

HE whom I love spake thus to me :

“Give me thy songs ;”

So I have given him all my songs,  
And now he sings them, that he may be strong  
About his work—for in those songs I told him  
That sunshine says to Earth :

“Thou shalt bear most beauteous children,  
If so be thy sons are brave.”

*The fire is slumb'ring,  
Who will waken it?*

He whom I love spake thus to me :

“Tell me thy dreams ;”

So then I told him all my dreams,

And he remembers them ;

For in my dreams I saw

A Heiduck proud, his right hand red with blood.

And thus, I told him, sunshine speaks to Earth :

“ Brave children thou wilt have,  
If on their hands thy men bear stains of blood.”

*The fire is slumb'ring,  
Who will waken it ?*

He whom I love, spake thus to me :

“ Tell me, how thou wilt sleep within the Earth ? ”—

So then I told, and hearing, he was glad ;  
For I shall sleep, down there within the Earth,  
With open eyes, and on my face a smile ;  
And in my eyes the Earth will be,  
And in my mouth.

I told him that the sunshine says to Earth :

“ Brave children thou wilt have  
If they but understand how they may sleep  
Right well in thee.”

*The fire is slumb'ring,  
Who will waken it ?*

VI.

*My girdle I hung on a tree-top tall,  
So the songs of the birds, it hears them all.*

O MAIDEN, who gave thee those lips so red,  
That smile, and those songs?—

—Lad, what is it to thee

Or why wouldst thou know who hath given them me?—

—And whither, O maiden, so fast art thou sped?

To the plum-tree groves in the valley below,

Or there, where the orchards of apple-trees grow  
Overhanging the cliff?—

—Lad, what is it to thee,

Since it is not thou that shalt go with me?—

*My girdle I hung on a tree-top tall,  
So the songs of the birds, it hears them all.*

O maiden, and what in thy heart dost thou bear?

A song, or a love?—

—Lad, what is it to thee?

If there's one that I love, sure, thou art not he.—

Where wouldst thou I died of my love, then, where?

By the river, where over me flowers shall weep?  
In the hut, where the mother who lulled me to sleep,  
Shall sing me my dirge?—

—Lad, what is it to me,  
Since I am not going to weep over thee?—

*My girdle I hung on a tree-top tall,  
So the songs of the birds, it hears them all.*

VII.

*He turned his head, he turned his head away,  
But whether he was glad, I do not know.*

WHY hast thou, brother, no compassion on her ?  
Weary she is, remorseful, and alone.—  
—And didst thou go within her house, my sister ?  
What saw'st thou in the house ?—  
—I saw the little house was very poor ;  
No flowers in the window,  
No mat upon the threshold ;  
Hard as the heart of the wicked was her bed,  
I said : “ Thou wouldst lie softer on bare earth.”—

*He turned his head, he turned his head away,  
But whether he was glad, I do not know.*

What didst thou see, my sister, in the courtyard ?—  
—Naught save some hay, all blackened by the rain,  
And then a dried-up well,  
Dry as a widow's heart.—  
—What didst thou see upon her face, my sister ?—  
—Furrows I saw upon her face, like ruts

Upon the roads when they are full of rain ;  
And full of tears were these.

*He turned his head, he turned his head away,  
But whether he was glad, I do not know.*

Hast thou no pity on her, brother, brother ?—  
—The carrion hath no pity on the vulture  
That dies for having rent it and devoured it.

*He turned his head, he turned his head away,  
But whether he was glad, I do not know.*

VIII.

*What dost thou bear in thine apron, little heart ?*

FLOWERS I bear, and grass, and fruit from the garden.  
My little mother died in the spring at even,  
And I think of her, since then, in the long spring evenings,  
Then do I hear no more the mill-wheel's murmur.  
I put on my bravest dress  
When I go to see my mother, there in the graveyard,  
That so I may seem right merry to my mother.  
And when I have the year's first-fruits, I fail not  
To cast across my threshold two of them,  
Yea, twain I give to the road, I give to the wand'rer,  
That in Earth's depths my mother may not hunger.

*What dost thou bear in thine apron, little heart ?*

The stranger came and said : "Why goest not with me ?  
My village stands beside a cool, green valley,  
Where flights of birds come by, and even in flying  
They tarry on my cottage."  
Then to the stranger I spake thus : "O stranger,  
Go home without me, I would tarry here ;

The sun and moon are wont to see me always  
Here in my little hut ;  
And a strange house would have no room, O stranger,  
For these my sorrows and my joys ; no corner  
Would there be found for me to stand my distaff,  
And ever would thy house be saying, stranger :  
“Of joys and sorrows we’ve enough already,  
We have no room for thine !”

*What dost thou bear in thine apron, little heart?*

IX.

*Oh, stay beside me, for alone am I.*

O MOTHER, when my hair has all grown white  
I'll shroud my veil so close about my head  
That none will see my hair has grown so white ;  
And I shall know so many, many things ;  
    Shall know, why thou dost weep.  
And he I love, he too will then be old,  
Will put his cap of fur upon his head,  
That none may see how white his hair has grown ;  
And I can say, at last, I love him, then.  
So often shall I tell him so,  
That it will make him grow quite young again.  
And I shall say to him : " Dost thou remember  
Upon that day, beside the well, when I  
    Would never smile on thee ?  
    That was because I loved thee."   
Mother, but I would fain be growing old  
That I might tell him sooner !

*Oh, stay beside me, for alone am I.*

And the young maidens then will beg of me  
To tell them of my life—and I will tell them  
About my life and all its many joys.—

The tree doth think no more, my little daughter,  
 About its fruit, when winter-time has come ;  
 And thou, thou too, thy smiles wilt all forget.

O mother, O dear mother, say not so !  
 Because I smile with twofold joy, to think  
 I shall remember them when I am sad,  
     Too sad, to smile again.—  
 —My child, the birds do carol every spring,  
     Yet not the self-same birds.  
 The harvests ripen every year, but yet  
 Each time new seeds are sown.  
 Even so the heart of man sings once, once only ;  
 Once, and once only, doth his harvest ripen.—

—O mother, O dear mother, say not so !  
 For when I have grown old  
 I'll smile upon the birds and on the harvests,  
 And say to them, "I too once bloomed and sang."

*Oh, stay beside me, for alone am I.*

X.

Tell me who she is, oh, tell me!—

—SHE hath no mother more, and her father's name  
Is all unknown to me.  
With her, the self-same moment, flowers were born—  
With her the flowers will die.  
Nay, nay, I love her not; yet I look at her.  
She wanders through the forest, and thereat  
The forest doth rejoice.—

—Tell me who she is, oh, tell me!—

—If Death should take  
That which is sweetest upon earth away,  
He would take her.  
Strong will the children be that are born of her,  
And from her breast the milk will stream in plenty,  
Like rivers at the melting of the snow.—

Tell me who she is, oh, tell me!

## XI.

*Go draw me water from the well,  
I am athirst.—*

Ан! what and if the well were dry?—  
—Then there is yet the river.—  
—What if the river were dried up?—  
—Then hath the spring still water;  
But oh! a joyless heart, that hath  
    No other joy beside.—  
—What hath befallen this thy heart?—  
—They came and took its joy away,  
They came by night to take its joy,  
And all the way was dark.

*Go draw me water from the well,  
I am athirst.*

And if the swallow were to die,  
Yet were the lark still here;  
And if the hail laid low our corn,  
The hay were left us still;  
But oh! a loveless life, that hath  
    No other love beside.—

—What hath befallen that thy love?—  
—My love is dead. They murdered it  
    With a sure knife and sharp,  
And with a hand that trembled not ;  
    I saw its blood,  
Its blood, that through my fingers flowed ;  
I could not stay the stream.

*Go draw me water from the well,  
I am athirst.*

## XII.

*Which dost thou love to hear the best,  
My spindle or my voice?—*

THREE lads have died in the village there,  
And one was my belovèd.  
Water from out the stream he drank,  
There, where a star had bathed,  
And then he died; and I bewail him,  
And sing my songs o'er him.  
I see the star in the water still,  
But he shall see it no more.

*Which dost thou love to hear the best,  
My spindle or my voice?*

I said to the star: "For two whole nights  
I would gaze on naught save thee,  
If thou wouldst tell me where bides his soul.  
Is it there in the flowers? in my bracelet here?  
Or yon 'mid the ripe red corn?  
For if I knew 'twas in a flower,  
I would water it oft and tend it well,  
That it might bloom for aye.

And if 'twere in my bracelet here,  
Pd pillow my head upon mine arm,  
That so I might have fairest dreams—  
Yea, dreams all robed in white.  
And if 'twere in the ripe red corn,  
My sickle ne'er should mow it down,  
But I would pluck it gently."

*Which dost thou love to hear the best,  
My spindle or my voice?*

Then thus the star replied to me :  
" His soul is so far away,  
That though thou shouldst take the fleetest steed,  
Thou couldst not reach it ever.  
Stay rather, leaning by thy hut,  
Perchance the little soul will come,  
Come flying up to thee ;  
Yet never seek to hold it there,  
But give it straight the fleetest steed,  
That it may hasten hence once more,  
That it may haste away."

*Which dost thou love to hear the best,  
My spindle or my voice?*

## XIII.

*Upon my threshold thou wilt meet  
An agèd man—him shalt thou bid come in.*

Do not thou ask that maid again  
Whither she fares—she knows it not herself,  
But loveth to go wand'ring round about ;  
And those who pass her by disturb her not.  
She wanders thus because she hath all knowledge  
Of magic philtres. One she drank herself,  
Not knowing that she drank it, and since then  
The world is changed to her, and all the world  
To her seems old—yea, thou art aged, and I ;  
The forest has grown old—an hundred years ;  
And she herself alone, she thinks, is young.  
She laugheth at our age—and wandereth on  
Along the ways, to find the youth who'll love her ;  
But never will she find him.

*Before my threshold thou wilt meet  
An agèd man—him shalt thou bid come in.*

XIV.

*Pluck no more flowers before her,  
For she never gathers one.*

WHITHER the streams are flowing,  
O mother, dost thou know?—  
—To the villages, through the forests,  
And o'er the plains they wend.—  
—And whither tears go streaming,  
O mother, dost thou know?  
Tears that are wept by women,  
Tears that they wipe away  
With the back of their hand, and that trembling  
Upon the hand yet lie?—  
—Tears flow into graves, to comfort  
The dead for having died.—

*Pluck no more flowers before her,  
For she never gathers one.*

Who was it, this evening, mother,  
That thou didst let in to thee?—  
—A woman it was, who sorely  
Wept o'er her womb, that bears

*Spinning Songs.*

Only dead children ever.  
 She weeps, that the souls of those children  
 Have never looked on earth,  
 And she prays the souls of those children  
 To turn them back for a moment  
 That she may look on them.—

*Pluck no more flowers before her,  
 For she never gathers one.*

And hath she not her cottage  
 Wherein she may tarry, mother?—  
 —Nay, she was fain to show me  
 Her tears—and they flowed before me ;  
 And she said of those unknown children :  
 “Golden hair like the sunrise  
 One would have had—and that other  
 Cheeks as red as the sunset ;  
 Slender, like as my distaff,  
 She would have grown, and beside me  
 Singing would she have sat.  
 Yet dead in my womb I bare them.  
 Then Nature spake thus to me, saying,  
 ‘Art thou a grave?’”

*Pluck no more flowers before her,  
 For she never gathers one.*

SPINNING-SONG.

*We went across yon bridge,  
But now the bridge has sunk.*

LAST night I saw my brother in the garden,  
Hither and thither went he, and he spake :  
“If I but had a mantle  
To hide my belt,  
And the knife, too, that in my belt is thrust,  
And the knife’s thoughts, that I might hide them well !  
If I but had a mantle  
Covering me over, even to my feet,  
Along the ways I’d wander,  
Beneath the acacia-trees, that are in blossom.

*We went across yon bridge,  
But now the bridge has sunk.*

Yet I have nothing, save a shirt, and that  
Was with me at my work.  
The knife has fearful thoughts,—  
Here in the garden I have let it lie,

Covered it with my fur-cap close and well ;  
 But though with my brow's sweat I water it,  
 Dry it remains and dead ;  
 No rain can make it, like the forest-trees,  
 Grow fresh and green.  
 And it will tell its thought,—  
 Unto the night will tell it !

*We went across yon bridge,  
 But now the bridge has sunk.*

And it will say : ' Why am I still so cold ?  
 No blood would ever warm me—no, by God !  
 Not though I drank it, drank it ! '   
 Why do I fill the women with affright,  
 Why dost thou frighten them so sorely too,  
 That, seeing me, they tremble ?  
 Earth says : ' And canst thou, then, not see the sun,  
 That thou art all so cold,  
 That thou complainest, thou dost quake with cold ? ' "

*We went across yon bridge,  
 But now the bridge has sunk.*

## NOTES.

### NOTE 1.

"THE other women have their veils," is as much as to say "they are married;" for only married women may wear veils on their heads in Roumania.

### NOTE 2.

"Thy belt six turns doth make about thy waist." The slenderness of a girl is measured by the number of times she can twist her long soft belt or girdle about her waist.

### NOTE 3.

The phrase "sister of the cross" has been used by the translators to denote a sort of elective relationship which is common in Roumania, and is distinguished by the untranslatable word "surata" a mere variation of "sora," a sister. It is usual there for two girls who may be no relation to each other, to choose one other out as sisters, and this choice is hallowed by a special service in church, during which their feet are chained together, to symbolize the bond that is henceforth to unite them. This is regarded as so real a one, that marriage with the brother of one's elective sister is forbidden, nor can these two "sisters" marry two brothers.

### NOTE 4.

It is the custom in Roumanian villages to paint a flower on the wall of a house in which a maiden lives; but if she is known to have behaved ill, the village youths come and efface the painting from the wall.

## NOTE 5.

For the Spinning-songs, the girls all stand in a circle, spinning; the best spinner and singer being in the middle. She begins to improvise a song, and at any moment she chooses, throws her spindle, holding it by a long thread, to another girl, who has to go on spinning while the first girl pulls out the flax—a proceeding requiring great dexterity—and at the same time has to continue the improvisation which has been begun.









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