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by Alexander Pushkin and other authors

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BAKCHESARIAN FOUNTAIN ***

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THE BAKCHESARIAN FOUNTAIN.

BY

ALEXANDER POOSHKEEN.

AND OTHER POEMS, BY VARIOUS AUTHORS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN,

BY

WILLIAM D. LEWIS.

TO

MY RUSSIAN FRIENDS,

THE FOLLOWING EFFORT TO RENDER INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE A FAVOURITE POEM
OF ONE OF THEIR MOST ADMIRABLE BARDS, AND SOME SHORTER PRODUCTIONS OF OTHER
RUSSIAN POETS,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

AS A SMALL TESTIMONIAL OF GRATITUDE FOR THE MANY KINDNESSES OF WHICH I WAS
THE OBJECT IN THEIR MOST HOSPITABLE COUNTRY, IN EARLY LIFE.

THE TRANSLATOR.

Philadelphia, July, 1849.

THE BAKCHESARIAN FOUNTAIN.

A TALE OF THE TAURIDE.

Mute sat Giray, with downcast eye,
As though some spell in sorrow bound him,
His slavish courtiers thronging nigh,
In sad expectance stood around him.
The lips of all had silence sealed,

Whilst, bent on him, each look observant,
Saw grief's deep trace and passion fervent
Upon his gloomy brow revealed.
But the proud Khan his dark eye raising,
And on the courtiers fiercely gazing,
Gave signal to them to begone!
The chief, unwitnessed and alone,
Now yields him to his bosom's smart,
Deeper upon his brow severe
Is traced the anguish of his heart;
As full fraught clouds on mirrors clear
Reflected terrible appear!

What fills that haughty soul with pain?
What thoughts such madd'ning tumults cause?
With Russia plots he war again?
Would he to Poland dictate laws?
Say, is the sword of vengeance glancing?
Does bold revolt claim nature's right?
Do realms oppressed alarm excite?
Or sabres of fierce foes advancing?
Ah no! no more his proud steed prancing
Beneath him guides the Khan to war,--
Such thoughts his mind has banished far.

Has treason scaled the harem's wall,
Whose height might treason's self appal,
And slavery's daughter fled his power,
To yield her to the daring Giaour?

No! pining in his harem sadly,
No wife of his would act so madly;
To wish or think they scarcely dare;
By wretches, cold and heartless, guarded,
Hope from each breast so long discarded;
Treason could never enter there.
Their beauties unto none revealed,
They bloom within the harem's towers,
As in a hot-house bloom the flowers
Which erst perfumed Arabia's field.
To them the days in sameness dreary,
And months and years pass slow away,
In solitude, of life grown weary,
Well pleased they see their charms decay.
Each day, alas! the past resembling,
Time loiters through their halls and bowers;
In idleness, and fear, and trembling,
The captives pass their joyless hours.
The youngest seek, indeed, reprieve
Their hearts in striving to deceive
Into oblivion of distress,
By vain amusements, gorgeous dress,
Or by the noise of living streams,

In soft translucency meand'ring,
To lose their thoughts in fancy's dreams,
Through shady groves together wand'ring.

But the vile eunuch too is there,
In his base duty ever zealous,
Escape is hopeless to the fair
From ear so keen and eye so jealous.

He ruled the harem, order reigned
Eternal there; the trusted treasure

He watched with loyalty unfeigned,
His only law his chieftain's pleasure,
Which as the Koran he maintained.

His soul love's gentle flame derides,
And like a statue he abides

Hatred, contempt, reproaches, jests,
Nor prayers relax his temper rigid,
Nor timid sighs from tender breasts,
To all alike the wretch is frigid.

He knows how woman's sighs can melt,
Freeman and bondman he had felt
Her art in days when he was younger;
Her silent tear, her suppliant look,
Which once his heart confiding shook,
Now move not,--he believes no longer!

When, to relieve the noontide heat,
The captives go their limbs to lave,

And in sequestered, cool retreat
Yield all their beauties to the wave,
No stranger eye their charms may greet,

But their strict guard is ever nigh,
Viewing with unimpassioned eye
These beauteous daughters of delight;

He constant, even in gloom of night,
Through the still harem cautious stealing,

Silent, o'er carpet-covered floors,
And gliding through half-opened doors,
From couch to couch his pathway feeling,

With envious and unwearied care
Watching the unsuspecting fair;

And whilst in sleep unguarded lying,
Their slightest movement, breathing, sighing,
He catches with devouring ear.

O! curst that moment inauspicious
Should some loved name in dreams be sighed,
Or youth her unpermitted wishes
To friendship venture to confide.

* * * * *

What pang is Giray's bosom tearing?

Extinguished is his loved _chubouk_,[1]
Whilst or to move or breathe scarce daring,

The eunuch watches every look;
Quick as the chief, approaching near him,
Beckons, the door is open thrown,
And Giray wanders through his harem
Where joy to him no more is known.
Near to a fountain's lucid waters
Captivity's unhappy daughters
The Khan await, in fair array,
Around on silken carpets crowded,
Viewing, beneath a heaven unclouded,
With childish joy the fishes play
And o'er the marble cleave their way,
Whose golden scales are brightly glancing,
And on the mimic billows dancing.
Now female slaves in rich attire
Serve sherbet to the beauteous fair,
Whilst plaintive strains from viewless choir
Float sudden on the ambient air.

TARTAR SONG.

I.

Heaven visits man with days of sadness,
Embitters oft his nights with tears;
Blest is the Fakir who with gladness
Views Mecca in declining years.

II.

Blest he who sees pale Death await him
On Danube's ever glorious shore;
The girls of Paradise shall greet him,
And sorrows ne'er afflict him more.

III.

But he more blest, O beauteous Zarem!
Who quits the world and all its woes,
To clasp thy charms within the harem,
Thou lovelier than the unplucked rose!

They sing, but-where, alas! is Zarem,
Love's star, the glory of the harem?
Pallid and sad no praise she hears,
Deaf to all sounds of joy her ears,
Downcast with grief, her youthful form
Yields like the palm tree to the storm,
Fair Zarem's dreams of bliss are o'er,
Her loved Giray loves her no more!

He leaves thee! yet whose charms divine

Can equal, fair Grusinian! thine?
Shading thy brow, thy raven hair
Its lily fairness makes more fair;
Thine eyes of love appear more bright
Than noonday's beam, more dark than night;
Whose voice like thine can breathe of blisses,
Filling the heart with soft desire?
Like thine, ah! whose inflaming kisses
Can kindle passion's wildest fire?

Who that has felt thy twining arms
Could quit them for another's charms?
Yet cold, and passionless, and cruel,
Giray can thy vast love despise,
Passing the lonesome night in sighs
Heaved for another; fiercer fuel
Burns in his heart since the fair Pole
Is placed within the chief's control.

The young Maria recent war
Had borne in conquest from afar;
Not long her love-enkindling eyes
Had gazed upon these foreign skies;
Her aged father's boast and pride,
She bloomed in beauty by his side;
Each wish was granted ere expressed.
She to his heart the object dearest,
His sole desire to see her blessed;
As when the skies from clouds are clearest,
Still from her youthful heart to chase
Her childish sorrows his endeavour,
Hoping in after life that never
Her woman's duties might efface
Remembrance of her earlier hours,
But oft that fancy would retrace
Life's blissful spring-time decked in flowers.
Her form a thousand charms unfolded,
Her face by beauty's self was moulded,
Her dark blue eyes were full of fire,--
All nature's stores on her were lavished;
The magic harp with soft desire,
When touched by her, the senses ravished.
Warriors and knights had sought in vain
Maria's virgin heart to move,
And many a youth in secret pain
Pined for her in despairing love.
But love she knew not, in her breast
Tranquil it had not yet intruded,
Her days in mirth, her nights in rest,
In her paternal halls secluded,
Passed heedless, peace her bosom's guest.

That time is past! The Tartar's force

Rushed like a torrent o'er her nation,--
Rages less fierce the conflagration
Devouring harvests in its course,--
Poland it swept with devastation,
Involving all in equal fate,
The villages, once mirthful, vanished,
From their red ruins joy was banished,
The gorgeous palace desolate!
Maria is the victor's prize;--
Within the palace chapel laid,
Slumb'ring among th'illustrious dead,
In recent tomb her father lies;
His ancestors repose around,
Long freed from life and its alarms;
With coronets and princely arms
Bedecked their monuments abound!
A base successor now holds sway,--
Maria's natal halls his hand
Tyrannic rules, and strikes dismay
And wo throughout the ravaged land.

Alas! the Princess sorrow's chalice
Is fated to the dregs to drain,
Immured in Bakchesaria's palace
She sighs for liberty in vain;
The Khan observes the maiden's pain,
His heart is at her grief afflicted,
His bosom strange emotions fill,
And least of all Maria's will
Is by the harem's laws restricted.
The hateful guard, of all the dread,
Learns silent to respect and fear her,
His eye ne'er violates her bed,
Nor day nor night he ventures near her;
To her he dares not speak rebuke,
Nor on her cast suspecting look.
Her bath she sought by none attended,
Except her chosen female slave,
The Khan to her such freedom gave;
But rarely he himself offended
By visits, the desponding fair,
Remotely lodged, none else intruded;
It seemed as though some jewel rare,
Something unearthly were secluded,
And careful kept untroubled there.

Within her chamber thus secure,
By virtue guarded, chaste and pure,
The lamp of faith, incessant burning,
The VIRGIN'S image blest illumed,
The comfort of the spirit mourning
And trust of those to sorrow doomed.
The holy symbol's face reflected

The rays of hope in splendour bright,
And the rapt soul by faith directed
To regions of eternal light.
Maria, near the VIRGIN kneeling,
In silence gave her anguish way,
Unnoticed by the crowd unfeeling,
And whilst the rest, or sad or gay,
Wasted in idleness the day,
The sacred image still concealing,
Before it pouring forth her prayer,
She watched with ever jealous care;
Even as our hearts to error given,
Yet lighted by a spark from heaven,
Howe'er from virtue's paths we swerve,
One holy feeling still preserve.

* * * * *

Now night invests with black apparel
Luxurious Tauride's verdant fields,
Whilst her sweet notes from groves of laurel
The plaintive Philomela yields.
But soon night's glorious queen, advancing
Through cloudless skies to the stars' song,
Scatters the hills and dales along,
The lustre of her rays entrancing.
In Bakchesaria's streets roamed free
The Tartars' wives in garb befitting,
They like unprisoned shades were flitting
From house to house their friends to see,
And while the evening hours away
In harmless sports or converse gay.
The inmates of the harem slept;--
Still was the palace, night impending
O'er all her silent empire kept;
The eunuch guard, no more offending
The fair ones by his presence, now
Slumbered, but fear his soul attending
Troubled his rest and knit his brow;
Suspicion kept his fancy waking,
And on his mind incessant preyed,
The air the slightest murmur breaking
Assailed his ear with sounds of dread.
Now, by some noise deceitful cheated,
Starts from his sleep the timid slave,
Listens to hear the noise repeated,
But all is silent as the grave,
Save where the fountains softly sounding
Break from their marble prisons free,
Or night's sweet birds the scene surrounding
Pour forth their notes of melody:
Long does he hearken to the strain,
Then sinks fatigued in sleep again.

Luxurious East! how soft thy nights,
What magic through the soul they pour!
How fruitful they of fond delights
To those who Mahomet adore!
What splendour in each house is found,
Each garden seems enchanted ground;
Within the harem's precincts quiet
Beneath fair Luna's placid ray,
When angry feelings cease to riot
There love inspires with softer sway!

* * * *

The women sleep;--but one is there
Who sleeps not; goaded by despair
Her couch she quits with dread intent,
On awful errand is she bent;
Breathless she through the door swift flying
Passes unseen; her timid feet
Scarce touch the floor, she glides so fleet.
In doubtful slumber restless lying
The eunuch thwarts the fair one's path,
Ah! who can speak his bosom's wrath?
False is the quiet sleep would throw
Around that gray and care-worn brow;
She like a spirit vanished by
Viewless, unheard as her own sigh!

* * * *

The door she reaches, trembling opes,
Enters, and looks around with awe,
What sorrows, anguish, terrors, hopes,
Rushed through her heart at what she saw!
The image of the sacred maid,
The Christian's matron, reigning there,
And cross attracted first the fair,
By the dim lamp-light scarce displayed!
Oh! Grusinka, of earlier days
The vision burst upon thy soul,
The tongue long silent uttered praise,
The heart throbs high, but sin's control
Cannot escape, 'tis passion, passion sways!

The Princess in a maid's repose
Slumbered, her cheek, tinged like the rose,
By feverish thought, in beauty blooms,
And the fresh tear that stains her face
A smile of tenderness illumines.
Thus cheers the moon fair Flora's race,
When by the rain opprest they lie
The charm and grief of every eye!

It seemed as though an angel slept
From heaven descended, who, distressed,
Vented the feelings of his breast,
And for the harem's inmates wept!
Alas! poor Zarem, wretched fair,
By anguish urged to mere despair,
On bended knee, in tone subdued
And melting strain, for pity sued.

"Oh! spurn not such a suppliant's prayer!"
Her tones so sad, her sighs so deep,
Startled the Princess in her sleep;
Wond'ring, she views with dread before her
The stranger beauty, frightened hears
For mercy her soft voice implore her,
Raises her up with trembling hand,
And makes of her the quick demand,
"Who speaks? in night's still hour alone,
Wherefore art here?" "A wretched one,
To thee I come," the fair replied,
"A suitor not to be denied;
Hope, hope alone my soul sustains;
Long have I happiness enjoyed,
And lived from sorrow free and care,
But now, alas! a prey to pains
And terrors, Princess hear my prayer,
Oh! listen, or I am destroyed!

Not here beheld I first the light,
Far hence my native land, but yet
Alas! I never can forget
Objects once precious to my sight;
Well I remember towering mountains,
Snow-ridged, replete with boiling fountains,
Woods pervious scarce to wolf or deer,
Nor faith, nor manners such as here;
But, by what cruel fate o'ercome,
How I was snatched, or when, from home
I know not,--well the heaving ocean
Do I remember, and its roar,
But, ah! my heart such wild commotion
As shakes it now ne'er felt before.
I in the harem's quiet bloomed,
Tranquil myself, waiting, alas!
With willing heart what love had doomed;
Its secret wishes came to pass:
Giray his peaceful harem sought,
For feats of war no longer burned,
Nor, pleased, upon its horrors thought,
To these fair scenes again returned.

"Before the Khan with bosoms beating
We stood, timid my eyes I raised,

When suddenly our glances meeting,
I drank in rapture as I gazed;
He called me to him,--from that hour
We lived in bliss beyond the power
Of evil thought or wicked word,
The tongue of calumny unheard,
Suspicion, doubt, or jealous fear,
Of weariness alike unknown,
Princess, thou comest a captive here,
And all my joys are overthrown,
Giray with sinful passion burns,
His soul possessed of thee alone,
My tears and sighs the traitor spurns;
No more his former thoughts, nor feeling
For me now cherishes Giray,
Scarce his disgust, alas! concealing,
He from my presence hastes away.
Princess, I know the fault not thine
That Giray loves thee, oh! then hear
A suppliant wretch, nor spurn her prayer!

Throughout the harem none but thou
Could rival beauties such as mine
Nor make him violate his vow;
Yet, Princess! in thy bosom cold
The heart to mine left thus forlorn,
The love I feel cannot be told,
For passion, Princess, was I born.
Yield me Giray then; with these tresses
Oft have his wandering fingers played,
My lips still glow with his caresses,
Snatched as he sighed, and swore, and prayed,
Oaths broken now so often plighted!
Hearts mingled once now disunited!
His treason I cannot survive;
Thou seest I weep, I bend my knee,
Ah! if to pity thou'rt alive,
My former love restore to me.
Reply not! thee I do not blame,
Thy beauties have bewitched Giray,
Blinded his heart to love and fame,
Then yield him up to me, I pray,
Or by contempt, repulse, or grief,
Turn from thy love th'ungenerous chief!
Swear by thy faith, for what though mine
Conform now to the Koran's laws,
Acknowledged here within the harem,
Princess, my mother's faith was thine,
By that faith swear to give to Zarem
Giray unaltered, as he was!
But listen! the sad prey to scorn
If I must live, Princess, have care,
A dagger still doth Zarem wear,--

I near the Caucasus was born!"

She spake, then sudden disappeared,
And left the Princess in dismay,
Who scarce knew what or why she feared;
Such words of passion till that day
She ne'er had heard. Alas! was she
To be the ruthless chieftain's prey?
Vain was all hope his grasp to flee.
Oh! God, that in some dungeon's gloom
Remote, forgotten, she had lain,
Or that it were her blessed doom
To 'scape dishonour, life, and pain!
How would Maria with delight
This world of wretchedness resign;
Vanished of youth her visions bright,
Abandoned she to fates malign!
Sinless she to the world was given,
And so remains, thus pure and fair,
Her soul is called again to heaven,
And angel joys await it there!

* * * * *

Days passed away; Maria slept
Peaceful, no cares disturbed her, now,--
From earth the orphan maid was swept.
But who knew when, or where, or how?
If prey to grief or pain she fell,
If slain or heaven-struck, who can tell?
She sleeps; her loss the chieftain grieves,
And his neglected harem leaves,
Flies from its tranquil precincts far,
And with his Tartars takes the field,
Fierce rushes mid the din of war,
And brave the foe that does not yield,
For mad despair hath nerved his arm,
Though in his heart is grief concealed,
With passion's hopeless transports warm.
His blade he swings aloft in air
And wildly brandishes, then low
It falls, whilst he with pallid stare
Gazes, and tears in torrents flow.

His harem by the chief deserted,
In foreign lands he warring roved,
Long nor in wish nor thought reverted
To scene once cherished and beloved.
His women to the eunuch's rage
Abandoned, pined and sank in age;
The fair Grusinian now no more
Yielded her soul to passion's power,
Her fate was with Maria's blended,

On the same night their sorrows ended;
Seized by mute guards the hapless fair
Into a deep abyss they threw,--
If vast her crime, through love's despair,
Her punishment was dreadful too!

At length th'exhausted Khan returned,
Enough of waste his sword had dealt,
The Russian cot no longer burned,
Nor Caucasus his fury felt.
In token of Maria's loss
A marble fountain he upreared
In spot recluse;--the Christian's cross
Upon the monument appeared,
(Surmounting it a crescent bright,
Emblem of ignorance and night!)
Th'inscription mid the silent waste
Not yet has time's rude hand effaced,
Still do the gurgling waters pour
Their streams dispensing sadness round,
As mothers weep for sons no more,
In never-ending sorrows drowned.
In morn fair maids, (and twilight late,)
Roam where this monument appears,
And pitying poor Maria's fate
Entitle it the FOUNT OF TEARS!

* * * * *

My native land abandoned long,
I sought this realm of love and song.
Through Bakchesaria's palace wandered,
Upon its vanished greatness pondered;
All silent now those spacious halls,
And courts deserted, once so gay
With feasters thronged within their walls,
Carousing after battle fray.
Even now each desolated room
And ruined garden luxury breathes,
The fountains play, the roses bloom,
The vine unnoticed twines its wreaths,
Gold glistens, shrubs exhale perfume.
The shattered casements still are there
Within which once, in days gone by,
Their beads of amber chose the fair,
And heaved the unregarded sigh;
The cemetery there I found,
Of conquering khans the last abode,
Columns with marble turbans crowned
Their resting-place the traveller showed,
And seemed to speak fate's stern decree,
"As they are now such all shall be!"
Where now those chiefs? the harem where?

Alas! how sad scene once so fair!
Now breathless silence chains the air!
But not of this my mind was full,
The roses' breath, the fountains flowing,
The sun's last beam its radiance throwing
Around, all served my heart to lull
Into forgetfulness, when lo!
A maiden's shade, fairer than snow,
Across the court swift winged its flight;--
Whose shade, oh friends! then struck my sight?
Whose beauteous image hovering near
Filled me with wonder and with fear?
Maria's form beheld I then?
Or was it the unhappy Zarem,
Who jealous thither came again
To roam through the deserted harem?
That tender look I cannot flee,
Those charms still earthly still I see!

* * * * *

He who the muse and peace adores,
Forgetting glory, love, and gold,
Again thy ever flowery shores
Soon, Salgir! joyful shall behold;
The bard shall wind thy rocky ways
Filled with fond sympathies, shall view
Tauride's bright skies and waves of blue
With greedy and enraptured gaze.
Enchanting region! full of life
Thy hills, thy woods, thy leaping streams,
Ambered and rubied vines, all rife
With pleasure, spot of fairy dreams!
Valleys of verdure, fruits, and flowers,
Cool waterfalls and fragrant bowers!
All serve the traveller's heart to fill
With joy as he in hour of morn
By his accustomed steed is borne
In safety o'er dell, rock, and hill,
Whilst the rich herbage, bent with dews,
Sparkles and rustles on the ground,
As he his venturous path pursues
Where AYOUDAHGA'S crags surround!

[1] A Turkish pipe.

BY

VARIOUS RUSSIAN AUTHORS.

[Several of the following translations were published anonymously, many years since, in the "National Gazette," when edited by Robert Walsh, Esq., and in the "Atlantic Souvenir," and other periodicals.]

AMATORY AND OTHER POEMS.

SONG.

I through gay and brilliant places
Long my wayward course had bound,
Oft had gazed on beauteous faces,
But no loved one yet had found.

Careless, onward did I saunter,
Seeking no beloved to see,
Rather dreading such encounter,
Wishing ever to be free.

Thus from all temptation fleeing,
Hoped I long unchecked to rove,
'Till the fair Louisa seeing,--
Who can see her, and not love?

Sol, his splendid robes arrayed in,
Just behind the hills was gone,
When one eve I saw the maiden
Tripping o'er the verdant lawn.

Of a strange, tumultuous feeling,
As I gazed I felt the sway,
And, with brain on fire and reeling,
Homeward quick I bent my way.

Through my bosom rapid darting,
Love 'twas plain I could not brave,
And with boasted freedom parting,
I became Louisa's slave.

THE HUSBAND'S LAMENT.

BY P. PELSKEY.

Parted now, alas! for ever
From the object of my heart,
Thus by cruel fate afflicted,
Grief shall be my only part,

I, bereft of her blest presence,
Shall my life in anguish spend,
Joy a stranger to my bosom,
Wo with every thought shall blend.

Double was my meed of pleasure
When in it a share she bore,
Of my pains, though keen and piercing,
Viewing her I thought no more.

All is past! and I, unhappy,
Here on earth am left alone,
All my transports now are vanished,
Blissful hours! how swiftly flown.

Vainly friends, with kind compassion,
Me to calm my grief conjure,
Vainly strive my heart to comfort,
It the grave alone can cure.

Fate one hope allows me only,
Which allays my bosom's pain--
Death our loving hearts divided,
Death our hearts can join again!

COUNSEL.

BY DMEETRIEFF.

Youth, those moments so entrancing,
Spend in sports and pleasures gay,

Mirth and singing, love and dancing,
Like a shade thou'lt pass away!

Nature points the way before us,
Friends to her sweet voice give ear,
Form the dances, raise the chorus,
We but for an hour are here.

Think the term of mirth and pleasure
Comes no more when once gone by,
Let us prize life's only treasure,
Blest with love and jollity.

And the bard all sorrows scorning,
Who, though old, still joins your ring,
With gay wreaths of flowers adorning
Crown him that he still may sing.

Youth, those moments so entrancing,
Spend in sports and pleasures gay,
Mirth and singing, love and dancing,
Like a shade thou'lt pass away!

STANZAS.

BY NELPIDINSKY.

He whose soul from sorrow dreary,
Weak and wretched, nought can save,
Who in sadness, sick and weary,
Hopes no refuge but the grave;
On his visage Pleasure beaming,
Ne'er shall shed her placid ray,
Till kind Fate, from wo redeeming,
Leads him to his latest day.

Thou this life preservest ever,
My distress and my delight!
And, though soul and body sever,
Still I'll live a spirit bright;
In my breast the heart that's kindled
Death's dread strength can ne'er destroy,
Sure the soul with thine that's mingled
Must immortal life enjoy!

That inspired by breath from heaven
Need not shrink at mortal doom,

To thee shall my vows be given
In this world and that to come.
My fond shade shall constant trace thee,
And attend in friendly guise,
Still surround thee, still embrace thee,
Catch thy thoughts, thy looks, thy sighs.

To divine its secret pondering,
Close to clasp thy soul 'twill brave,
And if chance shall find thee wandering
Heedless near my silent grave,
Even my ashes then shall tremble,
Thy approach relume their fire,
And that stone in dust shall crumble,
Covering what can ne'er expire!

ODE TO THE WARRIORS OF THE DON.

WRITTEN IN 1812, BY N.M. SHATROFF.

Sudden o'er Moscow rolls the dread thunder,
Fierce o'er his proud borders Don's torrents flow,
High swells each bosom, glowing with vengeance
'Gainst the base foe.

Scarce in loud accents spoke our good Monarch,
"Soldiers of Russia! Moscow burns bright,
Foemen destroy her,"--hundreds of thousands
Rush to the fight.

"Who dare oppose God? who oppose Russians?"
Cried the brave Hetman,--steeds round him tramp,--
"The Frenchman's ashes quickly we'll scatter,
Show us his camp!

"TSAR true-believing we are all ready,
Thy throne's defenders, each proud heart bent
By the assault th' invader's black projects
To circumvent.

"Russians well know the rough road to glory,
Rhine's banks by our troops soon shall be trod,
We fight for vengeance, for love of country,
And faith in God!

"BELIEVE and conquer, fear not for Russia,
Awful the blow the cross-bearer strikes,

Th'arkan[1] is dreadful, the sword unsparing,
Sharp are our pikes.

"Vain are Napoleon's skill, strength, and cunning,
Nor do his hosts fill us with despair,
For Michael[2] leads us, and Mary's[3] image
With us we bear.

"To horse, brothers, haste, the foe approaches,
Holy faith guides us, in God we trust,
Quick, true believers, rush to the onset,
God aids the just!

"Sternly rush on, friends, crush the vile Frenchman,
Firm be as mountains when tempests blow,
Oh! into Russia grant not the foul one
Further to go."

Don, broad and mighty, poured forth her children,
The world was amazed, pale with affright,
Napoleon abandoned his fame, and sought
Safety in flight.

On all sides alike pikes gleam around us,
Through air hiss arrows, cannons bright flash,
Bullets, like bees, in swarms fly terrific,
Mingling swords clash.

Not half a million of fierce invaders
Can meet the rage of Russia's attacks;
Not more than they the timid deer shrinks at
Sight of Cossacks.

O'er blood-drenched plains their red standards scattered,
Their arms abandoned, spoils left behind:
Death they now flee from, to loss of honour
Basely resigned.

Vainly they shun it, fruitless their cunning,
Jove's bird strikes down the blood-thirsty crow,
The fame and bones of Frenchmen in Russia
Alike lie low.

Thus th' ambitious usurper is vanquished,
Thus his legions destroyed as they flee,
Thus white-stoned Moscow, the first throned city,
Once more set free.

To God, all potent, let thanks be rendered,
Honoured our TSAR'S and each chieftain's name,
To th' Empire safety, to Don's brave offspring
Laurels and fame!

[1] Lasso.

[2] Kutuzoff.

[3] The Virgin.

SOLITUDE.

BY MERZLIAKOFF.

Upon a hill, which rears itself midst plains extending wide,
Fair flourishes a lofty OAK in beauty's blooming pride;
This lofty oak in solitude its branches wide expands,
All lonesome on the cheerless height like sentinel it stands.
Whom can it lend its friendly shade, should Sol with fervour glow?
And who can shelter _it_ from harm, should tempests rudely blow?
No bushes green, entwining close, here deck the neighbouring ground,
No tufted pines beside it grow, no osiers thrive around.
Sad even to trees their cheerless fate in solitude if grown,
And bitter, bitter is the lot for youth to live alone!
Though gold and silver much is his, how vain the selfish pride!
Though crowned with glory's laurelled wreath, with whom that crown divide?
When I with an acquaintance meet he scarce a bow affords,
And beauties, half saluting me, but grant some transient words.
On some I look myself with dread, whilst others from me fly,
But sadder still the uncherished soul when Fate's dark hour draws nigh;
Oh! where my aching heart relieve when griefs assail me sore?
My friend, who sleeps in the cold earth, comes to my aid no more!
No relatives, alas! of mine in this strange clime appear,
No wife imparts love's fond caress, sweet smile, or pitying tear;
No father feels joy's thrilling throb, as he our transport sees;
No gay and sportive little ones come clambering on my knees;--
Take back all honours, wealth, and fame, the heart they cannot move,
And give instead the smiles of friends, the tender look of love!

TO MY ROSE.

Bright queen of flowers, O! Rose, gay blooming,
How lovely are thy charms to me!
Narcissus proud, pink unassuming,
In beauty vainly vie with thee;

When thou midst Flora's circle shinest,
Each seems thy slave confessed to sigh,
And thou, O! loveliest flower, divinest,
Allur'st alone the passer's eye.

To change thy fate the thought has struck me,
Sweet Rose, in beauty, ah! how blest,
For fair Eliza I will pluck thee,
And thou shalt deck her virgin breast:--
Yet, there thy beauties vainly shining,
No more predominance will claim,
To lilies, all thy pride resigning,
Thou'lt yield without dispute thy fame.

TO CUPID.

Cupid, one arrow kindly spare,
'Twill yield me transport beyond measure,
I'll not be mean, by heaven I swear,
With Mary I'll divide the treasure.

Thou wilt not?--Tyrant, now I see
Thou lovest with grief my soul to harrow;
To her thou'st given thy quiver--for me
Thou hast not left a single arrow!

EVENING MEDITATIONS.

Nature in silence sank, and deep repose,
Behind the mountain, Sol had ceased to glare,
Timid the moon with modest lustre rose,
Willing as though my misery to share.
The past was quick presented to my mind,
A gentle languor calmed each throbbing vein,
My poor heart trembled as the leaves from wind,
My melting soul owned melancholy's reign.
Plain did each action of my life appear,
Each feeling bade some fellow feeling start,
On my parched bosom fell the flowing tear,
And cooled the burning anguish of my heart.
Moments of bliss, I cried, ah! whither flown?

When Friendship breathed to me her soothing sighs,
Twice have the fields with golden harvests shone,
And still her blest return stern Fate denies!
Cynthia, thou seest me lone my course pursue,
Hopeless here roving, grief my only guide,
Evenings long past thou call'st to Fancy's view,
Forcing the tear down my pale cheek to glide.
Friendless, of love bereft, what now my joy?
Void are my heart and soul, a prey to pain,
To love, to be beloved, can never cloy,
But all on earth besides, alas! is vain!

THE LITTLE DOVE.

BY DMETRIEFF.

The little dove, with heart of sadness,
In silent pain sighs night and day,
What now can wake that heart to gladness?
His mate beloved is far away.

He coos no more with soft caresses,
No more is millet sought by him,
The dove his lonesome state distresses,
And tears his swimming eyeballs dim.

From twig to twig now skips the lover,
Filling the grove with accents kind,
On all sides roams the harmless rover,
Hoping his little friend to find.

Ah! vain that hope his grief is tasting,
Fate seems to scorn his faithful love,
And imperceptibly is wasting,
Wasting away, the little dove!

At length upon the grass he threw him,
Hid in his wing his beak and wept,
There ceased his sorrows to pursue him,
The little dove for ever slept.

His mate, now sad abroad and grieving,
Flies from a distance home again,
Sits by her friend, with bosom heaving,
And bids him wake with sorrowing pain.

She sighs, she weeps, her spirits languish,

Around and round the spot she goes,
Ah! charming Chloe's lost in anguish,
Her friend wakes not from his repose!

LAURA'S PRAYER.

As the harp's soft sighings in the silent valley,
To high heaven reaching, lifts thy pious prayer,
Laura, be tranquil! again with health shall nourish
Thy loved companion.

O! ye gods, behold fair Laura sunk in anguish,
Kneeling, O! behold her on the grassy hill,
Mild evening's sportive zephyrs gently embracing
Her golden ringlets.

Glist'ning with tears, her sad eyes to you she raises,
Her fair bosom heaving like the swelling wave,
Whilst in the solemn grove echo, clothed in darkness,
Repeats her accents.

"O! gods, my friend beloved give again health's blessings,
Faded are her cheeks now, dull her once bright eye,
In her heart no pleasure,--killed by cruel sickness,
As by heat flowers.

"But if your hard laws should bid her quit existence,
Grant then my sad prayer, with her let me too die,"--
Laura, be tranquil! thy friend thou'lt see reviving
Like spring's sweet roses.

THE STORM.

BY DERJAVIN.

As my bark in restless ocean
Mounts its rough and foaming hills,
Whilst its waves in dark commotion
Pass me, hope my bosom fills.

Who, when warring clouds are gleaming,

Quenches the destructive spark?
Say what hand, where safety's beaming,
Guides through rocks my little bark?

Thou Creator! all o'erseeing,
In this scene preserv'st me dread,
Thou, without whose word decreeing
Not a hair falls from my head.

Thou in life hast doubly blest me,
All my soul to thee's revealed,
Thou amongst the great hast placed me,
Be midst them my guide and shield!

TO MY HEART.

Why, poor heart, so ceaseless languish?
Why with such distresses smart?
Nought alleviates thy anguish,
What afflicts thee so, poor heart?

Heart, I comprehend not wrongly,
Thou a captive art confest,
Near Eliza thou beat'st strongly
As thou'dst leap into her breast.

Since 'tis so then, little throbbler,
You and I, alas! must part,
I'd not be thy comfort's robber;
To her I'll resign thee, heart.

Yet the maid in compensation
Must her own bestow on me,
And with such remuneration
Never shall I grieve for thee.

But should she, thy sorrows spurning,
This exchange, poor heart, deny,
Then I'll bear thee, heart, though mourning,
From her far and hasty fly.

But, alas! no pain assuaging,
That would but increase thy grief;
If kind Death still not its raging,
Granting thee a kind relief.

TIME.

O! Time, as thou on rapid wings
Encirclest earth's extensive ball,
Fatal thy flight to worldly things,
Thy darts cut down and ruin all.

A cloud from us thy form conceals;
Enwrap its gloomy folds among,
Thou mov'st eternity's vast wheels,
And with them movest us along.

The swift-winged days thou urgest on,
With them life's sand beholdest pass,
And when our transient hours are gone,
Thou smilest at their exhausted glass.

Against Time's look, when he but frowns,
All strength, and skill, and power, are vain;
He withers laurels, wreaths, and crowns,
And breaks the matrimonial chain.

As Time moves onward, far and wide
His restless scythe mows all away,
All feels his breath, on every side
All sinks, resistless, to decay.

To youth's gay bloom and beauty's charms
Mercy alike stern Time denies,
Like vernal flowers o'erwhelmed by storms,
Whate'er he looks at droops and dies.

Huge piles from earth his mighty hand
Sweeps to oblivion's empire dread,
What villages, what cities grand,
What kingdoms sink beneath his tread!

Heroes in vain, his gauntlet cast,
Oppose his stern and ruthless sway,
Nor armies brave, nor mountains vast,
Can thwart the devastator's way.

Thought strives, but fruitless, to pursue
The traces of Time's rapid flight,
Scarce Fancy gains one transient view,
He disappears and sinks in night.

Think, thou whom folly's dazzling glare

Of worldly vanities may blind,
Time frowns and all will disappear,
Nor gold a vestige leave behind.

And thou whom fierce distresses sting,
Thou by calamities low bowed,
Weep not, for Time the day will bring
That ranks the humble with the proud.

But, Time, thy course of ruin stay,
The lyre's sweet tones one moment hear,
By thee o'er earth is spread dismay,
Grief's sigh called forth, and pity's tear.

Yet, Time, thy speed the dread decree
Of retribution on thee brings,
Eternity will swallow thee,
Thy motion stop, and clip thy wings!

SONG.

Sweetly came the morning light,
When fair Mary blest my sight,
In her presence pleasures throng,
Louder swelled the birds their song,
Pleasanter the day became.

Not so radiant are Sol's rays,
When on darkest clouds they blaze,
As her look, so free from guile,
As fair Mary's tender smile,
As the smile of my beloved.

Not of dew the gems divine
Shine as Mary's beauties shine,
Not with hers the rose's dye
On the fairest cheek can vie,
None have beauty like to hers.

Mary's kiss as honey sweet,
Pure as streamlet clear and fleet,
Love inhabits her soft eyes,
Floats in all her soothing sighs,
Nought on earth so sweet as she.

Let us, Mary, now enjoy
Nature's charms without alloy,

Verdant lawn, and smiling grove;--
Brooks that babble but of love
 Will beside us softer flow.

Let us seek the pleasant shade,
Sit in bowers by us arrayed
With gay flow'rets, where are heard
Songs of many a pleasant bird,
 Which with rapture we will join.

In that sweet and lovely spot,
All the cares of earth forgot,
Thou, the comfort of my sight,
Thou, my glory, my delight,
 Shalt my soul to peace allure.

SONG.

The shades of spring's delicious even
 Invited all to soft repose,
I only sighed to listening heaven
 In the still grove my bosom's woes.

My heart's distress had Fate completed,
 Snatched from my sight my best beloved,
And echo's busy voice repeated
 Sweet Mary's name where'er I roved.

Without her sad the days and dreary,
 How cheerless drag life's moments on,
Of pleasure's tumults sick and weary,
 All blissful thoughts for ever flown!

But still to me more keen the anguish,
 With secret grief my heart must swell,
That her for whom I ceaseless languish
 I dare not of my passion tell.

No hope my cruel pain disarming,
 I live a prey to ceaseless wo,
And Mary, sweet, and fair, and charming,
 How much I love her does not know.

How shall I calm this bosom's raging?
 O! how alleviate its smart?
Her tender look, all grief assuaging,
 Alone can cure my wounded heart.

SONG.

How blest am I thy charms enfolding,
Cheerful thy smile as May's fair light,
As Paradise thine eyes are bright,
I all forget when thee beholding,--
Thou canst not think how sweet thou art.
Thy absence fills my soul with anguish,
Beloved one! hopeless of relief
I count the mournful hours in grief,
My heart for thee doth ceaseless languish,--
Thou canst not think how sweet thou art!

TO MARY.

Vainly, Mary, dost thou pray me
Heedless of thy charms to live,
If thou'dst have me, fair, obey thee,
Thou another heart must give.

One with stern indifference steeling,
That could know thee and be free,
One that all thy virtues feeling,
Could exist removed from thee.

That in which thine image blooming,
Holds an empire all its own,
Which, though thou to grief art dooming,
Lives, fair maid, in thee alone;

Every thought to thee addresses,
Filled by thee with visions bright,
Even 'midst sorrows, pains, distresses,
Thou'rt its comfort, hope, delight.

I be faithless! love avowing,
To thee first I bent my knee,
Even with soul thy looks endowing,
First I knew _it_ knowing _thee_.

Yes, my soul to thee returning,
Thine own gift do I restore,
Thou the offering proudly spurning,
I its charm can know no more.

Do not bid me, hope resigning,
My fond vows of love to cease,
How can I, in silence pining,
Cruel fair one, mar thy peace?

NOTE.

Of the following translation of Derjavin's Ode to God, universally esteemed as one of the sublimest effusions of the Russian Muse, I beg leave to say that my aim has been to render it into English as literally as the genius of our language would admit, without adding or suppressing a single thought, or amplifying a single expression, to accomplish which metrically would of course be impossible.

If I have succeeded, my readers will be better able to judge whether this Ode, after having been translated into the Japanese language, merited the great honour of being suspended, embroidered with gold, in the temple of Jeddo, than they can be by a perusal of the highly poetic effort of Dr. Bowring. For, whilst he has adhered to the structure of versification adopted in the original, and in some parts has given its sense with remarkable accuracy, in others he has been less fortunate; and in venturing to change the Trinitarian faith of Derjavin to suit his own notions of the unity of the Supreme Being, he has taken a liberty with his author which cannot but be deemed unwarrantable.

THE TRANSLATOR.

TO GOD.

BY DERJAVIN.

O! Thou, infinite in space,
Existing in the motion of matter,
Eternal amidst the mutations of time,
Without person, in three persons the Divinity!
The single and omnipresent spirit,

To whom there is neither place nor cause,
Whom none could ever comprehend,
Who fillest all things with thyself,
Embracest, animatest, and preservest them,
Thou whom we denominate God!

Although a sublime mind might be able
To measure the depths of ocean,
To count the sands, the rays of the planets,
To thee there is neither number nor measure!
Enlightened spirits, although
Proceeding from thy light,
Cannot penetrate thy judgments;
Thought scarce dare lift itself to thee;
It is lost in thy greatness,
Like the past moment in eternity.

Thou calledst chaos into existence,
Before time, from the abyss of eternity,
And eternity, existing prior to all ages,
Thou foundedst within thyself.
Constituting thyself of thyself,
By means of thyself shining from thyself,
Thou art the light from which light first flowed;
Creating all things by a single word,
Extending thyself throughout the new creation,
Thou wast, thou art, thou shalt be for ever!

Thou unitest within thyself the chain of beings,
Upholdest and animatest it,
Thou connectest the end with the beginning,
And through death bestowest life.
As sparks shoot forth and scatter themselves,
Thus suns are born of thee:
As, in a cold and clear winter's day,
Particles of frost scintillate,
Whirl about, reel, and glisten,[1]
Even so do the stars in the abysses beneath thee!

Millions of lighted torches
Fly throughout infinite space,
They execute thy laws,
And shed life-creating rays.
But these fiery luminaries,
Or shining masses of crystal,
Or crowds of boiling golden waves,
Or blazing ether,
Or all the dazzling worlds united--
Compared to thee are like night compared to day.

Like a drop of water cast into the ocean
Is this whole firmament compared to thee.
But what is the universe which I behold,

And who am I, in thy presence?
Were I to add to the millions of worlds
Existing in the ocean of air,
A hundred fold as many other worlds--and then
Dare to compare them to thee,
They would scarcely appear an atom,
And I compared to thee--nothing!

Nothing! yet thou shinest in me
Through thy great goodness:
In me thou imagest thyself,
As the sun is reflected in a small drop of water.
Nothing! yet I am sensible of my existence,
By an indescribable longing I ascend
Steadfastly to a higher region:
My soul hopes to be even as thou,
It inquires, meditates, reasons;
I am, and doubtless thou must be.

THOU ART! the order of nature proclaims it;
My heart declares it to be so,
My mind assures me of it.
Thou art! and I am not, therefore, nothing!
I am a particle of the whole universe,
Placed, as I think, in that important
Middle point of being,
Where thou finishedst mortal creatures,
Where thou began'st heavenly spirits,
And the chain of all beings unitedst by me.

I am the bond of worlds existing everywhere;
I am the extreme grade of matter;
I am the centre of living things,
The commencing trait of the Divinity;
My body will resolve itself into ashes,
My mind commands the thunder.
I am a king, a slave, a worm, a god!
But, being thus wonderful,
From whence have I proceeded? This is unknown.
But I could not have existed of myself!

I am thy work, Creator!
I am the creature of thy supreme wisdom,
Fountain of life, Giver of blessings,
Soul and monarch of my soul!
It was necessary to thy justice
That my immortal being
Should traverse the abyss of death,
That my spirit should be veiled in perishable matter,
And that through death I should return,
Father! to thy immortality!

Inexplicable, incomprehensible Being!

I know that the imaginings
Of my soul are unable
Even to sketch thy shadow!
But, if it be our duty to praise thee,
Then it is impossible for weak mortals
Otherwise to render thee homage
Than, simply, to lift their hearts to thee,
To give way to boundless joy,
And shed tears of gratitude!

[1] The full beauty of this metaphor can only be felt by those who have witnessed, in a high northern latitude during intensely cold and clear weather, the state of the atmosphere which the poet describes.

TRANSLATOR.

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