

ROMAIC AND RHINE BALLADS.

“I never could trust that man nor woman either, nor ever will, that can be insensible to the simple ballads and songs of rude times; there is always something wrong with them at the core.”

SINCE such is the opinion of a contemporary, we hope that his friends, at least, will rejoice in having their attention directed to collections as fine, in different ways, as those of the old English or Border ballads, which have fallen into our hands just when they were most needed, refreshing episodes in such a life as is led here.

First in order, though not first in favor, comes *Rheinsagen aus dem Munde des yolks tend Deutscher Dichter*, Traditions of the Rhine from the mouths of the people and German poets. By Karl Simrock.

A happy man is this Simrock, a “Dr.” too, Doctor of Romance, for at the end of this volume are printed advertisements of the Nibelungen lied, translated by K. S. —, twenty lays of the Nibelungen restored according to the intimations of Lachmann, by K. S. —, Wieland, the Smith, German heroic Saga, together with ballads and romances by K. S.

A happy man, a pleasant life! to dwell in this fair country, to bathe and grow from childish years in the atmosphere of its traditions, its architecture, and the aspect of nature by which these were fostered; then, as a grown man, to love, to understand them, and find himself in them, so that he became their fit interpreter. Such are the only interpreters, children of the era of which they speak, yet far enough remote to see it in memory. This tender fidelity, this veneration for the ancient institutions of the fatherland is not only remote from, but inconsistent with anything tame, servile, or bigotted in character; for to fulfil the offices of this natural priesthood supposes great life in the priest, intellectual life to comprehend the past, life of the affections to reanimate it, life of faith to feel that this beauty is not dead but sleepeth, while its spirit is reborn into new and dissimilar forms. This gentleness, this clearness of perception combined with ardent sympathy, this wide view are shown in the manner of preparing this garland with which

“the Rhine
May crown his rocky cup of wine.”

It is good for us in this bustling, ambitious, superficial country, where every body is trying to do something new, where all the thought is for the future, and it is supposed the divine spirit has but just waked up, and that the blunders, committed on the earth during this long slumber, are now at once to be corrected by the combined efforts of men still crude and shallow-hearted, or the scheme of some puny intellect; it is good for us to look abroad and learn to know the weakness which waits upon our strength by seeing the benefits of that state, where men believe that God rules the past as well as the future, that love and loyalty have bloomed and will bloom like the rose, the common ornament of each of his years, and that hate and falsehood have been, as they will be, permitted conditions of man's willing choice of virtue. It is good to hear, sometimes the silver trumpet, sometimes the rude fish-horn blown by breath that stifles in the utterance, calling to Repent, for the acceptable year of the Lord is come; but it is also pleasant to see men watering flowers upon a grave, gazing up with reverence to the ivied ruin and placing their gifts on the ancient shrine, pleasant to see them singing the songs and copying the pictures of genius now past from us, and translated elsewhere; for He the Lord hath spoken, then as now,

hath spoken the word that cannot grow old, and whose life to-day alike interprets and recreates its life of that other day.

Every genius is a reformer, but if he is a radical reformer, it may be to loosen the earth and let in sun and rain to the root, rather than to pull it up. This piety of the Germans has its two excesses, making them sometimes Phantasts, sometimes Pedants, but the soaring temper is always subject to the one danger, the severe and devout to the other. They are good people, and like the knights, and priests, and cathedral-loving monarchs of whom these Sagas sing, except in a less martial glance or grasp of the hand, for now the vocation is changed, and their eyes are bleared over the chronicles of men who lived in warmer blood a, hastier life, and the hand has lost all cunning save that of the pen, but could the old time come again, it would find the same stuff of which to make the same men. It would find its religion in the form of skepticism, and its love hid under a stranger mask, but still doing as of old the appointed work, and with that vigilance and loyalty which mark the clime.

Rivers, like men, have their destiny and that of the Rhine, one would think, must have been worked out. Not a step does the stream advance, unmarked by some event of obvious beauty and meaning. The castle and cathedral, with their stories and their vows, have grown along its banks as freely as the vine, and borne as rich a harvest. All things have conspired to make the course of the river a continuous poem, and it flows through this book almost as sweet and grand, as beneath its proper sky.

The book commences with the ballad called Staveren. It is written in the old woman's negligent, chronicle measure, and forms an admirable prologue to the book. It is the famous story of a city swollen by prosperity to that pitch of pride and wickedness that make its destruction inevitable. The devotees to money need not go to the desolate plains of Syria for their admonition, they may find it in a common voyage, if they will pause upon the waters of the Zuyder Sea.

It is a fine thing for a ballad to suggest so naturally and completely its pictures, as this does. Its burden is, "look down into the waters, and see the towers and spires of Staveren," and then look landward and you have before you the sudden rush of the sea which, in a manner so simple, wrought this doom.

Sodom must perish, but the intercession of Abram, whose pious mind is expressed in his strivings for the wicked city, casts a gleam of light into the pit of sin. A gentle warning given by a good man sheds a similar soft hue upon this story of Staveren. A maiden, the richest heiress of the city, summons her sailing master, and says, "take twelve moons' time for your voyage, and bring me back as cargo the noblest that earth can produce." He replies, "At once I obey and weigh the anchor, but tell more nearly what you want; there are so many noble productions of the earth. Is it corn or wine? Is it amber or silk, gold or specie? Is it pearls or emeralds? It costs thee but a word, and it shall be my cargo, were it the world's most precious treasure."

But she bid him guess and will give him no help. He sails away in doubt, but after much thought makes up his mind, as becomes a substantial wise German,

What can be more precious than the golden grain?
Without this common gift of earth, all other would be vain,
With this I'll lade the skiff and shun her anger's pain.

So he loads his vessel with wheat from Dantzic, and is back at the end of the half year. He finds in the banquet hall his lady, who receives him with looks of scornful surprise.

Art thou here, my captain, in such haste?
Were thy ship a bird, that bird had flown too fast!
I fancied thee just now on Guinea's golden shore,
What hast thou brought my, quickly say, if not the precious ore?

The poor captain well sees he has failed of his errand, and answers reluctantly, —

The best wheat I bring, potent lady, to thee!
No better can be found as the land meets the sea.

At the news she expressed the greatest scorn and anger. Did I not bid thee, she cries, bring me the noblest, the best that the earth holds, and didst thou dare to bring me “miserable wheat of which these loaves are made?”

The answered the old man, Despise not what by which we're fed,
God bids us daily pray him for our daily bread.
How highly I esteem it, she cries, thou soon shalt see,
On which side did you take in this trash you bring for me?

On the right, he replies. Very well, she says, then throw it all into the sea from the left. Prepare to do this immediately, and I will come myself to see that you obey.

He went, but not to do the bidding at which his soul revolts. He calls together the hungry poor, and assembles them on the landing, thinking her hard heart will be touched at the right, and she will not dare offend God by this waste of his gifts.

But the crowd of famished wretched implored in vain a little of the wheat to give them just one day, free from suffering. She persisted in her whim of pride, and all was thrown into the sea. The poor people looked on, wringing their hands, but the ship-master can no longer contain himself. He curses her, and predicts that she will yet be compelled to pick up the wheat, grain by grain, from the mud of the streets. She jeers at him. However, within the year the curse falls on her, losses are announced from every quarter, all is gone, and she begs from door to door the bread everywhere denied her, and at last sobs away her miserable life alone on a bed of straw.

This example does not warn her countrymen. They persist in their course of luxury, selfishness, and arrogance, when lo! a miracle comes to punish them, by stopping up the source of their ill-used wealth. Where the wheat had been thrown into the sea rose up a sand-bar, known by the name of Frauen sand. On this grows a plant unlike any known before, it is like corn only there is no grain in the ear. This mysterious obstacle barred up their haven, spoiled their trade, their city sunk into poverty; — one morning they drew up fish when they went to the wells, and, in a few hours, the sea made good its triumph over Staveren.

Though written into the thread of this story must show its texture. The legend is put into its present form by Simrock, and as well as most of those by his helpers, is graceful, vigorous, and of an expression whose simplicity and depth does not suffer by comparison with the volks

lieder, even when they are on the same subject. The manner is different, but the same spirit dictates both, each in the manner of its own time.

In a perhaps not less pious, though less meek spirit, comes a tale a little farther on. Prince Radbot is about to be baptized, he has his foot in the water's brink when he bethinks himself to ask the priest, "where now are all my ancestors who died without baptism?"

"In hell," replied the pious bishop,
 "Thy fathers who died as heathens,
 King Radbot, are now in hell."

That enraged the valiant Degen (blade).
 "Base priest," cried he, "my fathers,
 My fathers were valiant men;
 Rather will I, yes, by Wodan I swear it,
 Be with those heroes in their hell,
 Than with you in your priests' heaven."
 He spake it and walked away in defiance.

The anecdote resembles one well hacknied, but the sentiment is so based on truth, that it might be expressed anywhere.

The Swan plays a distinguished part in Rhine poesy. This bird which the always most discerning Greeks consecrated to the service of genius, rather than birds of frequent song, this most beautiful bird seems always floating before us on the Rhine. In some of these poems the peculiar feeling of delight mixed with expectation you have in looking up stream is made to take shape as the approaching swan. There are two, one a volks lied, the other modern, founded on the same tale and called Schwanen Ritter, Knight of the Swan. It is a tale of a lady left by her father's death under the power of a bad servant, who will only set her free from prison on condition of marrying him. She has no hope but in prayer, and as she beats her breast in anguish, a little silver bell attached to her rosary is made to ring. Its sound is very soft in her chamber, but vibrates loud as thunder in distant lands to call the destined knight to her rescue. This bell was to me a new piece of ballad furniture, and one of beautiful meaning. Looking down from her lonely window, she sees the knight approach in a boat to which a swan is attached by a golden chain, both as pilot and rower. He greets her with a proud calmness, lands, fights the good fight, wins back her inheritance, and becomes her husband. But he asks for one boon, that she will promise never to inquire his name and birthplace. The usual catastrophe follows; she asks him "at each favorable time" zu jeden frist. He resists her importunities with dignity and pathetic warnings as to what must ensue if she does not rise above this weakness. But she, at last, is so unworthy as to entreat him, if he loves their children, to tell her. He no longer refuses, declares his princely descent, divides among his three sons the fairy accoutrements of sword, horn, and ring, each of which is the pledge of a ducal inheritance. The swan-drawn boat appears, and the frail beauty is left to bear the heavy years of a widowed and degraded life. The volks lied is the answer of the mother to the questions of her children, orphaned by her fault, and her account of the vision of purity and bliss which once shone before her is answered naturally enough,

O Mutter, das ist seltne Mār.
O this is a strange tale, Mother.

So must young children answer, if told by their parents of visions of purity and bliss that had shone on their young eyes, and might have remained the companions of a whole life, had they been capable of self-denial and constancy. But when they hear that eye now so cold and dull has ever seen the silver swan approach on the blue stream, they may well reply

O this is a strange tale, mother.

In the German tales men are as often incable of abstinence and faith to their word, as women. The legends of Nixenquell and Melusine may be balanced against this of Schwanen ritter. The fairness of feeling towards women, so conspicuous when Germany was first known to the Romans, is equally so in all these romances. Men and women are both frail, both liable to incur stain, but also both capable of the deepest religion, truth, and love. The ideal relation between them is constantly described with a delicacy of feeling, of which only the highest minds in other countries are susceptible.

“Swan-rings” are another subject, expressing the thoughts of which the bird is an emblem. Charlemagne has lost the beautiful Svanhild. He cannot be drawn away from the body. He will not touch food, nor attend to the most urgent business. All expostulations only draw from him a few agonized words, “You are all mistaken: she is not dead, she only sleeps, see how beautiful she is, I cannot leave her till she awakes.” On the evening of the third day he sinks, exhausted, into sleep beside the corpse. The good bishop Turpin wishes to have him removed, but finds it impossible; his hold of the cold hand cannot be loosed. Suspicion being aroused, the bishop exercises till he finds in the mouth of Svanhild, one of those rings, on which was engraved the swan. He takes it away and puts it on his own finger. The king awakes, and at once orders the now disenchanted body to be buried, but turns all the folly of affection to Turpin, on whom he hangs like a child, enumerating all his charms and virtues. The bishop, terrified at being invested with this power of witchcraft, rushes down to the river, and throws the ring in. The monarch, who has followed with hasty steps, gazes wistfully into the blue depths, seeking the magnet, but not able to recover it, fixes near the spot his royal dwelling, and thence Aix arose.

Very grand are the lineaments of Charlemagne as described in these national memories. The ballads which describe him crossing the Rhine, where the moon has made him a bridge of light, to bless the vines on either shore, rousing the ferry-man to go with his shadowy host to fight the battles of his sometime realm against one as great in mind, but not in soul as himself, and those of his confession, and Eginhard and Emma, paint the noblest picture, and in the fullness of flesh and blood reality. He is a king, indeed, a king of men, in this, that he is most a man, of largest heart, deepest mind, and most powerful nature. See in Eginhard and Emma his meeting with his peers, and way of stating the offence, the fearful yet noble surrender of the self-accused Eginhard, the calm magnanimity with which the inevitable sentence is pronounced, and then his grief for the loss of his child.

Equally natural and sweet is the conduct of the lovers, wandering forth on different sides of the road, the princess now in pilgrim's weeds, not daring to speak to one another for days.

Then the kindness of the good woodmen, and the sleep which total weariness found at last in the open forest. There is no violent transition in their lives from a palace to a hut woven of boughs and twigs. The highest rank there grew up naturally from the lowest, was not severed from it. All ate at the same table, and he whose place was on the Dais knew the savor of the poor man's salt. The life of a noble was splendid, but no way enervating or factitious. It was as easy for the princess Emma to use her husband's helmet for a milk pail, as for Ulysses, or the pious Æneas, to cut down trees and build their ships with their own hands, when thrown upon a foreign coast. It was not distressing, but refreshing, to see people in those times cast down into the lowest adversity. We knew they would not yield, nor lie crushed in the ditch. There was strength in all their members to rise and stride boldly on afoot, since their chariots were taken from them.

In the other ballad the aged monarch has upon his soul a sin so great, that he wants force to name it even to his confessor. The monk reproves his weakness, urges upon him that it ought to be no added pain to speak to man that which he has dared keep in his thoughts to be seen of God. The king admits the truth of this, and tries again, but tears and sobs choke his utterance. The confessor bids him write it then. Alas! he replies, the years when he might have learned to use the pen were wasted in vain pleasures, or spent in knightly toils. It is not too late, cries the zealous monk, I will teach you; and, accordingly, this task-work goes on day after day, till Charlemagne can write "joininghand." Then they come to confession again, and the monk once more urges him to command himself and speak, and he tries, but the effort causes a still more suffocating anguish than before. Then he begins to write, with slow, stiff hand; the monk, from afar, sees the large letters forming on the page, but when he draws near to read the finished scroll, he finds it a blank. He turns to the monarch for an explanation, but the amazement of both is equal, till turning to the page again they find written by a heavenly pen, "Thy sins are forgiven." Thus the sin, so deeply felt, that it would have broke the heart if spoken, was absolved above the region of words to the patient penitent.

In the same tone are stories of the Cathedrals, especially of the bells. The high feelings about this voice of the church, expressed in Schiller's Song of the Bell, have given birth to these stories. One Master, unsuccessful with his bell under the influences of prayer, and his best mood, swears and curses, and is immediately successful; but when the ceremony of consecration came, the bell gave out tones so fearful that it could be used only at times of fire and other calamity. Another Master, summoned from afar on account of his great skill, substituted tin for a part of the silver with which he was entrusted. At the consecration, the emperor pulls the bell-rope but cannot make it stir; he cannot guess what the difficulty is and calls the Master. The Master advances, pale with guilt and fear, pulls the rope, and, at his touch, the clapper falls and kills him. The ballads about the bishops are worthy those about the churches. From several, all good in different ways, take the following.

The lords of Thum it did not please
 That Willegis their bishop was,
 For he was a waggoner's son;
 And they drew to do him scorn
 Wheels of chalk upon the wall;
 He found them in chamber, found them in hall,
 But the pious Willegis

Could not be moved to bitterness.

Seeing the wheels upon the wall,
 He bid the servants a painter call
 And said, "My friend, paint for me
 On every door that I may see
 A wheel of white on a field of red,
 Underneath, in letters plain to be read.
 Willegis, bishop now by name,
 Forget not from whence you came."

The lords of Thum were full of shame,
 They wiped away their works of blame,
 They saw that scorn and jeer
 Cannot wound the wise man's ear,
 And all the bishops who after him came,
 Quartered the wheel with their arms of fame;
 Thus came to Willegis
 Glory out of bitterness.

This gentle humility is like that of Mazoni's Borromeo, that expressed in the following like his Cristoforo.

Gunhild lived a still, pious life in her little convent cell,
 Till her confessor made her stray by a wild passion's spell,

She fled with him into the world, awhile they lived in strife and sin,
 He gamed and cheated, poorer grew, must robbery begin.

Gunhild, poor lost girl, Gunhild what wilt thou do?
 Alone in a strange land, a robber he who wrought thee wo.

She wept her eyes all red, she said, "Alas, that ever I this course begun,
 I will return to my old home, whatever penance must be done."

She begged her way through many lands; she begged from door to door,
 Till she saw the Rhine, the woods, the cloister stood before.

She knocks upon the cloister gate, quickly it open flies,
 She stands before the Abbess, she says with weeping eyes,

"O Mother take back the lost child, from her safe fold who
 And let the hardest penance release the church's ban."

"Gunhild, my child, what ails thee? safe in thy little cell
 Do I not find thee every hour employed the rosary to tell,

Singing hymns so wondrous sweet both day and night
That all our hearts are lifted with ravishing delight.

If thou, holy child, must seek penance for thy sin,
Where must I, poor wretch, to make atonement for my life be gin's"

They led her to the cell, what to think she could not guess,
Till away flew the angel who had filled her place.

Those, who look into their bosoms by the light of a tale like this, will not need to see the angel that has taken their place, while thought strayed to forbidden haunts, before they prepare a thank-offering to the "Preventing God."

The same nation, the same state of religious feeling, which gives Gunhild this guardian angel to protect her against her passion-stirred fancy, or curiosity, and longsuffering, is generous of chances for repentance, when a poor monk walks forth *doubting* and reasoning as to the interpretation of a passage of Scripture, lets him lose himself in the wood, where, as a penance, he doubts, reasons, and wanders for a hundred years far from his home, his church, and yet never attaining an inward certainty. In our time the scale of sin would reverse the place of the two faults.

There are also fine mystical legends, one on the loss of the consecrated wafer into a field of corn, many about the Virgin, and two about the children, St. Hermann Joseph, and St. Rupert. Those on the holy Ottilia are among the noblest. One resembles that of "my Cid" when he meets St. Jago as a leper.

There are others of deep and painful import, where unnecessary martyrdom waits on the spirit's choice. The Maid of Bodman is one of these. Its holy sweetness cannot reconcile us to the desolation over which it hovers, like some pale, half-frozen seraph, lost in a temperature for which his organs were not made. This deep religious feeling occasions sometimes a dalliance with it, for men are not afraid to play with what they feel and know to be true, but only with what they wish may be true, but fear to be false. There are several playful legends of this character, of which two founded on the presumption of St. Peter are good.

The following is in the true German style of humor, bit of playful wisdom. It is called

THE DEATH OF BASLE.

When I was a young man, I took a stone-old wife,
Before three days were over I rued it well,
I went into the church-yard, and prayed to dear Death,
Ah, dear, kind Death of Basle, take away the old wife.
And next time I went to the church-yard, the grave was
"You bearers, walk softly that she may not awake,
Heap on the earth, the gravel; the old, the cross wife,
How she has already worn out my young life."
When I came home again every corner was too wide,
Three days had not passed before I took a young wife;
The young wife that I took, she beats me every day,
Ah, dear Death of Basle, might I but have the old one back.

Some of the best are those which give the impression of a particular scene, as the Lorelei ballads, which represent, by the legend of the unhappy fay, the wild melancholy beauty of a certain part of the Rhine. The poor Lorelei! her beauty bewitched all who saw it from a distance, and lured them to the dangerous heights, but her love floated disdainful in a ship upon the stream, she must throw herself down to reach him.

Drachenfels is a place that inspires whatever springs from it with its own character. In this book is a legend of a Christian Maiden, exposed here by heathens, but before the cross on her pure breast the dragons flee and throw themselves from the precipices. But that is long since, and they seem again to shed their expression over their seat of royalty, not to be dispelled, expect by some pure ray of living light, such as is expressed in this ballad.

The Fraulein von Windeck, a modern ballad by Chamisso, is singularly happy in giving this aspect of a peculiar scene. The young knight has been lured by the apparition of a stag to the ruins of Windeck. There the stag vanishing through the ruined gate, he knows not how, he stands gazing on the mighty walls. The sun burns down, all is so lovely and still, he wipes the drops from his brow and cries, O that some one would bring me a single drinking horn of wine that must be stored in these cellars. Hardly had the words passed from his lips before the attentive cup-bearer issued from the wall. It was a slender, most beautiful maiden, in a white robe, with the keys at her girdle, the drinking-cup high in her hand. He sipped the wine with thirsty lips, and at the same time drew consuming flames into his bosom. He supplicates this lovely being for her love. She smiles on him with a tender compassion, and vanishes without a word.

He wandered like a dreamer, ghost-like, pale, and thin,
 He faded, but he could not die, much less new life begin.
 They say that after many years she came to him again,
 And pressed upon his lips a kiss which freed him from his pain.

The profound loneliness of a sunny noon, and the effect of the light upon the ruins amid the leaves, making the stag vanish and the lady appear, is admirably exhibited in this poem. The following which grows also out of the character of the scenery pleases me no less.

HEINDENLOCH. By A. Lamey.

GALLUS.

Father! how long in this dark solitude
 Must I abide;
 Where only deer and bears visit the wood
 That waves so wide?
 How bright and cheerful spreads the distant plain,
 Far from the world of men why must I here remain?

MARTIUS.

O peace, my son. The Gods who here command
 Thou shalt obey;
 I fled with thee from a far distant land

Before the new God's sway.
 But once *our* Gods the wide earth-ball controlled,
 Great were the nations in those times of old.

GALLUS.

And what for thee alone to tend their shrine
 Can now avail?
 If they had ruled the earth by right divine
 Would they thus fail?
 These pallid statues on the stone altar,
 Is't these, my father, who so mighty were?

MARTIUS.

Yes! Rome and Athens through their mighty name
 Rose to such a fame!
 And with that fame fell courage, honor true,
 Then came the new;
 Will a blind world no more due homage give,
 The more are favored those who still believe.

GALLUS.

O father, yesterday I ventured forth
 Upon the chase;
 I saw a maiden on the sunny turf
 Giving her lamb fresh grass.
 She greeted me with smiles, the lovely child,
 And knelt before a figure shrined, and just so angel mild

MARTIUS.

Enough! the rest thou hast no need to tell,
 My son, farewell!
 In vain with thee far from the Cross I run; —
 A moment has my toil undone.
 With thy dead mother we will find our home,
 I and my Lares, in her lonely tomb.

This struggle between the old and the new has not ceased yet, in Germany, nor, indeed, anywhere in the world, where the influence of ancient literature is still felt.

Opposed a whole heaven's breadth between, to the spirit of the Charlemagne ballads, are a few scattered up and down about the great modern, who, after the lapse of centuries, seemed to open to the sun's path the same sign of the zodiac. Charlemagne does not excite more love and reverence in that region, than Napoleon hatred, and a contempt even to loathing. These feelings are expressed in the following ballad perhaps better than in any.

The original is one of the best street ballads I ever saw. It has the real jingle, doggerel ease, and fire beneath the ashes that please in such. As it is placed among the historical ballads, it

ought to record a fact, although I had always supposed the title of “Little Corporal” was only a pet name given by his army to the little great genius.

CORPORAL SPOHN.

They name in Coblentz and the vale
Still Spohn, as the great Corporal.

What did this Spohn to win the name,
Does he deserve a lasting fame?

Spohn was a true, a faithful man,
Find a truer none may nor can.

His Emperor truly served Spohn,
His Emperor, named Napoleon,

Who had in the Drei-Kaiser fight
Ventured too forward from his might.

Sudden he turns his horse to fly,
Both left and right the foe are nigh.

Kossacks are they on their swift steeds,
The Emperor spurs as well he needs.

A thicket stops him in his flight,
And he to life must bid good night.

This saw Spohn, he did not lag,
Sir King, he cries, give me the nag;

Me the well known, three-cornered hat;
Fly; — all your part I play with that.

To the ground sprang Napoleon,
On the gray horse quick sat Spohn.

The famous hat upon his head,
The foe no deception dread.

But spring that way, and cry “He's taken,”
And see too late how they've mistaken.

When they saw who the prisoner was,
They hewed him down with fifty blows.

The Emperor flew far that day,

A Corporal's hat on, all the way.

Since that time, so goes the tale,
He's called the little Corporal;

The great Corporal was Spohn,
Was greater than Napoleon.

Very unlike all the others are the Nibelungen ballads. One of these Tennyson has taken as the groundwork of his "Day Dream;" but except in the gorgeous description of the "Sleeping Beauty," it loses infinitely by any change from its first simplicity. Brunhild's quarrel with Odin, the style of her housekeeping, the woven wall of fire which daunts all the faint-hearted, but proves to the true knight only a wall of sunbeams as he dashes through; all are in the best style of the romantic ballad, grand, fresh, and with dashes of fun between.

Siegfried is the native hero of the country, on the true heroic Valhalla basis, unchristianized, unchristian, arrogant, noble, impetuous, sincere, overbearing, generous, no reflective wisdom, no side thoughts, no humility, no weakness. He exults as a strong man to run a race, and he does run it, and come in at the goal as he promised. He takes pleasure in outshining others, because he *is* the noblest. Came a nobler he would yield with joy! How he would have stared at such night thoughts as

"Forgive his faults, forgive his virtues too."

Or,

"Have I a lover — who is noble and free,
I would he were nobler — than to love me."

Siegfried shows that he was educated at the forge and bathed in the dragon's blood. His triumphant energy fills with light the black forests, where the wild boar holds at bay the bravest huntsman. Of a stately native growth were the timbers from which this ship of Germany is built, all oak, proud, German oak.

I have lightly touched upon the characteristics of the Rhine ballads, lightly, for the hand becomes fearful and maladroit, when obliged to choose among materials so rich as to make rejection a pain at every step. They express a nation in the early years of a pious, a valorous, an earnest and affectionate manhood, innocent, but not childishly so, playing antics sometimes in the gayety of health and strength, but never light or vain. What culture it possesses is expressed in character. They were full of faith and they always acted upon it. They had clear eyes, but the life blood beat too quick to let them spend their days in looking about them. Their superstition was no incubus, it was their ardor of trust and love, burning away the crusts of fact. Their romance grew from the heart, not the head; for each man felt himself capable of loyalty and tenderness. The assembled princes boast the value of their different provinces. Everhard, Duke of Wirtemberg, when it comes to his turn says; My land is not of the richest. But when I meet a Wirtemberger in the black pine wood, I lie down and sleep in his lap as I should in my mother's.

He paused, and his eye shone clear and friendly, as if he had just waked from sleep in a Wirtemberger's arms. Such a heart beat in the German people!

“The knights are dust
And their good swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints, we trust.”

We know.

Of an entirely different character is the other book, I have before me, “Modern Greek popular Songs, collected and published by C. Pauriel, translated and furnished both with the French editor's explanations and his own, by Wilhelm Müller. *Neu Griechische Volkslieder, gesammelt and herausgegeben von C. Fauriel. Uebersetzt and mit des Franzosischen herausgebens and eigenen erläuterungen versehen von Wilhelm Millier.*

The former book gave the mind of a people at a period of national dignity, of high culture and development, as respected character. On that soil was seen to rise the sublime architecture of an established religious faith, interspersed with homes sacred with honor and the affections. As the river pierced the land it talked all along with a rich and multiform life. The grape was its proper emblem, and the juice of that vine has been carried to every part of the civilized world; and though we gladly return to quaff it in the vineyard from which it was born, the pleasure is not new, only keener than before. But in this other book it is wholly new. A breath fresh with the snows late fallen from heaven blows from Olympus and Pindus, where the Greek Klepht, stately if not serene as the gods who there in olden days feasted at the golden tables, waged a war which, for the traits of individual heroism that signalized it, and the indomitable love of freedom that made it glorious, might have made Greece more proud in her day of highest pride.

This mountain life has always given one aspect to the men driven into the natural fastnesses, to keep off those who would not allow that they should breathe heaven's air and be cheered by its light at their pleasure. The flashing eye, the body hardened to pain and famine, the light hold on life, the eagle gaze at death, the sudden love, the steadfast hate, the readiness of resource, and the carelessness of plan, these mark the wild chamois gesture of man, who seeks not to be rich, be great, or wise, or holy, but simply to be free. A small portion this of his proper life; yet to see him vindicate it gives the same pleasure as the instinctive motion of the infant, or the career of the wind.

The whortleberry, not the grape, is the fruit that expresses what these ballads are. I abridge an account of their origin from Muller's introduction.

“We have here a poetry of the people in the truest sense of the name; a voice from the people in which nothing vibrates, but what can be felt and understood by every Greek; a poesy which neither has its birth nor death on paper; but springing up as living song, hovers on the same wings from mouth to mouth, and dies away entirely, when the period is past whose spirit and thought were expressed by it.

“The modern Greek lays of this class may be divided into domestic, historical, and romantic or ideal; that is to say, those of which the material is not taken from the actual life, either of the past or the present.

“Among the domestic we count all those made to be sung at household festivals. The feast days, which are especially commemorated in such, are the days of the holy Basilius, and the first of March.”

Of the latter the account is very interesting. The swallow's song, sung on this day by little boys, who carry a wooden effigy of the bird from door to door, is peculiarly charming. But of these and the songs of betrothal, of marriage, and mourning the account must be omitted. I have room only for this passage which exhibits one of the most interesting features of national character.

“The desire for knowledge, persecutions, or the need of gaining and assuring a maintenance, for which his own country affords little opportunity, these and similar motives and circumstances compel many Greeks to leave their home for a long time, and nothing is so tragical to them as this freewill banishment. The Greek clings with a love so tender to the land of his birth, that he, despite all dangers and ill treatment to which he is there exposed from his barbarous rulers, can find nowhere else a heaven on the earth, and regards each foreign land as a place of exile and sorrow. But what makes still sadder to the Greek a separation from his home and those he loves, is his uncertainty as to their destiny during his absence. Shall he ever see them again? Will the Turk leave his house and kin unassailed during his absence? The same apprehensions are in the hearts of those he is leaving behind; for they feel that their lives, honor, and fortunes are in the hands of rude tyrants.

“Hence may be explained the solemn observance shown to the day when the Greek takes leave of his familiar circle. His friends and relations assemble in his house, partake with him the last meal, and then accompany him some miles on his way. Songs are usual on this occasion, some sung at the table, others as they go with him on his way. Many of these are handed down from ancient time, and common through all Greece; others applicable to the present occasion and locality alone. Often, songs are improvised by members of the family. These farewell songs are of a most pathetic cadence, and exercise a power over the Greeks, almost beyond belief elsewhere, as the following history bears witness.

“In the district of Zagori, near the old Pindus, lived a family to which three brothers belonged, the youngest of whom, by a singular variation from the usual order of nature, was an object of aversion to his mother. After he had long, in silent submission, endured her unjust severity, he, at last, resolved to seek happiness at a distance. He announced his intentions to go to Adrianople. The usual solemnity of the banquet passed, his friends accompanied the youth five miles, and then halted to take leave in a wild valley of Pindus. After several relations and friends had sung their songs, the poor youth ascended a high rock and sang one composed by himself, in which he had painted in the most tender manner his sorrow at leaving the fatherland, and all whom he loved, but worst of all, leaving in his home a mother who did not love him. This poem, sung with deep emotion, enhanced by the sad loneliness of the place, and the accompaniments of the scene, conquered at last the heart of the mother. While they all wept, she rushed to the arms of her son, and promised in future to be a better mother to him. And she kept her word”

The festivals of marriage and mourning have given occasion for fine songs; but I pass on to the historical, which are the most interesting of all.

“Among these the most numerous and expressive are the Klepht or Robber songs, celebrating the exploits of those in combat with the soldiers of the Pachas and Beys. To understand these it is necessary to know the political and social relations on which the origin and power of these robber-bands rest.

“Klepht originally meant Robber; but since it has been applied to the heroes of the Greek mountains, the word has gained a new and noble meaning.

“In part they were from the native Greek militia, Armatoli, who, on occasions of extraordinary aggression or treachery from the Turk, would fly to the mountains, and there make a stand against his

power. These Armatoli, are bred to the use of arms; their weapons are handed down from father to son. They are, therefore, not unprepared for this mode of life.”

“A different occasion called out the Armatoli of Thessaly. When the conquering Turk broke in here the dwellers of the fruitful plain bent to the yoke without resistance. But the shepherds of Olympus, of Pelion, of the Thessalian ridges connected with Pindus, and the heights which now bear the name of Agrapha, refused to yield. With arms in hand, they often rushed down from their natural fortresses on the cultivated plains and rich cities, and plundered the conquerers, and also, sometimes, those to whose cowardice they thought the national shame and sorrow were due. Thus they received the name of Klepht, given at first by their foes as a term of abuse, but which they willingly adopted and used with pride, to distinguish themselves from the peaceful Rajas of the plain, the slaves of the Turk. Thus in these ballads it is obvious that they use this name as a title of honor.

“The Turks were soon weary of living in perpetual war with these Klephts, a war in which they alone could be the losers, as complete victory would have added nothing of value to their possessions. They offered them peace on such conditions as most of the Klephts were willing to accept, leaving them the right to govern themselves by their own laws, to live independent in their mountain districts, to bear arms for their own defense, only paying for these privileges a small tribute to the Turkish government. Some of the inhabitants of the wildest and least accessible heights refused even this, and have maintained absolute freedom down to this time.”

Those who accepted the treaty banded themselves again under the name of Armatoliks. The remaining Klephts lived in hamlets in the recesses of the mountains. But soon the Turks found that too much had been granted, and a course began of treachery and indirect tyranny which was continually rousing the resistance of those who had submitted; so that often, an Armatolik would fly again to the mountains, and a band of well disposed Pallikaris¹ be turned into Klephts in a day.

Thus began a course of romantic and ceaseless warfare. The Klepht, on his guard all the time against his treacherous and powerful foe, with no friends, but his sword, his mountains, and his courage, was trained to the utmost hardihood, agility, presence of mind, and brilliant invention. In self-reliance and power of endurance he was like our Indians. The spirit in which he looks on life and nature is the same; but his poetical enjoyment of his wild life is keen, as befits the mercurial Greek.

A thousand interesting details might be gathered from the introduction and notes of Müller; but I must hasten to let the ballads tell their own story.

These songs are sometimes composed by the Klephts themselves, but more generally by blind beggars, who seem to have copied the part of the ancient Rhapsodists with a fidelity somewhat astonishing.

There are few beggars in Greece, for almost all can find a sustenance. The blind are an exception; yet these even cannot with correctness be said to live on charity. For the songs with which they entertain the people are as needful and as valuable to lives like theirs, as anything that can be bought with gold. These blind, both on the continent and in the islands, learn as many popular songs as they can, and wander with them from city to city, from hamlet to hamlet, rather preferring the latter. They prefer stopping near the gates, or in the suburbs, where they readily find a circle of hearers. Everywhere they seek the common people. The Turks never listen to them, partly from a disdainful insensibility, partly because they do not understand Greek.

They sing to the accompaniment of an instrument which retains the form and the name of the ancient lyre. It is played with a bow; and when complete has five strings, but more frequently only two or three are seen. For the most part they wander about singly, but sometimes they unite to form choruses for their songs.

These Rhapsodists may be divided into two classes. The one, and naturally the most numerous, is satisfied with learning and reciting the songs of others; the second and higher class has also the gift of composition; these sing both the lays of others and their own. Always on the watch for some new story, they never lack materials in the state of things we have described.

They use all subjects likely to be popular; but among these the stratagems and exploits of the Klephts are the favorites, and in regard to them they deserve the name of Annalists. Many of them compose their own music as well as verse.

Among the blind Rhapsodists is found here and there one able to improvise his songs. Towards the end of the last century there was such an Improvisatore in Ampelakia of Thessaly not far from Mount Ossa, who was of high celebrity. He was named Gavcjannis, the blind Johannes, and lived to a great age. He improvised with facility on any theme that was given him. He knew a vast number of histories of the Klephts. Being distinguished above others of his craft, both for his richness in subjects, and his manner of treating them, he fixed his abode in this place, and became a *sitting* Rhapsodist. People were very willing to come to him; and Albanians in the pay of the Pacha paid him often a high price to celebrate them in a few verses.

In the memories of these old men then, and of women, have been preserved the lays which describe the life of the mountaineers, their watch by day, and their enjoyments by night; for in the dark they are secure from those who do not know the paths like themselves; their beautiful costume, and fine observances, both of domestic feeling and superstition, their brilliant valor in sallies upon the enemy, their stern pride when taken captive, and the wild breeze of the mountains sweeps through all the simple verse, there is no trace of any life but their own.

The ballads are often fragments, both because parts have sometimes been lost, and because the heroes were so well known to the audience that there was no need of any introduction to the bare fact. Sometimes the narrator is a bird, or three birds talk together, as in one of the oldest called,

CHRISTOS MILIONIS.

Three birds lighted down there in the camp upon the hill,
 The one looked towards Armyros, the other towards Valtos,
 The third, that which the fairest is, laments and cries,
 My lord, what has become of Christos Milionis?
 He is not to be seen in Valtos nor in Kryavrissis.
 They tell us he has gone out towards Arta,
 And there has taken captive the Cadi, the two Agas;
 And when the Moslem heard that, he was high in wrath.
 He called to Mauromartis and Muktar Klissara:
 You, if you would have bread, if you would have high honors,
 Go and slay Christos for me, the Captain Milionis!
 This command the Sultan gave and sent out his Firman.
 Friday's sun rose up, O had it never shone!
 And Soliman was sent, to go forth and seek him.
 He met him by Armyros, as friends they both paid greeting;
 They drank together all night through, till day began to dawn,
 Then called Soliman to the Captain Milionis:

Christos, the Sultan sends for thee, and the Agas they must have thee!
 So long as Christos lives, he bows not to the Turk.
 Then they ran upon one another with their guns,
 Fire upon fire they gave and fell upon the spot.

BUKOVALLAS.

What noise is that which rises there? What is that great alarm?
 Are they killing oxen? Are they fighting with wild beasts?
 No: they are not killing oxen, not fighting with wild beasts.
 Bukovallas stands in fight against a thousand and five hundred,
 Between Kerassovon and the town of Kenuria.
 A fair maiden looks out from a window of the house;
 Johannes, stop the fight, stop awhile the shooting,
 Let the dust sink to the ground, let the smoke fleet away,
 That we may count the troop and see how many fail.
 The Turks counted theirs three times and five hundred failed,
 The sons of Robbers counted theirs, and but three braves were absent;
 One was gone to fetch us water, one for bread,
 The third and the bravest lies there on his gun.

They use, like our Indians, the word brave, braves, as the highest title for a man. The Grave of Dimos also corresponds with the thought of the "Blackbird's Grave," as related by Catlin.

THE GRAVE OF DIMOS.

The sun is sinking now, and Dimos gives command,
 Bring water, children, and partake the evening meal,
 And thou, Lampraki, nephew mine, sit down here by my side,
 Here take my arms and be their leader now.
 But you, my children, take my orphaned sword,
 Go, hew green boughs, and with them make my bed,
 And bring a father confessor, that I may tell all sins
 That I have ever done, and be by him absolved.
 Was Armatole for thirty years, for twenty was I Klepht,
 And now the death hour comes, and this hour I will die,
 O make my grave and make it a broad and high one,
 In which I could stand up to fight, and load my gun in the middle,
 And on the right side leave for me a little window open,
 At which the swallows may fly in to tell me when the spring comes,
 And where in fair May moons the nightingales may sing.

They resemble the Indians, too, in their treatment of prisoners; and that they showed the same respect to women is proved by the haughty conduct of the female captive in the following ballad.

SKYLLODIMOS.

SkylloDIMOS sat at supper beneath the lofty fir-trees;
 At his side he had Irene, that she might fill his wine.
 Pour out, O fair Irene, be my cupbearer till daybreak,
 Until the morning star shall rise, the Pleiades shall set,

When I may send thee home with ten of these my braves.
 Dimos, I am not thy slave, to fill the cup for thee.
 I am the bride of a Proestos, the daughter of an Archon,
 And see at break of day two wanderers approach;
 Their beards are long, their faces black, and they greet Skyllodimos,
 O Skyllodimos, a good day. O Wanderers, you are welcome,
 But, wandering strangers, how knew ye that I am Skyllodimos?
 We bring thee words of love from thy own absent brother,
 We saw him in Janina, we saw him in his prison;
 On his hands were chains, and on his feet were fetters.
 Then Dimos wept aloud, rose quickly to depart;
 Where art thou going, Dimos, whither, O valiant Captain?
 It is thy brother's self, come here, that he may kiss thee.
 And then the Captain knew him and took him in his arms,
 They kissed each other tenderly both on the eyes and lips;
 And now asked Dimos him, thus spoke he to his brother,
 Come here, my brother sweet, sit here and tell thy story;
 How hast thou so escaped the hands of the Albanians?
 By night I loosed my hands, I drew off both the fetters,
 I broke the iron bar in two and leaped into the trench,
 I found a little bark and rowed upon the lake,
 Last night I left Janina and reached the mountains.

“Skillodimos was the name of an ancient Armatoli family in Akarnania. In later times there were four brothers of the name, two of whom are introduced in this song. The one who appears here as the robber captain was not of much celebrity. The youngest, Spyros Skillodimos, is properly the hero of the lay. In 1805 he fell into the hands of Ali Pacha, who shut him up in a subterranean dungeon of the castle of Janina. Many months this unfortunate dragged his chains from side to side in the mud of his narrow dungeon. At last by the help of a file, of his long girdle and wonderful agility, he reached and sprang from a window of the tower in which his prison was. But a wide and deep piece of water surrounds the castle of Janina, and Skillodimos was forced to pass three winter days and nights in the swamps overgrown with reeds which border it, before he could find a bark to take him across. Afterwards, through the most difficult paths he found his way to the mountains of Akarnania.”

The few lines on Kontoghiannis point to a noble life.

INSCRIPTION ON THE SWORD OF KONTOGHIANNIS

Who trembles not at tyrants' word,
 Frankly and freely walks the earth,
 Esteems his fame than life more worth,
 To him alone belongs this sword.

KONTOGHIANNIS. A FRAGMENT.

What has befallen Gura's hills, that they so mournful stand?
 Has the hail laid them waste? Presses them the hard winter?
 No hail has laid them waste, presses them no hard winter;
 Kontoghiannis wages war in winter as in summer.

This refers to one known from her connexion with the hero, and is worthy of reading for its own beauty.

THE SORROWFUL EMBASSY.

She sleeps, wife of the noble captain, son of Kontoghiannis,
 Under a golden coverlet, and gold-embroidered sheets.
 I am afraid to wake her, I dare not tell her,
 So I will take nutmegs and throw at her;
 Perhaps she will feel the perfume and awake.
 And see by the perfume of the many nuts
 The noble captains wife is waked, and asks with sweet tongue,
 What bringest thou for news from our captains?
 I bring bitter news from our captains;
 Nicholas is a captive, Constantine is wounded; —
 Where is my mother? Come to me, come, and hold my temples,
 And bind them, bind them hard while I sing the mourning song.
 For which of both shall I weep first, for which sing the mourning song?
 I weep for them, for Constantine, for Nicholas, for both
 Were flags upon the heights and banners in the field.
 The mountains find a brave clear voice.

OLYMPPOS.

Olympos and Kissavos² the two high peaks were striving;
 Olympos turns itself to Kissavos, and says,
 Strive not with me, Kissavos, thou trodden in the dust,
 I am the old Olympos, through the wide world so famous,
 With two and forty peaks, with two and sixty sources,
 Beside each source a banner waves, by each tree stands a Klepht,
 And on my highest summit there is an eagle sitting,
 And in his talons holds he fast the head of a dead hero.
 “O Head, what halt thou done? tell me how didst thou sin?
 Eat, Eagle, feed thee on my youth, feed on my strength valor,
 Till thy wings be ell-thick, and span-thick be thy talons,
 In Luros and Xeromeros I was an Armatole,
 In Chasia and on this mount, twelve years long a Klepht,
 Sixty Agas have I slain and burnt, too, all their hamlets,
 And what I left upon the place, both Turks and Albanese
 So many were they, bird of mine, that they cannot be numbered;
 Yet at the last to me the lot came too, at last I fell in battle.”

The following presents a new Penelope.

KALIAKUDAS.

Were I a bird that I might fly, might hover in the air,
 Then I might seek another land, seek Ithaca the lonely,
 That I might hear Lukina, might hear the wedded wife of Lukas,
 How there she weeps and mourns dark tears in streams outpouring;
 She like a partridge hangs the head, unfeathered like a duck,
 She wears a robe that is as black as is the raven's wing,
 At her window sits she, out-gazing o'er the sea,
 The skiffs as they sail by she questions every one,
 Ye barks, who sail so swift, ye golden Brigantines,
 Have ye not seen my husband, seen Lukas Kaliakudas?

Last night we left him, left him beyond Gaurolimi,
 His band were roasting lambs, roasting wethers at the fire,
 And they had with them Agas five to turn around the spits.

This might serve as a battle song.

STERGIOS.

Although the passes Turkish be beset by the Albanians,
 So long as Stergios lives, he cares not for the Pachas;
 So long as snow falls on the hills we yield not to the Turk,
 Up, let us make our camp where wolves have found their home;
 In cities on the plains among the rocks dwell slaves,
 The valiant have their city in clefts of desert rocks;
 O rather with the wild beasts dwell than with the Turk.

The Suliote war furnishes ballads enough to make a Homeric canto by itself. Here the women play their part, as heroines. Throughout the ballads their position is commanding, living constantly in the open air, their beauty is healthy and majestic. The uncertainties and dangers which beset their lives, while taking from them their natural office of making home quiet and lovely for the rest of man, develop the higher qualities of generous love, fortitude, and a ready helpfulness. The maiden is sometimes introduced feeding the horse of her lover, sometimes with the gun in her hand. The following describe women with accessories that fit them as well as the harp, or the work-table.

TSAVELLINA.

There came a little bird and sat upon the bridge,
 It mourns in a loud voice and speaks, it speaks to Ali Pacha;
 This is not thy Janina, not here the waters of Janina,
 This is not Prevesa, where thou canst build thy fortress;
 No! this is the famous Suli, Suli the high-famed,
 Where little children stand in fight, and women, and maidens,
 Where Tsavellina stands in fight, the steel in her right hand,
 The nursling in one arm, in the other the gun,
 Her apron full of cartridges, walks she in the sight of all.

THE DEATH OF DESPO.

A great sound is heard, many gunshots fall;
 Are they shooting at a marriage, shooting at a feast of joy?
 They are shooting at no marriage here, at no feast of joy;
 It is Despo who fights, with her daughters in law and daughters,
 She was besieged in the tower of Dimulas by the Albanians .
 Give up thy arms, thou wife of Georgos, thou art not in Suli,
 Thou art the slave of the Pacha, the slave of the Albanians.
 Has Suli laid down arms, and is Kiapha Turkish?
 Never yet had Despo, never will have Turks for masters!
 She siezes a firebrand, calls to daughters in law and daughters,
 Let us not go into slavery, up, children, up and follow me!
 And she throws fire into the powder, and all perish in the flames.

A SULIOTE-FIGHT.

There in Tseritsana on the high borders of Suli,
 There by the old hill chapel stands the Bulumbashaws,
 And look down on the fight to see how Suliotes fight,
 How little children stand in fight, and women with the men,
 And the captain Kutsonikas called down from his post,
 O my children, stand your ground! O stand like valiant men,
 For Muktar Pacha comes, and with him come twelve thousand.
 Then he turned about and called to the Turks,
 Where goest thou, Muktar Pacha, whither thou rascal Turk?
 Here is not Chormovon, here not Saint Basilis,
 Where you make children slaves, where you take women captives,
 This is the bad Suli, famous through the world,
 Where Tsavellina stands in fight, like a worthy hero,
 She carries in her apron cartridges, and in her hand the sabre,
 And with her loaded gun she goes before them all.

ANOTHER.

The priest's wife called down, down from Avarikos,
 Where are you, children of Bozzaris? Where children of Lampros?
 Many black clouds draw hither with horses and with men;
 It is not one, it is not two, it is not three and five,
 But there are eighteen thousand, truly nineteen thousand,
 Let come the Turkish pack. What hurt can they do us?
 Let them come and see a fight, and see the Suliote guns,
 Learn to know the gun of Georgos, know the sword of Lampros,
 And the arms of Suliote women, of the far-famed Chaido!
 When the fight had begun and the guns were flashing,
 Then called Lampro 'Fsavellas to Bozzaris and Zervas,
 Now let come the time of sabres, let alone the guns,
 But Bozzaris answered down from his post,
 The time of sabres, shouted he, is not yet come,
 Stay yet in the thicket and hold fast to the rocks,
 For there are many Turks, and few Suliotes.
 Now cries the clear voice of Tsavellas to his braves,
 Shall we await them longer, the Albanian dogs?
 Then they all broke the sheaths of their sabres,
 And chased the Turks before them like goats.
 Veli Pacha called to them not to turn their backs,
 And they answered him with tears in their eyes,
 This is not Delvinu, we are not in Vidini,
 No, this is the famed Suli, famed throughout the world,
 This is the sword of Lampros, bathed in Turkish blood,
 He is the cause that all Albania wears black mourning garments,
 That mothers for their children weep, and wives for their husbands.

These give a specimen of the Suliote ballads which are all radiant with the same spirit.
 The war lasted twelve years.

“The mountain range of Suli is in that part of ancient Epirus, formerly called Thesprotia, and now Chamuri, and extends eastward out of the great mountain range of Mezzovo from the banks of the

Acheron, or Mauropotamos. Vehement torrents rush down from the rock chasms to the valley, through which this stream flows, and among them the Suli, probably the Selleis of the ancients is the most considerable. A hundred and fifty years ago shepherds fled with their flocks from the country of Gardiki in Albania into this wild mountainous district, to escape the ill treatment of the Turks. They were joined by others persecuted or discontented, and in the course of a few years these fugitives had formed a community of the Patriarchal kind, whose point of union was a hamlet which took the name of the mountain chain and district. In the year 1792, this little independent state offered triumphant defiance to the powers of the dreaded tyrant of Epirus, waged constant war with him, and were subjugated and destroyed at last by treachery, not valor. The few Suliotes, who survived the conquest of their mountain fastnesses, retired to the Ionian isles and enlisted beneath the French or Prussian banners against the barbarous oppressor of their country. To these belonged the Leonidas of Karpenissi, Marco Bozzaris.

“Suli seems intended by nature herself for a mountain citadel of freedom. Long, deep ravines, narrow, winding passes, high steep rock-walls are nowhere interspersed by a fertile spot, likely to allure the step of a conqueror. The hamlets of the Suliotes, eighteen in number, lay partly on the mountain peaks, partly in the strips of vale between. The oldest were Suli, or Kako Sub, Avarikos, Samoniva, Kiapha, and Kaki-Kiapha, together named Tetrachorion, which, from their situation on the ridge of a steep rock to which only one pass led, winding with many and long turns, were the chief fortresses of the Suliotes, being provided with walls and towers by the giant hand of nature. The Heptachorion was composed of seven hamlets, colonies of the before-named, and included the plain at the foot of the mountain. The eleven hamlets included the proper race of Suliotes; but with these were connected fifty or sixty little villages in the vicinity, inhabited by a mixture of Greeks and Albanians, who under the name of Parasuliotes stood in a serviceable relation to the mountaineers.

“The population of the eleven hamlets never were above five thousand, and half of these lived in the chief village, Suli. Their government was wholly Patriarchal. A union of several families formed a Phara. Sali counted eight hundred families, and these were divided into forty-seven Pharas. Each family had its head, and the oldest and wisest of these was chief of the Phara. There were in Suli neither written laws, nor courts of justice; the customs of their fathers stood to them in place of the former, and all strifes were composed by the heads of families and of the Phara.

“This arrangement held good in war as in peace. The heads of the family commanded their own in battle, the heads of the Phara these. When a foe approached their borders, the dwellers of the plain fled to the hills. No plan was made for the war, but each Suliote was trained from his childhood to use the gun and sabre he inherited, and knew every cleft and den of his native mountains, as a fox his hole. So each one stood for and by himself, as in the old hero-wars; and only this unity was among them, that they all fought for one cause, for their freedom and fatherland, for their women and children, and the graves of their ancestors. There were never more than fifteen hundred fighting men engaged against the Pacha. They fought on foot, for their country afforded no pasture for horses.

“The women followed the men to the fight; they carried the provisions and ammunition, and when there was need, often took an active part, as we see Moscho, the wife of Lampros Tsavellas, in these songs.

“The war of Ali Pacha with the Suliotes lasted, without much intermission, from 1792 till 1804, and ended in the surrender of their fastnesses to Veli Pacha, the son of Ali, who availed himself of the treaty to fall on the remnant of their fighting men, on their way to the seacoast, exhausted by long famine, and almost wholly to destroy them. Then it was that in the district of Zalongos the mothers of the Suliotes threw their children down the precipices, and, hand in hand, sprang after them, for no choice remained except between death and slavery.

“After the massacre, the Turks hastened to Reniassa, where there were left only women and children. In this hamlet is a tower, called the tower of Dimulas. The Suliote, Georgos

Botsis, to whom this tower belonged, was absent, and only his wife Despo was there with seven daughters and sons' wives, and three children. When these eight Suliote women saw the foe approaching, they armed themselves and received them with gun-shot. But they soon found defence would only avail them a short time longer. Then Despo called them all together, and asked, holding a firebrand in her hand, 'Will you rather die, or he slaves to the Turks?' Die, they called out with one accord, and Despo threw the brand into a chest full of cartridges. The tower flew into the air with its garrison of women, the children, and the nearest Turks. The Suliote ballads conclude with that on the heroine Despo."

What success might be expected to follow from the policy which bore such fruit, this story shows.

"Ali Pacha, who had had the best opportunity for knowing Klephts, did not undervalue his foe. After a long course of treacherous intrigues, not succeeding in exterminating, he re resolved to win them to be his instruments. In 1805, he invited the Klephtish chiefs from all parts of Greece to Karpenissi in Æelia, with the purpose of making permanent peace with them. They did not refuse to come, and they met, the generals of the Pacha with their troops, the Klepht-captains with their Pallikaris. Jussuf, the Arab, Ali's foster brother, the most dreaded official of the tyrant, and the worst foe of the Klephts, was astonished at their number, knowing better than any what their losses had been, and turning to the captain Athanasius, with whom he had formerly been acquainted, he said; 'How is it that, when we have waged incessant war upon you these five years, your bands are as numerous as ever?' Seest thou,' replied the captain, 'these five young men in the front rank of my right wing? Two of these are brothers, two cousins, and one the friend of one of my braves whom you put to death. All five flew to me, that they might take vengeance, under my banner, for the death of their friend and kinsman. Yet some years of persecution and war, and all Greece will be with us.'"

These truly Homeric Greeks know little about their forbears in the olden time that Homer sung, neither have they heard of the heroes of the Persian wars, and they know nothing of the gods and goddesses, who once were supposed to dwell on the very mountains that are their homes. Olympus, Pindus are names that to them speak only of fresh breezes, starlight nights, of free joy, and a homefelt delight that even the wild crag is their own. A few traces of the old mythology linger still, mixed up with their own superstitions. Charon is known to them; and in his old capacity, though now exercised on the firm land, and in new circumstances.

THE SHEPARD AND CHARON.

A bold gay lad was coming down from the high mountain,
 His cap was put on sideways, and his hair was braided,
 Charon who was waiting for him on the high peak,
 Went down into the valley and met him there,
 O young man, say, whence comest thou? O young man whither goest? —
 I come from my herd, I am going to my house,
 I shall take there a loaf and then go back. —
 But God has sent me down here to take away thy soul. —
 O Charon let me free, I pray thee, let me live,
 I have at home a young wife, she is not fit for a widow,
 If she walked lightly, they would say she sought another
 band,
 If she walked slowly, they would say, that she was proud.
 I have also little children, and they would be orphans. —
 But Charon would not hear, and tried to take him. —

O Charon, if thou wilt not hear, and art resolved to take me,
 Come, let us wrestle here upon this marble rock,
 And if thou art the victor, Charon, take my soul,
 If I should get the better, go thou where thou wilt. —
 Then they came and wrestled from morning to midday,
 And not till the vesper hour, could Charon throw him down.

THE MAIDEN AND CHARON.

A young maiden boasted that she was not afraid of Charon,
 Because she had nine brothers and Kostas for her betrothed,
 Who had many great houses, also four palaces,
 And Charon was a little bird, like a black swallow,
 He flew past and shot his dart into the heart of the young maiden.
 And then her mother wept, thus bewailed her mother,
 O Charon, how thou mak'st me mourn for my one daughter,
 For my one only one, for my fair daughter.
 And see, then came Kostas from a valley of the mountain,
 With him five hundred men and sixty-two musicians.
 Stop the marriage jubilee. Stop awhile the music,
 I see a cross at the door of my father-in-law,
 One of new brothers may be wounded,
 Or my father-in-law is dead, or else perhaps his father.
 He spurs his black steed, he gallops to the church,
 He finds the sacristan digging a grave,
 O Sacristan, be greeted, for whom is that grave?
 For the fair maiden, her with the dark eyes,
 She who had nine brothers, and Kostas for her bridegroom,
 He who has many great houses, also four palaces.
 O Sacristan, I pray thee dig the grave
 A little wider, large enough for two to lie there.
 He drew out his golden sword, and thrust it into his heart,
 And they both were buried in one grave together.

Here love works with exactly the opposite result, to that marked by Wordsworth on a similar occasion.

“O mercy, to myself I cried,
 If Lucy should be dead.”

Both are equally true to nature. The treasure of the heart seems so precious that it cannot remain with us, we tremble every moment lest some conspiracy of Fate and Time should break out to deprive us of it. — Again, it seems so truly all that we need, the complement of our being, the only means of life to us, and the only reality, that it seems more possible for any and all objects to totter and fall into dust than this now only one.

I have seen notices of the following; perhaps it is known to many.

CHARON AND THE SOULS.

Why are the hills so black in their mourning robes?
 Is it because the stormwind blows, and the rain beats upon them?

No! the stormwind does not blow, nor the rain beat upon them,
 Charon is passing over with a hand of the dead,
 He drives the young, foremost, and behind, the old,
 And he holds upon his saddle the tender children.
 The old pray to him, the young supplicate him,
 O dear Charon, stop in the village, stop at the cool fountain.
 I will not stop at the village, nor at the cool fountain,
 Mothers who go there for water would know their children,
 And man and wife would know one another, and could not be separated.

THE VOICE OF THE GRAVE.

All Saturday we were carousing, all the dear Sunday,
 And, when Monday morning came, all our wine was gone,
 Then the captain bade me go and bring more wine.
 A stranger am I, I know not the paths,
 And went into wrong ways, and untrodden paths,
 One of these took me up a high hill,
 All covered with graves, the graves of the valiant;
 A single one stood alone, away from the others,
 I saw it not, I stepped on it and stood at the head,
 Then heard I from the lower world a cry and a thundering.
 Why dost thou moan so, grave? Why dost thou sigh so deeply?
 Do the clods press hard, or the black stone-plate?
 The clods press not hard, nor the black plate,
 But I have grief and shame and a great cumber,
 That thou despisest me, thus to step on my head;
 Was I not also a young man? Was I not a brave?
 Have not I too wandered abroad in the moonlight?

Here is a Romanic Lochinvar.

As lately I was sitting and drinking at my marble table,
 My horse neighed loud, my sabre clashed;
 And my heart understood it well, my love is given in marriage,
 They are giving her in marriage to another,
 They bless her, they crown her with another man.
 I went out to my horses, to my five and seventy,
 Which is there of my horses, of my five and seventy,
 Which like a flash flies to the east, and again is in the west?
 And none of them would answer, none would promise,
 But an old horse, covered with forty wounds,
 Said, I am old and unseemly, not fit for a journey,
 But I will go the long way for my fair mistress,
 Who has fed me kindly from her round apron,
 Who has carefully given me drink from her joined hands.
 He saddles quick his horse, he quickly rides away,
 O! wind, my master, round the head a cloth seven ells long,
 And be not like a dainty youth, but use the spurs,
 Else soon I shall feel my youth like a foal,
 And scatter your brains over nine ells of land.
 He gives the switch to his horse and it runs forty miles,

He gives it a second time, then runs it five and forty,
 And on the way as he rode, he prayed to God,
 Let me find my father pruning vines in his vineyard;
 He spoke it like a Christian, he was heard as a saint,
 He found his father pruning vines in the vineyard.
 Hail to thee, old man, all good be with thee, to whom belongs this vineyard?
 To woe, alas, to dark grief, to Jannes, my son,
 To day they give his love to another wooer,
 They bless her, they crown her with another man.
 O say to me, old man, shall I find her at table?
 If thou hast a swift horse thou may'st find her at table,
 If thou hast a slow horse, thou wilt find her at the marriage.
 He gives the switch to his horse and it runs forty miles,
 He gives it a second time, then runs it five and forty,
 And on the way as he rode he prayed to God,
 Let me find my mother, watering her garden,
 He spoke like a Christian, he was heard as a saint,
 And he found his mother, watering her garden;
 Hail, mother, good be with thee. To whom belongs this garden?
 To woe, alas, to dark grief, to Jannes, my son,
 To-day they give his love to another wooer,
 They bless her, they crown her with another man.
 O say to me, mother, shall I find her at table?
 If thou hast a swift horse, thou wilt find her at table,
 If a slow horse, thou wilt find her at the marriage.
 He gives the switch to his horse, and it runs forty miles,
 Gives it a second time, the horse runs five and forty.

The horse began to neigh, and the maiden knew him,
 O my bride, who speaks with thee? Who holds talk with thee?
 My first brother is it, he brings the bridal presents.
 If it is thy first brother, go and fill the cup for him,
 If it is thy first bridegroom, I will come and kill him.
 Truly, it is my first brother, he brings the bridal presents.
 Then took she a gold goblet and went out to fill for him,
 Stand on my right, fair bride, fill the cup with the left.
 And the horse knelt, and up sprang the maiden,
 He flies away swift as the wind, the Turks take their guns,
 But the horse they saw no more, not even the dust,
 Who had a swift horse, he saw the dust,
 Who had a slow horse saw not even the dust.

How children love these repetitions which keep up the cadence of the thought, and make the ballad or fairy story musical as ripple after ripple on some little lake!

There are many pretty poems of a playful sort. The Greek grace is seen in these, just as when in the age of Pericles they prefaced the keenest irony with, O best one.

I go into a garden, find an apple tree
 Richly laden with apples, in the top sits a maiden;
 I say to her, come down and let us be friends,

But she plucks the apples and stones me with them.

The wish is only to be paralleled in its range with

“Ye gods annihilate both time and space,
And make two lovers happy.”

Here below, in the neighborhood, below in the street,
There dwells an old woman with an old man;
She has a cross dog, and a fair daughter,
Heavens! might the old woman only die with the old man,
And were the dog poisoned too, I might have the maid.

THE CURSE.

My loved, golden, clear moon, now sinking to thy rest,
Take a greeting to my dearest, the conqueror of my heart.
He kissed me and said, I will never leave thee,
And now he has left me, like stubble on the empty field,
Like a church under ban, like a ruined city.
I meant to curse him, but I feel tenderness again,
Yet better is it that I curse. Heaven do as it will,
With my sighs, my pains, with flames and curses,
If he climb a cypress tree to pluck its flower,
May he fall from the top, fall to the ground,
May he break in two, like glass, may he melt, like wax!
Feel the Turk's sabre and the dagger of the Frank!
Have five doctors to hold him, ten to heal him!

ANOTHER.

I passed by thy door and saw thee in anger,
Thy head lay down-sunken on thy right cheek,
Then my heart beat so high that I must ask thee,
What grief thou hast at heart, that I may bring thee comfort.
Why dost thou ask, false one? Well thou knowest what,
Since thou hast forsaken me and gone after another.
My dove, who has said that? Who, my cool fountain?
My love, he who has said that may he die this very week?
If the Sun said it, let him be quenched, if a star let it fall down!
And if a maiden said it, may she find no wooer!

DISCOVERY OF LOVE.

O maiden when we met, 'twas night, who could have seen us?
Night saw us, and dawn, the moon, and the stars,
And from the sky fell a star that told it to the sea,
The sea told it to the oar, the oar to the sailor,
And the sailor told it at the door of his love.

“The sailor told it to his fair,
And she — she told it everywhere,”

is a modern addition.
The tenderness is just as graceful.

THE FAREWELL.

O thou my red pink, my blue hyacinth,
Bow thyself down to me, let me give thee a sweet kiss,
I must go from this land, my father bids me go.

O thou, my red pink, my blue hyacinth,
Bow thyself down to me, let me give thee a sweet kiss,
I must go from this land, my mother bids me go.

Come is the day and hour when we must part,
We shall not meet again, and, ah, my heart bleeds,
That we must part here and meet never again,
My eyes swim in tears, and turn about like wheels,
That we must part here and meet never again.

The dying chief cries,

Bird,
On thy wings let me write three black letters,
One to my mother, another to my sister,
The third and last to my ardently beloved;
The mother reads hers, and my sister weeps,
The sister reads hers, and my beloved weeps,
My beloved reads hers, and all the world must weep.

THE SAILOR.

He who has a daughter to be wooed and taken in marriage,
Let him give her to an obi man rather than to a young sailor.
The sailor, the unhappy, has many griefs to suffer,
Who eats at noon, eats not at night, who makes his sleeps not;
Unhappy the youth who lies sick upon the deck,
No mother looks upon him, no wife will bewail him,
He has no brother, has no sisters, has no human soul,
The captain only speaks to him, and the master of the vessel,
Heida, stand up thou sailor, thou well taught sailor,
Reckon now the right time to run into the haven. —
You say to me, stand up, stand up, I say to you, I cannot,
Come take hold of me and lift me up and let me sit down,
And bind two handkerchiefs hard about my head,
With my love's gold handkerchief bind my cheeks;
Now bring me the chart, the sorrowful chart,
See this mountain, this one here, and there above the other,
They have clouds about their heads and mists at their feet,
Go, and cast anchor there, — there is a deep haven,
The little anchor on the right, the cable on the left,
And cast the great anchor into the sea towards the south.
I pray my captain, and also the master of the ship,

That they will not bury me in church, nor in cloister,
 No but on the sea beach, deep down in the sand.
 Then will come the sailors, I shall hear their voices,
 And the Yoho, at hauling in the anchor, Yoho casting it out.
 Then his eyes closed and saw never more.

So we see the Greek did not fail to cast his eye on the blue sea, too.

Two of the best, *The Unexpected Marriage*, and *The Night Journey*, I saw long since translated by — Sheridan, with great spirit, but with that corruption of their native simple beauty to which a rhymed translation almost always leads.

The song of the Swallow, the Cradle songs, and one “serenade,” even, contained in this volume, are of great beauty, but enough have been given to show the character of the whole. The account of the *Myriologia* corresponds with one of the same ceremonies in a province of France I think, that I saw not long since in a book of Balzac's, “*The Country Physician*.” I suppose the account was meant to be received as stating facts. If it is authentic, the correspondence is striking.

“The poems on funeral occasions are, from their nature, improvisations, painting a new and fresh grief. There are indeed handed down for this purpose, certain forms and common-places in the introductions, transitions, and closes, but the varying circumstances oblige always to improvise under cover of these. They have a slow, dragging measure, ending in a high tone, as if to express the cry of grief. It is wonderful to see timid and ignorant women at once transformed into poets by these occasions. Grief which, among us, robs the weaker sex even of the power of speech, becomes with them the source of inspiration, of which they had felt no presage in themselves, and they find courage to express their deepest feelings before the crowd who have their eyes upon them, waiting to be agitated and roused to tender emotions.

“It is hardly necessary to say that not all the Greece exhibit this wonderful gift in like degree. Some are especially famed for it, and are invited to sing at the funerals of those with whom they are not connected. The women love to practise this art, while at work in the fields, singing their extempore laments in imaginary cases, sometimes for the loss of a friend or neighbor, sometimes of a flower, a bird, or a lamb.

“Few of these poems are preserved; they are the gift of the moment and pass away with it; the poetesses, themselves, can rarely remember what they have sung. Single thoughts or images remain in the memory of the hearers, but seldom the whole song. In the absence of the poems, the account given by a friend of one of these ceremonies, at which he was present, may be acceptable.

“A woman of Mezzovon on Pindos, about five and twenty years of age, had lost her husband, who had left her with two little children. She was a poor peasant of simple character, and had never been in the least remarked for her intellect. Leading her children by the hand, she appeared before the corpse, and began her song of sorrow by the story of a dream, which she addressed to the departed. ‘A little while ago, she said, ‘I saw, before the door of our house, a youth of majestic form, with a threatening aspect, and at his shoulders, white, outspread wings. He stood upon the threshold, with a drawn sword in his hand. ‘Woman,’ he asked, ‘is thy husband in the house?’ ‘He is within,’ I answered; he is combing our little Nicholas, and coaxing him that he may not cry. But go not in, terrible young man, go not in. Thou wouldst frighten our child. But the youth, with the white wings, persisted that he would go in. I tried to push him back, but was not strong enough. He rushed into the house, he rushed on thee, my beloved, he struck thee with his sword, thee unhappy. And our son, the little Nicholas, he wished to kill.’

“After this beginning, whose tone, as she delivered it, made the hearers tremble, some of whom were looking to the door for the youth with the white wings, she threw herself sobbing on the body, and they with difficulty drew her away from it. Then while her little child clung sobbing to her knees, she renewed her song with still more inspiration. She asked her husband, how she should now live with their children; she reminded him of their wedding day, of all they had done together for their children, of her love for him, and did not cease till she sank exhausted to the ground, pale as the clay of him she bewailed.”

The Irish wake, probably, degenerates in this country; but even here, the poor bricklayers and ditch-makers combine with its coarse sociality something of this poetical enjoyment. Only a few months since I heard from one of the most ignorant Irish, an account of a wake almost as poetic as that given above. It was that of a young husband who left his widow with an infant child. She, too, threw herself on the body, and bewailed her fate with expressions and images of striking and simple beauty. All present were moved to tears. “He was a poor red-headed man, too,” added my narrator. The Irish have a rich vein of feeling, and it runs in the same direction with that of these Greeks, though not, ’tis true, with so pure a wave. Indeed, wherever nature is not overlaid with decencies and phrases, a death is always of this poetic value, stimulating to deeper life, and a sincerer thought; it is one legible sentence in the volume of nature.

A few more details.

“The Klephts bivouacked and were upon their guard all day long, but at night they felt themselves secure and could lie down peacefully to sleep. Their beds were of leaves, and their goatskin dresses protected them against the rain. When they made a sally, they took the night for it, preferring a right dark and stormy one. Their march was so rapid that they seldom failed to fall unexpectedly on the enemy.

“The Klepht used the same arms as the Armatole, but was distinguished by a cord or sash around his waist, with which he bound those whom he took prisoners. They fought without any order, wherever they found a good post, whether a crag, a tree, or a heap of slaughtered foes. They fired standing or kneeling, and loaded again, lying on the back or side. When hemmed in and pressed hard, they seized their sabres and rushed upon the foe in a body.

“Their favorite amusement, when at leisure, was shooting at a mark, and in this they attained the greatest dexterity. They also practised throwing the discus, leaping, and running. Wonderful stories are told of their agility. It was said of the captain Niko-Tzaras that he could leap over seven horses, or even three wagons laden high with corn. Many could run as fast as a horse could gallop, and it was popularly said of the captain Zacharias that, when he ran, his heels touched his ears. To this great swiftness they were indebted for many an advantage over the Turks. They were equally remarkable for their power of enduring hunger, thirst, and tortures; although those to which they were put by the Pachas, were so cruel that they would, if possible, kill themselves rather than be dragged to a prison. Thus it was for them a natural greeting of kindness in festive hours to wish one another ‘a good bullet,’ meaning one which would hit the right spot and put an end to all uncertainties in a moment.

“Next to being taken captive nothing was dreaded more than having the head cut off by the enemy, and carried away to be insulted and abused before all eyes. So it was, always, the most urgent and sacredly respected prayer to a brother in arms, to cut off the head of his slain friend, and carry it away from the Turks. This trait is often brought forward in the lays, — of one, only this passage is preserved. ‘Friend, take my head that the approaching enemy may not cut it off, and make a show for every passer by. My foes would see it, and their hearts would laugh for joy; my mother would see it and die of grief.’

“Naturally, they thought it a disgrace to die in a bed, deformed by slow sickness into an unhandsome corpse.

“It might be supposed that under such circumstances they would become savage and cruel, but it was not the case. If they reserved their prisoners for ransom, they treated them generously, women always

with respect, even when their own families had been maltreated by the foe. If cruel to the men, it was always in retaliation for cruelty. Generally, though they gave not easily his life to the Turk, they put him to death on the spot, without inventing tortures, like those of Ali Pacha.

“They were most scrupulous in religious observances, in keeping the festivals of the church, and even often made long pilgrimages.

“The captain Blachavas went, as a pilgrim, to Jerusalem in his seventy-sixth year, with his gun at his back, and attended by his Protopallikari. He died, as he hoped he might, in the Holy Land. No inducement of honor or safety could make them apostates from their religion. Andrutzos, when offered his choice between the honors of Islamism and the pest-house, chose the latter.

“Their devotion in friendship was not to be surpassed; life was not felt by the Pallikari to be a great sacrifice for his chief, and the story of Diplas and Katzantonis may vie with the beautiful fable of Orestes and Pylades.

“Those who consider comfort and peace necessary to the enjoyment of life may fancy the Klephts unhappy in their precarious and dangerous life amid the woods and mountains. On the contrary this life, full of adventure and variety, and passed in the open air, had such a charm for them, that few of those who submitted to the Pacha could endure the idle repose to which they had condemned themselves. They walked about, sad and downcast, often turning their longing eyes to the mountains, for which even the charming climate, safety, and freedom of the Ionian isles could not console them.

“Their mountains though not so high as the Alps, or even the Pyrenees, are uninhabitable a part of the year. In the season of snow they must leave them. They wrapped in linen their arms and accoutrements, hid them in the clefts or caverns, and went forth, some to the houses of friends and relations, others to the Ionian isles. Here the Klepht was known at once amid the crowd by his proud bearing, his wild glance, and picturesque dress. The Greeks, or all of them who retained a spark of national feeling, looked with pride on men before whom the Turks had often trembled; the story of their exploits passed from tongue to tongue, and the children of the villages fought, for their play, in Klepht and Turkish bands, of which the former were pretty sure to remain the victors, for the strongest and most spirited boys were always on that side.”

These extracts are abridged from the German, not without injury, and a risk of confusion, for there are no superfluous words or details in the book. It should be read; considering that it has been published so many years, very few, in proportion to its merit, can have had the benefit of it, or allusion to its subjects would be more frequent.

He who was the “sitting Rhapsodist,” of the early Greek time would hail the heroism; the self-sufficing power and resource, the free poetic spirit of the Klephts. They have not the rich frame in which his figures are set, but they are well worthy of a shield of Achilles. Their machinery is very simple. A bird stops a moment on the mountain peak to tell the story of a noble life, of a man, a prince in his heart, and a poet in his eye, whose life, if rude, was single, and well filled with passages, that tried his higher powers. All that relates to them is important in their eyes, as may be seen by the high-flown descriptions of the few accessories they had or needed. Their horses are shod with silver, their bits are of gold. The sword is in all countries a theme for poetical hyperbole, for it is the symbol of a warrior's life. This pleasure in details marks the reality of their existence; whatever they had or did was significant. In this, as in so many other respects, they represent our Indians, softened by the atmosphere which a high civilization, though mostly forgotten, does not fail to leave behind, and a gentler clime. Whatever we can obtain from our aborigines has the same beauty with these ballads. Had we but as complete a collection as this! Some German should visit this country, and aid with his power of selection, and critical discernment, the sympathy, enthusiasm, and energy of Catlin.

The German translator observes, “What characterizes the mountain lays is a vigorous tone, a wild intrepidity in thoughts and images, and a mood which takes up the most marvellous

subject, and treats it as freely and familiarly as the most common. The bards sing, as the Klephts strike. They are all marked by a like patriotic enthusiasm, hatred for the Turk, love for freedom and independence. Not only the air of the mountains blows upon us, but the steep and wild forms of the rocks, from whose clefts they echo, are to be found in these ballads.”

They present a striking contrast to the Rhine ballads in this; they are entirely destitute of that symbolical character which gives such interest to the minutiae of the latter. The Romaic are a plain transcript of realities, which happen to be of the class called Romantic. They please by their scenery and exhibition of character. The Rhine ballads are the growth of a national thought, and a religious faith.

Author's Notes:

1. Name given to each member of the band. The lieutenant was the chief or first Pallikaris.
2. Kissaros is the Ossa of the ancients.

Source: *The Dial*, Vol. III, No. II, October 1842, pp. 137-180