

DEATH COMES TO US ALL.

I.

Death comes to us all.
It is the return
Of man to his God.
We are leavers, and we fall
And mix with the sod,
But our spirits that yearn
For the unknown, and burn
With vain hopes, naught can kill.

II.

Mankind, like a rill
To ocean that flows
Through woodland and plain,
Makes his murmurings fill
With a ceaseless refrain
All the world as he goes,
Till he finds his repose
In the depths of the grave.

III.

'Twas ocean that gave
The streamlet to earth,
In the cycle of years
To return to its wave.
God gave not for tears
Is that soul, but for mirth,
To teach us life's worth;
Then recalled it again.

Montreal.

ARTHUR WEIR.

Contributions.

THE ODES AND EPODES OF HORACE.

A METRICAL TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH.

BY LORD LYTTON.

The translations of the poems of Horace are innumerable. This gentlemanly poet of old Rome has possessed, still possesses, and, we think, ever will possess, an indescribable fascination for the refined, the intellectual, the student, and the man of the world, which is probably without example in the history of literature. His muse never excites passion or enthusiasm. He seems the "idle singer of an empty day," but he sings the life of his own age and day, and not simply the traditional stories of a bygone epoch. When he draws upon the lyric poets of Greece for an illustration, or for a happy thought and pleasant simile, the past is not the spirit which inspires him. He is *par excellence* the cultivated poet of the cultivated era of Augustus—the age of Virgil and Cicero, and of the patron Mæcenas—the age when Rome was losing the strength and vigour which made her the conqueror of the world, and was just entering upon the period of luxury, refinement, gentility, and scepticism, which ended in the final destruction of the power which afterwards became rotten at the core, and whose Capitol degenerated into a mere cesspool of wickedness and vice—a cesspool which is truthfully described in the first chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

In Horace's days, however, only the beginning of the end was visible, and that only to such men as Brutus, and he had been slain on the plains of Philippi. As it has often proved since in the history of mankind, the Emperor, who found Rome brick and left it marble, was the saviour of society, the restorer of order, the subduer of anarchists and revolutionists, and above all he made trade possible, and wealth accompanied his rule. Politics were banished

from literature; the Senate became the mere mouth-piece of the Emperor; and all free public life was crushed in the great city of Rome, the capital of the civilized world. Virgil looked to the past, and found scope for his calm and placid genius in singing the story of the life of the divine Æneas, and of the foundation of the empire of which Augustus was now the deified ruler. Horace, with more genial *bonhomie*, lived more in the present. "*Carpe diem*" was his motto, and "woman, wine, and song" the themes which inspired his muse. His whole nature was refined and unimpassioned. He was patriotic—that is, he loved Rome, if not his country, as much as a gentleman without any definite politics, and who accepted Cæsar Augustus as a god, could possibly be patriotic. He loved nature with a light, easy love, that enables him to sing gracefully, and to produce pretty pictures of his villa and of its rural surroundings; of the "she-goats browsing amid the arbuto and the wild thyme; the pebbly slopes of Usticia; the green nook sheltered from the dog-star; the noon-day entertainment; the light wines and the lute." Of all this he sings with a grace and melody which makes his odes the delight of youth, and the happy remembrance of old age; for while they please men with whom "years have brought the philosophic mind," they have the charms which make "ungenerous youth" find a pure, if not deep, joy in their perusal.

In his love songs he is also the same Horace. In these he is the easy-going gentleman who finds a joy in looking at and coquetting with a pretty face, a graceful form, a bright eye, a merry laugh, and a sweet voice. He has nothing of the passion and pathos of Burns, and never even touches the words which the modern poet has entirely under his command. Still, his songs to Pyrrha, who binds in wreaths her golden hair; to Latage, the sweet-smiling and the sweet speaking; to Glycera, with the saucy charms; and to the other fair maidens of ancient Rome who had attracted the poet's fancy, and in whose praise he sings his light and graceful songs, are, to our minds, written for real flesh and blood realities, and are not mere myths and creations of the imagination. With all their ease and grace the love-songs are too personal for that, and have the mark of reality too strongly impressed upon them to leave a doubt but that Latage, Lydia, Pyrrha, and the rest, are as much real Roman girls living in Horace's time, and known to the poet, as were the Jeans, the Marys, and the rest of the heroines of Burns.

And what pleasant and graceful songs they are! Never a line, never a word, never a figure, or an image too much! So skilful is the workmanship, so original the genius, so exquisite the taste; the thought and expression are alike so rich in exquisite terms and rare felicities, and the language is so admirably compressed, that, like the songs of Beranger, and of Heine, they defy translation. Perhaps their very difficulties have excited scholars to attempt it; for certain it is that no classical author has inspired so many competent men to translate his works as Horace; the veteran novelist (Lord Lytton) published his translation of the Odes and Epodes. This work of love