

And wonder that I answer not—not knowing
My inquisitor. Explain what you would have,
And then I'll satisfy yourself, or me.

Stral. I knew not that you had reasons for reserve.

Wer. Many have such:—Have you none?

Stral. None which can
Interst a mere stranger.

Wer. Then forgive
The same unknown and humble stranger, if
He wishes to remain so to the man
Who can have nought in common with him.

Stral. Sir,
I will not balk your humour, though untoward:
I only meant you service—but good night!
Intendant, show the way! (*to GABOR.*) Sir, you will
with me?

[*Exeunt STRALENHEIM and attendants; IDEN-
STEIN and GABOR.*]

Wer. (solus). 'Tis he! I am taken in the toils. Be-
fore

I quitted Hamburg, Giulio, his late steward,
Inform'd me, that he had obtain'd an order
From Brandenburg's elector, for the arrest
Of Kruitner (such the name I then bore), when
I came upon the frontier; the free city
Alone preserved my freedom—till I left
Its walls—fool that I was to quit them! But
I deem'd this humble garb, and route obscure,
Had baffled the slow hounds in their pursuit.
What's to be done? He knows me not by person;
Nor could aught, save the eye of apprehension,
Have recognised him, after twenty years,
We met so rarely and so coldly in
Our youth. But those about him! Now I can
Divine the frankness of the Hungarian, who
No doubt is a mere tool and spy of Stralenheim's,
To sound and to secure me. Without means!
Sick, poor—begirt too with the flooding rivers,
Impassable even to the wealthy, with
All the appliances which purchase modes
Of overpowering peril with men's lives,—
How can I hope! An hour ago methought
My state beyond despair; and now, 'tis such,
The past seems paradise. Another day,
And I'm detected,—on the very eve
Of honours, rights, and my inheritance,
When a few drops of gold might save me still
In favouring an escape.

Enter IDENSTEIN and FRITZ in conversation.

Fritz. Immediately.

Iden. I tell you 'tis impossible.

Fritz. It must
Be tried, however; and if one express
Fail, you must send on others, till the answer
Arrives from Frankfort, from the commandant.

Iden. I will do what I can.

Fritz. And recollect
To spare no trouble; you will be repaid
Tenfold.

Iden. The baron is retired to rest?

Fritz. He hath thrown himself into an easy chair
Beside the fire, and slumbers; and has order'd
He may not be disturb'd until eleven,
When he will take himself to bed.

Iden. Before
An hour is past I'll do my best to serve him.

Fritz. Remember!

[*Exit FRITZ.*]

Iden. The devil take these great men! they
Think all things made for them. Now here must I
Rouse up some half a dozen shivering vassals
From their scant pallets, and, at peril
Of their lives, despatch them o'er the river towards
Frankfort. Methinks the baron's own experience
Some hours ago might teach him fellow-feeling:
But no, "it must," and there's an end. How now?
Are you there, Mynheer Werner?

Wer. You have left
Your noble guest right quickly.

Iden. Yes—he's dozing,
And seems to like that none should sleep besides.
Here is a packet for the commandant
Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses;
But I must not lose time: Good night! [*Exit.*]

Wer. "To Frankfort!"
So, so, it thickens! Ay, "the commandant."
This tallies well with all the prior steps
Of this cool, calculating fiend, who walks
Between me and my father's house. No doubt
He writes for a detachment to convey me
Into some secret fortress.—Sooner than
This—

[*WERNER looks around, and snatches up a knife
lying on a table in a recess.*]

Now I am master of myself at least.
Hark,—footsteps! How do I know that Stralenheim
Will wait for even the show of that authority
Which is to overshadow usurpation?
That he suspects me's certain. I'm alone;
He with a numerous train. I weak; he strong
In gold, in numbers, rank, authority.
I nameless, or involving in my name
Destruction, till I reach my own domain;
He full-blown with his titles, which impose
Still further on these obscure petty burghers
Than they could do elsewhere. Hark! nearer still!
I'll to the secret passage, which communicates
With the—No! all is silent—'t was my fancy!—
Still as the breathless interval between
The flash and thunder:—I must hush my soul
Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,
To see if still be unexplored the passage
I wot of: it will serve me as a den
Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst.

[*WERNER draws a panel, and exit, closing it
after him.*]

Enter GABOR and JOSEPHINE.

Gab. Where is your husband?

Jos. Here, I thought: I left him
Not long since in his chamber. But these rooms
Have many outlets, and he may be gone
To accompany the intendant.

Gab. Baron Stralenheim
Put many questions to the intendant on
The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,
I have my doubts if he means well.

Jos. Alas!
What can there be in common with the proud
And wealthy baron, and the unknown Werner?

Gab. That you know best.

Jos. Or, if it were so, how
Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,
Rather than that of him whose life you saved?

Gab. I help'd to save him, as in peril; but
I did not pledge myself to serve him in

Oppression. I know well these nobles, and
Their thousand modes of trampling on the poor.
I have proved them; and my spirit boils up when
I find them practising against the weak:—
This is my only motive.

Jos. It would be
Not easy to persuade my consort of
Your good intentions.

Gab. Is he so suspicious?
Jos. He was not once; but time and troubles have
Made him what you beheld.

Gab. I'm sorry for it.
Suspicion is a heavy armour, and
With its own weight impedes more than protects.
Good night! I trust to meet with him at daybreak.

[*Exit GABOR.*]

*Re-enter IDENSTEIN and some Peasants. JOSEPHINE
retires up the Hall.*

First Peasant. But if I'm drown'd?

Iden. Why, you will be well paid for 't,
And have risk'd more than drowning for as much,
I doubt not.

Second Peasant. But our wives and families?

Iden. Cannot be worse off than they are, and may
Be better.

Third Peasant. I have neither, and will venture.

Iden. That's right. A gallant carle, and fit to be
A soldier. I'll promote you to the ranks
In the prince's body-guard—if you succeed;
And you shall have besides, in sparkling coin,
Two thalers.

Third Peasant. No more!

Iden. Out upon your avarice!
Can that low vice alloy so much ambition!
I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in
Small change will subdivide into a treasure.
Do not five hundred thousand heroes daily
Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one thaler?
When had you half the sum?

Third Peasant. Never—but ne'er
The less I must have three.

Iden. Have you forgot
Whose vassal you were born, knave?

Third Peasant. No—the prince's,
And not the stranger's.

Iden. Sirrah! in the prince's
Absence, I'm sovereign; and the baron is
My intimate connection;—"Cousin Idenstein!
(Quoth he) you'll order out a dozen villains."
And so, you villains! troop—march—march, I
say;

And if a single dog's-ear of this packet
Be sprinkled by the Oder—look to it!
For every page of paper, shall a hide
Of yours be stretch'd as parchment on a drum,
Like Ziska's skin, to beat alarm to all
Refractory vassals, who can not effect
Impossibilities—Away, ye earth-worms!

[*Exit, driving them out.
Jos. (coming forward).* I fain would shun these
scenes, too oft repeated,

Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot,
The dimmest in the district's map, exist
The insolence of wealth in poverty
O'er something poorer still—the pride of rank

In servitude, o'er something still more servile;
And vice in misery affecting still
A tatter'd splendour. What a state of being!
In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants,
Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
As these; and our all-ripe and gushing valleys
Made poverty more cheerful, where each herb
Was in itself a meal, and every vine
Rain'd, as it were, the beverage which makes glad
The heart of man; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded, leaving
His warmth behind in memory of his beams)
Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe, less
Oppressive than an emperor's jewell'd purple.
But, here! the despots of the north appear
To imitate the ice-wind of their clime,
Searching the shivering vassal through his rags,
To wring his soul—as the bleak elements
His form. And 'tis to be amongst these sovereigns
My husband pants! and such his pride of birth—
That twenty years of usage, such as no
Father born in a humble state could nerve
His soul to persecute a son withal,
Hath changed no atom of his early nature;
But I, born nobly also, from my father's
Kindness was taught a different lesson. Father!
May thy long-tried and now rewarded spirit
Look down on us and our so long desired
Ulric! I love my son, as thou didst me!
What's that? Thou, Werner! can it be? and thus?

*Enter WERNER hastily, with the knife in his hand,
by the secret panel, which he closes hurriedly after
him.*

Wer. (not at first recognising her). Discover'd!
then I'll stab—(*recognising her.*)
Ah! Josephine,

Why art thou not at rest?

Jos. What rest? My God!
What doth this mean?

Wer. (showing a rouleau). Here's gold—gold,
Josephine,

Will rescue us from this detested dungeon.

Jos. And how obtain'd?—that knife!

Wer. 'Tis bloodless—yet.
Away—we must to our chamber.

Jos. But whence comest thou?
Wer. Ask not! but let us think where we shall
go—

This—this will make us way—(*showing the gold*)—
I'll fit them now.

Jos. I dare not think thee guilty of dishonour.

Wer. Dishonour!

Jos. I have said it.

Wer. Let us hence.

'Tis the last night, I trust, that we need pass here.

Jos. And not the worst, I hope.

Wer. Hope! I make sure.

But let us to our chamber.

Jos. Yet one question—

What hast thou done?

Wer. (fiercely). Left one thing undone, which
Had made all well: let me not think of it!
Away!

Jos. Alas, that I should doubt of thee!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the same Palace.

Enter IDENSTEIN and Others.

Iden. Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!
A baron pillaged in a prince's palace!
Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was heard of.

Fritz. It hardly could, unless the rats despoil'd
The mice of a few shreds of tapestry.

Iden. Oh! that I e'er should live to see this day!
The honour of our city's gone for ever.

Fritz. Well, but now to discover the delinquent:
The baron is determined not to lose
This sum without a search.

Iden. And so am I.

Fritz. But whom do you suspect?

Iden. Suspect! all people
Without—within—above—below—Heaven help me!

Fritz. Is there no other entrance to the chamber?

Iden. None whatsoever.

Fritz. Are you sure of that?

Iden. Certain. I have lived and served here since
my birth,

And if there were such, must have heard of such,
Or seen it.

Fritz. Then it must be some one who
Had access to the antechamber.

Iden. Doubtless.

Fritz. The man call'd *Werner's* poor!

Iden. Poor as a miser.¹

But lodged so far off, in the other wing,
By which there's no communication with
The baron's chamber, that it can't be he.
Besides, I bade him "good night" in the hall,
Almost a mile off, and which only leads
To his own apartment, about the same time
When this burglarious, larcenous felony
Appears to have been committed.

Fritz. There's another,
The stranger—

Iden. The Hungarian?

Fritz. He who help'd

To fish the baron from the Oder.

Iden. Not
Unlikely. But, hold—might it not have been
One of the suite?

Fritz. How? *We, sir!*

Iden. No—not you,

But some of the inferior knaves. You say
The baron was asleep in the great chair—
The velvet chair—in his embroider'd night-gown;
His toilet spread before him, and upon it
A cabinet with letters, papers, and
Several rouleaux of gold; of which one only
Has disappear'd;—the door unbolted, with
No difficult access to any.

Fritz. Good sir,
Be not so quick; the honour of the corps
Which forms the baron's household's unimpeach'd
From steward to scullion, save in the fair way
Of peculation; such as in accompts,
Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,

¹ ["Your printer has made an odd mistake:—"poor as a mouse," instead of "poor as a miser." The expression may

Where all men take their prey; as also in
Postage of letters, gathering of rents,
Purveying feasts, and understanding with
The honest trades who furnish noble masters:
But for your petty, picking, downright thievery,
We scorn it as we do board-wages. Then
Had one of our folks done it, he would not
Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard
His neck for one rouleau, but have swoop'd all;
Also the cabinet, if portable.

Iden. There is some sense in that—

Fritz. No, sir, be sure

'T was none of our corps; but some petty, trivial
Picker and stealer, without art or genius.

The only question is—Who else could have

Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?

Iden. You don't mean me?

Fritz. No, sir; I honour more

Your talents—

Iden. And my principles, I hope.

Fritz. Of course. But to the point: What's to
be done?

Iden. Nothing—but there's a good deal to be said.

We'll offer a reward; move heaven and earth,
And the police (though there's none nearer than
Frankfort); post notices in manuscript
(For we've no printer); and set by my clerk
To read them (for few can, save he and I).

We'll send out villains to strip beggars, and
Search empty pockets; also, to arrest

All gipsies, and ill-clothed and sallow people.

Prisoners we'll have at least, if not the culprit;

And for the baron's gold—if 'tis not found,

At least he shall have the full satisfaction

Of melting twice its substance in the raising

The ghost of this rouleau. Here's alchemy

For your lord's losses!

Fritz. He hath found a better.

Iden. Where?

Fritz. In a most immense inheritance.

The late Count Siegendorf, his distant kinsman,

Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my lord

Is on his way to take possession.

Iden. Was there

No heir?

Fritz. Oh, yes; but he has disappear'd

Long from the world's eye, and perhaps the world.

A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban

For the last twenty years; for whom his sire

Refused to kill the fatted calf; and, therefore,

If living, he must chew the husks still. But

The baron would find means to silence him,

Were he to re-appear: he's politic,

And has much influence with a certain court.

Iden. He's fortunate.

Fritz. 'Tis true, there is a grandson,

Whom the late count reclaim'd from his son's hands,

And educated as his heir; but then

His birth is doubtful.

Iden. How so?

Fritz. His sire made

A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,

With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter:

Noble, they say, too; but no match for such

A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill

seem strange, but it is only a translation of 'semper avarus eget!'—*Lord Byron to Mr. Murray.*]

Could brook the alliance; and could ne'er be brought
To see the parents, though he took the son.

Iden. If he's a lad of mettle, he may yet
Dispute your claim, and weave a web that may
Puzzle your baron to unravel.

Fritz. Why,
For mettle, he has quite enough: they say,
He forms a happy mixture of his sire
And grandsire's qualities,—impetuous as
The former, and deep as the latter; but
The strangest is, that he too disappear'd
Some months ago.

Iden. The devil he did!

Fritz. Why, yes:

It must have been at his suggestion, at
An hour so critical as was the eve

Of the old man's death, whose heart was broken by it.

Iden. Was there no cause assign'd?

Fritz. Plenty, no doubt,

And none perhaps the true one. Some averr'd

It was to seek his parents; some because

The old man held his spirit in so strictly

(But that could scarce be, for he doted on him);

A third believed he wish'd to serve in war,

But peace being made soon after his departure,

He might have since return'd, were that the motive;

A fourth set charitably have surmised,

As there was something strange and mystic in him,

That in the wild exuberance of his nature

He had join'd the black bands, who lay waste Lusatia,

The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,

Since the last years of war had dwindled into

A kind of general condottiero system

Of bandit warfare; each troop with its chief,

And all against mankind.

Iden. That cannot be.

A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury,

To risk his life and honours with disbanded

Soldiers and desperadoes!

Fritz. Heaven best knows!

But there are human natures so allied

Unto the savage love of enterprise,

That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.

I've heard that nothing can reclaim your Indian,

Or tame the tiger, though their infancy

Were fed on milk and honey. After all,

Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus,

Your Banner, and your Torstenson and Weimar,

Were but the same thing upon a grand scale;

And now that they are gone, and peace proclaim'd,

They who would follow the same pastime must

Pursue it on their own account. Here comes

The baron, and the Saxon stranger, who

Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,

But did not leave the cottage by the Oder

Until this morning.

Enter STRALENHEIM and ULRIC.¹

Stral. Since you have refused

All compensation, gentle stranger, save

Inadequate thanks, you almost check even them,

Making me feel the worthlessness of words,

¹ [The characters are any thing but original. . . Ulric is only the Giaour, Conrad, Lara, Alp, &c. &c. rehased and served up as a Bohemian. "Coelum, non animum mutant." It is the old mess with a new sauce. Compare him particularly with Lara, and you must be struck with the resemblance. Both high-born—both leaving home mysteriously—both suspected of being linked with desperate characters—both

And blush at my own barren gratitude,
They seem so niggardly, compared with what
Your courteous courage did in my behalf—

Ulr. I pray you press the theme no further.

Stral. But

Can I not serve you? You are young, and of

That mould which throws out heroes; fair in favour;

Brave, I know, by my living now to say so;

And doubtlessly, with such a form and heart,

Would look into the fiery eyes of war,

As ardently for glory as you dared

An obscure death to save an unknown stranger

In an as perilous, but opposite, element.

You are made for the service: I have served;

Have rank by birth and soldiery, and friends,

Who shall be yours. 'Tis true this pause of peace

Favours such views at present scantily;

But 't will not last, men's spirits are too stirring;

And, after thirty years of conflict, peace

Is but a petty war, as the times show us

In every forest, or a mere arm'd truce.

War will reclaim his own; and, in the meantime,

You might obtain a post, which would ensure

A higher soon, and, by my influence, fall not

To rise. I speak of Brandenburg, wherein

I stand well with the Elector; in Bohemia,

Like you, I am a stranger, and we are now

Upon its frontier.

Ulr. You perceive my garb

Is Saxon, and of course my service due

To my own sovereign. If I must decline

Your offer, 'tis with the same feeling which

Induced it.

Stral. Why, this is mere usury!

I owe my life to you, and you refuse

The acquittance of the interest of the debt,

To heap more obligations on me, till

I bow beneath them.

Ulr. You shall say so when

I claim the payment.

Stral. Well, sir, since you will not—

You are nobly born?

Ulr. I have heard my kinsmen say so.

Stral. Your actions show it. Might I ask your

name?

Ulr. Ulric.

Stral. Your house's?

Ulr. When I'm worthy of it,

I'll answer you.

Stral. (aside). Most probably an Austrian,

Whom these unsettled times forbid to boast

His lineage on these wild and dangerous frontiers,

Where the name of his country is abhor'd.

[*Aloud to FRITZ and IDENSTEIN.*

So, sirs! how have ye sped in your researches?

Iden. Indifferent well, your excellency.

Stral. Then

I am to deem the plunderer is caught?

Iden. Humph!—not exactly.

Stral. Or at least suspected?

Iden. Oh! for that matter, very much suspected.

Stral. Who may he be?

returning to play the magnifico—both charged with heavy crimes, by people who had met them while absent on their wild exploits, and both ready to get rid of their accusers by the summary process of murder. Both are, moreover, very fine speakers, valiant men, high-browed, bright-eyed, black-haired.—MAGINN.]

Iden. Why, don't you know, my lord?
Stral. How should I? I was fast asleep.
Iden. And so
 Was I, and that's the cause I know no more
 Than does your excellency.
Stral. Dolt!
Iden. Why, if
 Your lordship, being robb'd, don't recognise
 The rogue; how should I, not being robb'd, identify
 The thief among so many? In the crowd,
 May it please your excellency, your thief looks
 Exactly like the rest, or rather better:
 'Tis only at the bar and in the dungeon
 That wise men know your felon by his features;
 But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,
 Whether he be found criminal or no,
 His face shall be so.
Stral. (to *Fritz*). Prithee, Fritz, inform me
 What hath been done to trace the fellow?
Fritz. Faith!
 My lord, not much as yet, except conjecture. [me
Stral. Besides the loss (which, I must own, affects
 Just now materially), I needs would find
 The villain out of public motives; for
 So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep
 Through my attendants, and so many peopled
 And lighted chambers, on my rest, and snatch
 The gold before my scarce-closed eyes, would soon
 Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant!
Iden. True;
 If there were aught to carry off, my lord.
Ulr. What is all this?
Stral. You join'd us but this morning,
 And have not heard that I was robb'd last night.
Ulr. Some rumour of it reach'd me as I pass'd
 The outer chambers of the palace, but
 I know no further.
Stral. It is a strange business;
 The intendant can inform you of the facts.
Iden. Most willingly. You see —
Stral. (impatiently). Defer your tale,
 Till certain of the hearer's patience.
Iden. That
 Can only be approved by proofs. You see —
Stral. (again interrupting him, and addressing
ULRIC).
 In short, I was asleep upon a chair,
 My cabinet before me, with some gold
 Upon it (more than I much like to lose,
 Though in part only): some ingenious person
 Contrived to glide through all my own attendants,
 Besides those of the place, and bore away
 A hundred golden ducats, which to find
 I would be fain, and there's an end. Perhaps
 You (as I still am rather faint) would add
 To yesterday's great obligation, this,
 Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid these men
 (Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering it?
Ulr. Most willingly, and without loss of time —
 (To *IDENSTEIN*). Come hither, mynheer!
Iden. But so much haste bodes
 Right little speed, and —
Ulr. Standing motionless
 None; so let's march; we'll talk as we go on.
Iden. But —
Ulr. Show the spot, and then I'll answer you.
Fritz. I will, sir, with his excellency's leave.
Stral. Do so, and take your old ass with you.

Hence!
Ulr. Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle!
 [Exit with *IDENSTEIN* and *Fritz*.
Stral. (solus). A stalwart, active, soldier-looking
 stripling,
 Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour,
 And with a brow of thought beyond his years
 When in repose, till his eye kindles up
 In answering yours. I wish I could engage him:
 I have need of some such spirits near me now,
 For this inheritance is worth a struggle.
 And though I am not the man to yield without one,
 Neither are they who now rise up between me
 And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a bold one;
 But he hath play'd the truant in some hour
 Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to
 Champion his claims. That's well. The father, whom
 For years I've track'd, as does the blood-hound, never
 In sight, but constantly in scent, had put me
 To fault; but here I have him, and that's better.
 It must be he! All circumstance proclaims it;
 And careless voices, knowing not the cause
 Of my inquiries, still confirm it. — Yes!
 The man, his bearing, and the mystery
 Of his arrival, and the time; the account, too,
 The intendant gave (for I have not beheld her)
 Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect;
 Besides the antipathy with which we met,
 As snakes and lions shrink back from each other
 By secret instinct that both must be foes
 Deadly, without being natural prey to either;
 All — all — confirm it to my mind. However,
 We'll grapple, ne'ertheless. In a few hours
 The order comes from Frankfort, if these waters
 Rise not the higher (and the weather favours
 Their quick abatement), and I'll have him safe
 Within a dungeon, where he may avouch
 His real estate and name; and there's no harm done,
 Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery
 (Save for the actual loss) is lucky also:
 He's poor, and that's suspicious — he's unknown,
 And that's defenceless. — True, we have no proofs
 Of guilt, — but what hath he of innocence?
 Were he a man indifferent to my prospects,
 In other bearings, I should rather lay
 The inculcation on the Hungarian, who
 Hath something which I like not; and alone
 Of all around, except the intendant, and
 The prince's household and my own, had ingress
 Familiar to the chamber.

Enter *GABOR*.

Friend, how fare you?
Gab. As those who fare well everywhere, when they
 Have suppd and slumber'd, no great matter how —
 And you, my lord?
Stral. Better in rest than purse:
 Mine inn is like to cost me dear.
Gab. I heard
 Of your late loss; but 'tis a trifle to
 One of your order.
Stral. You would hardly think so,
 Were the loss yours.
Gab. I never had so much
 (At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not
 Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you. [them,
 Your couriers are turn'd back — I have outstripp'd
 In my return.

Stral. You! — Why?
Gab. I went at daybreak,
 To watch for the abatement of the river,
 As being anxious to resume my journey.
 Your messengers were all check'd like myself;
 And, seeing the case hopeless, I await
 The current's pleasure.
Stral. Would the dogs were in it!
 Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage?
 I order'd this at all risks.
Gab. Could you order
 The Oder to divide, as Moses did
 The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood
 Of the swoln stream), and be obey'd, perhaps
 They might have ventured.
Stral. I must see to it:
 The knaves! the slaves! — but they shall smart for
 this. [Exit *STRALENHEIM*.
Gab. (solus). There goes my noble, feudal, self-
 will'd baron!
 Epitome of what brave chivalry,
 The preux chevaliers of the good old times,
 Have left us. Yesterday he would have given
 His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,
 His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air
 As would have fill'd a bladder, while he lay
 Gurgling and foaming half way through the window
 Of his o'er-set and water-logg'd conveyance;
 And now he storms at half a dozen wretches,
 Because they love their lives too! Yet, he's right:
 'Tis strange they should, when such as he may put them
 To hazard at his pleasure. Oh! thou world!
 Thou art indeed a melancholy jest! [Exit *GABOR*.

SCENE II.

The Apartment of *WERNER*, in the Palace.

Enter *JOSEPHINE* and *ULRIC*.

Jos. Stand back, and let me look on thee again!
 My *Ulric*! — my beloved! — can it be —
 After twelve years?
Ulr. My dearest mother!
Jos. Yes!
 My dream is realised — how beautiful! —
 How more than all I sigh'd for! Heaven receive
 A mother's thanks! — a mother's tears of joy!
 This is indeed thy work! — At such an hour, too,
 He comes not only as a son, but saviour.
Ulr. If such a joy await me, it must double
 What I now feel, and lighten from my heart
 A part of the long debt of duty, not
 Of love (for that was ne'er withheld) — forgive me!
 This long delay was not my fault.¹
Jos. I know it,
 But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt
 If I e'er felt it, 'tis so dazzled from
 My memory, by this oblivious transport! —
 My son!

Enter *WERNER*.

Wer. What have we here, — more strangers?
Jos. No!
 Look upon him! What do you see?

¹ [Ulric behaves far too hopefully and too dutifully for an assassin and a brigand. He is of the Giaour and the Lara order — a *Westall* ruffian. — *Ecl. Rev.*]

A stripling,
Wer. For the first time —
Ulr. (kneeling). For twelve long years, my father!
Wer. Oh, God!
Jos. He faints!
Wer. No — I am better now —
Ulric! (Embraces him.)
Ulr. My father, Siegendorf!
Wer. (starting). Hush! boy —
 The walls may hear that name!
Ulr. What then?
Wer. Why, then —
 But we will talk of that anon. Remember,
 I must be known here but as *Werner*. Come!
 Come to my arms again! Why, thou look'st all
 I should have been, and was not. *Josephine*!
 Sure 'tis no father's fondness dazzles me;
 But, had I seen that form amid ten thousand
 Youth of the choicest, my heart would have chosen
 This for my son!
Ulr. And yet you knew me not!
Wer. Alas! I have had that upon my soul,
 Which makes me look on all men with an eye
 That only knows the evil at first glance.
Ulr. My memory served me far more fondly: I
 Have not forgotten aught; and oft-times in
 The proud and princely halls of — (I'll not name them,
 As you say that 'tis perilous) — but i' the pomp
 Of your sire's feudal mansion, I look'd back
 To the Bohemian mountains many a sunset,
 And wept to see another day go down
 O'er thee and me, with those huge hills between us.
 They shall not part us more.
Wer. I know not that.
 Are you aware my father is no more?
Ulr. Oh, heavens! I left him in a green old age,
 And looking like the oak, worn, but still steady
 Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees
 Fell fast around him. 'T was scarce three months since.
Wer. Why did you leave him?
Jos. (embracing *ULRIC*). Can you ask that question?
 Is he not here?
Wer. True: he hath sought his parents,
 And found them; but, oh! how, and in what state!
Ulr. All shall be better'd. What we have to do
 Is to proceed, and to assert our rights,
 Or rather yours; for I waive all, unless
 Your father has disposed in such a sort
 Of his broad lands as to make mine the foremost,
 So that I must prefer my claim for form:
 But I trust better, and that all is yours.
Wer. Have you not heard of *Stralenheim*?
Ulr. I saved
 His life but yesterday: he's here.
Wer. You saved
 The serpent who will sting us all!
Ulr. You speak
 Riddles: what is this *Stralenheim* to us? [lands;
Wer. Every thing. One who claims our father's
 Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.
Ulr. I never heard his name till now. The count,
 Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman, who,
 If his own line should fail, might be remotely
 Involved in the succession; but his titles
 Were never named before me — and what then?
 His right must yield to ours.
Wer. Ay, if at Prague:
 But here he is all-powerful; and has spread
 A a

Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto
He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not
By favour.

Ulr. Doth he personally know you?

Wer. No; but he guesses shrewdly at my person,
As he betray'd last night; and I, perhaps,
But owe my temporary liberty
To his uncertainty.

Ulr. I think you wrong him
(Excuse me for the phrase); but Stralenheim
Is not what you prejudice him, or, if so,
He owes me something both for past and present.
I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me.
He hath been plunder'd too, since he came hither:
Is sick; a stranger; and as such not now
Able to trace the villain who hath robb'd him:
I have pledged myself to do so; and the business
Which brought me here was chiefly that¹: but I
Have found, in searching for another's dross,
My own whole treasure—you, my parents!

Wer. (agitatedly). Who
Taught you to mouth that name of "villain?"

Ulr. What
More noble name belongs to common thieves?

Wer. Who taught you thus to brand an unknown
being

With an infernal stigma?

Ulr. My own feelings
Taught me to name a ruffian from his deeds.

Wer. Who taught you, long-sought and ill-found
boy! that

It would be safe for my own son to insult me?

Ulr. I named a villain. What is there in common
With such a being and my father?

Wer. Every thing!
That ruffian is thy father!²

Jos. Oh, my son!
Believe him not—and yet!—(her voice falters.)

*Ulr. (starts, looks earnestly at WERNER, and then
says slowly,)* And you avow it?

Wer. Ulric! before you dare despise your father,
Learn to divine and judge his actions. Young,
Rash, new to life, and rear'd in luxury's lap,
Is it for you to measure passion's force,
Or misery's temptation? Wait—(not long,
It cometh like the night, and quickly)—Wait!—
Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted³—till
Sorrow and shame are handmaids of your cabin;
Famine and poverty your guests at table;
Despair your bed-fellow—then rise, but not
From sleep, and judge! Should that day e'er arrive—

¹ [The following is the original passage in the novel:—"Stralenheim," said Conrad, "does not appear to be altogether the man you take him for: but were it even otherwise, he owes me gratitude not only for the past, but for what he supposes to be my present employment. I saved his life, and he therefore places confidence in me. He hath been robbed last night—is sick—a stranger—and in no condition to discover the villain who has plundered him; and the business on which I sought the attendant was chiefly that," &c.—LEE.]

² ["And who," said he, "has entitled you to brand thus with ignominious epithets a being you do not know? Who has taught you that it would be even safe for my son to insult me?"—It is not necessary to know the person of a ruffian, replied Conrad indignantly, "to give him the appellation he merits: and what is there in common between my father and such a character?"—"Every thing," said Siegendorf, bitterly,—"for that ruffian was your father!"—*Ibid.*]

³ ["Conrad, before you thus presume to chastise me with your eye, learn to understand my actions. Young, and inexperienced in the world—reposing hitherto in the bosom of indulgence and luxury, is it for you to judge of the force of

Should you see then the serpent, who hath coil'd
Himself around all that is dear and noble
Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your path,
With but his folds between your steps and happiness,
When he, who lives but to tear from you name,
Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with
Chance your conductor; midnight for your mantle;
The bare knife in your hand, and earth asleep,
Even to your deadliest foe; and he, as 't were
Inviting death, by looking like it, while
His death alone can save you:—Thank your God!
If then, like me, content with petty plunder,
You turn aside—I did so.

Ulr. But—
Wer. (abruptly). Hear me!

I will not brook a human voice—scarce dare
Listen to my own (if that be human still)—

Hear me! you do not know this man—I do.⁴
He's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You
Deem yourself safe, as young and brave; but learn
None are secure from desperation, few

From subtilty. My worst foe, Stralenheim,
Housed in a prince's palace, couch'd within
A prince's chamber, lay below my knife!

An instant—a mere motion—the least impulse—
Had swept him and all fears of mine from earth.

He was within my power—my knife was raised—
Withdrawn—and I'm in his:—are you not so?

Who tells you that he knows you not? Who says
He hath not lured you here to end you? or
To plunge you, with your parents, in a dungeon?

[*He pauses.*]

Ulr. Proceed—proceed!

Wer. Me he hath ever known,
And hunted through each change of time—name—
fortune—

And why not you? Are you more versed in men?
He wound snares round me; flung along my path
Reptiles, whom, in my youth, I would have spurn'd
Even from my presence; but, in spurning now,
Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be
More patient? Ulric!—Ulric!—there are crimes
Made venial by the occasion, and temptations
Which nature cannot master or forbear.⁵

Ulr. (looks first at him, and then at JOSEPHINE).
My mother!

Wer. Ay! I thought so: you have now
Only one parent. I have lost alike
Father and son, and stand alone.

Ulr. But stay!
[WERNER rushes out of the chamber.]

the passions, or the temptations of misery? Wait till, like
me, you have blighted your fairest hopes—have endured
humiliation and sorrow—poverty and famine—before you
pretend to judge of their effects on you! Should that miser-
able day ever arrive," &c.—*Ibid.*]

⁴ ["You do not know this man," continued he: "I do!
I believe him to be mean, sordid, deceitful! You will con-
ceive yourself safe, because you are young and brave! Learn,
however, none are so secure but desperation or subtilty may
reach them! Stralenheim, in the palace of a prince, was in
my power! My knife was held over him—I forbore—and I
am now in his," &c. &c.—*Ibid.*]

⁵ ["Me he has known invariably through every change of
fortune or of name—and why not you? Me he has entrapped—
are you more discreet? He has wound the snares of
Idenstein around me;—of a reptile whom, a few years ago,
I would have spurned from my presence, and whom, in spurn-
ing now, I have furnished with fresh venom. Will you be
more patient? Conrad, Conrad, there are crimes rendered
venial by the occasion, and temptations too exquisite for
human fortitude to master or forbear," &c.—*Ibid.*]

Jos. (to ULRIC). Follow him not, until this storm
of passion

Abates. Think'st thou, that were it well for him,
I had not follow'd?

Ulr. I obey you, mother,
Although reluctantly. My first act shall not
Be one of disobedience.

Jos. Oh! he is good!
Condemn him not from his own mouth, but trust
To me, who have borne so much with him, and for
him,

That this is but the surface of his soul,
And that the depth is rich in better things.

Ulr. These then are but my father's principles?
My mother thinks not with him?

Jos. Nor doth he
Think as he speaks. Alas! long years of grief
Have made him sometimes thus.

Ulr. Explain to me
More clearly, then, these claims of Stralenheim,
That, when I see the subject in its bearings,
I may prepare to face him, or at least
To extricate you from your present perils.

I pledge myself to accomplish this—but would
I had arrived a few hours sooner!

Jos. Ay!
Hadst thou but done so!

Enter GABOR and IDENSTEIN, with Attendants.
Gab. (to ULRIC). I have sought you, comrade.
So this is my reward!

Ulr. What do you mean?
Gab. 'Sdeath! have I lived to these years, and
for this!

(*To IDENSTEIN.*) But for your age and folly, I
would—

Iden. Help!
Hands off! Touch an intendant!

Gab. Do not think
I'll honour you so much as save your throat
From the Ravenstone¹ by choking you myself.

Iden. I thank you for the respite: but there are
Those who have greater need of it than me.

Ulr. Unriddle this vile wrangling, or—
Gab. At once, then,
The baron has been robb'd, and upon me
This worthy personage has deign'd to fix
His kind suspicions—me! whom he ne'er saw
Till yester' evening.

Iden. Wouldst have me suspect
My own acquaintances? You have to learn
That I keep better company.

Gab. You shall
Keep the best shortly, and the last for all men,
The worms! you hound of malice!

[GABOR seizes on him.]
Ulr. (interfering). Nay, no violence:
He's old, unarmed—be temperate, Gabor!

Gab. (letting go IDENSTEIN). True:
I am a fool to lose myself because
Fools deem me knave: it is their homage.

Ulr. (to IDENSTEIN). How
Fare you?

Iden. Help!
Ulr. I have help'd you.

¹ The Ravenstone, "Rabenstein," is the stone gibbet of
Germany, and so called from the ravens perching on it. [See
anté, p. 187.]

Iden. Kill him! then
I'll say so.

Gab. I am calm—live on!
Iden. That's more
Than you shall do, if there be judge or judgment
In Germany. The baron shall decide!

Gab. Does he abet you in your accusation?
Iden. Does he not?

Gab. Then next time let him go sink
Ere I go hang for snatching him from drowning.
But here he comes!

Enter STRALENHEIM.
Gab. (goes up to him). My noble lord, I'm here!

Stral. Well, sir!
Gab. Have you aught with me?
Stral. What should I
Have with you?

Gab. You know best, if yesterday's
Flood has not wash'd away your memory;
But that's a trifle. I stand here accused,
In phrases not equivocal, by yon
Intendant, of the pillage of your person
Or chamber:—is the charge your own or his?

Stral. I accuse no man.
Gab. Then you acquit me, baron?
Stral. I know not whom to accuse, or to acquit,
Or scarcely to suspect.

Gab. But you at least
Should know whom not to suspect. I am insulted—
Oppress'd here by these menials, and I look
To you for remedy—teach them their duty!
To look for thieves at home were part of it,
If duly taught; but, in one word, if I
Have an accuser, let it be a man
Worthy to be so of a man like me.

I am your equal.
Stral. You!

Gab. Ay, sir; and, for
Aught that you know, superior; but proceed—
I do not ask for hints, and surmises,
And circumstance, and proofs; I know enough
Of what I have done for you, and what you owe me,
To have at least waited your payment rather
Than paid myself, had I been eager of
Your gold. I also know, that were I even
The villain I am deem'd, the service render'd
So recently would not permit you to
Pursue me to the death, except through shame,
Such as would leave your scutcheon but a blank.
But this is nothing: I demand of you
Justice upon your unjust servants, and
From your own lips a disavowal of
All sanction of their insolence: thus much
You owe to the unknown, who asks no more,
And never thought to have ask'd so much.

Stral. This tone
May be of innocence.

Gab. 'Sdeath! who dare doubt it,
Except such villains as ne'er had it?

Stral. You
Are hot, sir.

Gab. Must I turn an icicle
Before the breath of menials, and their master?

Stral. Ulric! you know this man; I found him in
Your company.

Gab. We found you in the Oder;
Would we had left you there!

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