

Stral. I give you thanks, sir.
Gab. I've earn'd them; but might have earn'd more from others,
 Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.
Stral. Ulric! you know this man?
Gab. No more than you do,
 If he avouches not my honour.
Ulr. I
 Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my
 Own brief connection led me, honour.
Stral. Then
 I'm satisfied.
Gab. (ironically). Right easily, methinks.
 What is the spell in his asseveration
 More than in mine?
Stral. I merely said that I
 Was satisfied—not that you are absolved.
Gab. Again! Am I accused or no?
Stral. Go to!
 You wax too insolent. If circumstance
 And general suspicion be against you,
 Is the fault mine? Is't not enough that I
 Decline all question of your guilt or innocence?
Gab. My lord, my lord, this is mere cozenage,
 A vile equivocation; you well know
 Your doubts are certainties to all around you—
 Your looks a voice—your frowns a sentence; you
 Are practising your power on me—because
 You have it; but beware! you know not whom
 You strive to tread on.
Stral. Threat'st thou?
Gab. Not so much
 As you accuse. You hint the basest injury,
 And I retort it with an open warning
Stral. As you have said, 'tis true I owe you some-
 thing,
 For which you seem disposed to pay yourself.
Gab. Not with your gold.
Stral. With bootless insolence.
 [To his Attendants and IDENSTEIN.
 You need not further to molest this man,
 But let him go his way. Ulric, good morrow!
 [Exit STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, and Attendants.
Gab. (following). I'll after him and—
Ulr. (stopping him). Not a step.
Gab. Who shall
 Oppose me?
Ulr. Your own reason, with a moment's
 Thought.
Gab. Must I bear this?
Ulr. Pshaw! we all must bear
 The arrogance of something higher than
 Ourselves—the highest cannot temper Satan,
 Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.
 I've seen you brave the elements, and bear
 Things which had made this silkworm cast his
 skin—
 And shrink you from a few sharp sneers and words?
Gab. Must I bear to be deem'd a thief? If 'twere
 A bandit of the woods, I could have borne it—
 There's something daring in it;—but to steal
 The moneys of a slumbering man!—
Ulr. It seems, then,
 You are not guilty?
Gab. Do I hear aright?
 You too!
Ulr. I merely ask'd a simple question.

Gab. If the judge ask'd me, I would answer
 "No"—
 To you I answer thus. (He draws.)
Ulr. (drawing). With all my heart!
Jos. Without there! Ho! help! help!—Oh, God!
 here's murder!
 [Exit JOSEPHINE, shrieking.
 GABOR and ULRIC fight. GABOR is disarmed just as
 STRALENHEIM, JOSEPHINE, IDENSTEIN, &c. re-enter.
Jos. Oh! glorious heaven! He's safe!
Stral. (to JOSEPHINE). Who's safe?
Jos. My—
Ulr. (interrupting her with a stern look, and turn-
 ing afterwards to STRALENHEIM). Both!
 Here's no great harm done.
Stral. What hath caused all this?
Ulr. You, baron, I believe; but as the effect
 Is harmless, let it not disturb you.—Gabor!
 There's your sword; and when you bare it next,
 Let it not be against your friends.
 [ULRIC pronounces the last words slowly and em-
 phatically in a low voice to GABOR.
Gab. I thank you
 Less for my life than for your counsel.
Stral. These
 Brawls must end here.
Gab. (taking his sword). They shall. You have
 wrong'd me, Ulric,
 More with your unkind thoughts than sword: I would
 The last were in my bosom rather than
 The first in yours. I could have borne yon noble's
 Absurd insinuations—ignorance
 And dull suspicion are a part of his
 Entail will last him longer than his lands.—
 But I may fit him yet:—you have vanquish'd me.
 I was the fool of passion to conceive
 That I could cope with you, whom I had seen
 Already proved by greater perils than
 Rest in this arm. We may meet by and by,
 However—but in friendship. [Exit GABOR.
Stral. I will brook
 No more! This outrage following up his insults,
 Perhaps his guilt, has cancell'd all the little
 I owed him heretofore for the so-vaunted
 Aid which he added to your abler succour.
 Ulric, you are not hurt?
Ulr. Not even by a scratch.
Stral. (to IDENSTEIN). Intendant! take your
 measures to secure
 Yon fellow: I revoke my former lenity.
 He shall be sent to Frankfort with an escort
 The instant that the waters have abated.
Iden. Secure him! He hath got his sword again—
 And seems to know the use on't; 'tis his trade,
 Belike;—I'm a civilian.
Stral. Fool! are not
 Yon score of vassals dogging at your heels
 Enough to seize a dozen such? Hence! after him!
Ulr. Baron, I do beseech you!
Stral. I must be
 Obey'd. No words!
Iden. Well, if it must be so—
 March, vassals! I'm your leader, and will bring
 The rear up: a wise general never should
 Expose his precious life—on which all rests.
 I like that article of war.
 [Exit IDENSTEIN and Attendants.

Stral. Come hither,
 Ulric: what does this woman here? Oh! now
 I recognise her, 'tis the stranger's wife
 Whom they name "Werner."
Ulr. 'T is his name.
Stral. Indeed!
 Is not your husband visible, fair dame?—
Jos. Who seeks him?
Stral. No one—for the present: but
 I fain would parley, Ulric, with yourself
 Alone.
Ulr. I will retire with you.
Jos. Not so:
 You are the latest stranger, and command
 All places here.
 (Aside to ULRIC, as she goes out.) O Ulric! have a
 care—
 Remember what depends on a rash word!
Ulr. (to JOSEPHINE). Fear not!—
 [Exit JOSEPHINE.
Stral. Ulric, I think that I may trust you:
 You saved my life—and acts like these beget
 Unbounded confidence.
Ulr. Say on.
Stral. Mysterious
 And long-engender'd circumstances (not
 To be now fully enter'd on) have made
 This man obnoxious—perhaps fatal to me.
Ulr. Who? Gabor, the Hungarian?
Stral. No—this "Werner"—
 With the false name and habit.
Ulr. How can this be?
 He is the poorest of the poor—and yellow
 Sickness sits cavern'd in his hollow eye:
 The man is helpless.
Stral. He is—'tis no matter;—
 But if he be the man I deem (and that
 He is so, all around us here—and much
 That is not here—confirm my apprehension)
 He must be made secure ere twelve hours further.
Ulr. And what have I to do with this?
Stral. I have sent
 To Frankfort, to the governor, my friend,
 (I have the authority to do so by
 An order of the house of Brandenburg),
 For a fit escort—but this cursed flood
 Bars all access, and may do for some hours.
Ulr. It is abating.
Stral. That is well.
Ulr. But how
 Am I concern'd?
Stral. As one who did so much
 For me, you cannot be indifferent to
 That which is of more import to me than
 The life you rescued.—Keep your eye on him!
 The man avoids me, knows that I now know him.—
 Watch him!—as you would watch the wild boar when
 He makes against you in the hunter's gap—
 Like him he must be spear'd.
Ulr. Why so?
Stral. He stands
 Between me and a brave inheritance!
 Oh! could you see it! But you shall.
Ulr. I hope so.
Stral. It is the richest of the rich Bohemia,
 Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so near
 The strongest city, Prague, that fire and sword
 Have skimm'd it lightly: so that now, besides

Its own exuberance, it bears double value,
 Confronted with whole realms far and near
 Made deserts.
Ulr. You describe it faithfully. [but,
Stral. Ay—could you see it, you would say so—
 As I have said, you shall.
Ulr. I accept the omen.
Stral. Then claim a recompense from it and me,
 Such as both may make worthy your acceptance,
 And services to me and mine for ever.
Ulr. And this sole, sick, and miserable wretch—
 This way-worn stranger—stands between you and
 This Paradise?—(As Adam did between
 The devil and his)—[Aside.]
Stral. He doth.
Ulr. Hath he no right?
Stral. Right! none. A disinherited prodigal,
 Who for these twenty years disgraced his lineage
 In all his acts—but chiefly by his marriage,
 And living amidst commerce-fetching burghers,
 And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews.
Ulr. He has a wife, then?
Stral. You'd be sorry to
 Call such your mother. You have seen the woman
 He calls his wife.
Ulr. Is she not so?
Stral. No more
 Than he's your father:—an Italian girl,
 The daughter of a banish'd man, who lives
 On love and poverty with this same Werner.
Ulr. They are childless, then?
Stral. There is or was a bastard,
 Whom the old man—the grandsire (as old age
 Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom,
 As it went chilly downward to the grave:
 But the imp stands not in my path—he has fled,
 No one knows whither; and if he had not,
 His claims alone were too contemptible
 To stand.—Why do you smile?
Ulr. At your vain fears:
 A poor man almost in his grasp—a child
 Of doubtful birth—can startle a grandee!
Stral. All's to be fear'd, where all is to be gain'd.
Ulr. True; and aught done to save or to obtain it.
Stral. You have harp'd the very string next to
 my heart.
 I may depend upon you?
Ulr. 'T were too late
 To doubt it.
Stral. Let no foolish pity shake
 Your bosom (for the appearance of the man
 Is pitiful)—he is a wretch, as likely
 To have robb'd me as the fellow more suspected,
 Except that circumstance is less against him;
 He being lodged far off, and in a chamber
 Without approach to mine: and, to say truth,
 I think too well of blood allied to mine,
 To deem he would descend to such an act:
 Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one
 Once—though too rash.
Ulr. And they, my lord, we know
 By our experience, never plunder till [heirs,
 They knock the brains out first—which makes them
 Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought, can lose
 nothing,
 Nor e'er be robb'd: their spoils are a bequest—
 No more.
Stral. Go to! you are a wag. But say
 A 3

I may be sure you'll keep an eye on this man,
And let me know his slightest movement towards
Concealment or escape?

Ulr. You may be sure
You yourself could not watch him more than I
Will be his sentinel.

Stral. By this you make me
Yours, and for ever.

Ulr. Such is my intention. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*A Hall in the same Palace, from whence the secret
Passage leads.*

Enter WERNER and GABOR.

Gab. Sir, I have told my tale: if it so please you
To give me refuge for a few hours, well—
If not, I'll try my fortune elsewhere.

Wer. How
Can I, so wretched, give to Misery
A shelter?—wanting such myself as much
As e'er the hunted deer a covert—

Gab. Or
The wounded lion his cool cave. Methinks
You rather look like one would turn at bay,
And rip the hunter's entrails.

Wer. Ah!

Gab. I care not

If it be so, being much disposed to do
The same myself. But will you shelter me?
I am oppress'd like you—and poor like you—

Disgraced— [graced?]

Wer. (abruptly). Who told you that I was dis-
Gab. No one; nor did I say you were so: with
Your poverty my likeness ended; but
I said I was so—and would add, with truth,
As undeservedly as you.

Wer. Again!

As I?

Gab. Or any other honest man. [me
What the devil would you have? You don't believe
Guilty of this base theft?

Wer. No, no—I cannot.

Gab. Why that's my heart of honour! yon young
gallant—

Your miserly intendant and dense noble—
All—all suspected me; and why? because
I am the worst-clothed, and least named amongst
them;

Although, were Momus' lattice in your breasts,
My soul might brook to open it more widely
Than theirs: but thus it is—you poor and helpless—
Both still more than myself.

Wer. How know you that?

Gab. You're right: I ask for shelter at the hand
Which I call helpless; if you now deny it,
I were well paid. But you, who seem to have proved
The wholesome bitterness of life, know well,
By sympathy, that all the outspread gold
Of the new world the Spaniard boasts about,
Could never tempt the man who knows its worth,
Weigh'd at its proper value in the balance,
Save in such guise (and there I grant its power,
Because I feel it,) as may leave no nightmare
Upon his heart o' nights.

Wer. What do you mean?

Gab. Just what I say; I thought my speech was
plain:

You are no thief—nor I—and, as true men,
Should aid each other.

Wer. It is a damn'd world, sir.

Gab. So is the nearest of the two next, as
The priests say (and no doubt they should know
best),

Therefore I'll stick by this—as being loth
To suffer martyrdom, at least with such
An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.

It is but a night's lodging which I crave;
To-morrow I will try the waters as
The dove did, trusting that they have abated.

Wer. Abated? Is there hope of that?

Gab. There was
At noontide.

Wer. Then we may be safe.

Gab. Are you
In peril?

Wer. Poverty is ever so.

Gab. That I know by long practice. Will you not
Promise to make mine less?

Wer. Your poverty?

Gab. No—you don't look a leech for that disorder;
I meant my peril only: you've a roof,
And I have none; I merely seek a covert.

Wer. Rightly; for how should such a wretch as I
Have gold?

Gab. Scarce honestly, to say the truth on't,
Although I almost wish you had the baron's.

Wer. Dare you insinuate?

Gab. What?

Wer. Are you aware

To whom you speak?

Gab. No; and I am not used
Greatly to care. (*A noise heard without.*) But hark!
they come!

Wer. Who come?

Gab. The intendant and his man-hounds after me:
I'd face them—but it were in vain to expect
Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall I go?
But show me any place. I do assure you,
If there be faith in man, I am most guiltless:
Think if it were your own case!

Wer. (aside.) Oh, just God!

Thy hell is not hereafter! Am I dust still?

Gab. I see you're moved; and it shows well in you:
I may live to requite it.

Wer. Are you not

A spy of Stralenheim's?

Gab. Not I! and if

I were, what is there to espy in you?
Although, I recollect, his frequent question
About you and your spouse might lead to some
Suspicion; but you best know—what—and why.
I am his deadliest foe.

Wer. You?

Gab. After such
A treatment for the service which in part
I render'd him, I am his enemy:

If you are not his friend, you will assist me.

Wer. I will.

Gab. But how?

Wer. (showing the panel). There is a secret spring:
Remember, I discover'd it by chance,
And used it but for safety.

Gab. Open it
And I will use it for the same.

Wer. I found it,
As I have said: it leads through winding walls,
(So thick as to bear paths within their ribs,
Yet lose no jot of strength or stateliness.)
And hollow cells, and obscure niches, to
I know not whither; you must not advance:
Give me your word.

Gab. It is unnecessary:
How should I make my way in darkness through
A Gothic labyrinth of unknown windings?

Wer. Yes, but who knows to what place it may lead?
I know not—(mark you!)—but who knows it might
not

Lead even into the chamber of your foe?
So strangely were contrived these galleries
By our Teutonic fathers in old days,
When man built less against the elements
Than his next neighbour. You must not advance
Beyond the two first windings; if you do
(Albeit I never pass'd them), I'll not answer
For what you may be led to.

Gab. But I will.

A thousand thanks!

Wer. You'll find the spring more obvious
On the other side; and, when you would return,
It yields to the least touch.

Gab. I'll in—farewell!

[*GABOR goes in by the secret panel.*
Wer. (solus). What have I done? Alas! what had
I done

Before to make this fearful? Let it be
Still some atonement that I save the man,
Whose sacrifice had saved perhaps my own—
They come! to seek elsewhere what is before them!

Enter IDENSTEIN and Others.

Iden. Is he not here? He must have vanish'd then
Through the dim Gothic glass by pious aid
Of pictured saints upon the red and yellow [sunrise
Casements, through which the sunset streams like
On long pearl-colour'd beards and crimson crosses,
And gilded crosiers, and cross'd arms, and cowls,
And helms, and twisted armour, and long swords,
All the fantastic furniture of windows
Dim with brave knights and holy hermits, whose
Likeness and fame alike rest in some panes
Of crystal, which each rattling wind proclaims
As frail as any other life or glory.
He's gone, however.

Wer. Whom do you seek?

Iden. A villain.

Wer. Why need you come so far, then?

Iden. In the search

Of him who robb'd the baron.

Wer. Are you sure

You have divined the man?

Iden. As sure as you

Stand there: but where's he gone?

Wer. Who?

Iden. He we sought.

Wer. You see he is not here.

Iden. And yet we traced him

Up to this hall. Are you accomplices?

Or deal you in the black art?

Wer. I deal plainly,

To many men the blackest.

Iden. It may be
I have a question or two for yourself
Hereafter; but we must continue now
Our search for t' other.

Wer. You had best begin
Your inquisition now: I may not be
So patient always.

Iden. I should like to know,
In good sooth, if you really are the man
That Stralenheim's in quest of.

Wer. Insolent!
Said you not that he was not here?

Iden. Yes, one;
But there's another whom he tracks more keenly,
And soon, it may be, with authority
Both paramount to his and mine. But, come!
Bustle, my boys! we are at fault.

[*Exit IDENSTEIN and Attendants.*]

Wer. In what
A maze hath my dim destiny involved me!
And one base sin hath done me less ill than
The leaving undone one far greater. Down,
Thou busy devil, rising in my heart!
Thou art too late! I'll nought to do with blood.

Enter ULRIC.

Ulr. I sought you, father.

Wer. Is't not dangerous?

Ulr. No; Stralenheim is ignorant of all
Or any of the ties between us: more—
He sends me here a spy upon your actions,
Deeming me wholly his.

Wer. I cannot think it:
'Tis but a snare he winds about us both,
To swoop the sire and son at once.

Ulr. I cannot

Pause in each petty fear, and stumble at
The doubts that rise like briars in our path,
But must break through them, as an unarm'd carle
Would, though with naked limbs, were the wolf
rustling

In the same thicket where he hew'd for bread.
Nets are for thrushes, eagles are not caught so:
We'll overfly or rend them.

Wer. Show me how?

Ulr. Can you not guess?

Wer. I cannot.

Ulr. That is strange.

Came the thought ne'er into your mind *last night*?

Wer. I understand you not.

Ulr. Then we shall never

More understand each other. But to change

The topic—

Wer. You mean to *pursue* it, as

'Tis of our safety.

Ulr. Right; I stand corrected.

I see the subject now more clearly, and

Our general situation in its bearings.

The waters are abating; a few hours

Will bring his summon'd myrmidons from Frankfort,

When you will be a prisoner, perhaps worse,

And I an outcast, bastardised by practice

Of this same baron to make way for him.

Wer. And now your remedy! I thought to escape

By means of this accursed gold; but now

I dare not use it, show it, scarce look on it.

Methinks it wears upon its face my guilt

For motto, not the mintage of the state;

And, for the sovereign's head, my own begirt
With hissing snakes, which curl around my temples,
And cry to all beholders, Lo! a villain!

Ulr. You must not use it, at least now; but take
This ring. [*He gives WERNER a jewel.*]

Wer. A gem! It was my father's!

Ulr. And

As such is now your own. With this you must
Bribe the intendant for his old caleche
And horses to pursue your route at sunrise,
Together with my mother.

Wer. And leave you,
So lately found, in peril too?

Ulr. Fear nothing!

The only fear were if we fled together,
For that would make our ties beyond all doubt.
The waters only lie in flood between
This burgh and Frankfort; so far's in our favour.
The route on to Bohemia, though encumber'd,
Is not impassable; and when you gain
A few hours' start, the difficulties will be
The same to your pursuers. Once beyond
The frontier, and you're safe.

Wer. My noble boy!
Ulr. Hush! hush! no transports: we'll indulge
In Castle Siegendorf! Display no gold: [in them
Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,
And have look'd through him): it will answer thus
A double purpose. Stralenheim lost gold—
No jewel: therefore it could not be his;
And then the man who was possesser of this
Can hardly be suspected of abstracting
The baron's coin, when he could thus convert
This ring to more than Stralenheim has lost
By his last night's slumber. Be not over timid
In your address, nor yet too arrogant,
And Idenstein will serve you.

Wer. I will follow
In all things your direction.

Ulr. I would have
Spared you the trouble; but had I appear'd
To take an interest in you, and still more
By dabbling with a jewel in your favour,
All had been known at once.

Wer. My guardian angel!
This overpays the past. But how wilt thou
Fare in our absence?

Ulr. Stralenheim knows nothing
Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.

I will but wait a day or two with him
To lull all doubts, and then rejoin my father.

Wer. To part no more!

Ulr. I know not that; but at
The least we'll meet again once more.

Wer. My boy!
My friend! my only child, and sole preserver!
Oh, do not hate me!

Ulr. Hate my father!

Wer. Ay,

My father hated me. Why not my son?

Ulr. Your father knew you not as I do.

Wer. Scorpions

Are in thy words! Thou know me? in this guise
Thou canst not know me, I am not myself;
Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.

Ulr. I'll wait!

In the mean time be sure that all a son
Can do for parents shall be done for mine.

Wer. I see it, and I feel it; yet I feel
Further—that you despise me.

Ulr. Wherefore should I?

Wer. Must I repeat my humiliation?

Ulr. No!

I have fathom'd it and you. But let us talk
Of this no more. Or if it must be ever,
Not now. Your error has redoubled all
The present difficulties of our house,
At secret war with that of Stralenheim:
All we have now to think of is to baffle
Him. I have shown one way.

Wer. The only one,
And I embrace it, as I did my son,
Who show'd himself and father's safety in
One day.

Ulr. You shall be safe; let that suffice.
Would Stralenheim's appearance in Bohemia
Disturb your right, or mine, if once we were
Admitted to our lands?

Wer. Assuredly,
Situate as we are now, although the first
Possessor might, as usual, prove the strongest,
Especially the next in blood.

Ulr. Blood! 'tis
A word of many meanings; in the veins,
And out of them, it is a different thing—
And so it should be, when the same in blood
(As it is call'd) are aliens to each other,
Like Theban brethren: when a part is bad,
A few spilt ounces purify the rest.

Wer. I do not apprehend you.

Ulr. That may be—
And should, perhaps—and yet—but get ye ready;
You and my mother must away to-night.
Here comes the intendant: sound him with the gem;
'T will sink into his venal soul like lead
Into the deep, and bring up slime and mud,
And ooze too, from the bottom, as the lead doth
With its greased understratum; but no less
Will serve to warn our vessels through these shoals.
The freight is rich, so heave the line in time!
Farewell! I scarce have time, but yet your hand,
My father!—

Wer. Let me embrace thee!

Ulr. We may be
Observed: subdue your nature to the hour!
Keep off from me as from your foe!

Wer. Accursed

Be he who is the stifling cause which smothers
The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts;
At such an hour too!

Ulr. Yes, curse—it will ease you!
Here is the intendant.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Master Idenstein,
How fare you in your purpose? Have you caught
The rogue?

Iden. No, faith!

Ulr. Well, there are plenty more:
You may have better luck another chase.
Where is the baron?

Iden. Gone back to his chamber:
And now I think on't, asking after you
With nobly-born impatience.

Ulr. Your great men
Must be answer'd on the instant, as the bound

Of the stung steed replies unto the spur:
'Tis well they have horses, too; for if they had not,
I fear that men must draw their chariots, as
They say kings did Sesostris.

Iden. Who was he?

Ulr. An old Bohemian—an imperial gipsy.

Iden. A gipsy or Bohemian, 'tis the same,
For they pass by both names. And was he one?

Ulr. I've heard so; but I must take leave. In-
tendant,
Your servant!—Werner (*to WERNER slightly*), if
that be your name,

Yours. [*Exit ULRIC.*]

Iden. A well-spoken, pretty-faced young man!
And prettily behaved! He knows his station,
You see, sir: how he gave to each his due
Precedence!

Wer. I perceived it, and applaud
His just discernment and your own.

Iden. That's well—
That's very well. You also know your place, too;
And yet I do not know that I know your place.

Wer. (*showing the ring*). Would this assist your
knowledge?

Iden. How!—What!—Eh!

A jewel!

Wer. 'Tis your own on one condition.

Iden. Mine!—Name it!

Wer. That hereafter you permit me
At thrice its value to redeem it: 'tis
A family ring.

Iden. A family!—*yours!*—a gem!

I'm breathless!

Wer. You must also furnish me
An hour ere daybreak with all means to quit
This place.

Iden. But is it real? Let me look on it:
Diamond, by all that's glorious!

Wer. Come, I'll trust you:

You have guess'd, no doubt, that I was born above
My present seeming.

Iden. I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it: this is the true breeding
Of gentle blood!

Wer. I have important reasons

For wishing to continue privily

My journey hence.

Iden. So then you are the man

Whom Stralenheim's in quest of?

Wer. I am not;

But being taken for him might conduct

So much embarrassment to me just now,

And to the baron's self hereafter—'tis

To spare both that I would avoid all bustle.

Iden. Be you the man or no, 'tis not my business;

Besides, I never should obtain the half

From this proud, niggardly noble, who would raise

The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward—

But *this!*—another look!

Wer. Gaze on it freely;

At day-dawn it is yours.

Iden. Oh, thou sweet sparkler!

Thou more than stone of the philosopher!

Thou touchstone of Philosophy herself!

Thou bright eye of the Mine! thou loadstar of

The soul! the true magnetic Pole to which

All hearts point duly north, like trembling needles!

Thou flaming Spirit of the Earth! which, sitting
High on the monarch's diadem, attractest
More worship than the majesty who sweats
Beneath the crown which makes his head ache, like
Millions of hearts which bleed to lend it lustre!
Shalt thou be mine? I am, methinks, already
A little king, a lucky alchymist!—
A wise magician, who has bound the devil
Without the forfeit of his soul. But come,
Werner, or what else?

Wer. Call me Werner still;
You may yet know me by a loftier title.

Iden. I do believe in thee! thou art the spirit
Of whom I long have dream'd in a low garb.—
But come, I'll serve thee; thou shalt be as free
As air, despite the waters; let us hence:
I'll show thee I am honest—(oh, thou jewel!)
Thou shalt be furnish'd, Werner, with such means
Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds
Should overtake thee.—Let me gaze again!
I have a foster brother in the mart
Of Hamburg skill'd in precious stones. How many
Carats may it weigh?—Come, Werner, I will wing
thee. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

STRALENHEIM'S Chamber.

STRALENHEIM and FRITZ.

Fritz. All's ready, my good lord!

Stral. I am not sleepy,

And yet I must to bed; I fain would say
To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,
Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for slumber,
Sits on me as a cloud along the sky,
Which will not let the sunbeams through, nor yet
Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself
'Twill earth and heaven, like envy between man
And man, an everlasting mist;—I will
Unto my pillow.

Fritz. May you rest there well!

Stral. I feel, and fear, I shall.

Fritz. And wherefore fear?

Stral. I know not why, and therefore do fear more,
Because an undescribable—but 'tis
All folly. Were the locks (as I desired)
Changed, to-day, of this chamber? for last night's
Adventure makes it needful.

Fritz. Certainly,
According to your order, and beneath
The inspection of myself and the young Saxon
Who saved your life. I think they call him "Ulric."

Stral. You think! you supercilious slave! what right
Have you to tax your memory, which should be
Quick, proud, and happy to retain the name
Of him who saved your master, as a litany
Whose daily repetition marks your duty.—

Get hence! "*You think*," indeed! you who stood still
Howling and dripping on the bank, whilst I
Lay dying, and the stranger dash'd aside
The roaring torrent, and restored me to [scarce
Thank him—and despise you. "*You think!*" and
Can recollect his name! I will not waste
More words on you. Call me betimes.

Fritz. Good night!

I trust to-morrow will restore your lordship

To renovated strength and temper.

[*The scene closes.*]

SCENE III.

The secret Passage.

Gabor (solus). Four —
Five — six hours have I counted, like the guard
Of out-posts on the never-merry clock :
That hollow tongue of time, which, even when
It sounds for joy, takes something from enjoyment
With every clang. 'T is a perpetual knell,
Though for a marriage feast it rings : each stroke
Peals for a hope the less ; the funeral note
Of Love deep-buried without resurrection
In the grave of Possession ; while the knoll
Of long-lived parents finds a jovial echo
To triple Time in the son's ear.

I'm cold —
I'm dark ; I've blown my fingers — number'd o'er
And o'er my steps — and knock'd my head against
Some fifty buttresses — and roused the rats
And bats in general insurrection, till
Their cursed pattering feet and whirling wings
Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.
A light ! It is at distance (if I can
Measure in darkness distance) : but it blinks
As through a crevice or a key-hole, in
The inhibited direction : I must on,
Nevertheless, from curiosity.
A distant lamp-light is an incident
In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead me
To nothing that may tempt me ! Else — Heaven aid
me

To obtain or to escape it ! Shining still !
Were it the star of Lucifer himself,
Or he himself girt with its beams, I could
Contain no longer. Softly ! mighty well !
That corner's turn'd — so — ah ! no ! — right ! it draws
Nearer. Here is a darksome angle — so,
That's weather'd. — Let me pause. — Suppose it leads
Into some greater danger than that which
I have escaped — no matter, 't is a new one ;
And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,
Wear more magnetic aspects : I will on,
And be it where it may — I have my dagger,
Which may protect me at a pinch. — Burn still,
Thou little light ! Thou art my *ignis fatuus* !
My stationary Will-o'-the-wisp ! — So ! so !
He hears my invocation, and fails not.

[*The scene closes.*]

SCENE IV.

*A Garden.**Enter WERNER.*

Wer. I could not sleep — and now the hour's at hand ;
All's ready. Idenstein has kept his word ;
And station'd in the outskirts of the town,
Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle
Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars begin
To pale in heaven ; and for the last time I
Look on these horrible walls. Oh ! never, never
Shall I forget them. Here I came most poor,
But not dishonour'd : and I leave them with
A stain, — if not upon my name, yet in
My heart ! — a never-dying canker-worm,
Which all the coming splendour of the lands,
And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf
Can scarcely lull a moment. I must find

Some means of restitution, which would ease
My soul in part ; but how without discovery ? —
It must be done, however ; and I'll pause
Upon the method the first hour of safety.
The madness of my misery led to this
Base infamy ; repentance must retrieve it :
I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon
My spirit, though he would grasp all of mine ;
Lands, freedom, life, — and yet he sleeps as soundly,
Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous curtains
Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,
Such as when — Hark ! what noise is that ? Again !
The branches shake ; and some loose stones have fallen
From yonder terrace.

[*ULRIC leaps down from the terrace.*

Ulric ! ever welcome !

Thrice welcome now ! this filial —

Ulric. Stop ! Before

We approach, tell me —

Wer. Why look you so ?

Ulric. Do I

Behold my father, or —

Wer. What ?

Ulric. An assassin ?

Wer. Insane or insolent !

Ulric. Reply, sir, as

You prize your life, or mine !

Wer. To what must I

Answer ?

Ulric. Are you or are you not the assassin

Of Stralenheim ?

Wer. I never was as yet

The murderer of any man. What mean you ?

Ulric. Did not you *this* night (as the night before)

Retrace the secret passage ? Did you not

Again revisit Stralenheim's chamber ? and —

[*ULRIC pauses.*]

Wer. Proceed.

Ulric. Died he not by your hand ?

Wer. Great God !

Ulric. You are innocent, then ! my father's innocent !

Embrace me ! Yes, — your tone — your look — yes,

yes, —

Yet say so.

Wer. If I'er, in heart or mind,

Conceived deliberately such a thought,

But rather strove to trample back to hell

Such thoughts — if e'er they glared a moment through

The irritation of my oppressed spirit —

May heaven be shut for ever from my hopes

As from mine eyes !

Ulric. But Stralenheim is dead.

Wer. 'T is horrible ! 't is hideous, as 't is hateful ! —

But what have I to do with this ?

Ulric. No bolt

Is forced ; no violence can be detected,

Save on his body. Part of his own household

Have been alarm'd ; but as the intendant is

Absent, I took upon myself the care

Of mustering the police. His chamber has,

Past doubt, been enter'd secretly. Excuse me,

If nature —

Wer. Oh, my boy ! what unknown woes

Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering

Above our house !

Ulric. My father ! I acquit you !

But will the world do so ? will even the judge,

If — But you must away this instant.

SCENE IV.

WERNER.

Wer. No !

I'll face it. Who shall dare suspect me ?

Ulric. Yet

You had no guests — no visitors — no life

Breathing around you, save my mother's ?

Wer. Ah !

The Hungarian !

Ulric. He is gone ! he disappear'd

Ere sunset.

Wer. No ; I hid him in that very

Conceal'd and fatal gallery.

Ulric. There I'll find him.

[*ULRIC is going.*]

Wer. It is too late : he had left the palace ere

I quitted it. I found the secret panel

Open, and the doors which lead from that hall

Which masks it : I but thought he had snatch'd the

silent

And favourable moment to escape

The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were

Dogging him yester-even.

Ulric. You reclosed

The panel ?

Wer. Yes ; and not without reproach

(And inner trembling for the avoided peril)

At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus

His shelterer's asylum to the risk

Of a discovery.

Ulric. You are sure you closed it ?

Wer. Certain.

Ulric. That's well ; but had been better, if

You ne'er had turn'd it to a den for — [*He pauses.*]

Thieves !

Thou wouldst say : I must bear it and deserve it ;

But not —

Ulric. No, father ; do not speak of this :

This is no hour to think of petty crimes,

But to prevent the consequence of great ones.

Why would you shelter this man ?

Wer. Could I shun it ?

A man pursued by my chief foe ; disgraced

For my own crime ; a victim to my safety,

Imploring a few hours' concealment from

The very wretch who was the cause he needed

Such refuge. Had he been a wolf, I could not

Have in such circumstances thrust him forth.

Ulric. And like the wolf he hath repaid you. But

It is too late to ponder thus : — you must

Set out ere dawn. I will remain here to

Trace the murderer, if 't is possible. [*loch*]

Wer. But this my sudden flight will give the Mo-

suspicion : two new victims in the lieu

Of one, if I remain. The fled Hungarian,

Who seems the culprit, and —

Ulric. Who seems ? Who else

Can be so ?

Wer. Not I, though just now you doubted —

You, my son ! — doubted —

Ulric. And do you doubt of him

The fugitive ?

Wer. Boy ! since I fell into

The abyss of crime (though not of such crime), I,

Having seen the innocent oppress'd for me,

May doubt even of the guilty's guilt. Your heart

Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to accuse

Appearances ; and views a criminal

In Innocence's shadow, it may be,

Because 't is dusky.

Ulric. And if I do so,

What will mankind, who know you not, or knew

But to oppress ? You must not stand the hazard.

Away ! — I'll make all easy. Idenstein

Will for his own sake and his jewel's hold

His peace — he also is a partner in

Your flight — moreover —

Wer. Fly ! and leave my name

Link'd with the Hungarian's, or prefer'd as poorest,

To bear the brand of bloodshed ?

Ulric. Pshaw ! leave any thing

Except our father's sovereignty and castles,

For which you have so long panted and in vain !

What name ? You have no name, since that you bear

Is feign'd.

Wer. Most true ; but still I would not have it

Engraved in crimson in men's memories,

Though in this most obscure abode of men —

Besides, the search —

Ulric. I will provide against

Aught that can touch you. No one knows you here

As heir of Siegendorf : if Idenstein

Suspects, 't is but suspicion, and he is

A fool : his folly shall have such employment,

Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way

To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er

Laws reach'd this village) are all in abeyance

With the late general war of thirty years,

Or crush'd, or rising slowly from the dust,

To which the march of armies trampled them.

Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded

Here, save as such — without lands, influence,

Save what hath perish'd with him. Few prolong

A week beyond their funeral rites their sway

O'er men, unless by relatives, whose interest

Is roused : such is not here the case ; he died

Alone, unknown, — a solitary grave,

Obscure as his deserts, without a scutcheon,

Is all he'll have, or wants. If I discover

The assassin, 't will be well — if not, believe me

None else ; though all the full-fed train of menials

May howl above his ashes (as they did

Around him in his danger on the Oder),

Will no more stir a finger now than then.

Hence ! hence ! I must not hear your answer, —

Look !

The stars are almost faded, and the grey

Begins to grizzle the black hair of night.

You shall not answer : — Pardon me that I

Am peremptory ; 't is your son that speaks,

Your long-lost, late-found son. — Let's call my mo-

ther !

Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest

To me : I'll answer for the event as far

As regards you, and that is the chief point,

As my first duty, which shall be observed.

We'll meet in Castle Siegendorf — once more

Our banners shall be glorious ! Think of that

Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,

Whose youth may better battle with them. — Hence !

And may your age be happy ! — I will kiss

My mother once more, then Heaven's speed be with

you !

Wer. This counsel's safe — but is it honourable ?

Ulric. To save a father is a child's chief honour.

[*Exeunt.*]