

The tale is doubtless worthy the relater.
But is it of my father to hear further?

[To SIEGENDORF.]

Sieg. (takes his son by the hand). My son! I know my own innocence, and doubt not of yours—but I have promised this man patience; Let him continue.

Gab. I will not detain you By speaking of myself much: I began Life early—and am what the world has made me. At Frankfort on the Oder, where I pass'd A winter in obscurity, it was My chance at several places of resort (Which I frequented sometimes, but not often) To hear related a strange circumstance In February last. A martial force, Sent by the state, had, after strong resistance, Secured a band of desperate men, supposed Marauders from the hostile camp.—They proved, However, not to be so—but banditti, Whom either accident or enterprise Had carried from their usual haunt—the forests Which skirt Bohemia—even into Lusatia. Many amongst them were reported of High rank—and martial law slept for a time. At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers, And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction Of the free town of Frankfort. Of their fate, I know no more.

Sieg. And what is this to Ulric?

Gab. Amongst them there was said to be one man Of wonderful endowments:—birth and fortune, Youth, strength, and beauty, almost superhuman, And courage as unrivall'd, were proclaim'd His by the public rumour; and his sway, Not only over his associates, but His judges, was attributed to witchcraft. Such was his influence:—I have no great faith In any magic save that of the mine— I therefore deem'd him wealthy.—But my soul Was roused with various feelings to seek out This prodigy, if only to behold him.

Sieg. And did you so?

Gab. You'll hear. Chance favour'd me: A popular affray in the public square Drew crowds together—it was one of those Occasions where men's souls look out of them, And show them as they are—even in their faces: The moment my eye met his, I exclaim'd, "This is the man!" though he was then, as since, With the nobles of the city. I felt sure I had not err'd, and watch'd him long and nearly; I noted down his form—his gesture—features, Stature, and bearing—and amidst them all, Midst every natural and acquired distinction, I could discern, methought, the assassin's eye And gladiator's heart.

Ulr. (smiling). The tale sounds well.

Gab. And may sound better.—He appear'd to me One of those beings to whom Fortune bends As she doth to the daring—and on whom The fates of others oft depend; besides, An indescribable sensation drew me Near to this man, as if my point of fortune Was to be fix'd by him.—There I was wrong.

Sieg. And may not be right now.

Gab. I follow'd him, Solicited his notice—and obtain'd it—

Though not his friendship:—it was his intention To leave the city privately—we left it Together,—and together we arriv'd In the poor town where Werner was conceal'd, And Stralenheim was succour'd—Now we are on The verge—*dare* you hear further?

Sieg. I must do so— Or I have heard too much.

Gab. I saw in you A man above his station—and if not So high, as now I find you, in my then Conceptions, 't was that I had rarely seen Men such as you appear'd in height of mind In the most high of worldly rank; you were Poor, even to all save rags: I would have shared My purse, though slender, with you—you refused it.

Sieg. Doth my refusal make a debt to you, That thus you urge it?

Gab. Still you owe me something, Though not for that; and I owed you my safety, At least my seeming safety, when the slaves Of Stralenheim pursued me on the grounds That I had robb'd him.

Sieg. I conceal'd you—I, Whom and whose house you arraign, reviving viper!

Gab. I accuse no man—save in my defence. You, count, have made yourself accuser—judge: Your hall's my court, your heart is my tribunal. Be just, and I'll be merciful!

Sieg. You merciful!— You! Base calumniator!

Gab. I. 'T will rest With me at last to be so. You conceal'd me— In secret passages known to yourself, You said, and to none else. At dead of night, Weary with watching in the dark, and dubious Of tracing back my way, I saw a glimmer, Through distant crannies, of a twinkling light: I follow'd it, and reach'd a door—a secret Portal—which open'd to the chamber, where, With cautious hand and slow, having first undone As much as made a crevice of the fastening, I look'd through and beheld a purple bed, And on it Stralenheim!

Sieg. Asleep! And yet You slew him!—Wretch!

Gab. He was already slain, And bleeding like a sacrifice. My own Blood became ice.

Sieg. But he was all alone! You saw none else? You did not see the—

[He pauses from agitation.]

Gab. No, He, whom you dare not name, nor even I Scarce dare to recollect, was not then in The chamber. [still—]

Sieg. (to ULRIC). Then, my boy! thou art guiltless Thou bad'st me say I was so once—Oh! now Do thou as much!

Gab. Be patient! I can not Recede now, though it shake the very walls Which frown above us. You remember,—or If not, your son does,—that the locks were changed Beneath his chief inspection on the morn Which led to this same night: how he had enter'd He best knows—but within an antechamber, The door of which was half ajar, I saw A man who wash'd his bloody hands, and oft

With stern and anxious glance gazed back upon The bleeding body—but it moved no more.

Sieg. Oh! God of fathers!

Gab. I beheld his features As I see yours—but yours they were not, though Resembling them—behold them in Count Ulric's! Distinct, as I beheld them, though the expression Is not now what it then was;—but it was so When I first charg'd him with the crime—so lately.

Sieg. This is so— [the end!]

Gab. (interrupting him). Nay—but hear me to Now you must do so.—I conceived myself Betray'd by you and him (for now I saw There was some tie between you) into this Pretended den of refuge, to become The victim of your guilt; and my first thought Was vengeance: but though arm'd with a short poniard (Having left my sword without) I was no match For him at any time, as had been proved That morning—either in address or force. I turn'd, and fled—i' the dark: chance rather than Skill made me gain the secret door of the hall, And thence the chamber where you slept: if I Had found you waking, Heaven alone can tell What vengeance and suspicion might have prompted; But ne'er slept guilt as Werner slept that night.

Sieg. And yet I had horrid dreams! and such brief The stars had not gone down when I awoke. [sleep, Why didst thou spare me? I dreamt of my father— And now my dream is out!

Gab. 'T is not my fault, If I have read it.—Well! I fled and hid me— Chance led me here after so many moons— And show'd me Werner in Count Siegendorf! Werner, whom I had sought in huts in vain, Inhabited the palace of a sovereign! You sought me and have found me—now you know My secret, and may weigh its worth.

Sieg. (after a pause). Indeed!

Gab. Is it revenge or justice which inspires Your meditation?

Sieg. Neither—I was weighing The value of your secret.

Gab. You shall know it At once:—When you were poor, and I, though poor, Rich enough to relieve such poverty As might have envy'd mine, I offer'd you My purse—you would not share it:—I'll be franker With you: you are wealthy, noble, trusted by The imperial powers—you understand me?

Sieg. Yes. *Gab.* Not quite. You think me venal, and scarce 'T is no less true, however, that my fortunes [true: Have made me both at present. You shall aid me; I would have aided you—and also have Been somewhat damaged in my name to save Yours and your son's. Weigh well what I have said. *Sieg.* Dare you await the event of a few minutes' Deliberation?

Gab. (casts his eyes on ULRIC, who is leaning against a pillar). If I should do so?

Sieg. I pledge my life for yours. Withdraw into This tower. [Opens a turret door.]

Gab. (hesitatingly). This is the second safe asylum You have offer'd me.

¹ ["*Gab.* I have yet an additional security—I did not enter Prague a solitary individual; and there are tongues without that will speak for me, although I should even share the fate

Sieg. And was not the first so?

Gab. I know not that even now—but will approve The second. I have still a further shield.— I did not enter Prague alone; and should I Be put to rest with Stralenheim, there are Some tongues without will wag in my behalf. Be brief in your decision!

Sieg. I will be so.—

My word is sacred and irrevocable Within these walls, but it extends no further.

Gab. I'll take it for so much.

Sieg. (points to ULRIC's sabre still upon the ground). Take also that—

I saw you eye it eagerly, and him Distrustfully.

Gab. (takes up the sabre). I will; and so provide To sell my life—not cheaply.

[GABOR goes into the turret, which SIEGENDORF closes.]

Sieg. (advances to ULRIC). Now, Count Ulric! For son I dare not call thee—What say'st thou?

Ulr. His tale is true.

Sieg. True, monster!

Ulr. Most true, father! And you did well to listen to it: what

We know, we can provide against. He must Be silenced.

Sieg. Ay, with half of my domains; And with the other half, could he and thou Unsay this villany.

Ulr. It is no time

For trifling or dissembling. I have said His story's true; and he too must be silenced.

Sieg. How so?

Ulr. As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull As never to have hit on this before?

When we met in the garden, what except Discovery in the act could make me know His death? Or had the prince's household been

Then summon'd, would the cry for the police Been left to such a stranger? Or should I

Have loiter'd on the way? Or could you, Werner, The object of the baron's hate and fears,

Have fled, unless by many an hour before Suspicion woke? I sought and fathom'd you,

Doubting if you were false or feeble: I Perceived you were the latter; and yet so

Confiding have I found you, that I doubted At times your weakness.

Sieg. Parricide! no less Than common stabber! What deed of my life,

Or thought of mine, could make you deem me fit For your accomplice?

Ulr. Father, do not raise The devil you cannot lay between us. This

Is time for union and for action, not For family disputes. While you were tortured,

Could I be calm? Think you that I have heard This fellow's tale without some feeling?—You

Have taught me feeling for you and myself; For whom or what else did you ever teach it?

Sieg. Oh! my dead father's curse! 't is working now.

Ulr. Let it work on! the grave will keep it down! Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy

To baffle such, than countermine a mole,

of Stralenheim. Let your deliberation be short."—"*Sieg.* My promise is solemn, sacred, irrevocable: it extends not, however, beyond these walls."—LEE.]

Which winds its blind but living path beneath you.
Yet hear me still!—If you condemn me, yet
Remember *who* hath taught me once too often
To listen to him! *Who* proclaim'd to me
That *there were crimes* made venial by the occasion?
That passion was our nature? that the goods
Of Heaven waited on the goods of fortune?
Who show'd me his humanity secured
By his *nerves* only? *Who* deprived me of
All power to vindicate myself and race
In open day? By his disgrace which stamp'd
(It might be) bastardy on me, and on
Himself—a *felon's* brand! The man who is
At once both warm and weak invites to deeds
He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange [done
That I should *act* what you could *think*? We have
With right and wrong; and now must only ponder
Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim,
Whose life I saved from impulse, as, *unknown*,
I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's, I slew
Known as our foe—but not from vengeance. He
Was a rock in our way which I cut through,
As doth the bolt, because it stood between us
And our true destination—but not idly.
As stranger I preserved him, and he *owed me*
His *life*: when due, I but resumed the debt.
He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf wherein
I have plunged our enemy. *You* kindled first
The torch—*you* show'd the path; now trace me that
Of safety—or let me!

Sieg. I have done with life!
Ulr. Let us have done with that which cankers
life—

Familiar feuds and vain recriminations
Of things which cannot be undone. We have
No more to learn or hide: I know no fear,
And have within these very walls men who [things.
(Although you know them not) dare venture all
You stand high with the state; what passes here
Will not excite her too great curiosity:
Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,
Stir not, and speak not;—leave the rest to me;
We must have no *third* babblers thrust between us.

[*Exit* ULRIC.
Sieg. (*solus*). Am I awake? are these my father's
halls?

And *you*—my son? *My* son! *mine*! who have ever
Abhor'd both mystery and blood, and yet
Am plunged into the deepest hell of both!
I must be speedy, or more will be shed—
The Hungarian's!—Ulr—he hath partisans,
It seems: I might have guess'd as much. Oh fool!
Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key
(As I too) of the opposite door which leads
Into the turret. Now then! or once more
To be the father of fresh crimes, no less
Than of the criminal! Ho! Gabor! Gabor!
[*Exit into the turret, closing the door after him.*

SCENE II.

The Interior of the Turret.

GABOR and SIEGENDORF.

Gab. Who calls?
Sieg. I—Siegendorf! Take these, and fly!
Lose not a moment!

[*Tears off a diamond star and other jewels, and
thrusts them into GABOR's hand.*

Gab. What am I to do
With these?
Sieg. Whate'er you will: sell them, or hoard,
And prosper; but delay not, or you are lost!
Gab. You pledged your honour for my safety!
Sieg. And
Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,
It seems, of my own castle—of my own
Retainers—nay, even of these very walls,
Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!
Or you will be slain by—

Gab. Is it even so?
Farewell, then! Recollect, however, Count,
You sought this fatal interview!

Sieg. I did:
Let it not be more fatal still!—Begone!

Gab. By the same path I enter'd?
Sieg. Yes; that's safe still:
But loiter not in Prague;—you do not know
With whom you have to deal.

Gab. I know too well—
And knew it ere yourself, unhappy sire!
Farewell! [*Exit* GABOR.

Sieg. (*solus and listening*). He hath clear'd the
staircase. Ah! I hear
The door sound loud behind him! He is safe!
Safe!—Oh, my father's spirit!—I am faint—
[*He leans down upon a stone seat, near the wall
of the tower, in a drooping posture.*

Enter ULRIC, with others armed, and with weapons
drawn.

Ulr. Despatch!—he's there!
Lud. The count, my lord!

Ulr. (*recognising* SIEGENDORF). *You* here, sir!
Sieg. Yes: if you want another victim, strike!
Ulr. (*seeing him stript of his jewels*). Where is the
ruffian who hath plunder'd you?

Vassals, despatch in search of him! You see
'T was as I said—the wretch hath stript my father
Of jewels which might form a prince's heir-loom!
Away! I'll follow you forthwith.

[*Exeunt all but* SIEGENDORF and ULRIC.
What's this?

Where is the villain?
Sieg. There are *two*, sir: which
Are you in quest of?

Ulr. Let us hear no more
Of this: he must be found. You have not let him
Escape?

Sieg. He's gone.
Ulr. With your connivance?
Sieg. With

My fullest, freest aid.
Ulr. Then fare you well!
[ULRIC *is going*.

Sieg. Stop! I command—entreat—implore! Oh,
Ulr!
Will you then leave me?

Ulr. What! remain to be
Denounced—dragg'd, it may be, in chains; and all
By your inherent weakness, half-humanity,
Selfish remorse, and temporising pity,
That sacrifices your whole race to save
A wretch to profit by our ruin! No, count,
Henceforth you have no son!

Sieg. I never had one;
And would you ne'er had borne the useless name!

Where will you go? I would not send you forth
Without protection.

Ulr. Leave that unto me.
I am not alone; nor merely the vain heir
Of your domains; a thousand, ay, ten thousand
Swords, hearts, and hands, are mine.

Sieg. The foresters!
With whom the Hungarian found you first at Frank-
fort!

Ulr. Yes—men—who are worthy of the name!
Your senators that they look well to Prague;
Their feast of peace was early for the times;
There are more spirits abroad than have been laid
With Wallenstein!

Enter JOSEPHINE and IDA.

Jos. What is't we hear? My Siegendorf!
Thank Heav'n, I see you safe!

Sieg. Safe!

Ida. Yes, dear father!
Sieg. No, no; I have no children: never more
Call me by that worst name of parent.

Jos. What
Means my good lord!

Sieg. That you have given birth
To a demon!

Ida. (*taking* ULRIC's hand). Who shall dare say
this of Ulr?

Sieg. *Ida*, beware! there's blood upon that hand.
Ida. (*stooping to kiss it*). I'd kiss it off, though it
were mine.

Sieg. It is so!
Ulr. Away! it is your father's! [*Exit* ULRIC.
Ida. Oh, great God!

And I have loved this man!
[*IDA falls senseless—JOSEPHINE stands speech-
less with horror.*

Sieg. The wretch hath slain
Them both!—My Josephine! we are now alone!

Would we had ever been so!—All is over
For me!—Now open wide, my sire, thy grave;
Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son
In mine!—The race of Siegendorf is past!

Hours of Idleness:

A SERIES OF POEMS, ORIGINAL AND TRANSLATED.¹

Virginibus puerisque canto. — HORACE, lib. iii. Ode 1.
Μῆν' ἄρ' ἄρ' μὲν ἰδὲν αἶνε, μῆν' ἄρ' ἴδμεν. — HOMER, *Iliad*, x. 249.
He whistled as he went, for want of thought. — DRYDEN.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE FREDERICK, EARL OF CARLISLE,

KNIGHT OF THE GARTER, ETC. ETC.

THE SECOND EDITION OF THESE POEMS IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED WARD AND AFFECTIONATE KINSMAN,²

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.³

IN submitting to the public eye the following col-
lection, I have not only to combat the difficulties that
writers of verse generally encounter, but may incur
the charge of presumption for obtruding myself on
the world, when, without doubt, I might be, at my
age, more usefully employed.

These productions are the fruits of the lighter hours
of a young man who has lately completed his nine-
teenth year. As they bear the internal evidence of a
boyish mind, this is, perhaps, unnecessary information.
Some few were written during the disadvantages of

illness and depression of spirits: under the former
influence, "CHILDISH RECOLLECTIONS," in particular,
were composed. This consideration, though it cannot
excite the voice of praise, may at least arrest the arm
of censure. A considerable portion of these poems
has been privately printed, at the request and for the
perusal of my friends. I am sensible that the partial
and frequently injudicious admiration of a social
circle is not the criterion by which poetical genius is
to be estimated, yet, "to do greatly," we must "dare
greatly;" and I have hazarded my reputation and
feelings in publishing this volume. "I have passed
the Rubicon," and must stand or fall by the "cast of

¹ [First published in 1807.]

² [Isabella, the daughter of William, fourth Lord Byron
(great-great uncle of the Poet), became, in 1742, the wife of
Henry, fourth Earl of Carlisle, and was the mother of the
fifth Earl, to whom this dedication was addressed. This

lady was a poetess in her way. The Fairy's Answer to Mrs.
Greville's "Prayer of Indifference," in Pearch's Collection,
is usually ascribed to her.]

³ [This Preface was omitted in the second edition.]