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***GOTHIC BOURNES***

**THE DEMON'S ISLE.**

**(1826)**

TRANSCRIPTION BY

**Incihan Hotaman**

**EDITING GOTHIC TEXTS**

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**LEGENDS OF TERROR !  
AND  
TALES  
OF THE  
WONDERFUL AND THE WILD.**

-  
**Original and Select**

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**IN PROSE AND VERSE  
WITH HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS**

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## THE DEMON'S ISLE

—

An Original Legendary Ballad<sup>1</sup>

—

MERRILY, merrily, danced a bark  
The ocean surges o'er,  
But the tempest-fiend came wild and dark,  
And<sup>2</sup> the bark was seen no more.  
The blast was high in the starless sky,  
Where the forky flash was glaring,  
And the desert shore was sprinkled with gore  
Where the sea-bird his prey was tearing !

Slowly, slowly, the pale dawn crept  
From the dark embrace of Night ;  
The storm was hushed and the wild winds slept,  
Save a murmuring breeze that lightly swept  
A raft o'er the surges white ;  
Sir Egbert there, with his lady fair,  
For weary life were striving,  
And the burdened mast, on the current fast,  
To the Demon's Isle was driving.

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<sup>1</sup> The Title's claims of being "legendary" and "original" seem to contradict with each other, as well as the content of the story which appears more typical than original.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the original text, the conjunction "and" is incorrectly written as "aud" twice.

Sadly, sadly, o'er paths unblest,  
    They pass'd with footsteps sore,  
O'er tangled wilds that ne'er were press'd  
    By mortal foot before ;  
The wild dog howled and she-wolf growled,  
    The wanderers' hearts dismaying,  
And the serpent rolled his scaly fold,  
    Where their lonely steps were straying !

Deadly, deadly night-shade arched  
    The path of the hapless pair,  
Their limbs were faint and their lips were parched,  
    And their hearts sank in deep despair,  
For save the fruit of that poisonous root,  
    Nor berry nor herb was growing,  
And many a snake hissed loud in the brake,  
    Where the lonely stream was flowing !

Darkly, darkly fell the shade  
    Of night on the Demon's Isle ;  
His lady's couch Sir Egbert made  
    Where a withering fir o'erhung the glade,  
And he vowed with sleepless eye and blade  
    To watch around the while.  
" I'll hurl the wolf in yon craggy<sup>3</sup> gulph,<sup>4</sup>  
    If near thy slumbers prowling,  
And the serpent shall start and glide apart  
    To hear the savage howling."

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<sup>3</sup> Full of rocks or cliffs

<sup>4</sup> Archaic variant of Gul

Fatally, fatally Egbert drank,  
Of the deadly dew as it fell,  
Till in slumbers deep his eye-lids sank  
O'erpower'd with a magic spell.  
At the raven's croak with a start he woke,  
His flesh with terror creeping,  
And he softly stept where his lady had slept,  
But he found no lady sleeping !

Wildly, wildly o'er rock and steep,  
Then traversed the phrenzied<sup>5</sup> knight,  
With many a curse on his treacherous sleep,  
Aud many a curse more dread and deep  
On the treacherous elfin-sprite!<sup>6</sup>  
Up started then, from his gloomy den,  
The Fiend in his anger proudly,  
" I care not for ban of a perjured<sup>7</sup> man !"  
He cried to Sir Egbert loudly.

Boldly, boldly Sir Egbert's brow  
He crossed, then hallowed his blade,  
Cried " Holy Virgin, Oh ! help me now !"  
And cleft down the elfin shade,  
With an eldritch<sup>8</sup> scream, like a fading dream,  
The grisly shape departed,  
And his lady dear, from the cavern drear  
To his eager bosom started !

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<sup>5</sup> Frenzied

<sup>6</sup> Spirit

<sup>7</sup> According to *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, "perjury" means a "voluntary violation of an oath"; here it refers to the fact that Sir Egbert could not keep his promise of keeping an eye out to protect his lady.

<sup>8</sup> According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, the word "eldritch" suggests something that is unnatural that inspires fear.

Gaily, gaily carols the lark  
At the smile of the rising morn,  
And gaily, gaily, speeds a bark  
O'er the ocean surges borne !  
Sir Egbert there, and his lady fair,  
A boundless joy's pervading,  
And the Demon's Isle, from their ken<sup>9</sup> the while,  
Far, far o'er the billow is fading !

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<sup>9</sup> Sight. Here, the word suggests that the isle was out of their sight.