

MMES
MADRID MASTERS IN ENGLISH STUDIES
UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID

GOTHIC BOURNES

**SIR REGINALD DE CUTHBERT
(1799)**

TRANSCRIPTION BY
Daniel F. García Rabell

**EDITING GOTHIC TEXTS
EIGHTH SERIES, 2021
Nº 4**

THE
COMPANION:
BEING
A SELECTION
OF THE
BEAUTIES
OF THE MOST
CELEBRATED AUTHORS,
IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
IN PROSE AND VERSE.

'Thou, cheerfulness, by Heav'n design'd
To rule the pulse that moves the mind.'

AKENSIDE.

PRINTED BY NATHANIEL AND BENJAMIN HEATON,
FOR JOSEPH J. TODD, *PROVIDENCE*,
At the Sign of the Bible and Anchor.

M,DCC,XCIX.

Source text:

<https://books.google.es/books?id=EFZWAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=es#v=onepage&q&f=false>

(pages 167-174)

SIR REGINALD DE CUTHBERT.

A ROMANCE ELUCIDATED.

Truth lies not long conceal'd in mystery;
Clearly to Reason she reveals her light,
And Errours vanish like a mist before her.

SAVAGE.

SIR Reginald de Cuthbert, a noble knight who had long fought valiantly under the banners of the Holy Cross, when the armies were going to retire to their respective quarters for the winter, applied to the general for leave to return home. Crowned with glory, and arrayed with honour, Sir Reginald sought retirement in the land of his fathers; intending to dedicate the remainder of his days to the service of his God, in defence of whose name he had so often engaged in the horror of battle.

The many perilous adventures the knight encountered on his way from the Holy Land, we find not recorded in history, until his arrival at the borders of a dreary forest on the confines of Germany. The twilight was spreading over the hemisphere, when Sir Reginald entered what at first [168] appeared to him a small wood, which he now found extended itself by degrees into an immense and almost impenetrable forest. The knight pricked forward with great impatience, till the shades of night, which fell heavily over the forest, in some measure arrested his progress; the narrow winding path grew more and more intricate; the clouds, which seemed charged with thunder, passed slowly along the heavens; the wind now arose and whistled hollow through the branches, the rain began to rattle amidst the trees, and a tremendous storm seemed to be fast approaching, while the darkness of night surrounded him with all its horrors.

At length, overcome with fatigue and impeded by the bushes and underwood, the knight alighted from his horse, and threw himself upon the ground; but soon arose, and securing his trusty steed, walked slowly onward in hopes of finding some solitary

cottage, which might afford him shelter from the 'pelting of the pitiless storm.'¹ Ere the knight had measured many paces, he perceived a light, which, from its lofty situation, at first appeared to his deluded eye a brilliant star; he was, however, soon undeceived, and joy reanimated his drooping spirits, in a few moments he found himself at the gate of a castle. The knight knocked violently at the castle gate. 'Who is there?' some body [sic], whom he could not see, snarled with a rough voice from above. 'In the name of all the blessed saints,'² exclaimed Sir Reginald, 'I conjure you to open quickly the gate to a trav[169]eller, who hast lost his way in the forest, and is piteously beaten by the tempest.' No answer was returned, but the gate was opened by an unseen hand. The entrance was still and gloomy as the grave. The knight groped his way through the dark. 'Come!' roared the same rough voice he had heard before; at the same time, a hand, cold as ice, pulled him along. Sir Reginald shuddered violently, and was going to retire, when the gate was shut after him with a thundering noise.

Perceiving that all retreat was cut off, he bade defiance to his fate, and resolved to meet the worst as a man. After advancing a few paces, the icy hand was drawn back. The knight stopped to wait till it should again lay hold of him, and lead him farther; but waited in vain; he groped around, expecting to find his guide, whom he fancied to be near, but he was gone. Not a footstep or the most distant sound was heard through the whole building. Not a single ray of light broke through the dismal darkness, which surrounded him, yet he proceeded with extended arms and advanced about thirty steps, when something impeded his passage, he endeavoured to examine it with his hand, but it seemed suddenly to start back; he once more stretched out his hand, and felt a heap of skulls and bones. Horror and a chilly tremor shook his whole frame. The awful stillness, which surrounded him, was still uninterrupted.

The knight was fixed to the ground, wildly staring through the impenetrable darkness. At length [170] a hollow broken sound was heard, which seemed at a great distance. After a long pause, it vibrated in his ear a second time. The idea that he had nothing more to lose, and that every means of effecting an escape from that residence of horror was cut off, entirely subdued his fear, and prompted him to follow that sound. A few paces brought him to a stone staircase. Having descended five steps, a doleful groan seemed to proceed from a room not far distant. The knight advanced slowly, and with the utmost circumspection, musing on his perilous situation, when at once he felt the passage obstructed by a door, which opened without difficulty. The room to which it led was also a residence of darkness and dismal silence. The knight was resolved to enter it boldly. Fortunately he examined the entrance with his foot, before he proceeded, and found with unspeakable horror, that it was bottomless. The hollow dismal sound again struck his ear from a small distance. He shuddered violently, and staggered onward.

¹ Quoted from William Shakespeare's *King Lear*: Act III, Scene IV. It has been slightly misquoted, since the original was "pelting of this pitiless storm".

² If a character speaks, the text opens and closes with ('). However, at the beginning of a line, if it happens to start in the middle of a sentence uttered by a character, there is also a ('), perhaps to remind the reader that a character is speaking. This has been entirely removed in this transcription, since the lines are not being respected as they were originally written, and it is not adequate in present day English.

Every thing [sic] was now lonely and silent all around; at length he came to a second staircase, ascended seven steps, and then descended as many, when his eyes suddenly beheld a faint glimmer of light, which seemed to emerge from below, at a great distance. Coming nearer, the knight observed that he was standing on the brink of a deep abyss, from which the glimmer broke forth. An old half rotten staircase led down; he however resolved to risk every thing [sic], and pulling off his shoes to avoid making a noise, began to descend. When [171] he came to the eighth step, the hollow sound was again repeated: the knight stopped a moment, and then went on with returning courage. When he had reached the middle, the light suddenly disappeared, and impenetrable darkness surrounded him once more. He stopped to consider what could be done, when a stone got loose beneath his feet, and rolled down with a thundering noise against the door of the vault. 'Who disturbs my rest?' the hollow, well known voice exclaimed. Sir Reginald was rivetted to the ground in dread expectation; terror sealed his lips. The door of the vault opened slowly, and a pale white figure appeared, with a candle in one hand. It advanced two steps, lifted up one hand in a menacing manner, and disappeared. The sight of this dreadful apparition almost petrified him on the spot, his senses seemed to forsake him, and the blood congealed within his veins.

The knight having recovered a little the use of his senses, with difficulty regained the top of the steps, and from thence perceived a passage quite different from the other, and following it he arrived at the foot of a spiral staircase. He ascended many steps, at length a partition impeded him, he pushed forcibly against it with his right hand, and shivered a glass pane into a thousand pieces. 'Who is there?' a rough voice exclaimed. At the same time a door opened, and a most alarming discourse filled the knight with dismal apprehensions. 'Have you sharpened the knife?' one of the talkers asked. 'Yes, it is bright and sharp,' [172] replied another voice, 'his blood shall flow abundantly.' With these words the door bust open. Horror and despair now winged Sir Reginald's steps. He flew down the staircase, and had scarcely reached the bottom, when he was suddenly seized by the ice-cold hand, which he had felt on his entrance in that abode of terror. Here the knight's senses fled, and he dropped down in a swoon.

When Sir Reginald opened his eyes, he found himself in a splendid room, lying at his ease on a superb bed, and a girl with two servants sitting by the bed-side [sic], chaffing his temples. 'Where am I?' were the first sounds he uttered. They assured him, he was in good hands; on enquiring to whom the castle belonged, he was informed it was the property of the Lady Countess of Darbis, who would see him in the morning. An excellent supper was soon after placed on the table, and the servants retired after he had finished his meal.

When left to himself, the knight began to muse on the adventures of that eventful and alarming evening. A thousand ideas crouded [sic] upon his imagination, and no clue could be found to extricate himself from the mazes of wonder and astonishment in which he was lost, the fearful apprehension of whose power he was in, and what would become of him, lay heavy on his heart; impatient to have the mystery of his situation

unfolded, and yet dreaded that period. Hope and fear crowded [sic] alternately upon his soul, until at length he fell asleep, overcome by fatigue of body and mind.

[173] Sir Reginald awoke at ten o'clock in the morning, and after breakfast, was conducted by a page through three magnificent apartments; in the fourth, the lady of the castle, dressed in black, with a veil of the same colour, was seated on a sofa. She rose on his entering the room, and courtied [sic] very civilly, then retook her seat. After a long pause, the knight said something in a faltering [sic] accent, which was meant as an excuse for his intruding visit. The lady kindly bade him welcome to her castle, and moreover desired him to be seated. This kindness dispelled all perplexity, and gave him new courage; he related his adventures of the preceding evening, at which the lady of the castle smiled often, and promised the knight, that the whole mysterious adventure should be elucidated. After dinner, the servants were called into the room, and Sir Reginald found every strange event, that had filled him with such terror, so natural, that he even blushed at his childish fears. The ice-cold hand—the skulls and bones—the spectre, &c³. were found to be the necessary appendages to every castle. The cold hand belonged to the phlegmatic porter. He drew his hand suddenly back, because the knight trembled violently and struggled to disengage himself, and was obliged to return and light the torch, which the wind had extinguished. Sir Reginald, with staggering steps, had reached a remote part of the castle, where the Countess had erected a kind of Mausoleum to her deceased husband; and his hand had touched the skulls and bones it was decorated with. The groans and sighs, which he heard, came from an old domestic, who had a violent tooth-ache. When the stone rolled down, she went out of the cellar, where she was suffered to lie, to see who was there; she threatened him with her hand, and went back, because she mistook him for one of the servants, and fancied the stone had been thrown down on purpose to frighten her. The door, which led to the bottomless room, belonged to an old cellar, where the steps had been destroyed by the ravages of time, and which the servants had left open by carelessness. The room on the spiral staircase, where the knight had broken the glass pane, was inhabited by the cook and butler. Their discourse, part of which he overheard, concerned a hog, which was to be killed the next day. When he was hurrying down the staircase, the porter received him in his arms, to prevent his falling, and carried him, during his swoon, to the apartment, where he recovered the use of his senses.

Sir Reginald was ashamed that this accidental concurrence of circumstances could have rendered him so ridiculously fearful and cowardly. 'This adventure,' said the knight to himself, 'shall teach me to bridle my impetuous imagination, to examine every thing uncommon by the torch of reason, and thus to guard my understanding against the dangerous delusions of a lively impetuous fancy.'⁴

³ The logogram 'Œ' is nowadays typed as '&', and it was used as a ligature for the letters 'et'. I have chosen this version of the logogram instead of the new one because it was easier to understand and closer in its shape to the one in the original text.

⁴ The original text did not close the statement with the mark ('). This could be a mistake or, perhaps, the editor did not consider necessary to close the statement because there was only one word in the last line

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 444 Castro Street, Suite 900, Mountain View, California, 94041, USA.



This transcription of "Sir Reginald de Cuthbert" by Daniel F. García Rabell is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/)

and it was already preceded by ('), since every line that had a statement that started in the previous line began with (').