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***GOTHIC BOURNES***

**THE STORY OF FITZALAN  
(1800)**

TRANSCRIPTION BY

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&

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*Gothic Stories.*

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**SIR BERTRAND'S**

ADVENTURES IN A RUINOUS CASTLE

*THE STORY OF  
FITZALAN:*

THE ADVENTURE  
**JAMES III. OF SCOTLAND**  
HAD WITH THE  
*WEIRD SISTERS,*  
IN THE DREADFUL  
WOOD OF BIRNAN:

*THE STORY OF  
RAYMOND CASTLE:*

THE  
RUIN OF THE HOUSE OF ALBERT:

AND  
**MARY, A FRAGMENT.**

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Third Edition, with Additions.

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THE  
STORY OF  
*FITZALAN.*

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From the Monthly Visitor.

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IT was after sun-set, one evening, in the decline of autumn, when, in consequence of a letter which he had just received, summoning him to attend the death-bed of a much-loved friend, the protector of his infancy, that Fitzalan, after having most affectionately embraced and bade adieu to his beloved wife Edith, and his infant Edwin, mounted his steed, and departed from his dwelling<sup>1</sup>. He had many miles to travel; and a great part of the road he was to pursue, lay over a bleak and dreary heath of immense extent. He quitted his home, though only for a short time, with extreme reluctance; and, notwithstanding his haste, while it remained in sight, often stopped and looked back to catch another glimpse of the place which contained all that he held dear. Edith, and her little boy, followed him to the gate; waved their hands to him while he remained visible; and when the distance and the advance of night hid him from them, returned to the house in a melancholy mood. Edith trembled for her husband, though she knew not why: the tears stole fast down her cheeks; and little Edwin, seeing his mother weep, clasped his [9] arms round her neck—hid his head in her bosom—and mingled his tears with hers.

Fitzalan having at length lost sight of the dear objects that retarded his progress, pursued his journey with all possible swiftness: in a few minutes he entered upon the heath, across which lay the road he was necessitated to take. Not a single house was to be seen before him—not an individual traveller appeared, whose presence and conversation might enliven the tedious way he had to go. It was now night, and the moon had not yet risen. The chilling wind, that howling mournfully through the trees scattered their shrivelled yellow foliage upon the ground; the gloomy, spectre-like appearance of every surrounding object; the late parting from his wife and child; and the painful nature of the duty he was then hastening to perform, all contributed to fill the bosom of Fitzalan with the most melancholy reflections. “It is now sixteen years ago,” said he to himself, with a sigh, “since my brave and tender father disappeared on this heath; slain, most probably, by the sword of some vile assassin! Would to God that I could avenge his death! but, alas, I know not his murderer! The venerable Sir Edmund too, the friend, the guardian of my youth; he, whose liberality preserved my independance [sic], when the rapacious Fitzurban wrested from me my paternal domains—he

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<sup>1</sup> The first sentence boasts very elaborate syntax as a means of preparing the storyline’s tempo.

will, perhaps, ere I can arrive at his castle, be no more! I shall not have the sad satisfaction of closing those eyes that were ever turned upon me with the tenderest affection. I shall not receive the blessing of him who delighted to contribute to my happiness: but yet, all is not lost. My faithful lovely Edith, my little Edwin, still remain; and, while I possess them, I cannot be miserable.”

In this manner Fitzalan gave vent to his meditations. He had now travelled over one-third of the heath, when he imagined that he heard, at a great distance, as the gale wafted the sound, the trampling of horses feet: he stopped for a moment, in hopes that some one might be journeying the same way with himself: he listened—but, not again hearing it, he supposed that he had [10] been deceived by the wind sweeping through the branches of the old half-leafless trees that were thinly scattered over the heath. He therefore proceeded: but, in a few minutes, again heard very plainly the noise of horsemen, advancing with great rapidity: he once more halted, and, favoured by the wind, and the stillness which reigned around him, heard one of them say to the other—“By’r lady! Walter, I wish we were well out of this adventure: for if he should prove such a lion-hearted fellow, as I have been told he is, it may, perhaps, cost us some broken bones, if even it should not turn out worse.” “Why, what a fool you are, Hugo!” re-joined the other, angrily. “Do you think that us two, well-armed, are not a match for him? It is very well that the baron does not hear you express your childish fears; he would certainly send you to keep company with the ghosts in the caverns of the castle; but, on the other hand, do but think of the angels\* we shall get possession of when we go back. Two hundred—think of that, Hugo—sweet, pretty creatures! How I long to be fingering them. By St. Cuthbert! I should desire no better sport than to have such a commission every day. Faith, I would soon be as rich as the baron; and not a whit less honest with it. But come, come, spur on, he cannot be far before us; and the sooner we get through the business, the sooner we shall get our reward. But, if we should lose him through you fears, you may e’en go back to the castle by yourself: for my part, I would as soon meet the devil as meet the baron, when he has been disappointed in one of his projects.”

Fitzalan heard this mysterious discourse with a considerable degree of anxiety. He was convinced that they were assassins; and though he knew not why, yet still he was firmly convinced that he was the object of their pursuit. The assassins were now so near that they discovered Fitzalan, and loudly called out to him to stop. As Fitzalan disdained the least thought of [11] flying from his enemies, even if flight might be of any avail, he turned his horse, and, in an angry tone, demanded the reason of their insolence. “Ask no questions of us,” replied the ferocious Walter, “but surrender yourself our prisoner.” “Slave!” re-joined Fitzalan, instantly drawing his sword, and advancing upon the ruffian, who was not backward in doing the same. Fitzalan, at last, disarmed his opponent; and, at the same instant, received a blow on the temple from Hugo, who had slyly got behind him, which stretched him senseless on the ground. On recovering from his trance, he found himself bound to the horse, his hands firmly fastened behind him, and

\* An antient [sic] gold coin worth ten shillings.

the horse led by the two ruffians who had attacked him. He repeatedly asked his conductors to what place they were conveying him, but he asked them in vain; they preserved the most profound silence. After having travelled across the heath above an hour, the faint beams of the waning moon showed, at some distance, the turrets of a castle, which appeared to Fitzalan to be that of the baron Fitzurban. He was right in his conjecture—it was the castle of Fitzurban; and thither were the ruffians conveying him. In a few minutes they reached it; and Walter having given the signal, the draw-bridge was let down; Fitzalan, when disarmed, and faint with loss of blood, finding it impossible to make any effectual resistance, suffered himself to be taken off the horse and fettered. He was now led by Hugo and Walter, with their swords drawn, into the inner court; and Walter taking a key from his pocket applied it to a door, the lock of which being rusty the age, it was some time before it could be made to open; but, at length, he succeeded. He entered, followed by Fitzalan and Hugo, and descended a number of steps into a passage of great length, damp and noisome; from which many others branched forth: at the end of this passage, a massy door strongly bolted presented itself. Walter drew back the bolts, and unlocking the door, conducted Fitzalan into a dungeon of considerable extent, and wet with unwholesome vapours. In one corner lay a [12] bundle of straw, almost rotten with age. “This, Sir,” said Walter, pointing to it with a malignant smile, “is your bed; I hope you will approve of it. We will leave you to your meditations; you will be but seldom disturbed, I promise you.”

“Base, dastardly slave!” exclaimed Fitzalan, his eyes flashing with indignation. With a contemptuous sneer, Walter and his comrade now quitted the dungeon; and as they fastened the bolts, harsh and rusty from the lapse of years, Fitzalan felt his heart die within him. He flung himself on the bed of straw, in a state of mind nearly allied to phrenzy—a thousand tender recollections presented themselves to him, and every one of them contributed to render his present situation more horrible: torn, for ever, from his Edith! from his Edwin! manacled in a dungeon! and, perhaps, on the verge of death; not a ray of hope illumined the dreary prospect before him: “Gracious heaven!” he exclaimed, “if I had been doomed to fall in the fair face of day, on the field of glory, I had indeed been blest: but, to be *thus* immured and shackled! fated, too, to perish by the hand of some vile assassin, inglorious and unrevenged! —thus to fall, and from those—it is too much for mortal endurance.” In exclamations like this, of mingled grief and indignation, Fitzalan gave utterance to his feelings. Yet, disastrous as his present situation was, the thought of the sorrow which his Edith would suffer from his loss, gave him a thousand times more unsufferable agony than the dangers to which he was exposed. Walter and Hugo, after having secured Fitzalan, proceeded to give the baron an account of the success of their mission.

They found him waiting for them with the utmost impatience. “Well, my trusty friends,” exclaimed he, the instant they appeared, “is Fitzalan in my power—beyond the possibility of escape?” “He is, my Lord,” answered Walter, “as safe as locks, bolts, and the dungeon under the north tower, can keep him.” “The north tower! the north tower! repeated the baron in a hurried tone, pressing his hands forcibly against his fore[13]head, while his eyes flashed with all the wildness of

phrenzy. His minions looked first at their lord, and then at each other, with an expression of surprise. In a few moments the baron recovered himself, and continued the discourse. "Do not be alarmed, my friends," said he, "a violent pain shot through my head, but it is gone; and I am well again. I thank you both for your fidelity: here is the reward which I promised you. This is but a small part of what you shall receive when my happiness is confirmed. Now that the hated Fitzalan is in my power, it will be a matter of very little difficulty to effect the completion of my wishes. Tomorrow night you will proceed to execute the plan which I unfolded to you. Be faithful! and rest assured, that I will reward you beyond even the utmost extent of your hopes. Hugo! to your care I commit the man I detest. At present you may both retire." They bowed and obeyed.

When he was somewhat recovered from his tempest of passion and agony, Fitzalan rose from the ground, and with agitated steps paced his prison, carefully examining every corner of it, in expectation of discovering some outlet that might afford him the hope of escape, though ever so distant. His search was not in vain. A part of the wall, when struck, returned a hollow sound; this proved to be a small door, which he supposed led to some other of the *dungeon*<sup>2</sup> under the castle. His heart rose on this discovery. With an eager hand he sought to find the bolts or locks, but without effect; it appeared to be fastened on the other side, and the massiness of the plates of iron with which it was defended, mocked every attempt to procure a passage by force. It was not, however, till he was entirely worn out by the violence of his exertions, that Fitzalan desisted from endeavouring to accomplish his purpose. Baffled in all his efforts, and made more wretched by their failure, he threw himself on his damp and half-decayed heap of straw. All was solemn silence; except when it was broken by the rattling of his chains, or when the castle-bell in deep and sullen [14] tones announced the lapse of the hours. Fitzalan several times imagined that he heard a low but heavy groan, which seemed to him like that of a person expiring: and twice or thrice he thought the bolts of the door he had discovered just grated, as though some one were striving softly to draw them back. He listened each time with the most profound attention; but not hearing any thing more, concluded that it was the effect of his over-heated and bewildered imagination. After several hours of indescribable suffering had elapsed, the agonized and exhausted Fitzalan sunk into slumber. But to him, slumber was no respite from anguish. Innumerable dim and indefinable but horrid forms, appeared to float before him, and view him with scowling and portentous aspects.

Now he thought that he heard a more than mortal voice call upon him to execute vengeance on a murderer. He started—the scene changed—the murderer, fallen beneath his sword, lay lifeless at his feet—it vanished, and he beheld his Edith kneeling for mercy, his little Edwin clinging round her neck, screaming in terror, while a ruffian, whose dagger was stained with the half-congealed blood of recent murder, was in the act of stabbing her. He sprang forward to save her, and

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<sup>2</sup> Literal transcription from the original, although the word *dungeon* should have been plural.

awoke, every limb convulsed, and the cold drops of horror trickling down his frame. "Merciful God!" he exclaimed, "my unprotected Edith!"

Thus passed the hours, till at last the dawning day appeared through a narrow oblique perforation in the wall, which just served to keep the air of the dungeon from total stagnation. Fitzalan could now examine his prison more minutely than before. This he did, but with no better effect. The door remained impervious to all his efforts; and the window, if so it might be called, gave still less prospect of escape; for independant [sic] of its form, length, and narrowness, it was firmly secured, both inside and out, by thick iron bars, which almost excluded the little light and air which was intended to be admitted. Once more then, Fitzalan in despair gave up his search, and endeavoured to discover [15] the motives of his imprisonment, but in vain. He was roused from his reverie, by the unbarring of the dungeon-door—it opened, and Hugo entered, armed, and with a drawn sword in his hand. He brought with him a pitcher of water and a small loaf, which he laid down near the door, and instantly departed without uttering a word. Heavily indeed passed the hours of this day: night at last came, and brought with it the same horrors as the preceding one. He still thought that he heard at times the deep chilling groan, and the hand endeavouring to remove the fastenings of the door which he had found impassable. He slept; again, the voice called for vengeance; again, the murderer lay slain; again, his Edith appeared on the brink of ruin; and he thought that now, with a frantic voice, she called him to save her from destruction.

About noon the next day the doors unbarred, and Hugo entered, armed, and bringing, as before, a loaf and pitcher. "Tell me," cried Fitzalan, starting from the ground, "by what authority, and for what purpose, I am brought here. To what fate am I doomed?"—"To death," answered Hugo. "It is decided upon. To-night, when the castle clock strikes twelve, expect your executioners. Recommend yourself therefore to God, and prepare for your end. I wish," added he, in a softened tone, "that I were to have no part in your murder; but if I were to refuse, my own life would be the forfeit." Saying this, he closed the door, leaving Fitzalan in a state of mind bordering upon madness. In exclamations of the most unbounded rage, in vain attempts to force a passage from his dungeon, and in meditating upon the helpless situation of his wife and infant, hour after hour passed away, till at length the bell announced eleven. Fitzalan now rallying his scattered senses, prostrated himself in supplication to the father of mercy; and implored his protection for his Edwin, for his Edith. When he pronounced these dear names, all his resolution vanished: his dreams recurred to his mind, and he felt an overpowering and ominous fear for their safety. A hollow groan rung [16] through the cell—he started, looked wildly round, and listened—but all was silent. In a few minutes the castle clock began to strike the hour of twelve. Its heavy tone sunk to the heart of Fitzalan. It was to him the voice of death. With a harsh and hideous sound the bolts flew back. "They come," exclaimed Fitzalan; and sprang from the ground, resolved, though unarmed, to resist to the last, and, if possible, not to die unrevenged. The door which he had so often tried in vain, flew open, and a pale light gleamed through the dungeon. The blood of Fitzalan ran cold in his

veins, as his eyes met the form of a venerable old man, on whose face was the pallid hue of dissolution. In his left breast, which was bare, appeared two deep and mortal wounds. The figure beckoned to Fitzalan, whose faculties were all absorbed in awe and wonder; to follow which, recovering from his surprise, he obeyed. The fetters with which he was bound instantly fell from his limbs. He followed his guide, and entered the next cell, which was illumined by a faint radiance, whose source was not visible. The door closed upon them, and the bars jarred together; his conductor advanced to near the centre of the place—then stopped; and turning round, pointed to Fitzalan a human skull laying<sup>3</sup> [sic] on the ground, and by its side a dagger; from their condition, they appeared to have lain there many years. Fitzalan shuddered at the sight; and involuntarily stooping, took up the dagger. His guide fixed his sunken eyes on him with an expression of the utmost satisfaction and tenderness, and extended his arm toward a door near them, which directly opened—then articulating with an awful voice, “vengeance on my murderer!” disappeared, leaving the dungeon in total darkness.

Fitzalan paused for a moment; it seemed to him the delusion of some delirious dream; he paused but for a moment—a thousand blended ideas and recollections of the past and present rushed across his brain, and he turned to execute the command he had received. As he passed out of this place, he heard the doors of his late [17] prison unbarring, and shuddered at the thought of the fate allotted to him, which he had so wonderfully escaped. He turned up a narrow winding pair of stairs, and traversed several suites of apartments without meeting any one. As he passed along he heard a voice—he stopped and listened, and heard the person exclaim, “By this time it is all over, and I shall be happy—Happy! wretch that I am, how can I talk of happiness? Haunted day and night by ten thousand fiends, my life is a burthen<sup>4</sup>: yet I dare not die! Was I not deeply damned enough before, but I must plunge myself yet deeper in perdition! O it may not be too late to save this one crime. Ho! Walter, Hugo, touch him not, I charge you! Ah! that bleeding form which glares upon me! O forgive me! O spare that frown, it freezes my heart!” The voice was silent for a moment, and then continued, “Foolish plantasies<sup>5</sup>! Shall I be the slave of fear? No, let him die. I shall now enjoy what I have long wished for. If she resists, force shall bend her stubborn spirit. Shame! shall I be foiled by a woman? Oh, my brain fires again! And have I dipped my hands in blood: have I doomed my soul to eternal misery for a woman? First damned by avarice, then by lust, it is vain for me to hope for mercy from heaven! Then let me seize on every pleasure here, nor think of hereafter. To think is madness. Peace! conscience, peace! I will not hear thee! She shall be mine.” Fitzalan, wrought to phrensy during this soliloquy, had raised his dagger: a door now opened just before him, from which Fitzurban came out, with a lamp and sword in his hand. As soon as he saw Fitzalan, he shrieked, dropped the sword, and before he could call for

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<sup>3</sup> Semantic error in the original text due to a confusion between the verbs *lay* and *lie*. Correction: *lying*.

<sup>4</sup> Archaic variant of *burden*.

<sup>5</sup> Transcription error within this 1800 compilation of Gothic stories. In its original source, *The Monthly Visitor and Entertaining Pocket Companion v. II*, the word appears as *phantasies*. (St. Julien, 1797, p. 526).

mercy, felt the dagger in his bosom. He fell; and seeing Fitzalan prepare to repeat the blow, feebly uttered, "Hold! in mercy hold your hand! It is enough!" The attendants, alarmed by the noise of their lord falling, now came in, and bore him to a couch. Yet such was their hatred of him, that not one of them offered to molest Fitzalan. The dying man motioned with his hand for the servants to retire [18] farther, and Fitzalan to advance.—"O much injured knight," he groaned, "can you forgive me? Will you speak peace to my departing spirit? O look not so sternly! Yet I deserve it. I have sinned beyond hope of pardon. But I must be speedy in my tale, I feel the hand of death upon me! O God! O Christ! O save a wretched sinner! Alas! for me there is no hope." Weak through loss of blood and agony, Fitzurban fainted; when he recovered, he continued—"It is now more than sixteen years since, to gratify my avarice, I caused your father to be seized as he was travelling, and conveyed to this castle. He fell in one of the dungeons of the north tower by the hands of an assassin. I gained possession of his domains by the vilest means. I robbed you of your birth-right; but I lost my peace; since that hour I have been a stranger to happiness. Suspecting all, and hated by all, I have existed the most miserable of wretches. Sleeping or waking, the spirit of your father has unceasingly been present; has still frowned on me, and threatened me with vengeance for my crimes. O save me from him! Now he smiles on me with scorn, and bids the fiend snatch my trembling soul. O mercy! mercy!" Terror stopped his utterance. In a few moments he was more calm, and proceeded—"Two years ago, I first saw your Edith, and instantly"—"Where, where is my Edith?" cried Fitzalan impetuously. "Ruffian, restore her to me." "She is safe and spotless," answered the dying Fitzurban—"restrain awhile your just indignation, and listen to me. From the time I saw your Edith, I felt a fresh fire burning in my breast. I devised a thousand plans to get her into my possession; and as fast as I had formed, rejected them. It was not till four days ago, that I formed the scheme which I put in practice; and which has righteously ended in my destruction. I wrote the letter in the name of Sir Edmund, well knowing that you would fly to your friend. The result you know. Your Edith was deluded in the same manner by a letter which I dispatched yesterday morning, and which was pretended to be written by your orders from [19] the bed-side of Sir Edmund. She likewise fell into the snare, and was brought hither. I have seen her but once, when she received me with indignation, and awed me into silence by her frown. Enraged by this reception, I ordered Hugo and Walter to dispatch you in the dungeon; and resolved to use force, if I could not by persuasion conquer the hatred of Edith. Heaven in its justice has restored you to liberty, and I fall the victim of my own wickedness. Would to God that my death might expiate all my crimes! I make you the heir of all my domains. May you long be happy with your Edith! O speak pardon and peace to my guilty soul. Yet a short time, O spare me, heaven!—O I am lost—they seize me—Mercy, Lord, mercy!" He faintly shrieked, averted his head, as if to shun the sight of something dreadful, and expired before Fitzalan could pronounce the intreated forgiveness.

After gazing a few moments on the corpse of the lifeless Fitzurban, whose features were fixed in convulsive agony, Fitzalan ordered one of the servants to conduct him to the chamber of Edith. When he entered she was sitting absorbed in

grief, with Edwin laying [sic] in her lap, and the tears trickling from her eyes upon him. As Fitzalan advanced, she lifted up her head, and frowned; but as soon as she perceived her lord, she sprang into his arms. Edwin bounded toward him, clung round him, and expressed his joy by a thousand infantine, endearing actions. Fitzalan embraced her with the most unbounded rapture<sup>6</sup>; and when the tumult of joy had a little subsided, proceeded to relate his adventure in the dungeon, in the following words:—

“My dearly beloved Edith,” and with these words he tenderly embraced her, “Heaven has rewarded you for your constancy. Fitzurban, that slave whose cankered mind projected our ruin, is no more! It was his contrivance by a letter to draw me from your arms, and by the same artful means to bring you here for violation. His dying confession to me made me tremble. He related, that in the same dungeon whence I have but [20] just emerged, my father expired under the bloody hand of an assassin. Like me he was way-laid, and being overpowered by force was led to this place, where his short confinement concluded with his death. Like him I was to have suffered under the ruffian hand of servile murderers, but heaven has averted the stroke by fending the spirit of my father to my assistance. It was he who furnished me with the dagger, the instrument of his own death, for the destruction of Fitzurban his mortal enemy, and desperate though just retribution has lain him at my feet. It is just now in my power to right myself. He has bequeathed his own domains to me, and restored what he had unjustly usurped from my father; and thus, my dear Edith, heaven rewards the patience of the faithful servant.”

Further notes:

- *The Story of Fitzalan* was first published in the second volume of the British literary magazine *The Monthly Visitor and Entertaining Pocket Companion*. Each volume comprised two issues, which meant the beginning of Fitzalan was published in the first issue, released in July 1797, and the second part in the December issue of that same year. However, readers that year must have been bitterly disappointed for when they were nearing the end of the tale and Fitzalan was finally reunited with his beloved Edith the story is suddenly cut short. Apparently, the author, Ferdinand St. Julien, had been in an accident which had rendered him incapable of finishing the tale. In fact, this issue of the magazine contained a note from the editor excusing the author and apologizing to the readers on his behalf\*. Presumably the ending was published in the third volume of said magazine, however, this volume cannot be found in the original source which stores the collection: the New York Public Library. The tale above transcribed did not include the name of the author nor any reference to the tale lacking an ending, thus it encourages debate on whether the final part belonged to the original author or to a second additional and unnamed contributor. However, there isn't solid proof to back this theory. To begin with, we know the author survived as he continued publishing stories in later volumes of the same magazine. In addition,

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<sup>6</sup> Transcription error within this 1800 compilation of Gothic stories. In its original source, *The Monthly Visitor and Entertaining Pocket Companion v. II*, the word appears as *rapture* (St. Julien, 1797, p. 528).

there is only a paragraph left in which the protagonist, Fitzalan, recounts his whole adventure to his spouse. In this last addition no discordant elements are introduced, so we must presume St. Julien ended the story in the third volume of the magazine, which we know exists since it is documented in subsequent bibliographies (Ty, 1998, p. 194)

\*[Note from the editor of the *The Monthly Visitor and Entertaining Pocket Companion* to its readers: "St. Julien most sincerely concerned, that he has hitherto been unable to give to the friends of the Monthly Visitor the conclusion of the preceding story. He craves the pardon of his readers, but more particularly of those fair ones who have expressed their anxiety for the fate of Fitzalan. He bends at their tribunal, and doubts not of their favourable verdict upon his conduct, when he pleads, and with truth, that he has not trespassed intentionally upon their patience, but only through necessity. He is sure they will give him their pity as well as their forgiveness, when he declares that he has been withheld from writing by an almost mortal illness arising from a terrible accident. St. Julien begs leave to assure them, though he has kept Fitzalan in prison so long, he has nothing Robespierrean in him, but is really a very tractable and well-disposed creature. He doubts not therefore that he shall receive next month an honourable acquittal". R.A.D.] (St. Julien, 1797, p. 529)

- The author of the story, Ferdinand St. Julien, may be a fairly unknown author to us nowadays, but he was apparently quite popular at the time. Besides *Fitzalan* he wrote multiple other stories for several volumes of this same magazine, such as *Morosus* (St. Julien, 1797) or *A Journey to the moon* (St. Julien, 1798)
- Since the tale was written in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it contains several words which are spelled differently in contemporary English, for instance, sun-set, some one, any thing, or for ever. In order to preserve the text's integrity the words are left as per their original writing.

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