

**Transcript of short story from a literary annual that is reminiscent of *Frankenstein***

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The traveller[sic], who some centuries ago had occasion to pass through the country of Thuringia, took care to choose his route by the Castle of Aarburg, unless disappointed love, or some other miserable heart-ache, cause him to seek a more solitary road. The warder stood night and day upon the watch-tower, gazing about for knights, pilgrims, or other strangers; and when lucky enough to discover one approaching, upon sounding a flourish on his cheerful horn, by the way of welcome, the gates creaked, the drawbridges rattled, the horses stamped, and the men-at-arms rode out to meet the traveller[sic], and courteously invite him to refreshment and a night's comfortable rest. The knight of the castle had a kind word for every new comer, and, according to his rank, he either conducted him into the fall, or left him to the care of his retainers until he should think proper to depart.

The last knight of the family, Sir Thimo von de Aarburg, did not derogate from the fame acquired by his ancestors for hospitality. He had succeeded to the inheritances of his brothers, uncles, and cousins, and knew no care unless when strangers and guests were wanting to partake of the good things of his castle: in such cases it even sometimes happened that he sallied forth himself to meet travellers[sic], and invite them to share his hospitality.

The greatest treasure in the Castle of Aarburg was

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the knight's only daughter, celebrated throughout all Germany by the name of "the Beautiful Bertha." -- Princes, counts, and knights, came from the four quarters of the earth to admire her and humbly solicit her love -- but she was not to be pleased so easily: [italics]this[/italics] knight she found too dull, [italics]that[/italics] too presuming, and a third was splenetic -- Frenchman, Britons, and Italians, all shared the same fate. "He who shall gain this bride," quoth[sic] gossip Rumour[sic], "will be fortune's greatest favourite[sic]; for besides the enchanting beauty with which nature has endowed her, and the immense wealth which fortune has loaded her father, there is an invaluable casket of jewels -- an ancient property of the house of Aarburg -- which she, as the last of her family, will receive at her nuptials for her bridal ornaments."

At the distance of a few arrow-flights from the Castle of Aarburg stood an ancient ruin, which the late owner, Sir Heerwart, had left as the sole inheritance of his only son Baldwin. Before the period when the emperor Maxmilian introduced the spreading plant of Roman law into German soil, and whilst every knight could protect his property with spear and sword, the good Sir Heewart was not the poorest among those of his own rank; for he was brave in battle, and made great profit by booty and ransom: but now, when the knightly spear was obliged to bend before the goose-quill, and the emperor, during public peace, laid heavy fines upon all

private feuds against the property of others, he could not get on quite so well as usual. Year after year he was obliged to cede

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apartments and towers of his ruinous castle to the bats and the owls, whose profession abroad was not prohibited life that of its luckless lord.

The young knight, Sir Baldwin, beheld with great pain the natural decay of the home of his ancestors. Little space as the whole of his personal property required, it appeared very much as if his castle would only grant him that little for the few warm days of summer, by no means promising him protection against the frost and snow of the ensuing winter. He held a private council with himself, as to what was to be done under such circumstances; but his thoughts always swerved from the tasks which he had given to his understanding, and amused his imagination with dreams and wishes, which had no sort of connexion[sic] with the case in question.

Sir Baldwin's heart was unfortunately as near to ruin as his paternal castle, with this only difference, that the cause was not from the attacks of age and pitiless enemies, but rather from the repeated assaults of youth and beauty, and against which his means of defence[sic] were still more slender. He had seen the daughter of the knight of Aarburg at a tournament, where she had been proclaimed the Queen of Beauty, and presented the prize to the victor. Sir Baldwin's arm was strengthened tenfold by the sight of her loveliness: he lifted the knights out their saddles as if they had been men of straw; and his blows fell as it spirits of the air conducted his arm. The fair Bertha was not more shortsighted than the rest of her lovely sex in these particular cases; she saw plainly enough that her

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eyes were the sunbeams, and her soft words the breath of that spring, which produced such vigorous plants of valour[sic] in the bosom of the young knight: she therefore rewarded the judges of the combat with her sweetest smiles, when they with one accord decreed the prize to her hero; and she delivered it to him with a blush, that to an experienced eye would have betrayed what was passing in her bosom.

After the tournament, Sir Baldwin did not fail to pay frequent visits to the knight of Aarburg in his own castle; and as he was a lively companion, and assisted the baron not only to project, but also to execute many an excellent practical joke, he soon became a daily guest at Aarburg, and always found a seat ready for him at the table, with a chamber and a bed besides, when he did not like to ride home through fog and darkness. The Lady Bertha sent many an inquiring glance towards the active, slender knight; even challenged him sometimes to the dance, when awkward guests threatened her with a round or a saraband; and solicited his advice when she purposed to add something new to her ornaments or her attire. These little condescensions[sic] gave courage and strength to the hopes of the young knight; and one lovely summer's evening, when the Lady Bertha was seated in a bower, accompanying her harp with her sweet voice, he suddenly found his heart become too warm and too large for his bosom: so he sprang up from the bank of turf, sank at Bertha's feet, and swore roundly, that, like the sound of her song, he only lived by her breath, and fondly and

earnestly wooed for her sweet love in return. The lady was surprised, but not so much at the knight's glowing passion, which she had for a long time observed with secret satisfaction, as at its hasty and violent effect. In her consternation the harp slipped from her fair hands, and, as she bent forward to recover the instrument, her lips encountered those of Sir Baldwin; while her arms, which were accidentally extended, intertwining themselves with his, the lovers were guilty of a kiss and an embrace, before they were aware how much the demon Chance had played into the hands of the divinity Cupid. After the first few moments, they were somewhat startled upon considering how Sir Thimo, the rich lord of Aarburg, would regard his daughter's love for the poor knight of the ruins. They coned the subject over and over again many nights after this; and sat many an hour together without coming to any conclusion, except that Baldwin was to fix himself more firmly in the favour[sic] of the knight of Aarburg, and to take an early opportunity of disclosing his hopes and plans respecting Bertha. This opportunity soon offered itself. Notwithstanding all the magnificence and expense of the Castle of Aarburg, father Thimo's money-chests became fuller and fuller every day, so that there was really no end to his riches and purchases. On one occasion (the acquisition of a rich lordship), when his friends and guests wished him joy in full bumpers, he placed his cup gloomily upon the table before him, and would not accept their congratulations. "Of what use is it all to me?" said he; "you know I have no heir, to whom

to leave my property and possessions." "No," replied one of the guests; "but have you not a lovely daughter, who can give you just such a son-in-law as your heart would desire?" "True," replied the knight of Aarburg, sighing; "but I would rather have had a son: a son-in-law carries off his wife to his own castle, and the old father sits deserted and solitary in his empty hall. If I had a son now -- a son, for instance, like Baldwin there -- I should look out for a proper wife, and place him over this new lordship, or let him dwell in the castle of my ancestors, where there is room enough for a whole generation."

Sir Baldwin's courage rose at these words -- it had already been considerably elevated by the quantity of wine which he had drunk ; he did not hesitate as to how he should begin his speech, but commenced the attack straight-forward: "Father Thimo," said he, "what hinders you from making me your son?" -- Give me your daughter, the beautiful Bertha, to wife, and let us dwell in one of your castles, or, if it please you better, here at Aarburg: you shall have children and grandchildren to your heart's content."

But instead of accepting this friendly offer in a friendly manner, the knight of Aarburg turned coolly round, and showed a very long face to the speaker; and "Do you think so, knight of Heerwart?" was the only answer he deigned to give the petitioner, who beheld him quietly resume, without further remark, an indifferent conversation with one of his guests. Baldwin's anger rose at the coolness with which the knight of Aarburg received his courtship. In

the zeal of his heart he rose from his seat, repeated his words, and declared his love for the beautiful Bertha in terms of the most impassioned eloquence. Thimo allowed him quietly to go through with his oratory, and when he had finished, "Knight," said he, "how am I to know whether you really love my daughter, or only woo her for your own temporal advantage? Hear me quietly -- I listened patiently to you. You appeal to your knightly word; that is certainly sufficient for me in all affairs of honour[sic]: but my Bertha is not only the pride of my house, but also the darling of my heart. Besides, I have, like all rich people, my whims, which all your eloquence will not make me resign: he who wins the hand of my Bertha must be rich in castles and lands, in order that she may not live in less splendour[sic] as a wife than she did as a maiden. I can add nothing as a fortune, for all I possess will be spent in the purchase of bridal ornaments, magnificent as those which a spirit once bestowed upon our family, and which, since that period, have unfortunately been lost. For this reason my son-in-law must be a rich man. Those bridal ornaments I will have, and their purchase will swallow up my fortune; but they are, notwithstanding, and acquisition too important to be neglected."

To Sir Baldwin this speech appeared extremely ridiculous, though he took care not to declare this as his particular opinion; on the contrary, he affected to treat the thing in a very different manner. "Sir Thimo," he began gravely, throwing a most sentimental expression into his face, placing his right hand pathetically upon his

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heart, "surely you cannot imagine that I have any wish for these vanities and superfluous treasures; keep them all, I beseech you, for ever: it is Bertha herself alone I covet; is not her beauty a richer jewel than -- " "Pshaw!" thundered the old man, now become exceedingly impatient, "don't I know beforehand all that you are going to say? Have I not sworn the same thing myself a thousand times, and could you do otherwise, professing love for my Bertha, than swear by all the saints that you preferred one lock of her fair to all the chains of gold that emperors and princes could bestow? There, now, you look rather foolish; but no matter. Bertha must have the ornaments, and I will have my whim; for the rest we may still be good friends if you choose; but you must first pass your knightly word, that there shall be no private tampering with Bertha's duty, neither inside nor outside the castle: I'll have no love-making, Baldwin, or we part company at once."

Sir Baldwin made a wry face or two at this bitter pill, which nevertheless he was obliged to swallow; and therefore, much against his will, gave his knightly word to Sir Thimo, lest he should be altogether deprived of the sight of his lovely mistress. The knights and gentlemen, friends of Sir Thimo, who were present at this scene, forgot to sympathise[sic] with the unsuccessful wooer, in the ardour[sic] of their curiosity respecting those valuable bridal ornaments, on the possession of which the lord of Aarburg seemed to have placed all his happiness. They anxiously inquired whence they came, whither they had gone, and

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what were the particular virtues they possessed; swearing most manfully (for Sir Thimo's wine had inflamed their valour) to get them back for their good host, even from under the Grand Turk's beard. "Whither they are gone," replied Sir Thimo, "is more than I can tell you, since the loss was before my father's time. The last person who wore them was the Lady Urilda, the sole child and heiress of the then Baron von der Aarburg, and hers is a fearful history. She loved a knight, who was as poor, though not so honest, as Baldwin there; and upon her father's refusal to permit the match, she, on the suggestion of her admirer, murdered the poor old man, and, dressing herself in the bridal ornaments, waited at midnight for her lover to carry her off. He came, as the legend goes -- but what he said or did, or whither they went, has never been known to this day; only during that dreary night frightful shrieks and loud wailings were heard, as of one in mortal agony beseeching for mercy; and in the morning it was known that the Lady Urilda and the bridal ornaments had strangely disappeared together. It is an ugly history, and the less is said upon the subject the better; but as to the 'how they came into the family,' the story being of a more pleasing character, I shall not hesitate to repeat it as it has been often related to me by our old confessor.

"The Countess Ursula von der Aarburg, who lived many centuries ago, and was a perfect pattern both as a wife and a mother, was sleeping quietly one night among her seven children (it was the Eve of St. John), when she

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suddenly awoke from hearing herself called by a shrill clear voice. Opening her heavy eyelids, she was surprised to observe a singularly-dressed female figure, of great beauty but diminutive stature, standing by the side of her couch, and who said, in a sweet small voice, 'Arise, noble lady, and lend a sufferer your assistance; the Queen of the Mountain will die without your aid.' The countess rose, though utterly unable to understand the speaker, who waited upon her toilette, and officiated as her waiting-maid, and with as much readiness and zeal as if it had been the habit of years; and the countess herself, who was no very keen observer, could not help remarking, that with the several articles of her dress seemed to be instinct with life, or to possess some very extraordinary deference to her attendant, the motion of whose little finger they instantaneously obeyed, placing themselves upon their owner's person at the first signal given by the stranger. The Countess Ursula had never been so well attended before, and in pure gratitude for the honour[sic] done her (howbeit not loving moonlight walks, having seven children), quietly followed wherever her singular visitor thought fit to lead her. Away they went (not flying, but soberly walking) from the castle, unseen of the guards, through whom, however, they passed, over ramparts and drawbridges, through doors and gates, over fields and water, without even wetting their feet, till they arrived at a high mountain, at the foot of which her guide knocked upon a square tablet for admission. The stony doors gave way, and immediately a magnificent glittering arch

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was formed in the mountain, under which the travellers passed to the splendid hall of a subterranean regal palace. Here many beautiful forms of men and women, but all proportionably[sic] small, met the countess and her companion, and respectfully saluting them,

conducted them through many royal saloons, glittering with gold and silver, to one more superb than any of the rest, in which were a pair of golden folding-doors communicating with another chamber. These suddenly flew open, and another female advancing, took the countess by the hand, and saying that the Mountain-Queen longed for her impatiently, conducted her into the apartment. the little men fell back respectfully, but the waiting-maids accompanied the countess into the chamber of the sovereign. Here walls of pure marble were surmounted by a cupola of soft green emerald, under which stood a bed of beaten gold, and upon that reclined a lovely female, mild and gracious as the Italian representations of the Madonna. 'Noble lady,' said she, in a gentle tone, to dame Ursula, 'be not alarmed; you are even safer here than in the home of your fathers: approach me without hesitation, and assist me in this hour of mortal terror, which has fallen upon me in the Eve of St. John, when the spirits of the earth are powerless until morning. I bear beneath my heart a pledge of our sovereign-husband's love, which, without your aid, cannot see the light; assist me, then, in this my hour of need, as you would hope for help in yours.'

"Ursula was moved by this gentle address and the high confidence reposed in her: she spoke some words

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of comfort to the royal patient, and then blessed her with the sacred sign of the cross, in order to make quite sure the devil had no hand in the affair. In fact, every thing remained unchanged except the beautiful face of the queen, which smiled still more sweetly than before; and the soft mountain-air, which met the nerves of the stranger, was loaded with fragrance, and breathed harmony around her; for wonderful music floated above them, while Ursula presented to the queen a lovely infant boy. As the mother folded him to her heart, a loud shot was heard, and the deep majestic tones of many trumpets, pouring forth sounds of triumph, rang through this subterraneous paradise. The folding-doors again opened; the king himself entered, took the child in his arms, kissed it, and then showed it to a great number of little men, who had fallen upon their knees before the doors: they bowed their heads to the earth, and then shouted as loudly as before.

"The Countess Ursula was an astonished spectator of this strange yet happy scene, till the silver voice of the queen recalled her attention. 'Take, noble lady,' it said, 'with the grateful acknowledgements of Saffira, the Mountain-Queen, this little casket, which will serve as a rich and perpetual monument of the gratitude she owes for your service. Be careful to preserve in your family the jewels which it contains. As long as they make part of your possessions, your house shall be the first in its country, and the branches of your genealogical tree shall even overshadow the empire itself; but if you lose it,

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prosperity will vanish and your name be extinguished for ever. You may, nevertheless, bestow a few of these jewels upon a beloved daughter, for they have the power of communicating happiness to their possessor; but in that case be careful to replace them with gems of the same kind and value, that the whole set may be preserved entire, and each bride of the house of Aarburg may adorn herself with them on her bridal day.' She then signed to the lady who had

brought Ursula thither, and placing in her hand the casket of exquisite workmanship, requested to her to conduct the countess home. This was performed immediately: the attendant waited to undress the lady with all duteous attention, placed the casket upon the table, and retired, making a most profoundly respectful courtesy.

"When my good ancestress awoke in the morning, she was very well disposed to consider the whole as a dream, till the sight of the casket staring her in the face convinced her there was no delusion. Her husband was delighted with the present, for the blessing promised by the Mountain-Queen was fulfilled to the letter; the family grew immensely rich and prosperous, and there was not a town in German where an Aarburg had not a castle. But since the jewels have been lost, we have gone rapidly to decay. One Aarburg has died childless after another, and I, the last, have no offspring save Bertha. She, however, shall retrieve the fortunes of our family: one jewel I have in my possession which came to me by inheritance, and if the Mountain-Queen is to be believed,

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will communicate its virtues to all the other articles made to match it. This is my purpose; I will have the set made entire; and you now understand why I can give Bertha no other fortune, since mine will be all consumed by the purchase of the jewels with which I am resolved to adorn her on her wedding-day."

At the close of this wonderful story, the knight's hearers began to discuss the Countess Ursula and her midnight adventure with no little merriment and freedom. Some declared that the ancestress must have had a lively imagination -- that she dreamed the thing, and then invented the jewels afterwards. Others asserted that her ladyship must have been fond of a frolic, more especially as the Mountain-King himself figured upon the scene: but these were the freethinking reprobates. The true believers were shocked by their impiety, and gravely produced many instances of similar facts in support of their opinion. Sir Baldwin took no part at all in the discussion; he sat, in very ill humour[sic], looking extremely grim, in the corner, and wishing, from his inmost soul, the bridal ornaments, which had thus robbed him of a bride, at the devil.

The autumn days now began to shorten, and the period of the equinox approached. The wind whistled frostily over the stubbles, and the rain and hail beat (without much difficulty, it must be confessed) through the windows of Sir Baldwin's castle. The coldness of his home determined him to quit it; and having formed his resolution, he hastened to the knight of Aarburg, to entreat his

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assistance and approbation of the measure. "Good Sir Thimo," said he, "I can no longer sit idly down in my dismantled castle; the storms are playing as cruel a game with that as love is doing with my heart. I intend to set out for the emperor's armor, and endeavour[sic] to gain fame and fortune by valour. Buy my castle of me: you may give me for it what you think proper." The Baron of Aarburg did so (for between honest men bargains are soon struck), though he was sincerely grieved at the prospect of Baldwin's departure. He gave, however, a noble feast in his

honour[sic]; allowed him to sit, for the last time, next to the beautiful Bertha: furnished him with letters to all his castellans in the different parts of German, commanding them to treat the knight as himself during the time he should stay there; and then, bestowing upon him a few kind words and a hearty shake of the hand, seized him by the shoulder, and thrust him out of the castle.

Baldwin, as he mounted his horse, cast many a sigh towards the chamber of his beloved Bertha; yet, remembering his knightly word, he would allow himself the indulgence of a farewell, but darted gallantly forward on his travels. He found his introductory letters of no small use in procuring him good cheer and lodging. Those castellans nearest to their lord were exceedingly civil; while the more distant being, of course, in less fear of his authority, were insolent and refractory. He had almost made up his mind to trouble no more of them, when a violent storm, which overtook him near Leipzig, drove him

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for shelter to Sir Thimo's castle of Frankenberg. Sir Baldwin, who was at heart a cheerful fellow, perceived the windows all gaily lighted up, and heard sounds of music and dancing with infinite delight; for he hoped to join the revellers[sic], and shortly to be as merry as themselves. three times he blew stoutly upon the horn before any one noticed his application; and at last a gruff old warder stumped towards him, and shrilly demanded his business. The knight could read on the warder's brow that he had disturbed their merriment, and was by no means a welcome guest; yet nothing daunted, he sent in his letter to the castellan, and was instantly admitted. "Sir knight," said the castellan, trying to look, and, what as infinitely more difficult, to speak soberly, "you see how we are doing -- a marriage in my family is the occasion of this little festivity. Partake of our cheer, noble sir; eat, drink, and be merry. I can, according to my lord's directions, entertain you to your heart's content; only tonight, the castle being so crowded with company, I cannot find you a bed."

"Make yourself easy, I beseech you, Mr. Castellan," replied Sir Baldwin, quite coolly, notwithstanding this difficulty -- "I do not intend to quit this roof to-night; and if you will not spare me the trouble, I will undertake the search myself, and depend upon it I will find a bed, even if I am obliged to share the bride's." The castellan looked angry, but said little, conscious that it was not to his interest to offend his master's guest; he therefore suddenly recollected that two chambers in the castle

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were vacant -- one a wretched hole, through which the wind whistled so loudly as to remind Sir Baldwin of his own desolate castle at Aarburg -- the other a magnificent apartment, called "the Baron's" but in a most dreary state of neglect, owing to its being entirely appropriated to the use of some fantastical goblins who kept their revels there, and had had the good taste to select this, the noblest apartment in the castle, for their exclusive accommodation.

The poor castellan strongly persuaded the knight to sleep in the storm-visited attic, in preference to that tenanted by the ghosts; but to this Sir Baldwin would be no means consent after he had viewed the apartment. He had not the fear of ghosts before his eyes, and, at any rate,

esteemed them better company than hail, rain, and sleet. "Gramercy! Sir Seneschal," said he, "for your kind advice, which I do not intend to follow: I had rather sleep with the goblins, more especially as you say there are females among them, than under the chilling influence of all the winds of heaven; so, in spite of the knights adventurers, who, on their return from this chamber, have found their hands and feet had changed places, I will pass the night in it, and dare the worst that may befall me." The seneschal said nothing in reply, but sent food, wine, and lights, to the baron's chamber. In a few hours the ball broke up, and the party of revellers[sic] dispersed: the castellan's family retired to rest, and Sir Baldwin, after disposing of the contents of a small flagon of choice Rhenish, threw himself heavily upon his magnificent bed to dream of his beloved Bertha. But his

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sleep this night was not destined to be blessed with so fair a vision; his thoughts incessantly ran upon the unpromising state of his affairs, and the little prospect there was of a union with his beloved. Tired of these vexatious and unprofitable reflections, he tried hard to lose himself in sleep, but found it impossible to succeed: he turned fidgetily[sic] from side to side -- pulled his pillow, now up, now down -- shut his eyes, opened them -- said his prayers over and over again; and finding this last remedy inefficacious, made up his mind, though in extreme ill-humour[sic], to lie awake all night. No sooner had he come to this conclusion, than he was startled by a noise which seemed to issue from the chimney of this deserted apartment in which he was so unsuccessfully courting repose.

He now banished as anxiously all thoughts of sleep as he had before endeavoured[sic] to encourage them, and, suddenly facing round towards the seat of the odd noise which had disturbed him, beheld, to his utter astonishment, a human hand fall down the chimney; to this succeeded a foot, then another hand, and then again another foot, and so quietly, by degrees, all the requisites for making up a human body, each attired according to its own proper mode of dressing: and these rolling together, and kindly uniting, there arose from the fragments a gigantic figure, who, with belt and partizan[sic], huge mustaches and grim looks, mounted guard on one side of the fire-place.

This organizing process was suspended for a few seconds, and then began again, and a second halberdier deliberately stalked forward, and placed himself opposite to

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his elder brother, on the other side of this wondrous laboratory; but things did not long go on so quietly. The gentle rain of limbs, which had hitherto descended so modestly, was changed into a loud and rattling shower; and the delicate feet of women, fists of men, heads of children, a whole assortment of human limbs, rolled pellmell[sic] down the chimney. Amongst these were materials for tables, chairs, and footstools -- kettles, covers, dishes, and goblets, followed in grand confusion, with every thing necessary for a great entertainment, so that one half of the chamber was filled with this lumber. The two first-born of this ghastly creation then stepped gravely forward, laid aside their partizans[sic], and began their operations by reducing to order this chaos of materials for the creation of the latest of worlds. From this mass of human

fragments they stuck folks together so cleverly, and with so much dexterity, despatch[sic], silence, and taste, that it was impossible to doubt the extent of their practice in this their most extraordinary vocation. From their Promethean fingers, which beat the maker of poor Frankenstein [!!] all to nothing, there arose a whole train of stately-looking domestics, who bestirred themselves to prepare a splendid banquet, which soon sparkled upon the table. Guests only were wanting. These, however, were soon produced from the alchymical[sic] chimney. It really hailed men and women, who, in the most magnificent festival dresses, took their seats upon the chairs, or walked gaily about the apartment. The last comer was a young and lovely lady, beautiful as moonlight, and as pale: her countenance was like the sigh of

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an angel, full of grief, but of unspeakable sweetness. By her side walked a gigantic knight, black and terrible to look upon: there was a laughing fury curling round his lips, and his eyes were dark thunder-clouds, emitting flashes of lurid lightning. He rudely dragged the lovely lady to a mirror, which reflected back to her eyes, not her own fair image, but a hideous phantom, to which, when she shrank from it in horror and disgust, he again compelled her to return and contemplate the figure, while the attendants brought her magnificent ornaments and a bridal crown. In these the monster-knight obliged her to array her beautiful person before the deceptious[sic] mirror; and these articles, to the horror of Sir Baldwin, he discovered to be red-hot, as well by their glowing light, as by the hissing of the beautiful lady's flesh, when the contents of this infernal jewel-box were displayed upon her person.

Until this moment, Sir Baldwin had, from his bed, been only a silent spectator of this curious adventure; but an involuntary burst of indignation at the conduct of the black knight, which escaped him, directed the stony looks of the whole assembly of spectres[sic] towards his bed. One of them solemnly rose, took a golden goblet from the table, presented it to the human guest, and by signs invited him to rise and partake of their midnight festivity. Sir Baldwin trembled; for brave as were the ancient knights when they had a human enemy to encounter, they did not deem it at all disgraceful to be sensible of fear when opposed to the spiritual world; and Sir Baldwin, like all the rest of his brethren, would rather have seen the glitter of a hun- [page end]

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dred Saracen sword-blades than that golden goblet which the strange drinking-companion pressed upon him so pertinaciously[sic] with his fleshless bony hand. Notwithstanding his confusion, however, he saw that there was no escaping. as his delay began to put in motion the other guests, who now commenced a slow and regular march towards his bed. To a strong mind, in such moments, the transition from terrified hesitation to the most dauntless heroism is as easy and as rapid as the change from idle boasting to pusillanimous despondency in the heart of a coward. Sir Baldwin instantly recollected himself, leaped up lightly from his bed, seized his sword in his right hand, and with his left deposited the goblet with the infernal punch upon the table. "Whoever you may be," he then exclaimed in a firm and powerful tone of voice, "how dare you challenge an honourable[sic] knight to partake of your cheer, whilst you thus oppress weak maidens, like midnight murderers and robbers? If you are human, then meet me fairly, and let us

fight it out, firmly and gallantly; if you are not, then begone from this castle, and do not disturb with your presence the dwellings of human beings."

A dismal silence of some seconds which followed this speech was suddenly broken by a ghastly laugh from the black knight, which shook the very walls of the castle. "This maiden," cried he, "is mine; she gave herself to me; she won me by a crime -- a midnight crime -- for which each midnight she must suffer. She is my bride; and my bride she must remain, and nightly be decked in these burning ornaments, till the jewels shall return to

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their rightful owner: meddle not then with the matter, Sir Knight, but deign to partake of our cheer."

Sir Baldwin evinced not the smallest inclination to follow this impertinent advice, but advanced in a hostile manner towards the ugly goblin who had uttered it. The latter also drew his enormous sword, and stood on his defence[sic], but could not prevent the descent of Sir Baldwin's blow, which, falling with all its strength on the black knight's head, divided him completely in two from the crown to chine[sic -I'm guessing chin]. The two halves of the cloven knight stood quietly apart for some few seconds, and then collapsing, the black knight again stood before him, whole, upright, and ugly as before.

The bridal guests, encouraged by the failure of Sir Baldwin, pressed upon him more eagerly than before, holding in their withered hands goblets filled with red, smoking froth. The men invited him to drink, the women to dance, but neither of these invitations would he deign to accept; and finding that his sword-blade no longer terrified them, he presented to their eyes the crosletted[sic] hilt, from which they shrank back in horror, and made way to the right and left for him to pass. Perceiving this, and knowing the hapless maiden to be that Urilda who had last worn the bridal ornaments, and of whose disappearance the ugly company present gave a tolerably sufficient explanation, he made up his mind in an instant, and advancing boldly towards the bride, took from her brow and slender person the burning jewels, which, however, contained no fire for him. Then facing

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the black knight, "I will do you justice, arch-fiend," said he, "but only, such as you deserve. This maiden is Urilda, of the family of Aarburg, and you have henceforth no further part in her, since I claim the jewels for their rightful owner, and seize them, in Our Lady's name, for Sir Thimo von der Aarburg."

This bold proclamation by word of mouth had an effect which the speaker himself scarcely anticipated. It fairly dislodged the enemy, who, apparently too lucky in getting safely away and securing their prisoner, left behind them all the treasure which Sir Baldwin contended for, even to the utensils of gold and silver produced for the banquet. One loud, ghastly, simultaneous shriek was the signal for their discomfiture; after which they all rushed to the

chimney, and darted up [*en masse*], and in much quicker time than they had descended from it.

I need not detail Sir Baldwin's uncontrollable delight on beholding the treasure of which his firmness had made him possessor. He could not sleep for gazing, and hoping, and speculating. Break of day brought to his apartment the seneschal, who, if he was astonished at finding the knight alive, was still more so by the flitter with which he was surrounded. His greedy fingers longed to clutch some part of the booty, but Sir Baldwin scared him away, by declaring the legacy to be the devil's own, which he had destined for Sir Thimo, and which, if any other dared to touch, would bring instant death to the sacrilegious offender. Carriages were then procured, and he hastened to depart for Aarburg, for he remembered that Urilda

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would still be the demon's captive till the treasure should be in the hands of its rightful owner: this was soon effected. The baron, who had a "heavy miss" of his friend, welcomed him back with all his heart and soul; and Bertha -- but all the lovers who read my legend -- and all my readers either are, have been, or will be so -- will understand her feelings better than I can describe them. Sir Baldwin was instantly acknowledged the knight's accepted son; and Bertha, without the sacrifice of Sir Thimo's fortune, wore the bridal ornaments on her wedding day. But before that period, on the first night Sir Baldwin passed in her father's castle, a gentle voice stole on his ear as he was endeavouring[sic] to compose himself to sleep -- "Thanks, noble knight," it breathed, "thanks for your dauntless courage! I am the spirit of the redeemed Urilda; seek my body in the cavern under the castle of Frankenburg, and give it a tomb in the vaults of my ancestors. Farewell, noble knight! all[sic] happiness henceforth be the portion of you and yours!" Sir Baldwin awoke, obeyed the spirit, married Bertha, and, of course, lived very happily ever after.