











And a dead man's arm by a magic charm  
Each glimmering taper bore,  
And where it was lopt, still dropt and dropt  
Thick gouts of clotted gore.

Where ends the room, doth a chrystal tomb 165  
Its towering front uphold;  
And one on each hand two skeletons stand,  
Which belonged to two giants of old:

That on the right holds a faulchion bright,  
That on the left a horn; 170  
And crowns of jet with jewels beset  
Their eyeless skulls adorn:

And both those grim colossal kings  
With fingers long and lean  
Point tow'rds the tomb, within whose womb 175  
A captive Dame is seen.

A form more fair than that prisoner's, ne'er  
Since the days of Eve was known;  
Every glance, that flew from her eyes of blue,  
Was worth an Emperor's throne, 180  
And one sweet kiss from her roseate lips  
Would have melted a bosom of stone.

Soon as Sir Guy had met her eye,  
Knelt low that captive maid;  
And her lips of love seemed fast to move, 185  
But he heard not what she said.

Then her hands did she join in suppliant sign,  
Her hands more white than snow:  
And like dew[s] that streak the rose's cheek,  
Her tears began to flow. 190

The warrior felt his stout heart melt,  
When he saw those fountains run;  
— "Oh! What can I do," he cried, "for you?"

What mortal can do, shall be done!" —

Then out and speaks the wizard; 195  
Hollow his accents fall!

— "Was never man, since the world began,  
Could burst that chrystal wall:

"For the hand, which raised its magic frame,  
Had oft clasped Satan's own; 200  
And the lid bears a name . . . . . Young Knight the same  
Is stamped on Satan's throne;

"At its maker's birth long trembled the earth;  
The sky dropt showers of gore;  
And she, who to light gave the wondrous wight, 205  
Had died seven years before;

"And at Satan's right hand while keeping his stand,  
The foulest Fiend of fire  
Shrunk back with awe, when the babe he saw,  
For it shocked its very sire! 210

But hark, Sir Knight! and riddle aright  
The riddle I'll riddle to thee:  
Thou'lt learn a way without delay  
To set yon damsel free.

"See'st yonder sword, with jewels rare 215  
Its dudgeon crusted o'er?  
See'st yonder horn of ivory fair?  
'Twas Merlin's horn of yore!

"That horn to sound, or sword to draw,  
Now, youth, your choice explain; 220  
But that which you choose, beware how you lose,  
For you never will find it again:

"And that once lost, all hopes are crost,  
Which now you fondly form;  
And that once gone, the sun ne'er shone 225  
A sadder wight to warm;

“But such keen woe, as never can know  
Oblivion’s balmy power.  
With fixed despair your soul will share,  
Till comes your dying hour. 230

“Your choice now make for yon Beauty’s sake;  
To burst her bonds endeavour;  
But that which you chuse, beware how you lose:  
Once lost, ’tis lost for ever!” —

In pensive mood awhile now stood 235  
Sir Guy, and gazed around;  
Now he turned his sight to the left, to the right,  
Now he fixed it on the ground.

Now the faulchion’s blaze attracted his gaze;  
On the hilt his fingers lay; 240  
But he heard fear cry, — “you’re wrong, Sir Guy!”  
And he snatched his hand away!

Now his steps he addrest towards the North and the West;  
Now he turned tow’rds the East and the South:  
Till with desperate thought the horn he caught, 245  
And prest it to his mouth.

Hark! the blast is a blast so strong and so shrill,  
That the vaults like thunder ring;  
And each marble horse stamps the floor with force,  
And from sleep the warriors spring! 250

And frightful stares each stoney eye,  
As now with ponderous tread  
They rush on Sir Guy, poising on high  
Their spears to strike him dead.

At this strange attack full swift sprang back, 255  
I wot the startled Knight!  
Away he threw the horn, and drew  
His faulchion keen and bright.



But as soon as the horn his grasp forsook,  
Was heard a cry of grief; 260  
It seemed the yell of a soul in hell  
Made desperate of relief!

And straight each light was extinguished quite,  
Save the flame so lurid blue  
On the Wizard's brow, (whose flashings now 265  
Assumed a bloody hue,)  
And those sparks of fire, which grief and ire  
From his glaring eye-balls drew!

And he stamped in rage, and he laughed in scorn,  
While in thundering tone he roar'd, 270  
"Now shame on the coward who sounded a horn,  
When he might have unsheathed a sword!"

He said, and from his mouth there came  
A vapour blue and dank,  
Whose poisonous breath seemed the kiss of death, 275  
For the Warrior senseless sank.

Morning breaks! again he wakes;  
Lo! in the porch he lies,  
And still in his heart he feels the dart,  
Which shot from the captive's eyes. 280

From the ground he springs! as if he had wings,  
The ruin he wanders o'er,  
And with prying look each cranny and nook  
His anxious eyes explore:

But find can he ne'er the winding stair, 285  
Which he climbed that dame to see,  
Whom spells enthrall in the haunted hall,  
Where none but once may be.

The earliest ray of dawning day  
Beholds his search begun; 290  
The evening star ascends her car,  
Nor yet his search is done:

Whence the neighbours all the night now call  
By “Guy, the Seeker’s” name;  
For never he knows one hour[‘]s repose 295  
From his wish to find the Dame;

But still he seeks, and aye he seeks,  
And seeks, and seeks in vain;  
And still he repeats to all he meets,  
— “Could I find the sword *again!* [”]— 300

Which words he follows with a groan,  
As if his heart would break;  
And oh! that groan, has so strange a tone,  
It makes all hearers quake!

The villagers round know well its sound, 305  
And when they hear it poured,  
— “Hark! hark!” they cry; “the Seeker Guy  
Groans for the Wizard’s sword.” —

Twice twenty springs on their fragrant wings  
For his wound have brought no balm; 310  
For still he’s found . . . . But hark! what sound  
Disturbs the midnight calm?

Good peasants, tell, why rings that knell?  
— ‘tis the Seeker-Guy’s we toll:  
“His race is run; his search is done.” — 315  
God’s mercy on his soul!

1808

(From *Romantic Tales*. New York, 1809)