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TALES OF WONDER;

WRITTEN AND COLLECTED

BY

M. G. LEWIS, Esq. M. P.

AUTHOR OF THE MONK, CASTLE SPECTRE,
LOVE OF GAIN, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Black spirits and white,
Blue spirits and grey,
Mingle, mingle, mingle,
Ye that mingle may! MACBETH.

VOL. I.

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FOR THE AUTHOR;
AND SOLD BY J. BELL, NO. 148, OXFORD-STREET,
OPPOSITE NEW BOND-STREET.

1801.

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ERRATA.

- Page 11, line 12, for *dead*, read *dread*.
- 34, — 2, for *slumber's*, read *slumbers*
- 41, — 17, omit both commas.
- 64, — 2, for *size*, read *rise*.
- 71, — 19, omit the comma after *Saviour*.
- 73, — 3, omit the comma after *tissue*.
- 74, — 6, for *hears*, read *heard*.
- 77, — 4, after *perform*, put ! instead of ?
- 121, — 13, for *arms*, read *arras*.
- 133, — 4, for *brow*, read *vow*.
- 144, — 7, for *black friars sing*, read *white monks they sing*.
- 235, — 7, for *tumbling*, read *trembling*.

No. XXIII.

THE WILD HUNTSMEN.

GERMAN.—WALTER SCOTT.

The tradition of the "Wild Huntsmen" (Die Wilde Jäger) is a popular superstition, very generally believed by the peasants of Germany. Whoever wishes for more information respecting these imaginary Sportsmen, will find his curiosity fully satisfied, by perusing the first Volume of the German Romance of "the Necromancer;" (Der Geister-banner.) The original of this Ballad is by Bürger, Author of the well-known "Leonora."

THE Wildgrave* winds his bugle horn;
 To horse, to horse, halloo, halloo!
 His fiery courser snuffs the morn,
 And thronging serfs their Lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
 Dash through the bush, the brier, the brake;
 While answering hound, and horn, and steed,
 The mountain echoes startling wake.

* The Wildgrave is a German title, corresponding to the Earl Warden of a royal forest.

The beams of God's own hallow'd day
 Had painted yonder spire with gold,
 And, calling sinful man to pray,
 Loud, long, and deep the bell had toll'd:

But still the Wildgrave onward rides ;
 Halloo, halloo, and hark again !
 When, spurring from opposing sides,
 Two stranger horsemen join the train.

Who was each stranger, left and right,
 Well may I guess, but dare not tell:
 The right-hand steed was silver white,
 The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand horseman, young and fair,
 His smile was like the morn of May ;
 The left, from eye of tawny glare,
 Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He wav'd his huntsman's cap on high,
 Cry'd, " Welcome, welcome, noble Lord !
 " What sport can earth, or sea, or sky,
 " To match the princely chase, afford ?"—

—“ Cease thy loud bugle’s clanging knell,”—
 Cry’d the fair youth, with silver voice ;
 —“ And for devotion’s choral swell,
 “ Exchange the rude unhallow’d noise.

“ To-day th’ ill-omen’d chase forbear ;
 “ Yon bell yet summons to the fane :
 “ To-day the warning spirit hear,
 “ To-morrow thou may’st mourn in vain.”—

—“ Away, and sweep the glades along!”—
 The sable hunter hoarse replies;
 —“ To muttering monks leave matin song,
 “ And bells, and books, and mysteries.”—

The Wildgrave spurr’d his ardent steed,
 And, launching forward with a bound,
 —“ Who for thy drowsy priestlike rede
 “ Would leave the jovial horn and hound ?

“ Hence, if our manly sport offend :
 “ With pious fools go chaunt and pray ;
 “ Well hast thou spoke, my dark-brow’d friend,—
 “ Halloo ! halloo ! and hark away !”—

The Wildgrave spurr'd his courser light,
 O'er moss and moor, o'er holt and hill,
 And on the left, and on the right,
 Each stranger horseman follow'd still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
 A stag more white than mountain snow;
 And louder rung the Wildgrave's horn,
 —“ Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!”—

A heedless wretch has cross'd the way,—
 He gasps the thundering hoofs below;
 But, live who can, or die who may,
 Still forward, forward! On they go.

See where yon simple fences meet,
 A field with autumn's blessings crown'd;
 See, prostrate at the Wildgrave's feet,
 A husbandman with toil embrown'd,

—“ O mercy! mercy! noble Lord;
 “ Spare the poor's pittance,” was his cry,
 “ Earn'd by the sweat these brows have pour'd
 “ In scorching hour of fierce July.”—

Earnest the right-hand stranger pleads,
 The left still cheering to the prey :
 The impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
 But furious holds the onward way.

—“ Away, thou hound, so basely born,
 “ Or dread the scourge’s echoing blow !” —
 Then loudly rung his bugle-horn,
 —“ Hark forward, forward, holla ho !” —

So said, so done—a single bound
 Clears the poor labourer’s humble pale :
 Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
 Like dark December’s stormy gale.

And man, and horse, and hound, and horn,
 Destructive sweep the field along,
 While joying o’er the wasted corn
 Fell Famine marks the madd’ning throng.

Again up roused, the timorous prey
 Scours moss and moor, and holt and hill ;
 Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
 And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appear'd ;
 He seeks the shelter of the crowd ;
 Amid the flock's domestic herd
 His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
 His track the steady blood-hounds trace ;
 O'er moss and moor, unwearied still,
 The furious Earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall ;
 —“ O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
 “ These herds, a widow's little all ;
 “ These flocks, an orphan's fleecy care.”—

Earnest the right-hand stranger pleads,
 The left still cheering to the prey ;
 The Earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
 But furious keeps the onward way.

—“ Unmanner'd dog ! To stop my sport
 “ Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
 “ Though human spirits of thy sort
 “ Were tenants of these carrion kine !”—

Again he winds his bugle horn,
 —“ Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!”—
 And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
 He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall ;
 Down sinks their mangled herdsman near ;
 The murd'rous cries the stag appal,
 Again he starts, new-nerv'd by fear.

With blood besmear'd, and white with foam,
 While big the tears of anguish pour,
 He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
 The humble hermit's hallow'd bour.

But man and horse, and horn and hound,
 Fast rattling on his traces go ;
 The sacred chapel rung around
 With hark away, and holla, ho !

All mild, amid the route profane,
 The holy hermit pour'd his prayer :
 —“ Forbear with blood God's house to stain ;
 “ Revere his altar, and forbear !

“ The meanest brute has rights to plead,
 “ Which, wrong'd by cruelty, or pride,
 “ Draw vengeance on the ruthless head ;—
 “ Be warn'd at length, and turn aside.”—

Still the fair horseman anxious pleads,
 The black, wild whooping, points the prey ;
 Alas! the Earl no warning heeds,
 But frantic keeps the forward way.

—“ Holy or not, or right or wrong,
 “ Thy altar and its rights I spurn ;
 “ Not sainted martyrs' sacred song,
 “ Not God himself, shall make me turn.”—

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
 —“ Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!”—
 But off, on whirlwind's pinions borne,
 The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man, and horn and hound,
 And clamour of the chase was gone :
 For hoofs and howls, and bugle sound,
 A deadly silence reign'd alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted Earl around ;—

He strove in vain to wake his horn,
In vain to call ; for not a sound
Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds ;

No distant baying reach'd his ears ;
His courser, rooted to the ground,
The quickening spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades,

Dark as the darkness of the grave ;
And not a sound the still invades,
Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o'er the sinner's humbled head

At length the solemn silence broke ;
And from a cloud of swarthy red,
The awful voice of thunder spoke.

—“ Oppressor of creation fair !

“ Apostate spirit's harden'd tool !

“ Scornor of God ! scourge of the poor !

“ The measure of thy cup is full.

“ Be chased for ever through the wood,
 “ For ever roam the affrighted wild ;
 “ And let thy fate instruct the proud,
 “ God’s meanest creature is his child.”—

’Twas hush’d : one flash of sombre glare
 With yellow tinged the forests brown ;
 Up rose the Wildgrave’s bristling hair,
 And horror chill’d each nerve and bone.

Cold pour’d the sweat in freezing rill ;
 A rising wind began to sing ;
 And louder, louder, louder still,
 Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call—her entrails rend ;
 From yawning rifts, with many a yell,
 Mix’d with sulphureous flames, ascend
 The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly huntsman next arose,
 Well may I guess, but dare not tell :
 His eye like midnight lightning glows,
 His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The Wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
 With many a shriek of helpless woe ;
 Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
 And hark away, and holla, ho !

With wild despair's reverted eye,
 Close, close behind, he marks the throng ;
 With bloody fangs, and eager cry,
 In frantic fear he scours along.

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
 Till time itself shall have an end ;
 By day, they scour earth's cavern'd space,
 At midnight's witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
 That oft the lated peasant hears :
 Appall'd, he signs the frequent cross,
 When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear
 For human pride, for human woe,
 When, at his midnight mass, he hears
 The infernal cry of holla, ho !

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1801.

No. LIX.

LENORA.

GERMAN.

This version of Bürger's well known ballad, was published in the Monthly Magazine, and I consider it as a master-piece of translation; indeed as far as my opinion goes, the English ballad is, in point of merit, far superior, both in spirit and harmony, to the German, which is written in a stanza, producing an effect very unsatisfactory to the ear; that my Readers may judge of this for themselves, I shall here add a stanza similar to that in which Bürger's "Lenora" is written: I rather imagine, that the effect made by it upon others, is the same with that which it produced upon me, since among the numerous translators of this ballad, not one has adopted the metre of the original.

[Lenora wakes at dawn of day,
 'Tears down her fair cheeks trickle:
 —"Oh! why, my William, dost thou stay,
 And art thou dead or fickle?"—
 With Fred'rick's host young William went,
 But since the fight of Prague he sent
 No word to tell his speeding,
 And soothe her bosom bleeding.]

I cannot but think, that the above metre will be universally disapproved of, when compared with that adopted in the following ballad.

At break of day, with frightful dreams

Lenora struggled sore:

—"My William, art thou slaine," say'd she,

"Or dost thou love no more?"—

He went abroade with Richard's host,
 The Paynim foes to quell ;
 But he no word to her had writt,
 An he were sick or well.

With sowne of trump and beat of drum,
 His fellow soldyers come ;
 Their helmes bydeckt with oaken boughs,
 They seeke their long'd-for home.

And ev'ry roade, and ev'ry lane,
 Was full of old and young,
 To gaze at the rejoicing band,
 To hail with gladsome tounge.

—" Thank God !" their wives and children saide ;
 " Welcome !" —the brides did say :
 But greete or kiss Lenora gave
 To none upon that daye.

She askte of all the passing traine,
 For him she wisht to see :
 But none of all the passing traine
 Could tell if lived he.

And when the soldyers all were bye,
 She tore her raven haire,
 And cast herself upon the growne
 In furious despaire.

Her mother ran and lyfte her up,
 And clasped in her arme,
 —“ My child, my child, what dost thou ail?
 “ God shield thy life from harm !” —

—“ O mother, mother! William’s gone!
 “ What’s all besyde to me?
 “ There is no mercye, sure, above!
 “ All, all were spared but hee !” —

—“ Kneel downe, thy paternoster saye,
 “ ’Twill calm thy troubled spright:
 “ The Lord is wyse, the Lord is good;
 “ What hee hath done is right.” —

—“ O mother, mother! say not so;
 “ Most cruel is my fate:
 “ I prayde, and prayde, but watte away!d?
 “ ’Tis now, alas! too late !” —

—“ Our Heavenly Father, if we praye,
 “ Will help a suff’ring childe:
 “ Go take the holy sacrament,
 “ So shall thy grief grow milde.”—

—“ O mother, what I feel within,
 “ No sacrament can stave,
 “ No sacrament can teche the dead
 “ To bear the sight of daye.”—

—“ May be, among the heathen folk
 “ Thy William false doth prove,
 “ And puts away his faith and troth,
 “ And takes another love.”

“ Then wherefore sorrow for his loss ?
 “ Thy moans are all in vain ;
 “ And when his soul and body parte,
 “ His falsehode brings him paine.”—

—“ O mother, mother ! gone is gone,
 “ My hope is all forlorn ;
 “ The grave mie onely safeguarde is,
 “ O, had I neer been borne !

" Go out, go out, my lampe of life,
 " In grislie darkness die :
 " There is no mercye, sure, above !
 " For ever let me lie." —

—" Almighty God ! O do not judge
 " My poor unhappy childe ;
 " She knows not what her lips pronounce,
 " Her anguish makes her wilde.

" My girl, forget thine earthly woe,
 " And think on God and bliss ;
 " For so, at least, shall not thy soule
 " Its heavenly bridegroom miss." —

" O mother, mother! what is blisse,
 " And what the infernal celle ?
 " With him 'tis heaven any where,
 " Without my William, helle.

" Go out, go out, my lamp of life,
 " In endless darkness die :
 " Without him I must loathe the earth,
 " Without him scorn the skye." —

And so despaire did rave and rage
 Athwarte her boiling veins ;
 Against the providence of God
 She hurlede her impious strains.

She bet her breaste, and wrung her hands,
 And rolde her tearlesse eye,
 From rise of morne, till the pale stars
 Again did freeke the skye.

When harke ! abroade she hearde the trampe
 Of nimble-hoofed steed ;
 She hearde a knighte with clank alighte,
 And climb the staire in speede.

And soon she herde a tinkling hande,
 That twirled at the pin ;
 And through her door, that open'd not,
 These words were breathed in.

—“ What ! what ho ! thy dore undoe ;
 “ Art watching or asleepe ?
 “ My love, dost yet remember mee,
 “ And dost thou laugh, or weep ? ” —

—“ Ah ! William here so late at night !
 “ Oh ! I have watchte and waked,
 “ Whence dost thou come ? for thy return
 “ My herte has sorely aked.”—

—“ At midnight only we may ride ;
 “ I come o'er land and sea ;
 “ I mounted late, but soone I go,
 “ Aryse, and come with me.”—

—“ O William, enter first my bowre,
 “ And give me one embrace :
 “ The blasts athwarte the hawthorne hiss ;
 “ Awayte a little space.”—

—“ Though blasts athwarte the hawthorne hiss,
 “ I may not harbour here ;
 “ My spurre is sharpe, my courser pawes,
 “ My houre of flighte is nere.

“ All as thou lyst upon thy couch,
 “ Aryse, and mount behinde ;
 “ To-night we'le ride a thousand miles,
 “ The bridal bed to finde.”—

—“ How, ride to-night a thousand miles?

“ Thy love thou dost bemocke :

“ Eleven is the stroke that still

“ Rings on within the clocke.”—

—“ Looke up, the moone is bright, and we

“ Outstride the earthlie men :

“ I'll take thee to the bridal bed,

“ And night shall end but then.”—

—“ And where is, then, thy house and home,

“ And where thy bridal bed?”—

—“ 'Tis narrow, silent, chilly, dark;

“ Far hence I rest my head.”—

—“ And is there any room for mee,

“ Wherein that I may creepe?”—

—“ There's room enough for thee and mee,

“ Wherein that we may sleepe.

“ All as thou lyst upon thy couch,

“ Aryse, no longer stop;

“ The wedding guests thy coming waite,

“ The chamber door is ope.”—

All in her sarke, as there she lay,
 Upon his horse she sprung,
 And with her lilly hands so pale
 About her William clung.

And hurry-skurry forth they goe,
 Unheeding wet or drye;
 And horse and rider snort and blow,
 And sparkling pebbles flye.

How swift the flood, the mead, the wood,
 Aright, aleft, are gone;
 The bridges thunder as they pass,
 But earthlie sowne is none.

Tramp, tramp, across the land they speed,
 Splash, splash, across the see:
 —“ Hurrah! the dead can ride apace;
 “ Dost feare to ride with mee?

“ The moone is bryghte, and blue the nyghte,
 “ Dost quake the blast to stem?
 “ Dost shudder, mayde, to seeke the dead?”—
 —“ No, no, but what of them?

“ How glumlie sownes yon dirgye song,
 “ Night-ravens flappe the wing;
 “ What knell doth slowlie toll ding dong?
 “ The psalmes of death who sing?

“ It creeps, the swarthie funeral traine,
 “ The corse is on the beere;
 “ Like croke of todes from lonely moores,
 “ The chaunt doth meet the eere.”—

—“ Go, bear her corse when midnight's past,
 “ With song, and tear, and wayle;
 “ I've gott my wife, I take her home,
 “ My howre of wedlocke hayl.

“ Lead forth, O clarke, the chaunting quire,
 “ To swell our nuptial song;
 “ Come, preaste, and read the blessing soone,
 “ For bed, for bed we long.”—

They heede his calle, and husht the sowne,
 The biere was seen no more;
 And followde him ore feeld and flood
 Yet faster than before.

Halloo ! halloo ! away they goe,
 Unheeding wet or drye ;
 And horse and rider snort and blowe,
 And sparkling pebbles flye.

How swifte the hill, how swifte the dale,
 Aright, aleft, are gone ;
 By hedge and tree, by thorpe and towne,
 They gallop, gallop on.

Tramp, tramp, across the land they speede,
 Splash, splash, acrossse the see ;
 —“ Hurrah ! the dead can ride apace ;
 “ Dost fear to ride with me ?

“ Look up, look up, an airy crewe,
 “ In roundel daunces reele ;
 “ The moone is bryghte, and blue the nyghte,
 “ May'st dimlie see them wheele.

“ Come to, come to, ye gostlie crew,
 “ Come to, and follow me,
 “ And daunce for us the wedding daunce,
 “ When we in bed shall be.”—

And brush, brush, brush, the gostlie crew
 Come wheeling ore their heads,
 All rustling like the wither'd leaves
 That wyde the whirlwind spreads.

Halloo ! halloo ! away they goe,
 Unheeding wet or drye,
 And horse and rider snort and blowe,
 And sparkling pebbles flye.

And all that in the moonshyne lay,
 Behynde them fled afar ;
 And backward scudded overhead,
 The skye and every star.

Tramp, tramp, across the land they speede,
 Splash, splash, across the see ;
 —“ Hurrah ! the dead can ride apace ;
 “ Dost fear to ride with me ?

“ I weene the cock prepares to crowe,
 “ The sand will soone be runne ;
 “ I snuff the earlye morning aire,
 “ Downe, downe ! our work is done.

" The dead, the dead can ryde apace,
 " Oure wed bed here is fit ;
 " Our race is ridde, oure journey ore,
 " Our endless union knit."—

And lo! an yren-grated grate
 Soon biggens to their viewe ;
 He crackte his whype, the clangyng boltes,
 The døores asunder flewe.

They pass, and 'twas on graves they trode,
 —" 'Tis hither we are bounde ;"—
 And many a tombstone gostlie white,
 Lay inn the moonshyne round.

And when he from his steede alytte,
 His armour, green with rust,
 Which damps of charnel vaults had bred,
 Straight fell away to dust.

His head became a naked skull,
 Nor haire nor eyne had hee ;
 His body grew a skeleton,
 Whilome so blythe of blee.

And att his dry and boney heele
 No spur was left to be ;
 And inn his witherde hand you might
 The scythe and hour-glasse see.

And lo! his steede did thin to smoke,
 And charnel fires outbreathe ;
 And paled, and bleach'd, then vanish'd quite,
 The mayde from underneathe.

And hollow howlings hung in aire,
 And shrekes from vaults arose ;
 Then knew the mayde she might no more
 Her living eyes unclose.

But onwarde to the judgment seat,
 Through myste and moonlight dreare :
 The gostlie crewe, their flyghte persewe,
 And hollowe inn her eare.

—“ Be patient, though thyne herte should breke,
 “ Arrayne not heavn's decree ;
 “ Thou nowe art of thie bodie refte,
 “ Thie soule forgiven bee !”—