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FITZCAREY; OR THE RECLUSE OF SELWOOD. A NORMAN TALE.

CANTO I.

Omnibus locis ingens apparet imago tristitiz.

ENNIUS.

Through all the wide expanse below,  
Appears the giant form of Woe:

**D**IM through the scudding mists shone the mild beauties of the moon, like the radiance of Virtue through Misfortune's cloud. The warbler of the night sat silent on the spray, and suspended was her sweet murmuring tale.

Hoarse through the forest rushed the ill-omen'd blast; Melancholy rode on its sullen wings; and Fear and Superstition awakened at its call. The fragments of a ruined pile were tumbling before the rising storm, and the owl shrieked discordant among its ivy-vested walls—when Fitz-carey roved, desponding, on the banks of the troubled Frone, and listened to the Jem, tolling curfew.

Changed for the crucifix was the warrior's lance; the burnished mail was resigned for the hermit's cassock; and the love of maidens was a prey to remorse, and wandered by the roaring stream.

But Fitzcarey wandered not far: for darker spread the gloom, congenial with his soul; and sable Horror blotted out the silver lights of heaven. He paused with dismay. Like the courser, long famed for his swiftness in the chase, when fierce raging flames assail him in his stall, and relax the strong sinews which should bear him from his fate—so the mourner stood appalled on the brink of the torrent, and yielded his soul to the encroachments of despair.

'Aye, tremble, thou wretch!' howled the spirit of the storm, as he rode on the

swelling blast, 'tremble at the thought of thy perjured crime, and bow beneath the weight of my reproach. Hark! hearest thou not my voice in the loud howling blast? How it groans forth Egwina's wrong!—List! hearest thou not my breath in the pause of the storm? How it sighs forth Egwina's woe.

'Remorse is my name—the sure attendant of Guilt; the avenging sword of Innocence betrayed. Lo! Affliction and Wrath, the heralds of my approach; and Terror and Despair, who still follow in my train!'

As the roebuck in the forest, whom the hunters surround, stands dismayed by their brandished spears; so trembled Fitz-carey at the horrors of the scene—but he shrunk from those horrors in vain: for still in his view glared the spectres through the gloom; and menaced with revengeful ire. The terror of heroes felt the palpitations of fear: for Conscience was assailed by the recollection of guilt.

Wild in his sockets rolled his dim, glaring orbs: they sought for consolation in vain: as the heron through the skies, as he scuds o'er the barren heath, seeks for shelter in vain from the talons of the hostile kite. He smote his perturbed breast, he groaned from the bottom of his soul; while loud o'er his head burst the thunders of wrath, and the lightnings of vengeance scared his dishevelled locks.

'Lo! these,' said the Spectre, who directed