LUDWIG TIECK

THE FAITHFUL ECKART

That noble duke, the great

Of Burgundy's proud land,

Felt all his foemen's hate,

And, vanquish'd, bit the sand.

He spoke: "I'm struck! I bleed!

Where is my valour fled?

Friends fail me at my need,

My knights are flown or dead;

I cannot hold the field—

I faint! My strength, my pride,

Has left me here to yield—

True Eckart's from my side.

It was not thus of old,

When war raged fierce and strong—

The last to have it told,

He loved his home too long.

Now, see they trooping come—

Not long my sword is mine:

Flight's made for the base groom—

I'll die as died my line."

With that he raised his sword,

And would have smote his breast;

When, truer than his word,

Good Eckart forward prest.

Back spurn'd the vaunting foe,

And dashed into the throng;

Nor was his bold son slow

To bring his knights along.

The bold duke saw the sign,

And cried, "Now, God be praised!

Now tremble, foemen mine,

My drooping hopes be raised!"

Again he charged and cheer'd,

True Eckart wins the fight;

"But where's his boy?" he heard;

"No more he sees the light."

When now the foe was fled,

Out spoke the duke aloud;

"Well hath it with me sped,

Yet Eckart's head is bow'd.

Though many thou hast slain,

For country and for life;

Thy son lies on the plain,

No more to join the strife."

Then Eckart's tears flow'd fast,

Low stoop'd the warrior down;

Embraced and kiss'd his last,

And sadly made his moan.

"Sweet Heins, how died'st so young,

Ere yet thou wert a man?

What boots it that I'm strong,

And thou so still and wan?

Yet thou hast saved thy prince

From his dread foeman's scorn!

Thou art his—accept him, since

He never will return!"

Bold Burgundy then mourn'd

To see a father's grief;

His heart within him burn'd,

But could not bring relief.

He mingles tears with tears;

He clasps him to his breast;

The hero he reveres,

And speaks his deep distress:—

"Most faithful hast thou been,

When fail'd me all beside;

Henceforth we will be seen

Like brothers, side by side.

Throughout all Burgundy,

Be lord of me and mine;

And could more honour be,

I'd freely make it thine."

He journey'd through the land,

Each liege-man hail'd him home;

To each he gave command,

True Eckart to welcome.

It was the voice of an old mountaineer that sung this song, resounding far among the rocks, where the faithful Eckart was sitting upon a declivity, weeping aloud. His youngest boy stood near his father, and said, "Why do you cry so bitterly, my dear father? Why are you so much better and stronger than other men, if you are afraid—can you be afraid of them?"

Meanwhile the duke, at the head of a hunting-party, was leisurely proceeding homewards; Burgundy himself was mounted upon a stately, richly caparisoned steed. His princely gold and silver trappings sparkled in the evening sun; insomuch that the young Conrad could not sufficiently admire the fine procession as it passed. Faithful Eckart raised his eyes, and looked darkly and sorrowfully towards the place; while his tender Conrad began to sing, as he lost sight of the princely cavalcade in the distance:—

"If you'd wield

Sword and shield,

And have good steed

With spear at need

And harquebuss,—what must you do?

You must feel

Your nerves like steel,

Strong in heart and spirit;—

Manhood good

In your blood

To bear you stoutly through with merit."

The old warrior pressed his son to his heart, and looked earnestly at his large clear blue eyes. He then said, "Did you hear the song of the good mountaineer, my boy?"

"Did I?" repeated the boy: "surely he sang loud enough. And are you, then, still that faithful Eckart whom I was glad to hear so praised?"

"That same duke is now my enemy: he holds my second son in durance,—yea, hath already laid him low, if I must believe all that the people of the country say."

"Then take your great sword, father, and bear it no longer," exclaimed his brave boy: "they will tremble when they see you; the good people will uphold you all the country round, for they say you are their greatest hero."

"No, I must not do that, my boy; for then I should prove my enemies' worst words true. I must not be unfaithful to my native prince. I will not break my fealty and the peace of the country, to keep which I have sworn."

"But what does he want to do with us?" inquired Conrad, impatiently.

Eckart had risen, but he again seated himself, and said, "Dear boy, the whole of that history would sound too harsh and strange in thy young ears. Enough to know that great people always bear their worst enemy in their own heart, and live in fear night and day. The duke now thinks he has trusted me too much, and been all along only cherishing a viper in his bosom. Yet in the country they call me the prince's sword—the strong sword that restored him life and land;—all the people call me Faithful Eckart, and the wretched and oppressed cry unto me for help in the hearing of

the court. This the duke cannot bear. His envy hath turned to rage, and they who might help, set him against me, and have turned his heart from love to hatred."

The aged hero then related how the duke had spoken evil words, and banished him from before his face for ever; and how they now became quite strange, like enemies, because envious men had said that he was going to deprive the duke of his dominions. More sadly did he proceed to tell, as he passed his hand across his eyes, how the duke had seized upon himself and his son, and accused them of wanting to take his land and life; "Yea, 'tis said he hath even doomed my son to die."

Young Conrad spoke not to his father, seeing he wept. At length he said, "Father, let me go to the court, and I will talk to the duke, that he may be brought to understand you, and treat you better. Should he have hurt a hair of my brother's head, he is so bad a man that you shall punish him; yet it can scarce be that he hath so soon forgotten all your services."

"Alas! don't you remember the old proverb, poor boy?—

'When the mighty want your hand,

They'll promise you both gifts and land;

When the evil day hath pass'd,

Their friendship flieth too as fast.'

Yes, and all my long and painful life has gone for nothing. Wherefore did he raise me high above my peers, only to plunge me into the lowest ignominy? The love of princes is like a fatal poison, which they ought to reserve only for their enemies, and which finally often proves the ruin of its heedless possessor: so it hath ever been."

"I will hasten to him," said Conrad; "I will plainly remind him of all you have done and suffered for him; and then he will treat you as well as he did before."

"You forget," replied Eckart, "that they have pronounced us traitors: we had better seek refuge together quickly in some foreign land, where we shall, perhaps, be more fortunate than here."

"What, father, in your old age!—and will you turn your back upon our sweet home? Let us rather try any way but this," said Conrad. "I will see the Duke of Burgundy; I will appease and make him friendly to us; for what harm can he do me, though he does hate and fear you?"

"I do not like to let you go," replied Eckart; "for my mind misgives me sadly; yet I

should like to be reconciled to him, for he was once my kind friend, and for the sake of your poor brother, who is lingering in prison, or perhaps dead."

The sun was now casting its last wild beams upon the green earth; and Eckart sat down, absorbed in deep thought, leaning against the root of a tree. He looked at Conrad earnestly a long while, and at length said, "If you will go, my son, then go now, before the night gathers in: the lights are already up, you see, in the windows of the duke's castle. I can hear the trumpets sounding at a distance for the festival;—perhaps his son's bride is arrived, and he may feel more friendly disposed towards us."

His son was instantly on his way; yet he parted with him unwillingly, for he no longer put any faith in his own good fortune or the duke's gratitude. Young Conrad was bold and hopeful; doubting nothing but that he should touch the duke's heart, who had heretofore caressed him on his knees.

"Art thou sure thou wilt come back to me, my sweetest child?" cried the old man; "for were I to lose thee, I have seen thee for the last time—the last of thy race." His young son then kissed and comforted him, promising that he would be with him very soon; and they separated.

Conrad knocked at the castle-gate, and was admitted. The aged Eckart remained seated where he was, exposed to the night-winds, all alone. "And I have lost him too; I am sure I have lost him." He cried bitterly in his solitude, "These eyes will never rest upon his dear face again." While thus lamenting, he saw an old wayfaring man leaning upon his crutch, and trying, at great hazard, to make his way down the mountain. A precipice yawned beneath him; and Eckart, aware of his danger, went and took him by the hand. "Whither are you going?" he inquired, as he assisted him down to the place where he had himself sat.

The old man sat down, and wept till the tears ran over his furrowed cheeks. Eckart sought to comfort him with gentle advice; but the other seemed too much afflicted to pay attention to him.

"What terrible calamity can it be that thus overpowers you?" inquired Eckart. "Only try to speak."

"Alas, my children!" exclaimed the aged man.

Then Eckart again thought of Conrad, of Heins, and Dietrich, and became himself inconsolable.

"I say nothing," he added, "if your children are all dead; for then your grief is, indeed, great."

"Oh, worse than dead!" exclaimed the other. "No, they are not dead," he repeated in a still more bitter voice; "but they are lost to me for ever! Yea, would to Heaven that they were only dead!"

The good old hero almost shrieked at hearing these words, and besought the unhappy father to explain so horrible a mystery: to which the latter replied, "We live in a wonderful world; and these are strange times. Surely the last dreaded day cannot be far from hand; for alarming signs and omens are daily abroad, threatening the world more and more. All evil things seem to have broken loose beyond their ancient boundaries, and rage and destroy on every side. The fear of God restrains us not—there is no foundation for any thing good; evil spirits walk in the broad day, and boldly scare the good away from us, or celebrate their nightly orgies in their unholy retreats. O my dear sir, we are grown grey in the world, but not old enough for such prodigious things. Doubtless you have seen the great comet—Heaven's portentous lightning in the sky, which glares so prophetically down upon us. Every one forebodes disasters; but none think of reforming their lives in order to escape the threatened evil. As if this, too, were not enough, the ancient earth discovers her trouble, and casts up her mysterious secrets from the deep, while that portentous light serves to reveal them from above. And, hark! have you never heard of the strange mountain which the people round call Venus-berg?"

"No, never," said Eckart, "though I have travelled far and wide here around the hills."

"At that I wonder much," replied the old man; "for the dreadful thing is now become as well known as it is true: for that, good sir, is the very mountain whither the devils fled for refuge in the centre of the earth, when the holy Christian faith began to wax strong, and pressed hard upon the heathen idols. There, they now say, that fatal goddess Venus holds her unblest orgies; whither the infernal powers of worldly lust and ambition, and all forbidden wishes, come trooping in myriads for their prey; so that the whole mountain hath become forsaken and accursed from time immemorial."

"On what side lies the mountain?" inquired Eckart.

"There is the mystery; it is a secret," whispered the old man, "which those who know dare not tell, and none know but those who are in the power of our great adversary; and indeed none but wicked persons will ever venture the discovery. Once only a wandering musician by miracle appeared again; but he came commissioned by the powers of darkness to traverse the world; and he plays strange notes upon a pipe—sounds which are heard to echo first in the distance, then more loud and sweet. Those who approach too close within his sphere are seized with a strange unaccountable delirium; and away they run in search of the mountain, heedless of every obstacle, and never weary—never satisfied until they gain the fatal summit, which opens for them, and whence there is no return. Their supernatural strength forsakes them only in the infernal abode; when they continue wandering round its

unhallowed precincts like unblest pilgrims, without the least hope of salvation. I lost all hope of comfort in my two sons long ago: they grew wilful and abandoned; they despised their parents, and our holy faith itself. Then they began to hear the strange music; and they are now fled far into the hills—the inhabited world is too narrow for them; and they will never stop until they reach the boundless regions below." And the old man wrung his hands.

"And what do you think of doing in this matter?"

"What should I do?—with this crutch, my only support, I have set out in pursuit of them, being determined either to find them or to die."

At these words he rose with a resolute effort, and hastened forward as fast as his feeble steps could bear him, as if fearful of losing a moment; while Eckart gazed after him with a look of pity, lamenting his useless anxiety and sorrows yet to come.

"To all his other evils," cried Eckart, "even madness itself does not seem to have brought any relief."

Night came, and passed away;—the morning broke, yet no signs of young Conrad. The old warrior wandered among the hills, and cast his eyes wistfully towards the castle; still no one appeared. Then he heard a tumult, as if proceeding from the place; and, unable to restrain his anxiety, he at last mounted his steed that was grazing near, and rode hastily towards the castle. He no longer disguised himself, but spurred boldly among the troops and pages surrounding the castle-gates, not one of whom ventured to stop or lay a hand upon him. All opened to him a path.

"Where is my son Conrad?" inquired the old hero, as he advanced.

"Inquire nothing," said one of the pages, casting down his eyes: "it would only grieve you;—better turn back."

"And Dietrich," added the old man,—"where is he?"

"Mention his name no more," said an aged knight, "the duke's rage was kindled, and he thought to punish you through him."

Hot scorn flushed the face of the old hero when he heard these words; grief and fury took possession of him, and he rode through the castle-gates with speed. All opened a way for him with fear and reverence; and he soon threw himself from his horse at the palace-doors. With trembling step he mounted into the marble halls.

"Am I here," he cried, "in the dwelling of the man who was once my friend?" He tried to collect his thoughts; but dreadful visions seemed to rise before him: and he

staggered wildly into the duke's presence.

Not aware of his arrival, Burgundy uttered a cry of alarm, as he found himself confronted with the old man. "Art thou the Duke of Burgundy?" asked the old hero.

The duke replied, "I am."

"And hast thou caused my son Dietrich to die?"

The duke answered, "Yes."

"And my youngest boy! my Conrad!—was not he too good and beautiful for thy sword?—hast thou killed him too?"

"I have," said the duke again.

And Eckart replied, as he shed tears, "Oh, say not that! say not that, Burgundy!—for I cannot bear those words: recall them. Say, at least, that it repents you of all you have done; and I will yet try to take comfort, though you have now done your worst to break my heart."

The duke answered, "Away! thou faithless traitor! hence from my sight! thou art the bitterest enemy I have on the face of the earth."

Eckart stood firm, and said, "Heretofore thou didst call me thy best friend; but good thoughts are now become strange to thee. Never did I aught against thy honour: nay, I have revered and loved thee as my true prince, so help me God! or here, with this hand upon my good sword, I could take speedy and bitter vengeance for all my wrongs. But no; I will for ever banish myself from your presence, and end my few and evil days in solitude and woe."

Having uttered these sad words, Eckart turned away; while Burgundy, agitated with hateful passions, called aloud for his pages and his lancers, who surrounded the old hero, and followed him with the points of their spears out of the duke's palace; none venturing, though at their lord's command, to put him to death.

Away he spurred at speed,

Eckart that noblest knight;

And spoke, "No more I heed

The world, nor wrong, nor right.

My sons are gone, and I

Am left to mourn alone;

My prince would have me die;

And friends I have not one."

Then made he to the woods,

And with full heart did strive

To bear his dismal moods—

To bear his woes and live.

"I fly man's hated face!

Ye mountains, lakes, and trees,

Be now my resting-place,

And join your tears to these.

No child beguiles my grief;

Their lives were sworn away;

Their days were all too brief—

My last one they did slay!"

Thus wild did Eckart weep,

Till mind and sense were gone;

Then madly down the steep

He spurr'd his true steed on.

He bounded, leaped, and fell,

Yet Eckart took no heed;

But said it was right well,

Though sadly he did bleed.

He next ungirt his horse,

And lay down on the ground;

And wish'd it had happ'd worse—

That he his grave had found.

None of the duke's peasantry could say whither the faithful Eckart had fled; for he had taken to the wild mountain-woods, and been seen by no human being. The duke dreaded his great courage and prudence, and he repented that he had not secured him, blaming his pages that they had suffered him to escape. Yet, to make his mind more easy, he proceeded at the head of a large train, as if going to the chase; being determined to ride through all the surrounding hills and woods until he should find the spot where Eckart had concealed himself, and there put him to death.

His followers spread themselves abroad on all sides, and vied with each other in the hope of pleasing the prince, and reaping the reward of their evil deed; but the day passed, and the sun went down, without their discovering any traces of him they sought.

A storm was now gathering, and the great clouds came darkling over the woods and hills; the thunder began to peal along the sky; the lightning flashed athwart the heavens, smiting the largest oaks; while torrents of rain fell upon their heads. The duke and his followers ran for shelter among the rocks and caves; but the duke's steed burst his reins, and ran headlong down the heights; while his master's voice was lost in the uproar of the storm, and separated from all his followers, he called out in vain for assistance.

Wild as the animals of the forest, poor Eckart had wandered, unconscious now of his sorrows or whither he went. Roots and berries, with the water of the mountain-spring, formed his sole refreshment: he would no longer have known any of his former acquaintance; the day of his despair seemed at length to have gone by. Yet no! As the storm increased, he suddenly seemed to recover some portion of his intellect, and to become aware of objects around him. Then he uttered a loud cry of horror, tore his hair, and beat his aged breast, as he bethought himself of his children. "Dear as the life-blood of my heart," he cried, "whither, my sweet boys, are ye all gone? Oh, foul befell my coward spirit that hath not yet avenged ye! Why smote I not your fell destroyer, who hath pierced my heart through and through, worse than with a thousand daggers? Mad wretch that I am! I deserve it all—all; for well may your tyrant

murderer despise me, when I oppose not the assassin of my own children. Ah, would that he might once come within the reach of my arm!—for now I long, when it is all too late, to taste the sweetness of revenge."

Thus he spent the night, wandering, and weeping as he went. At last he thought he heard a distant voice of some one crying for help. He turned his steps towards the direction in which it came; and finally he approached a man, whom the darkness hid from his sight, though he heard his voice close to him. This voice beseeched him piteously to guide a stranger into the right path. Eckart shrieked as it again fell upon his ear—he knew it; and he seized his sword. He prepared to cut down the assassin of his children—he felt new strength—and drew nigh, in the hope of full vengeance; when suddenly his oath of fealty, and all his former promises, when he was the duke's friend, came across his mind. Instead of piercing him to the heart, he took the duke's hand, and promised to lead him into the right path. They passed along conversing together, although the duke trembled with fear and cold. Soon they met some one. It was Wolfram, the duke's page, who had been long in search of his master. It was still dark night—not a star cast its feeble rays through the thick black clouds. The duke felt very weak, and sighed to reach some habitation, to refresh himself and repose; besides, he was in dread of encountering the enraged Eckart, whose strange feigned voice he did not yet know. He feared he should hardly survive till morning, and trembled at every fresh blast of wind that shook the trees, or the thunder as it rolled more awfully above their heads. "My good Wolfram," cried the duke, "mount this lofty fir, and cast a keen glance around thee to discover some light—whether from house or hut it boots not, so that we can but live to reach it."

The page obeyed at his life's risk, as the storm bent the strongest branches of the huge tree as if it had been a tender reed. Its topmost boughs sometimes nearly touched the ground; while the boy appeared little more than an acorn growing on a branch of the tree. At length he cried out, "In the plain below us there I perceive a glimmering—I can see the way we ought to go." At the same time he carefully descended, and took the lead. In a short while the friendly light greeted the eyes of all three—the very sight of which greatly restored the fallen spirits of the duke.

Absorbed within himself, Eckart uttered not a word. He walked along, striving with the bitter feelings that rose in his breast, leading the duke by the hand.

At length the page knocked at the cottage-door; and an infirm old woman appeared. When they had entered, Eckart loosed the duke's hand, whom he had led along; and the latter fell trembling upon his knees, to return Heaven thanks for his deliverance from the perils of that terrific night.

Eckart retired into a dark corner; where he found, stretched in sleep, the same old man who shortly before had been bewailing his unhappy fate in regard to his sons, whom he was then in search of.

The duke having finished his prayers, thus spoke:—"This has indeed appeared a miraculous night to me. I feel the goodness and almighty power of God more than ever I had before reason to do. Yet my heart hath failed within me, and I feel that I must shortly die; only wishing for time, before I depart, to entreat forgiveness for my manifold sins and offences against the Most High; but I will take care to reward you both, my faithful companions, before I go, and that as handsomely as I can. To thee, my trusty page, I bequeath the two castles which lie close to the next mountain here, on condition that, in remembrance of this terrific night, thou dost in future call them the Tannenhäuser, or Fir-houses.—And who art thou, good man, that hast laid thy weary limbs in the corner? Come forth, that I may reward thee quickly, according to thy great services and many kind offices shewn me during this terrific night."

Then up rose Eckart, like a thing

That starts from out the dim moonlight;

His furrowed cheek betrays the sting

Of many a woful day and night.

The soul of Burgundy sighed sore

To witness thus that aged face;

The blood forsook his veins—he tore

His hair, and swooned for dire disgrace.

They raise him from the low cold ground,

His limbs and temples warmly chafe:

"Then, O my God, at last he's found,"

He cried; "true Eckart's here—he's safe.

O whither shall I fly thy look?

Was't thou didst bring me from the wood?

And was it I thy dear babes struck—

Thou that to me hast been so good?"

And Burgundy, as thus he said,

He felt his heart was breaking fast;

On Eckart's breast he laid his head,

And thought he there would breathe his last.

His senses fled! Then Eckart spoke:

"I reck not, master, of their fate—

That so the world may see, though broke,

True Eckart's heart's yet true and great."

Thus passed the night. In the morning the followers of the duke arrived, and found him very sick. They placed him upon their mules, and carried him back to his castle. Eckart stirred not from his side; and often the duke took his hand, and, pressing it to his bosom, looked up at him imploringly; when Eckart would embrace him, and speak soft words of comfort till he was again still. The duke next called together his council, and declared that such was his confidence in his faithful Eckart, the bravest and noblest of all his land, that he would leave him governor of his sons. Having said which, he died.

Eckart then took the reins of government into his own hands, fulfilling the trust reposed in him in such a humane and prudent way as to excite the admiration of all the country. Shortly afterwards, the report spread more and more on all sides, of the arrival of the strange musician from Venus-berg, who seduced his victims with the strange sweetness of his tones; so that they disappeared without leaving a trace behind. Many gave credit to the report—others not; while Eckart again bethought him of the unhappy old man whom he had seen so forlorn and crazed upon the mountain.

"I have now adopted you as my children," he said to the young princes, as he one day sat with them on the bill before the castle; "your happiness is now become my inheritance; I shall continue to survive, after my departure, in your welfare and your good conduct."

They all stretched themselves on the hill-side, whence they could look far into the distant and lovely prospect beyond; and Eckart would then strive to subdue the regrets he felt for his own children, though they would appear as if passing over the mountain before him, while in the distance he thought he heard the faint echo of delicious music gradually growing louder.

Hark! comes it not like dreams

Before the morning beams?

From some far greenwood bowers,

Such as the night-bird pours,

So sweet, and such its dying fall?—

Those tones the magic song recall;

And Eckart sees each princely cheek

Flushed with the joys its victims seek;

Wild wishes seized each youthful breast

For some far unknown bourne of rest.

"Away to the mountains!" they cried; "the deep woods

Where the trees, winds, and waters make music for gods:

Sweet, strange, secret voices are singing there now,

And invite us to seek their blest Eden below."

In strange attire then came in view

The unblest sorcerer, and anew

Inspired the maddening youths, till bright

And brighter shone the sunny light.

Trees, streams, and flowers danced in the rays;

Through earth, air, heavens, were heard the lays;

The grass, fields, forests, trembling join'd

That magic tumult wild and blind.

Swift as a shadow fade the ties

That bind the soul to earth, and rise

Soft longings for unearthly scenes;

And strange confusion intervenes

Between the seen and unseen world,

Till reason from her seat is hurl'd,

And madly bursts the soul away

To mingle in the infernal fray.

The trusty Eckart felt it,

But wist not of the cause;

His heart the music melted,

He wondered what it was.

The world seems new and fairer,

All blooming like the rose;

Can Eckart be a sharer

In raptures such as those?

"Ha! are those tones restoring

My wife and noble sons?—

All that I was deploring—

My lost beloved ones?"

Yet soon his sense collected,

Brought doubts within his breast:

These magic arts detected,

A horror him possessed.

His children fade in air—

Mocks of infernal might;

His young friends vanished were—

He could not check their flight.

Yes, these his princely trust,

Late yielded to his power,

He now desert them must,

Or share their evil hour.

Faith, duty to his prince,

Is still his watchword here;

He still thinks of him, since

His last sad look and tear.

So boldly doth he now

Advance his foot and stand,

Arm'd proof to overthrow

The evil powers at hand.

The wild musician comes;

Eckart his sword has ta'en;

But ah! those magic tunes

His mortal strength enchain!

From out the mountain's side

Come thousand dwarfish shapes,

That threaten and deride,

And leap and grin like apes.

The princes fair are gone,

And mingled with the swarm;

True Eckart is alone,

And faint his valiant arm.

The rout of revellers grows,

Gathering from east to west,

And gives him no repose—

Around—before—abreast.

True Eckart's 'mid the din,

His might is lost and gone;

The hellish powers must win—

He of their slaves be one.

For now they reach the hill

Whence those wild notes are heard;

The dwarfish fiends stand still,

The hills their sides uprear'd,

And made a mighty void,

Whence fiercer sprites glower'd grim.

"What now will us betide?"

He cried:—none answered him.

Again he grasped his sword;

He said he must prove true:

Eckart has spoke the word,

And rushed amid the crew.

He saved the princes dear;

They fled and reach'd the plain;

But see, the fiend is near—

His imps their malice strain.

Though Eckart's strength is gone,

He sees the children safe;

And cried, "I fight alone—

Now let their malice chafe!"

He fought—he fell—he died

Upon that well-fought field;

His old heroic pride

Both scorn'd to fly or yield.

"True to the sire and son,

The bulwark of their throne,

Proud feats hath Eckart done;

There's not a knight, not one,

Of all my court and land,"

Cried the young duke full loud,

"Would make so bold a stand.

Our honour to uphold.

For life, and land, and all,

To Eckart true we owe;

He snatch'd our souls from thrall,

For all it work'd him woe."

And soon the story ran

Through Burgundy's broad land,

That who so venture can

To take his dangerous stand

Upon that mountain-side,

Where in that contest hard

True Eckart fought and died,

Shall see his shade keep guard,

To warn the wanderers back

Who seek th' infernal pit,

And spurn them from the track

That leads them down to it.