

**CHILDE ALARIQUE,
A POET'S REVERIE.
WITH OTHER POEMS**

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Childe Alarique, a poet's reverie. With other poems by R. P. Gillies

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R. P. GILLIES

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CHILDE ALARIQUE.

PART FIRST.

I.

“ YE forests wide, from whom I feel the breath
Of spring, that bears ten thousand odours, blow!
Ye mountains, gay with purple blooming heath,
Once more your scenery vanquishes my woe!
Once more I feel poetic ardours glow!—
Through shadowy groves of never-fading pine,
I watch the crystal currents glittering flow;—
Nor fairer rays within those waters shine,
Than bright responsive gleams of rapture that are mine!

2.

“ O fool to think, that never, never more
For me the pulse of joy would throb again,
While yet far distant from the peaceful shore
I combated the waves and wintry rain,
And my frail bark was beaten back amain
To the wild sea where ceaseless tempests blew !
But now, fast moor'd, I smile at former pain ;
Soft are the gales, the skies of lovely hue,
And all my infant raptures swell my heart anew.

3.

“ Oh, Heaven ! what ecstasy to weave again
The purple heath-bell into garlands wild !
To meet in haunted glades the dryad train,
And tread the path I loved while yet a child !

No more from these calm solitudes exiled,
Struggling I'll join Ambition's venal crew;
But here, mid mountain steeps and woodlands wild,
The path of joy and ecstasy pursue,
And the sweet Muse that loves the mountain forest woo!"

4.

Thus, as the well-known landscape open'd wide
Its varied treasures to his raptur'd sight,
With vernal hues and white haze beautified,²
And tinted here and there with radiance bright,
Childe Alarique 'gan utter his delight³
To the rude cliffs, beneath whose rocky steep,
In early days, full many a summer night
'Twas his in transport all dissolved to weep,
What time the fairy train their mystic revels keep.

5.

Oh, who can tell the varied joys that wait
The young enthusiast in the lonely shade,
When, all entranced, he goes to meditate
On Nature, in her richest charms array'd!
What artist e'er the magic hues pourtray'd
That float on hill and dale!— Ah, happy he,
If joys like these had not been doom'd to fade,
Like leaves in Autumn withering on the tree,
And yield to pale decay and ceaseless misery!

6.

Go then, unapprehensive Youth! explore
Whate'er of rapture woodland scenes can yield!
On dauntless pinion let thy fancy soar,
And thousand airy structures busy build!

Be all of Nature's richest stores reveal'd
 In sweet succession to thy watchful eye,
 While yet the hues of glory light the field,
 And yet is heard celestial harmony
 From every copsewood grey and haunted steep on high!

7.

See now, the Childe to coverts green repair
 In the fair, blushing, dewy morn of May;
 What bliss in every breath of "common air!"*
 What transport in the blackbird's choral lay!
 What grandeur in the landscape's fair array!—
 But, ah! what mortal strain his thoughts can tell,
 What pencil could the melting forms pourtray,
 That on his ravish'd sight inviting swell!—
 Oh, dreams beloved! whilom I knew your influence well!