

**CAPTIVE VIGILS, A
POEM IN SIX
CANTOS OR VIGILS**

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Captive Vigils, a Poem in Six Cantos or Vigils by Captive Vigils

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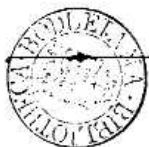
CAPTIVE VIGILS

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CAPTIVE VIGILS.

A
J
P O E M

IN SIX CANTOS OR VIGILS.



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GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY OF
HIS LATE ROYAL HIGHNESS
FREDERICK, DUKE OF YORK;
TO WHOM IN LIFE, WITH SPECIAL PERMISSION,
THIS WORK IN MANUSCRIPT
WAS ORIGINALLY DEDICATED,
BY ONE INDEBTED TO HIS KINDNESS,
AND WHO IS PROUD OF AN OCCASION TO PROVE
THAT HIS SENSE OF OBLIGATION
SURVIVES THE LOSS OF HIS PATRON.

THE AUTHOR.



P R E F A C E.

It will, I fear, be deemed a dull and presumptuous essay in the present era, to lay before the English reader a rhapsodical work of this alarming magnitude and antiquated shape, destitute of all that dramatic construction and busy incident, which now so generally compose the texture of a modern poem.

To confine my muse to the gloom of a midnight dungeon with a solitary captive—express-

ing himself in the least interesting form of the first person singular—is a poverty of plan rigidly exclusive of all other means of creating interest, than by the simple diversity of accidental thoughts, as they naturally emanate in successive train, one from another. The charge of insipidity, which such deviation from prevailing taste may provoke, will come harder home with the recurrent reflection, that had I selected some tale of romance, descriptive of scene, character, and action, my labour would have been relieved by the supporting interest of the ground-work, permitting not only repose, but convenient license to come and go upon, like a measured and defined path, along which I had but to march with the help of here and there an occasional illustration; instead of beating through a wilderness, without guide or land-

mark—only perhaps, to weary and dishearten the mind adventuring to follow. A further obstacle, to the success of my poem, may exist in its elegiac complexion; for the attention is apt to recoil from changes rung too long upon the plaintive and exclamatory; but had I failed to sustain the tone of lamentation, I should have been unfaithful to my subject, and inconsistent with my poetic situation. Another perilous objection may also be conceived, in my frequent allusions to a system of prison-terror, no longer familiar with the practice of our free country—but continental example chiefly furnished the picture; for there, suspected opinion still hurls the victim to perpetual captivity, and laws of exception devote the insolvent Briton to the pain of imprisonment till death.