# THE ISLE OF DEVILS

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The Isle of Devils by M.G. Lewis

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## M.G. LEWIS

# THE ISLE OF DEVILS

Trieste



### ISLE OF DEVILS.

## A Pistorical Tale,

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FUNNDED ON AN ANECDOTE IN THE ANNALS OF PORTUGAL.

(From an unpublished Manuscript.)

BY M. G. LEWIS, M. P.

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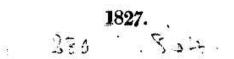
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### ISLE OF DEVILS.

THE

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SPEED Halcyon, speed, and here construct thy nest, Brood o'er these waves, and charm the winds to rest; No wave should dare to swell, no wind to roar, Till tands yon moraing maid on Lisbon's shore. That maid, as Venus fair, and chaste as she, When first to dazzl'd sky and wondering sea The bursting conch, love's new-bern Queen exposed, The brightest pearl that ever shell enclosed. While love's fantastic hand had joy'd to braid, Her locks with shells and weeds, like some sea maid : High seated at the stern was Irza seen, And seem'd to rule the flood, as ocean's Queen. Smooth sail'd the bark—the sun shone full and bright; The glitt'ring billows danced along the light; While Irza, free from fear, from sorrow face, Bright as the sun, and honyant as the sea, Bade o'er the late her flying fingers more, And sang a Spanish lay of Moorish love.\*

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Scarce moved the zepkyr's wings, while breathed the song, And waves in silence bore the bark along. T'was Irzn sang !--Rosalvo at her side, Gazed on his Cherub love, his destined bride---Felt at each look his soul in softness molt, Nor wished to feel more bliss than then he fek. 'Gainst the high mast, intent on book and beads, A Reverend Abbot leans, and prays, and reads;

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\* R appears, that here the Author intended to introduce Irza's song, but death prevented the completion of the Poem.

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And oft with secret glance the pair surveys Marks how she looks, and watches what he says. An idle task ! The terms which breathed their love Had served for prayer, and passed unblamed above. He finds each tender phrase so free from harm-So pure each thought, each look so chaste, though warm-Still to his beads and book he turns again, Pleased to have proved his guardian care so vain ; While off a blush of shame his pale cheek wears, To find his thoughts so much less pure than theirs. Oh they were pure 1 pure as the sun whose ray Loves on the shrines of Virgin Saints to play ; Pure as the falling snow, e're yet its shower Bends with its weight its own pale fragile flower. Not fourteen years were Irza's-(nay 'tis true) Most maids, at twelve, knew more than Irza knew ; And scarce two more had spread with silken down Her amorous cousin's cheek of glowing brown. His tutor sage, (in fact, not show, a Saint) Had kept his heart and mind secure from taint. In liberal arts, in healthful manly sports— In studies fits for councils, camps and courts— His moments found their full and best employ, Nor left one leisure hour for guilty joy. Since her blue dove-like eyes, six springs had seen, Immersed in cloistered shades had Irza been ; From duties done her sole delight deriven. And her sole care to please the Queen of Heaven : None e'er approached her--save the pure and good-Her promised spouse-that monk who near them stood-Her viceroy uncle, and some guardian nun Were all she e'er had seen by moon or sun. No amorous forms by wanton art designed, Had e'er inflamed her blood, or stained her mind : No hint in books, no coarse or doubtful phrase, E'er bade her curious thoughts explore the maze : Nor glowing dreams, by memory's pencil drawn, Had e'er prophaned her sleep, and made her blush at morn-With flowers she decked the virgin mother's shrine, Nor guessed a wonder, made that name divine. That very love which lent her looks such fire, N'er raised one blameful thought or loose desire. Like waves of gold, which in Alembics roll, The flames she suffered, but refined her soul-Made it more free from stain, more light from dross, With brighter lustre, and with softer gloss. That which she bore, a bridegroom well might claim, A sister's love, and bear a brother's name ; And e'en when now her lips in playful bliss Sealed on Rosalvo's eyes a roscate kiss, Love's highest, dearest charm she meant to show, Nor thought he more could ask, or she bestow.

From Goa's precious sands to Lisbon's shore, The Viceroy's countless wealth that vessel bore ; There jewels lay in heaps of various dyes, Ingots of Gold, and Pearls of wondrous size. And there (two gems worth all that Cortes won) He placed his blooming niece and only son. Sebastian sought the Moors ! with loyal zeaf, Rosalvo cased his youthful limbs in steel--To die or conquer by his Sovereign's side He came, aud with him came his promised bride. E'en now in Lisbon's court for Irza's hair, Virgins the Myrtle's bridal wreath prepare. And Hymen waves his torch from Cintra's towers, Hails the slow bark, and chides the loitering hours. Seldom in this frail world two hearts we see, So blest, and meriting, so blest to be ; Gently then O ye winds, your pinions move, And speed in safety home the bark of love. Brood Haleyon, Brood! thy sea spell chaunt again, And keep the mirror of th' enchanted main, Where his white wing the vaulting tropic dips, Calm as their hearts, and smiling as their lips. The charm prevails ! hush'd are the waves, and still Th' expanded sails, light favoring Zephyrs fill ; Wafting with motion scarce perceived : and now In rapture Irza from the vessel's prow, Gazed on an Isle with verdure gay and bright, Which seemed (so green it shone in solar light) An Emerald set in silver! long her eyes, Dwelt on its rocks-and oh ! dear friend she cries ; (And clasps Rosalvo's hands)-admire with me, Yon Isle which rising crowns the silent sea. How bold yon mossy cliffs which guard the strand, Like spires, and domes, and towers in fairy land ; How green the plains! how balsam-fraught the breeze-How bend with golden fruit the loaded trees! While fluttering 'mid their boughs in joyful notes, Miriads of birds attune their warbling throats. Blooms all the ground with flowers, and mark, oh ! mark, That giant palm whose foliage green and dark; Plays on the sun-clad rock : beneath, a cave, Spreads wide its sparry mouth, while loosely wave A thousand creepers, dyed with thousand stains, Whose wreaths enrich the trees and clothe the plains. Dear friend, how blest if passed my life could be, In that fair Isle with God alone and thee. Far from the world, from man and fiend secure, No guilt to harm us, and no vice to lure ! Bright round the Virgin's shrine would blush and bloon That world of flowers which pour such rich perfume; And sweet yon caves repeat with mellowing swell, Eve's closing Hymn when chimed the vesper bell.

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The Pilot heard-" Oh 1 spring of life" he cried, How bright and beautoous seems the bliss untried ; -I too, like you, in youth's romantic hours, Dreamt not of wasps in fruit, or thorn in flowers. And when on banks of sand the sunbeams shone, I deemed each sparkling flint a precious stone. Ah ! noble lady, learn that Isle so fair, The fields all roses, and all balm the air. That Isle is one, where every leaf's a spell, Where no good thing e'er dwelt, vor e'er shall dwell ; No fisher forced from home by adverse breeze, Would slake his thirst from yop infernal trees ; No ship-wrecked sailors from the swallowing waves, Would seek a refuge in those haunted caves. There flock the damaed-there Satan seigns and revels, And thence you Isle is called "The Isle of Devils"! Nor think on ramour's faith my tale is given, Once hot in youthful blood when hell nor heaven. Much filled my thoughts (the trath with shame I tell, Holy St. Francis guard thy votary well) ; In quest of water near that Isle I drew. When lo ! such monstrous forms appalled my view. Such shricks I heard, sounds all so strange and dread, That from the strand with shuddering haste I fled, Plyed as for life the car, nor backward turned my head. And the' since then bath flown full many a year, Still sinks my heart and shake my limbs with fear, Soon as you fatal Isle alarms mine eye : Cross we our breasts, say Ave and pass by.

#### III.

The Isle is past, and still in tranquil pride. Bears the rich bark its treasures u'er the tide. And now the sun c're yet his lamp he shrouds, Stains the pure western sky with crimson clouds. Now from the sea's last verge he sheds his rays, And sinks tr umphant in a golden blaze. Still o'er the Heaven's reflected lustre's flow Which make the world of waters gleam and glow : Wide, and more wide, each billow shines more bright, And all the empurpled occan floats in light. Soon as fair Irza marked the evening's close, Grave from her seat the young enthusiast rose ; Told o'er her beads and when the string was said, Ave Maria, sung the enraptured maid. Her looks so humble, so devout her air, Each worldly wish appeared so lost in prayer; All felt no thought could to her mind be near, That men her form could see, her voice could hear. Hushed all the ship! Each sailor checked his glee, Clasped his hard hands, and bent his trembling knee ; 5

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And each, as rose that sweet mysterious strain, (Best help in trouble and sweetbatm in pain)-Gazed on the maid with mingled love and fear, Dampon his check perceived the unwonted tear, Then raised to heaven his eyes in carnest prayer, And half believed himself already there ; Low too Rosalvo bent, nor knew if now, For Mary's love, or Irza's rose his vow. Scarce e'en the Monk forbore to kneel ; his child Fondly he view'd, and sweetly, gravely smiled, And blest that God, as swelled each melting note, Who gave such heavenly powers to human throat. Melodious strains ! Oh, speed your flight above, On rapture's wings ; and reach the car of love ; (For much thine aid sho needs) from ill to screen Thy Virgin votress ! Silence holds the deep, And e'en the heimsman's eyes are sealed in sleep ; Yet mark those gathering clouds ! the moon'is fled ! Mark too, that death-like stillness, deep and dread! And, hark ! from yon black cloud an awful voice, Pours the wild chaunt and bids the winds rejoice !

#### SONG OF THE TEMPEST FIEND.

I marked her I the Pennants how gaily they streamed, How well was she armed for resistence; The waves which sustained her, how brightly they beamed, In the sun's setting rays; and the sailors all seemed To forget the storm spirit's existence.

But I marked her I and now from the clouds I descend, My spells to the billows I mutter, I clap my black pinions—my wand I extend In darkwess the sky and the ocean to blend,

And the winds mark the charms which I witer.

Now more, and more rapid, in Eddies I whirl, In my voice while the thunder-clap rumbles; And now the white mountainous waves as they curl, I joy o'er the deck of the vessel to hurl,

And laugh as she tosses and tumbles.

The crew is alarmed, but the tempest prevails, No care from my fury delivers ; E're there's time for their furling the canvass—the sails From the top to the bottom I rend with my nails, And they stream in the blast-torn to shivers.

The sky and the ocean fierce battle they wage, The elements all are in action ;

No sailer the tempest now hopes to assuage---What elamours ! what burry ! what oaths ! and what rage ! Oh brave ! what disgair and distraction.

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Their heart strings they ache, while my ravage they view, Each knee 'gainst its fellow is knocking ; My eyes darting lightnings to dazzle the erew, Burn and blazo-and those lighnings so forked and so blue," Make the darkness of midnight more shocking.

The morn to that Vessel no succor shall bring ! Now high o'er the main-mast I bover: Now I plunge from the sky to the deck with a spring, And I shatter the mast with one flap of my wing— It cracks and it breaks, and goes over.

Hew away gailant sailors ! fatigue never dread ; You shall all rest at morn from your labours : The ocean's white mantle shall o'er you be spread, The white bones of Mariners pillow your head, And the whale and the shark be your neighbours.

For I swoop from aloft, and I roar and I burn, While my spouts the salt billows are drinking; I drive 'gainst the vessel, and beat down the stern, And pour in a flood that shall never return, And all shout, she is sinking ! she's sinking !

The barge! well remembered—'tis stout, and 'tis large, And will live in the billow's commotion; But now all my spouts from the clouds I discharge, And down goes the vessel—and down goes the barge— Hurrah! I reign Lord of the occun.

How their shricks rose in chorus! new all is at rest — The tempest no longer is brewing :

My dreams, by the harm newly done, will be blest, So I'll rest for a while on a thunder-cloud's breast,

Then rouse to hurl round me new rain.

#### IV.

Hush'd is the storm—the Heàvens no longer frown, And o'er that spot where late the boat went down; All bright and smiling glides the treacherous wave, Like sunshite playing on a new made grave. Full rose the watery moon; it showed a plank To which all deadly pale, with tresses dank; And robes of white (o'er which the storm had flung, Loose wreaths of occan flowers,) unconnecious hung A fair frail form—'Twas Irza' to the shore Each following wave the virgin mearcr bore; And now the mountain surge o'erwhelm'd the hand, And flying left her on the wished for strand.

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