KEATS AND LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ’S UNDINE

DAVID BONNELL GREEN *

Keats, as many of his critics have shown, not only read voraciously but constantly utilized his reading, transmuting materials from many sources into the gold of his poetry. As Robert Gittings, a recent critic, remarks in his book, John Keats: The Living Year, "His reading marched in step with his life and work, became a part of it, a day-by-day influence. Keats had read deeply . . . especially in the major poets, but he came even to them much later in life than many young men, and retained the freshness of discovery in his reading." 1 My concern in this paper is with his reading of La Motte Fouqué’s Undine: I hope to demonstrate that Keats based the character of Lamia in part upon that of Undine, and that he patterned the relationship between Lamia and Lycius on the relationship between Undine and Huldbrand. Undine truly "became a part " of his work.

Although Keat’s knowledge of classical and foreign literatures was neither extensive nor profound, he was acquainted with a considerable number of works by Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish writers. But he read comparatively few works by German authors, and those that he did he was compelled to read in translation. 2 Professor W. W. Beyer has discussed his reading of Sotheby’s version of Wieland’s Oberon, the German work which influenced him most extensively, and has touched upon his use of Undine; 3 elsewhere I have dealt with his reading of Goethe and Schiller. 4

Keats, towards the end of his life, shared then, in however limited a fashion, in the renewed curiosity in German literature which had developed in England after 1815. 5 During the eighteenth century,

* Department of English.


2 No shred of evidence exists that Keats could read German, and such lack of evidence—purely negative though it is—is sufficient to allow us to assume that he was dependent on English or French translations for his knowledge of German literature.

3 "Keats and the Daemon King" (New York, 1947), 235-236, 393-396.


5 See Walter F. Schirmer, Der Einfluss der deutschen Literatur auf die Englische
English interest in German literature had risen gradually but steadily and had culminated, in the last decade of the century, in a period of feverish translation of German drama and tales of terror. But with the overrunning of Germany by the French under Napoleon and with the increasing absorption of England in the prosecution of the war against France, English interest in German literature declined sharply in the decade 1805-1815, the time of Keats's boyhood and youth. The poet had shown at least a passing interest during that period, when on January 11, 1810, he had given a copy of Solomon Gessner's Death of Abel, translated by Mrs. Mary Collyer, to his brother Tom, and he may possibly have read Goethe's Werther in the years before 1815, but his first explicit and favorable comment on German literary works was made on September 21, 1819, when he wrote to his friend Woodhouse at Bath:

And don't forget to tell Reynolds of the fairy tale Undine. Ask him if he has read any of the American Brown's novels that Hazlitt speaks so much of—I have read one call'd Wieland—very powerful—something like Godwin. Between Schiller and Godwin. A Domestic prototype of S[c]hillier's Armenian. More clever in plot and incident than Godwin. A strange american [sic] scion of the German trunk. Powerful genius—accomplish'd horrors. 7

Although Keats's reminder to Woodhouse, "And don't forget to tell Reynolds of the fairy tale Undine," is puzzling, it is important to try to understand why he made it, for it provides a valuable, if rather enigmatic, clue to his reaction to Undine. The sentence just quoted contains Keats's only specific reference to Fouqué's book, but from the nature of his reminder it is only fair to conclude that

am 19 Jahrhundert (Halle, 1947), for the best recent survey of Anglo-German literary relations during this period. For a good, brief presentation in English of these relations, see Carlyle's Unpublished History of German Literature, ed. Hill Shine (Lexington, Ky., 1951), i-xxi. The large and tangled mass of scholarly writing on Anglo-German literary relations during the Romantic period still awaits some brave spirit willing and able to produce out of the assembled materials a comprehensive, orderly, and convincing study of the subject. Many excellent works on individual aspects of the field exist—a number of these are cited below—but their treatment of the whole is necessarily limited, and they are occasionally in serious conflict with one another.

"See Louis A. Holman, "John Keats, A Manuscript Record of His Life" (Boston, 1908-193—), 44. The book is there described in a note by F. Holland Day as "The Death of Abel, from the German of Gessner by Mrs. Collyer. With the life of the Author. 12mo. no date."

Undine had made an impression on him. He had last seen Woodhouse in London on Sunday, September 12, less than ten days previous to his letter, and had spent "6 hours tête à tête" with his friend. During those hours, as Woodhouse records, they had discussed Keats's poetry, especially Lamia. It seems probable, then, that in writing Woodhouse Keats was reminded of their conversation on September 12. It is likely that Undine had formed part of the subject of their talk and that Keats had asked Woodhouse to mention the book, or something concerning it, to Reynolds; for the poet had written to Reynolds on the morning of the same day, September 21, that he wrote to Woodhouse, and he would surely, if he had remembered, have spoken directly to Reynolds about Undine rather than have asked Woodhouse to remind him.

It is strange that if Keats had read the book earlier and been impressed by it he would not have mentioned or recommended it to Reynolds. And yet this possibility must be considered. The English translation of Undine by George Soane came out in June, 1818, and it is not likely that Keats saw the book before his return from Scotland in September, 1818; but he could very well have read the book at any time after that date. Perhaps the conversation with Woodhouse had reminded Keats of the fact that he wanted to mention the book to Reynolds. Perhaps W. W. Beyer is correct in suggesting the association of Keats's thought in the passage quoted above. Beyer writes: "I suspect that Keats' mind went from Undine to Brockden Brown to Schiller by some such train of thought as this: fairy tale, Undine, water-spirit; subject to daemon kind, Oberon, Wieland; (Wieland) the American novel like Godwin and (Wieland's contemporary) Schiller." Perhaps Keats, with the supernatural and horrific elements of Undine in mind, simply went on to speak of other Gothic novels and their authors. But the puzzle still remains: why, if Keats was writing Reynolds on the same day he wrote Woodhouse, he should not mention Undine directly to Reynolds—if he were merely recommending it as a book to be read. Indeed, the reminder might be interpreted to mean that Woodhouse should tell Reynolds of some particular manner in which Keats had used Undine. "And don't forget to tell Reynolds of [the way in which I have used] the fairy tale Undine [or,

---

8 The Keats Circle, ed. Hyder E. Rollins (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), I, 94.
9 Beyer, 393.
how useful it has been to me].” I would not press this interpretation. The main point I wish to make is that Keats could well have read Undine considerably before September 11, 1819.

Keats calls Undine a fairy tale, but for all the atmosphere of simplicity and artlessness that Fouqué creates, it is a highly sophisticated fairy tale. Keats was probably attracted by the combination of chivalry and magic, the daemonic and tragic love story—the union of a human with an elemental being—and the overtones of symbolism. The tale was of the sort that appealed to him, and had he met it in some older source such as Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy he might have been tempted to transform it into a poem. The story is that of a beautiful foundling child, Undine, who grows up into a lovely woman at the isolated cottage of a fisherman and his wife. The knight Huldbrand makes his way there, seemingly by chance, and eventually marries Undine—thereupon finding out that she is a water spirit in human form. She, however, gains a soul by marrying him. He takes her to his castle, along with his former beloved, Bertalda. Ultimately he forsakes Undine for Bertalda. Undine disappears; but on the night of Huldbrand’s wedding to Bertalda, Undine comes to him and, holding him passionately in her arms, drowns him with her tears.

This condensation of the plot hardly does justice to this artificial but charmingly and simply told tale. Undine, widely read and translated, held a special attraction for such contemporaries and successors of Keats as Southey, Scott, Coleridge, and Poe. Coleridge, for example, said that “Undine is a most exquisite work. It shows the general want of any sense for the fine and subtle in the public taste, that this romance made no deep impression. Undine’s character, before she receives a soul, is marvelously beautiful.”

10 See Wilhelm Pfeiffer, Über Fouqué’s Undine (Heidelberg, 1902), 40-43. Goethe and Heine both praised Undine highly. More recently Jean Giraudoux used the romance as the basis for his play Undine (Paris, 1938). Translated into English by Paul Valency, the play was successfully produced in New York in February, 1954.
12 See The Table Talk and Omniana of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. T. Ashe (London, 1923), 88.
14 Table Talk of Coleridge, 88. Thomas Roscoe, giving a different opinion of
Coleridge's nephew tells us that his uncle's "admiration of this little romance was unbounded." 15 Poe was equally enthusiastic. "I cannot say," he wrote, "whether the novelty of the conception of Undine, or the loftiness and purity of its ideality, or the intensity of its pathos, or the vigor of its simplicity, or the high artistic ability with which all are combined into a well-kept, well-motivirt whole of absolute unity of effect—is the particular chiefly to be admired." 16

Keats's enthusiasm for the tale was perhaps more restrained, 17 but echoes from Undine seem to be present in several of his poems. Keats may, as Mr. Beyer suggests, 18 have drawn on Fouqué's descriptions of the four elemental spirits, 19 in his "Song of Four Fairies," where the earth spirit is a salamander. The storm during which Undine and her lover Huldbrand are united may have contributed something to the storm in The Eve of St. Agnes, or at least Keats may have alluded to the storm in Undine when he has Porphyro say: "'Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land/ Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed.'" The storm in Undine is raised by the heroine's uncle, Kuhleborn, a powerful water spirit, and by means of the storm the two lovers are brought together. If, indeed, Keats knew Undine as early as April, 1819, the name Huldbrand may possibly have suggested that of Hildebrand, one of Madeline's unpleasant relatives, who is called "dwarfish Hildebrand," as association that may have arisen in Keats's mind from the fact that Huldbrand, in his ride through an enchanted forest, is plagued by an extremely ugly dwarf. 20

It seems possible that the character of Father Heilman, a monk in Undine, may have suggested some of the characteristics of Ethelbert, the monk in Otho the Great. Father Heilman is a man of simplicity, integrity, and "earnest dignity," 21 and he labors, as

Undine's popularity, wrote in 1826 (The German Novelists [London, 1826], II, 306): "Few modern writers of Germany have become greater favorites with the English reading public [than Fouqué], or have received more gratifying proofs of its admiration. . . ."

15 Table Talk of Coleridge, 88, n. 1.
16 Complete Works, XVI, 50.
17 One might suppose, however, that he admired Undine sufficiently to have been interested in the other works of Fouqué, if they had been translated into English; but Julius C. Hare's translation of Fouqué's Sintram and His Companions (1820) came too late to influence Keats's poetry, even if the poet had read the book.
18 P. 305, n.
19 Soane, 87—see below, n. 23.
20 Ibid., 42-46.
21 Ibid., 77.
does Ethelbert, to prevent a wrong by revealing the truth about an
imperfectly understood situation. Ethelbert seeks to clear the
name of the Lady Erminia from the imputation of sexual dishonor,
while Heilman seeks to prevent Huldbrand’s remarriage, but their
steadfastness in performing what they feel to be their duty is very
similar. What both have to say is received with equal anger and
stubborn disbelief, and yet both are right. Ethelbert, indeed, is
imprisoned until the true circumstances are made clear, while
Heilman is simply dismissed, but the basic situation is substantively
the same in both novel and play.

In *The Cap and Bells*, Keats deals in humorous fashion with the
theme of an immortal being’s love for a mortal creature: Efinan’s
infatuation with Bertha Pearl is a kind of comic reversal of Lycius’
love for Lamia, or Huldbrand’s for Undine. Bertha Pearl is a
changeling, as is Bertalda, who supplants Undine in Huldbrand’s
affections; and Bertalda, besides suggesting the changeling idea, may
have helped suggest the name Bertha.

More important than the echoes of *Undine* to be heard in these
works is the influence of Fouqué’s romance on *Lamia*. Some aspects
of Keats’s indebtedness to *Undine* in that poem have already been
pointed out by Professor Beyer,²² but in tracing the borrowings Mr.
Beyer unfortunately made use of a translation that was not pub-
lished till after Keats’s death. As a result his method of stressing
verbal parallels by italicizing the words in question is partly in-
validated—though only partly—and a comparison of the two trans-
lations will make clear where Mr. Beyer unavoidably went astray.²³

²² Beyer, 235-236, 393-396.

²³ Here, by way of example, are two of the passages quoted by Mr. Beyer from
the anonymous translation published by Phinney, Blakeman, and Mason. (The
translators of both the 1824 and 1860 versions, to which Mr. Beyer refers [394, n.],
were probably acquainted with Soane’s translation but worked independently.) I
have put the passages from the anonymous translation on the left, while placing
the corresponding passages from Soane’s translation on the right. The italics are
Mr. Beyer’s throughout.

“Thou shouldst know, my beloved, that
there exist in the elements beings not
very unlike you men, and who yet
seldom let themselves be seen by you.
The wondrous salamanders glisten and
sport in the flames; the rough malicious
gnomes dwell deep in the earth; the
woods are haunted by spirits which are
of the air; while the far-spread race of

“You should know, my beloved, that in
the elements there are beings, like unto
yourself in their external seeming, and
who yet are seldom visible to creatures
of the earth. The wondrous salamanders
glitter and sport in the fire; the dark,
malicious gnomes dwell in the bosom of
the earth; the sylphs inhabit in the air;
the water-spirits, an extensive race, live
But in spite of the fact that he presses verbal parallels—sometimes nonexistent—to far, Mr. Beyer makes out a good case for the influence of Undine on Lamia, and he would have strengthened his position had he pointed out the way in which Ketas has taken over a number of the situations in Undine and reworked them for Lamia.

The story of Lamia may, for convenience’s sake, be briefly told here. Lamia, released by Hermes from the form of a snake, enthralled the Corinthian youth Lycius. They dwell happily together for a year or more, but Lycius longs to display his loved one to his family and friends. He draws from Lamia a reluctant consent to a nuptial banquet, but she warns him not to invite his former mentor, the philosopher Apollonius. Apollonius, however, comes uninvited, turns his unflinching gaze upon Lamia, and declares her to be a serpent woman. Lamia vanishes, and Lycius swoons to his death.

In the paragraphs that follow I have outlined the similarities between Lamia and Undine and have placed the parallel passages upon which the comparison is based in an appendix to this paper. Keats, it seems clear, conceives of Lamia as an elemental being, and his poem tells the story of the union of such a being with a mortal man. Undine is definitely referred to as “the kind Naiad,” and Lycius believes it quite possible that Lamia may be a Naiad. Undine and Lamia both melt or dissolve when they disappear from the scene of action, a characteristic apparently of elemental water-

water-spirits live in lakes and streams and brooks” [p. 72].

“. . . so my father, who is a mighty sea-prince in the Mediterranean, longed that his only daughter should possess a soul, even if therewith she gained the sorrows of those gifted with souls. A soul can be obtained by one of our kind only by a union of deepest love with one of your race” [p. 74].

in the brooks, and the rivers, and the seas” [p. 87].

“. . . and thus it was the ambition of my father, a mighty prince in the Mediterranean, that his only daughter should have a soul, though with it she should suffer the miseries incident to its possession. But, one of our race can only gain that object by the most intimate connexion of love with a being of the earth. I have gained it” [pp. 89-90].

24 A possible parallel that Mr. Beyer overlooks is in the description of dawn. “When at length after the tumult of joy, recollection returned, the purple light of the morning shining over the lake peeped in upon them—the storm hushed—the birds sang cheerfully in the branches gemmed with the night rains,” (Soane, 35). “She smiled through her tears; it was like the purple of the morning playing on a streamlet,” (Soane, 75). “‘I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes’/”Break amorous through the clouds, as morning breaks”” (Lamia, I, 76-77).

25 Beyer, 393-396. 26 Ibid., 395, 223. 27 Soane, 178.
Both Undine and Lamia lack normal human feelings when they first encounter the men they love, men whom they have seen or known about before they actually meet them. Undine is delighted with Huldrbrand but is unfeeling in her treatment of him. Lamia is similarly delighted with Lycius, but she can view her lover’s suffering with almost inhuman indifference. Huldrbrand has gone in search of Undine, who has fled from her foster parents’ cottage into the night, and he is about to plunge more deeply into the raging stream that cuts him off from the mainland when he hears Undine’s warning. He begs her not to mock him and only plunges deeper into the stream, but a flash of moonlight reveals her on an island in the midst of the torrent. He reaches her side, and she draws him into an embrace and kisses him. Lamia only hints that she may go away, but Lycius is so deeply affected that, after begging her not to mock him, he loses consciousness. Lamia virtually sparkles at this display of her lover’s concern—much as Undine smiles at the demonstration of Huldrbrand’s love for her—and she revives him with a kiss. Huldrbrand is quickly infatuated with Undine, as Lycius is with Lamia. Both men fear that their newfound loves are simply visions that will melt away. Undine sings of her love to Huldrbrand; Lamia in similar fashion sings to Lycius.

The nature of Lamia, as of Undine, undergoes a fundamental change after the consummation of her love. The change is explicit with Undine: she acquires a human soul. The change in Lamia is implied rather than directly expressed, but a comparison of her actions and attitudes before and after her union with Lycius makes it clear that a transformation has occurred in her character. She retains, as does Undine, many of her elemental or fairy powers, but her feelings are those of a mortal woman.

Both Keats and Fouqué regret that they must destroy the love-dream in which their characters find themselves. Huldrbrand is content and happy, despite his isolation from human society, after he has fallen in love with Undine; Lycius is satisfied to withdraw from the world of men after he has become enamored of Lamia. Huldrbrand eventually is awakened again to the attraction of the outside world, to which he returns; and later he seeks to leave the confinement of his castle for a journey down the Danube; Lycius,

---

28 See Appendix (1).
29 See Appendix (2).
30 Ibid.
31 See Beyer, 394.
32 Soane, 89-90—see above, n. 23.
33 See Appendix (3).
too, hears the sounds of human life, martial sounds (martial sights arouse Hulbrand), and he returns to the outer world.  

Undine is happier about the trip down the Danube desired by Hulbrand than is Lamia about Lycius’ request for a public celebration of their nuptials, to which she bows, against her judgment; but Undine soon rues her agreement. She asks Hulbrand not to lift the stone off the well in the courtyard of their castle and not to be angry with her when they are sailing on water; Lamia similarly makes a special request of Lycius in asking that Apollonius not be invited to the wedding feast. Both Hulbrand and Lycius disregard the requests. Hulbrand becomes angry with Undine as they are sailing on the Danube, and Undine vanishes into the water. Later, the stone is taken from the mouth of the well, and Undine drowns Hulbrand in her embrace. Lycius, similarly disregarding the warning of his bride, welcomes the uninvited Apollonius. Hulbrand’s failure to heed Undine’s request results directly in his death, just as Lycius’ reception of Apollonius leads straight to his doom.

There is a banquet in Undine, although it is not described with the rich detail of Keats, and in the course of the feast Undine “ordered her lute to be brought to her, and sung the words that follow,”—words that lead to the ultimate destruction both of herself and Hulbrand. Fouqué writes, “. . . she [again] gently touched the strings of the lute, and sung. . . .” Bertalda’s true parentage is disclosed, much to her horror and disdain, and she finally goes out. “The other guests retired silent but murmuring in secret,—and Undine weeping bitterly sunk into the arms of Hulbrand.” In Lamia, too, there is an elaborate banquet, at which the revelry is stilled at last by the effect of Apollonius’ baleful stare fixed upon “the alarmed beauty of the bride, as “By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure ceased.”

And, finally, just as the loss of Undine is a terrible blow to Hulbrand, so the loss of Lamia has a crushing effect on Lycius. The knight recovers—only to die in the end at Undine’s hands—while Lycius never wakens, but both Undine and Lamia vanish at a crucial moment in the climax of both narratives.

Undine and Lamia are both romances which treat of the union of fairy or daemonic women—elemental beings—with mortal men, and

34 See Appendix (4).  
35 See Appendix (5).  
36 See Appendix (6).  
37 Soane, 111, 114, 121.  
38 See Appendix (7) and Beyer, 396, n.
of the tragic conclusion of their loves. Keats wrote *Lamia* in the summer of 1819, and it is more than likely that he was reading *Undine* during much the same time—if he had not read it some months earlier. The poem and the prose romance differ markedly, and yet they are strongly linked by similarities of plot and situation and by the use made of the supernatural. Materials from *Undine* surely were worked into the fabric of *Lamia*.

**APPENDIX**

(1) [Undine] leaped over the side of the bark—whether she sunk into the water, or melted away into it, no one could distinctly say—it was as both, and yet neither.—Soon, however, she was quite lost in the Donau.

[Soane, 174.]

... that vanish'd, also she
Melted and disappear'd as suddenly.

"For pity do not melt!" [Lycius implores Lamia].

... no sooner said,

Than with a frightful scream she vanished.


(2) Hulbrand feasted his eyes on the beautiful figure, and wished most carefully to impress upon his mind her lovely features. . . .

It almost seemed to him as if the whole lovely vision which had so suddenly vanished again in the night, was nothing more than a continuation of those wonderful images which had before wildly sported with him in the forest. . . .

[Hulbrand seeks to cross a raging torrent to enter the enchanted forest in search of Undine, who has raced away from the dwelling of her foster parents into the stormy night.] Already he had grasped a stray fir-branch, and stood supported by it in the whirling stream, against which he could scarcely hold himself upright, but he plunged deeper in with renewed courage, when a soft voice sounded near him crying, "Trust not—trust not—he is malicious—the old man—the stream!"—He knew the lovely tones, and stood as if thunder-struck amongst the shadows, which just then threw their darkness across the moon—his head grew giddy at the tumult of the waters which he saw rising on him and dashing furiously. Still he would not desist—

"Are you not really there?—Do you mock me only like the illusive forms of mist?—Oh then I do not wish to live—I will be like thee a shadow, my dear, my beloved Undine."

With this exclamation he again plunged deeper into the stream.
"Look around you—look around you,—lovely, infatuated youth," cried
a voice close beside him—At this moment the moon unveiled itself—he
looked around, and saw Undine, smiling and lovely, cradled in the blooming
grass amongst the branches of trees upon a little island which the flood had
formed.

Oh how much more joyfully did the young knight now use his fir staff
than before. Which a few steps he was through the torrent, that rolled
tempestuously between him and the maiden, and soon he stood beside her
upon the little turf-bank secret and secure under the shelter of the aged
trees that rustled over him.

Undine had partly raised herself, and winding her arms around his neck,
drew him down on the soft seat beside her.—"Here, my lovely friend,
shall you tell the tale to me," she softly murmured—"Here the ill-natured
old people cannot hear us; and this our leafy thatch has still as much value
as their wretched hovel."

"It is heaven," said Huldbrand, and with fervent kisses wound his arms
about the flattering fair one.

She wound her arms about Huldbrand, singing with indescribable sweet-
ness . . . she kissed and caressed her lover.

[Soane, 10, 15, 30-84.]

For so delicious were the words she sung,
It seem'd he had lov'd them a whole summer long;
And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
And still the cup was full,—while he, afraid
Lest she should vanish ere his lip had paid
Due adoration, thus began to adore;
Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure:
"Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, Goddess, see
"Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!
"For pity do not this sad heart belie—
"Even as thou vanishest so I shall die.
"Stay! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay!
"To thy far wishes will thy streams obey."

He, sick to lose
The amorous promise of her lone complain,
Swoon'd, murmuring of love, and pale with pain.
The cruel lady, without any show
Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
The life she had so tangled in her mesh:
And as he from one trance was wakening
Into another, she began to sing,
Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing,
A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
While, like held breath, the stars drew in their panting fires. 
And then she whisper'd in such trembling tone,
As those who, safe together met alone
For the first time through many anguish'd days,
Use other speech than looks; bidding him raise
His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,
For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood. . . .

[Lamia, I, 249-262, 287-308.]

(3) The writer of this story would entreat one favour of you, kind reader, for his own heart is deeply affected, and he could wish that you should feel as he does. Indulge him in his fancy when he passes over a long space of time with few words, and only gives a brief epitome of its actions. He could easily, according to the rules of art, unfold, step by step, how Huldbrand's love began to turn from Undine to fix upon Bertalda—how Bertalda's affection towards the knight glowed more and more with every day, and both, ceasing to pity Undine, began to fear her as a being of another nature—how Undine wept, and how her tears sometimes stung the conscience of the knight without, however, awaking the old affection. . . . All this, the writer knows, might, and, perhaps, ought to be, detailed.—But his heart is too heavy for the task . . . but too much of this—we will not dwell on these mournful remembrances.—Enough that it was so.

[Soane, 131-133.]

And but the flitter-winged verse must tell
For truth's sake, what woe afterwards befel,
'Twould humour many a heart to leave them thus
Shut from the busy world of more incredulous.

[Lamia, I, 394-397.]

(4) Oftentimes, with inward satisfaction, he observed that the wood-stream flowed every day more wildly, making its bed broader and broader, and thus for a longer period protracting his stay upon the islet.

This very retirement taught the youthful Huldbrand to imagine he was really the bridgroom of Undine. He felt as though there were no world beyond the surrounding waters, and that he never again should dwell in union with the rest of mankind; when, at times, his horse, while feeding on the near pasture neighed as if summoning him to knightly actions, or if his arms woven upon the steed's trappings, caught his eye, or his sword fell down from where it hung, and glided from out its sheath:—then, indeed, a momentary blush of shame would cross his cheek, but he would still the rising consciousness. . . .

[Soane, 51-53.]

. . . as the ample span

Of the wide doors disclos'd a place unknown
Some time to any, but those two alone,
And a few Persian mutes, who that same year
Were seen about the markets: none knew where
They could inhabit; the most curious
Were foil’d, who watch’d to trace them to their house.

Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit’s fast:—
That is a doubtful tale from faery land,
Hard for the non-elect to understand.
Had Lycius liv’d to hand his story down,
He might have given the moral a fresh frown,
Or clench’d it quite: but too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.

Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
Hover’d and buzz’d his wings, with fearful roar,
Above the lintel of their chamber door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor.

For all this came a ruin: side by side
They were enthroned, in the even tide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear
Unveil’d the summer heaven, blue and clear,
Betwixt two marble shafts:—there they reposed
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed,
Saving a tythe which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they almost slept;
When from the slope side of a suburb hill,
Deafening the swallow’s twitter, came a thrill
Of trumpets—Lycius started—the sounds fled,
But left a thought a-buzzing in his head.
For the first time, since first he harbour’d in
That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit pass’d beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forswn.

[Lamia, I, 388-398, II, 3-33.]

(5) The poor Undine was sorely troubled, and the other two were not
much more satisfied; Bertalda particularly fancied that she found traces of
the injured and jealous wife in the slightest deviation from her wishes: She
had, therefore, assumed an overbearing manner, to which Undine yielded
with a melancholy resignation, for the blinded Hulbrand upheld her in the
most decided manner.

Undine has a well in the castle courtyard closed up by a heavy stone, on
which she makes magical inscriptions. Bertalda is outraged and seeks to
have Hulbrand order the stone removed. But Undine explains to Hul-
brand that they will be disturbed by the elemental water beings, unless the
well is blocked off, and that her uncle Kuhleborn is especially incensed at the
way Hulbrand has been treating her. Hulbrand agrees to allow the stone to remain, and Undine continues:

"You are so good, so kind to-day, that I may venture to solicit a favor, which else I had not dared to mention... never be wrath with me upon the water, or when we are near a stream, for then my kinsmen have a power over me... Hulbrand solemnly promised to do as she desired...

[Hulbrand, Undine, and Bertalda agree to take a spring voyage down the Danube, but they are soon plagued by the malicious tricks of Kuhleborn; Hulbrand experiences a growing irritation, but excuses himself from all blame for the situation.]

Such throughts were a consolation as they silenced the voice of self-reproach, but the blame thus turned from himself only burst out with redoubled violence on the innocent Undine—Aversion was quickly rising in his bosom; he threw on her dark and gloomy looks, the meaning of which she understood but too well.

[The tricks of Kuhleborn continue.]

Hulbrand... boiled with indignation, and would have burst out into wild execration; but that she entreated him with tears, and in whispers, to be silent.—"For heaven's sake, remember we are upon the river!—Oh do not now be angry with me!" [Hulbrand is momentarily silent, but upon further provocation] he arose, cursed all those who had forced themselves into his alliance, and challenged them all, whether spirits of air or water, to come within the reach of his weapon, [Hulbrand finally turns on Undine, furiously ordering her to leave him.] Tears stood in the glazed eyes of the poor Undine—she looked on him motionless, speechless, [her] hand still stretched out...

[Soane, 133, 143-144, 168, 170, 172, 173, 174.]

The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want
Of something more, than her empery
Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
Because he mused beyond her, knowing well
That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell.
"Why do you sigh, fair creature?" whisper'd he:
"Why do you think?" return'd she tenderly:
"You have deserted me;—where am I now?
"Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:
"No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go
"From your breast houseless: ay, it must be so."
He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,
"My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
"Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
"While I am striving how to fill my heart
"With deeper crimson, and a double forlorn?
"How to entangle, trammel up and snare
"Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there
"Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?
"Ay, a sweet kiss—you see your mighty woes.
"My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!
"What mortal hath a prize, that other men
"May be confounded and abash'd withal,
"But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestical,
"And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice
"Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.
"Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,
"While through the thronged streets your bridal car
"Wheels round its dazzling spokes."—The lady's cheek
Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,
Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain
Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,
To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,
Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim
Her wild and timid nature to his aim:
Besides, for all his love, in self despite
Against his better self, he took delight
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible
In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
Fine was the mitigated fury, like
Apollo's presence when in act to strike
The serpent—Ha, the serpent! certes, she
Was none. She burnt, she lov'd the tyranny,
And, all subdued, consented to the hour
When to the bridal he should lead his paramour.

"Even as you list invite your many guests;
"But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
"With any pleasure on me, do not bid
"Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid."
Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank,
Made close inquiry; from whose touch she shrank,
Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

So being left alone,
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin)
And knowing surely she could never win
His foolish heart from its mad pompousness,
She set herself, high-thoughted, how to dress
The misery in fit magnificence.
She did so, but 'tis doubtful how and whence
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.

[Lamia, II, 34-83, 98-105, 111-118.]

(6) [Later, after Undine's disappearance, the stone is removed from the well in the castle courtyard, and Undine returns, against her will, to seek Huldrbrand in a final embrace.] Trembling with love, and the mingled fear
of approaching death, he bent towards her.—She kissed him with a heavenly kiss,—but she loosed him no more from her embrace,—she wept as she would weep away her soul. He dropt from her arms a lifeless corse.

[Soane, 200.]

"'Tis no common rule,
"Lycius," said he, "for uninvited guest
"To force himself upon you, and infest
"With an unbidden presence the bright throng
"Of younger friends; yet must I do this wrong,
"And you forgive me." Lycius blush'd, and led
The old man through the inner doors broad-spread;
With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen.

[Lamia, II, 164-172.]

(7) At length she wept—wept bitterly—her arm sunk, and she spoke as if exhausted. "Alas, it must be so!—Farewell, my beloved, farewell!—They shall not harm you, so long as by remaining faithful, you give me the power of protecting you—Ah! I must away from you—for ever must away from you in this life—Woe! Woe!—What is it you have done? Oh, Woe! Woe!"—And she leaped over the side of the bark—whether she sunk into the water or melted away into it, no one could distinctly say—it was as both, and yet as neither. Soon, however, she was quite lost in the Donau; but a few gentle waves swelled around the boat, and it seemed that a voice sobbed from them—"Woe! Woe! Woe! " Huldrand frantic with grief, lay stretched upon the deck—his blood burned—the hysterical passion rose to his throat—and a deep swoon shut out his miseries.

[Soane, 174-175.]

... which a death-nighing moan
From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and lost
He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
"Fool! Fool!" repeated he, while his eyes still
Relented not, nor mov'd; "from every ill
"Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day,
"And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?"
Then Lamin breath'd death breath; the sophist's eye,
Like a sharp spear, went through her uttered,
Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging: she, as well
As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so.
He look'd and look'd again a level—No!
" A Serpent! " echoed he; no sooner said,
Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
As were his limbs of life, from that same night.
On the high couch he lay!—his friends came round—
Supported him—no pulse, or breath they found.

[Lamia, II, 292-310.]