

# GERTRUDE DE WART, OR FIDELITY UNTIL DEATH.

Translated from the German of Appenzeller.

Founded on the most exact historic truth, with all the fearful and intense interest of the most appalling romance, Gertrude de Wart is a striking instance, amid the many, of that devotedness in affection, which will support a woman through scenes of which, in hours of ease and happiness, the very thought had been too much to bear. Gertrude had been for many years the beloved (and does not that imply the happy!) wife of Rodolph de Wart: in an unfortunate hour his attachment to his master, the Duke of Swabia, whose lands were unjustly retained by the avaricious Albert, plunged him into misery. Though not one of the assassins himself, yet being present at the murder of the emperor, he is involved in all their guilt, and in all their dangers; and after temporary concealment, he is betrayed by a relation into the hands of the Queen of Hungary and the Archduke Leopold, who had pursued the murderers of their father with the most unrelenting vengeance. His wife, who had borne with the most unshrinking fortitude all the misery of poverty to which she had been reduced by the burning of their castle and the confiscation of their estates, joins her husband, shares his prison, supports him at his trial; and at last, when he is condemned to the dreadful death of breaking on the wheel, she is still his stay and succour; but here we will give place to her own words; she has escaped from her friends to seek the place of Rodolph's suffering.

"The rising moon began to tip with silver the dark pines and the turret of the castle of Kybourg. I discovered the path I was in search of, and skirting the great forest which is near Winterthur, I heard more distinctly, the noise of a mill. This should be the meadow where I was to look for my husband. The mill and a rivulet only separated me from him. I passed the water, and, going round the mill, I perceived the wheel, and the unhappy victim laid on it. The guard was frightened at my appearance, and ran off, with every mark of terror. I heard the breathing of Rodolph, deep, and, at intervals, resembling sighs; I saw his broken members, agitated by convulsive movements, like those of a lamb, palpitating under the knife of the butcher: yes, Margaretta, all this, I was doomed to hear and see.

"It is me," said I softly: he immediately knew my voice. "Is it thee, Gertrude? Jesu Maria! this is all that was wanting!"

"I came near to the post on which the wheel was suspended. I saw there some pieces of wood. I took one of them, which I placed close to the wheel. I got upon it, and I was enabled to seize, and cover with kisses, one of his hands, which hung down, moistened with cold sweat.

"Spare me! spare me!" said he, with a tremulous voice: "thy presence adds to my sufferings; I call for death, and thou art come to retard it. Gertrude! Gertrude! where do you come from? what will you have? My limbs are broken; my joints are dislocated; my heart only still beats. Go from me—let me die—this is too much!"

"I saw him pale and motionless, entangled in the spokes of the wheel. The shivering of a fever pervaded his members—his groans mingled with the murmuring of the rivulet and the clapping of the mill. I fell on my knees, and prayed under the wheel, and exhorted my unhappy husband to resignation. At last, joining together some pieces of wood, I made a sort of scaffolding, by which means I could raise myself up to him, and leaning over him, free his face from the hairs which the wind blew over it. "Entreat thee! O, I entreat thee!" repeated he, "to begone, and leave me. If they should find you here when the day breaks, you know not what may happen. Why will you aggravate my misery? You cannot tell what additional sufferings you may bring upon me."

"I will die with thee," said I to him, "and it is for this purpose that I am come! No power shall force me from thee." I threw myself on him with extended arms, and I begged of God both his death and my own. The day appeared—I saw human figures moving at a distance. I was obliged to descend, and take away the pieces of wood which had enabled me to get up the wheel. The guard which had fled at the sight of me again made his appearance. No doubt this man had mentioned at Winterthur what he had seen; for as soon as it was day, there was a great mob of men, women, and children, coming from all quarters. I recognized the gaoler whom Landenberg had persuaded the evening before to let me free.—He did not appear surprised at seeing me with my husband: he approached me shaking his head, and said, "It was not for this purpose, madam, that the Landenbergs took you, yesterday, out of prison." The people drawing nearer and nearer, I saw several women of my acquaintance, and, among the rest, the wife of the president of the court of justice at Winterthur. I called to her, and entreated her to intercede with her husband that he would order the executioner to abridge the sufferings of Rodolph.

"He dares not do it," said Wart, groaning. "When the queen has spoken, the president of justice must be silent; and if it had not been for that, I may say that I had some right to expect this good office from him." Some person brought me refreshments, of which I could take nothing; but I was refreshed, if I may so say, by the compassion which was visibly impressed in their countenances, and by the tears which were shed by them.

"When the fog of the morning was dispersed, the crowd increased. I saw there the Bailiff Steiner, of Plungen, with his two sons; our tenant at Datlikon, and some woman from Neftenback: they all made the sign of the cross, and appeared as if they were praying for us.

"The executioner then came, followed by the Confessor Lamprecht. The former seemed to be the least cruel of the two: he said, sighing, 'May God have mercy on the poor young lord, and receive him into Paradise!'—The

confessor again urged him to avow his guilt; but Wart, making a great effort, repeated before all the people the same words which he had already said to the queen and the court of justice. The priest was silent. All at once I heard voices crying out, 'Place! Place!' Men armed with halberds made way through the crowd; helmets, surmounted with plumes, glittered near the mill. Soon were seen prancing horses and their riders, with shining armour, and their vizors down.

"The executioner dropped down on his knee—the confessor laid his hand on his breast—the horsemen halted. The women lifted up the children in their arms, that they might have a better view. Guards, armed with lances, obliged the people to form a circle.

"A knight of high stature, raising himself upon his horse, said to the executioner, in a sneering tone of voice, 'Where are the ravens, that they have not yet torn his eyes out?' It was the Archduke Leopold.

"My blood stopt in my veins when I heard one of the horsemen, who was near him, say, 'Let him scratch himself as long as the itching continues, but drive off these people. All this weeping and lamentation make me mad.—There must be no pity here: and who is this woman who causes all this crying? Let them take her away.'

"I knew the voice of the queen; it was Agnes disguised as a knight. 'It is the wife of Wart,' said a third voice. 'Yesterday evening, during the execution, we took her with us to Kybourg; but she ran away from us, and we thought that despair had instigated her to throw herself into the ditch of the castle. God, what a woman! what conjugal fidelity!—Leave her alone—it is impossible to take her away.' I here recognized the good young Landenberg. I could have thrown myself at his feet. Agnes made a sign to one of her equerries to take me up and remove me from the wheel. As he approached me, I passed my two arms around the post, and implored the *coup de grace* both for Wart and myself. Two men attempted to carry me away by force. I cried to God, and he heard me.

"Landenberg, though a faithful subject of the house of Austria, had courage again to speak for me. 'Let her alone,' said he: 'the sun never shone upon constancy equal to hers: the angels themselves may rejoice in heaven at seeing it.' Then they left me quiet. The horsemen took their departure. One of them said something to the executioner, which I did not understand.

"The confessor who had rigidly performed his duty, and had punctually executed the orders of the queen, now gave way to the sentiments of humanity. I saw the tears running from his eyes. 'I can hold it no longer, noble lady,' said he; 'you have conquered me: even if the world should forget your name, it will shine, at least, among those of the holy martyrs. Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!' What have I done to deserve that these magnificent words should be applied to me? He gave me his hand, and went away.

"The people gradually dispersed; the executioner and the guard, who was stationed at the entrance of the meadow, remained alone. The sun was set—there was every appearance of a dead calm: but soon a storm of wind arose, which seemed to stifle my prayers.

"One of the guards brought me a large cloak, to protect me against the inclemency of the weather, with which I covered the mutilated and frozen limbs of my husband. His lips were dry and contracted; I brought him water in my shoe. Dear Margaretta, when I reflect on these most horrible moments, I am at a loss to comprehend how I could have strength to support myself for more than forty hours without any nourishment.

"No doubt the saints and holy angels invisible supported me, while I lay and prayed under the wheel on which the beloved of my heart was suffering the agonies of death.

"During all this time I may truly say that my soul was with God. Every sigh, every groan of Rodolph pierced my heart; but I called to mind the Mother of our Saviour, under the cross of her divine Son. I encouraged myself by thinking of the mother of the Maccabees, of the apostles, and of the martyrs of our holy religion. I derived strength from the thought that the afflictions of this life would be succeeded by an eternal weight of glory; in a word, I found myself inconceivably fortified by the consciousness of a firm and determined will. I knew what I would do, and for whom I suffered. If in the beginning, Wart pressed me to leave him, saying, that the sight of me augmented his sufferings, he now tenderly thanked me for not having abandoned him. He derived strength and consolation from my prayers.

"During the second night, the executioner heard somebody call him by his name. He left us, and soon returned with a pensive look, and placed himself on his bed of straw.

"I cannot speak too much in praise of this man. In the most distressing moments he stood my friend. When night had thrown its dark mantle over us, it was he put together the pieces of wood, to enable me to get on the wheel. Yes, Margaretta, though he was the murderer of my husband, I thought I could have embraced him.

"Excuse me, I beseech you, from detailing the particulars of the morning and noon of the last day. Some hours before sunset, Rodolph made a motion with his head; I jumped up, and leaned over him. I collected his last words, which were hardly intelligible; 'Gertrude, thou hast been faithful to me unto death!' At these words his eyes closed, his heart ceased to beat and to suffer. He died while I was praying. I fell on my knees under the wheel, and thanked God that he had given me grace to be faithful unto death."

This work is rather to be felt than criticised; but it were injustice to the translator, were we not to commend his part: he has done much for the interest of this most affecting story; which is, indeed, infinitely more dreadful than that of the forlorn and wretched RIZPAH, clad in sackcloth and seated upon a rock, watching the putrid bodies of her own offspring, while swinging in the wind and blackening in the woe of heaven.—Sam. 12. 10.

## WESTERN STAGE.

THE arrangements having been completed for running a Stage from this to Annapolis, through Windsor and Kentville; the Company hereby give notice that the Coach will start on TUESDAY morning next, the 3d June at 5 o'clock, and continue to run regularly three times a week, leaving Halifax and Annapolis on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday in each week as follows, viz:—

Leaves	Arrives at	Distance
Halifax, at 5 A. M.	Windsor, 12 1/2 P. M.	45
Windsor, 1 1/2 P. M.	Kentville, 5 P. M.	27
Kentville 5 A. M.	Bridgetown, 1 P. M.	44
Bridgetown, 2 P. M.	Annapolis, 4 P. M.	15

Total miles.....131

## Fares

Halifax to Windsor.....	£0 17 6
Do. to Kentville.....	1 7 6
Do. to Annapolis.....	2 10 0
Windsor to Kentville.....	0 12 6
Kentville to Annapolis.....	1 7 6

Way Passengers, 6d per mile.

Persons wishing to take seats will please apply to the subscriber, who will afford any further information that may be required.

WILLIAM M. ALLEN, Agent.

Stage Office, Market square, Halifax, May 31. 3m.

## PROTECTION INSURANCE COMPANY.

THIS Office will continue to insure as usual against loss or damage by fire, on the most reasonable terms, on application to the Agent, JAMES BALLOCH. Fredericton, June 26, 1827.

## VALUABLE LANDS FOR SALE.

TO be sold by Public Auction, at the County Court House, in Fredericton, on Tuesday the 14th day of October next, between the hours of 10 and 12 o'clock in the forenoon, all that farm and lot of land in the Richmond settlement, parish of Woodstock and County of York lately occupied by Isaac Smith, known as Lot No 9 in the Grant to Robert Griffith and others, containing 250 acres, with extensive improvements.

H. G. CLOPPER, } Trustees for all the Creditors of  
WM. TAYLOR, } Isaac Smith an absconding debtor,  
GEO. E. KETCHUM, }  
Fredericton, July 26, 1828. p11w.

## ALSO,

AT the same time and place, will be sold, all that farm and lot of land lying in the Parish of Northampton, and County of York, lately occupied by George Tompkins, known as Lot No. 19 in Grant to Jacob Tompkins and others, containing 200 acres, more or less, with the improvements.

H. G. CLOPPER, } Trustees for all the Creditors  
W. TAYLOR, } of George Tompkins and  
RICHARD DIBBLE, } absconding debtor.  
Fredericton, July 26, 1828. p11w.

ALL Persons indebted to the SAINT GEORGE Steam Boat, are requested to make immediate payment to the Subscriber, who is now directed by the Proprietors of said Boat to place all unsettled Notes and Accounts in the hands of an Attorney to collect.

JAMES SEGIE.

Fredericton, April 8, 1828.

## TO BE SOLD

Or to Lease for a term of years,

A VALUABLE Farm in the Parish of Wakefield, on which are about 80 Acres cleared; a comfortable Dwelling House and a large Barr.

POSSESSION will be given early next Spring; for further particulars apply on the premises, to

JOHN D. GAULT.

Fredericton, August 9, 1828.

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