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Raising the Devil: A Legend of Cornelius Agrippa

Richard Harris Barham

'And hast thou nerve enough?' he said,
That Grey old Man, above whose head
Unnumber'd years had roll'd,—
'And hast thou nerve to view,' he cried,
'The incarnate Fiend that Heaven defied!
— Art thou indeed so bold?'

'Say, canst Thou, with unshrinking gaze,
Sustain, rash youth, the withering blaze
Of that unearthly eye,
That blasts where'er it lights,— the breath
That, like the Simoom, scatters death
On all that yet can die!

—'Darest thou confront that fearful form,
That rides the whirlwind, and the storm,
In wild unholy revel!
The terrors of that blasted brow,
Archangel's once,— though ruin'd now —
— Ay,— dar'st thou face THE DEVIL?'—

'I dare!' the desperate Youth replied,
And placed him by that Old Man's side,
In fierce and frantic glee,
Unblench'd his cheek, and firm his limb
—'No paltry juggling Fiend, but HIM!
— THE DEVIL!— I fain would see!—

'In all his Gorgon terrors clad,
His worst, his fellest shape!' the Lad
Rejoined in reckless tone.—
—'Have then thy wish!' Agrippa said,
And sigh'd and shook his hoary head,
With many a bitter groan.

He drew the mystic circle's bound,

With skull and cross-bones fenc'd around;
He traced full many a sigil there;
He mutter'd many a backward pray'r,
That sounded like a curse—
'He comes!'— he cried with wild grimace,
'The fellest of Apollyon's race!'—
— Then in his startled pupil's face
He dash'd — an EMPTY PURSE!!



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