

W. J. Hughes
ADELAIDE;

OR, THE

CHATEAU DE ST. PIERRE

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

553

A TALE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

By MRS. EDGEWORTH.

—
VOL. IV.
—

In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire
With good old folks, and let them tell the tales
Of woeful ages, long ago betide.

SHAKSPEARE.

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ADELAIDE.

CHAP. I.

"Sullen and sad to Fancy's frightened eye
Did shapes of dun and murky hue advance,
In train tumultuous, all of gesture strange,
And passing horrible." CARACTACUS.

NEITHER the supplications nor the shrieks with which Adelaide rent the air were of any avail; and ineffectually resisting the superior strength of these men, she was quickly borne from the

carriage into the interior of the ruins. The necessity of concealment, which their plans required, had rendered these supposed domestics too cautious to permit the unfortunate Adelaide to have had more than a glimpse of their features during the journey ; but now that this necessity no longer existed, they scrupled not to lower the cloaks with which they had carefully muffled their savage countenances, and all sense forsook her, when in these persons, to whose mercy, in the assumed character of protectors, she had committed herself, she recognized Durand and Robert !

On recovering, she perceived herself
in

in a small chamber, and that her arms were within the grasp of some person, who, when her recollection returned more fully, she found to be Durand. The remembrance of the discovery of his intentions respecting her, recurred also with this conviction, and struck like lightning upon her heart ; and believing that she was brought hither to be the victim of avarice and revenge, horror chilled all her frame, and she remained for a considerable time unconscious of Durand's having quitted the chamber.

When at length she perceived this to be the case, she rose to avail herself of his absence by examining the chamber,

• and the possibility it might afford of an escape : but the only door she discovered resisted all her efforts to uncloset ; and the only window was a narrow lattice, of which scarcely any of the glass remained, secured on the outside by thick bars of iron. All the furniture the place contained was a miserable mattress and a broken bench ; and as she surveyed its desolate appearance, it afforded but too powerful a conviction that she was brought hither, not for imprisonment, but for death ; and her utmost efforts for fortitude and resignation could not overcome the sickness of heart and universal terror which assailed her.

For several hours she remained alone, during which a tumult of horrible emotions agitated her mind; and amazement mingled with her fears as she considered the length of time her persecutors had been absent. At times she believed that they meant not to return, but to accomplish their purpose by leaving her thus without sustenance, secured beyond the possibility of an escape; but while in imagination she again beheld the harsh features of Robert, and the still darker cruelty which characterised the countenance of Durand, she could no longer doubt their readiness to employ the most certain means, nor suppose, for an instant, that any scruples would deter them from assassinating her.

It was not until the close of the day that these various surmises were interrupted by the creaking hinges of the door of her prison, as it was slowly opened from without, and Durand entered. Unable to articulate a syllable, she remained seated on the mattress, equally deprived of the power of motion and of utterance by the force of her apprehensions, which were, however, somewhat abated when she perceived that Durand now, as in former times, brought her a portion of food.

“ You little thought where you were coming to, I warrant,” said he, with a sneer, as he placed what he had brought upon the bench, “ when you stepped

so briskly into the carriage!—But you will be cunning if you escape from us again.—Had you staid quietly in your old quarters,” he continued, after a momentary pause, during which Adelaide spoke not—“had you kept your word with me, I should not have had such a plague to catch you again: but now you can only blame yourself for what may——”

While Durand yet spoke, a voice from without called on him to descend; when, leaving the sentence unfinished, he hastily quitted the chamber, and the door was again barred.

Adelaide listened to its grating sounds,

while her heart sickened with despondency ; and scarcely knowing why she did so, (for she had already tried the strength of the thick bars with which the lattice was secured,) she removed the jug of water and scanty portion of bread from the bench, and placing it against a projection of the wall beneath the window, she softly mounted on it. But the view of the situation of her prison, which the height of the lattice from the ground had till now prevented her from ascertaining, afforded her no room for the smallest indulgence of hope. She perceived that the eminence on which it stood was considerably higher than, when gradually ascending, she was aware of. It overlooked a vast extent

extent of plains, beyond which arose a chain of mountains, on whose towering summits the purple tints of evening yet lingered, while each minuter line and feature of the landscape was obscured by their gigantic shadows; and as she surveyed the desolation by which she was surrounded, the vast heap of stones, the fallen fragments of columns nearly hid by the underwood which had taken root amongst them, and mouldering gateway overgrown with ivy, through which the evening rays still darted a line of partial light, she felt but too powerfully convinced how entirely she was now at the mercy of her oppressors, and how little probability there existed of any persons discovering the

place of her confinement. She had not, indeed, forgotten the recent and timely assistance of the Chevalier de Bellecourt, and which appeared to be the immediate interposition of Providence ; but though she considered it as such, neither her piety nor her fortitude could subdue the anguish and horror of her present feelings.

With a desperate effort of strength she once more endeavoured to shake the iron bars with which the lattice was secured ; but notwithstanding the deep rust with which they were encrusted, they were still too strong to yield to the feeble pressure of her hand ; and though compelled to relinquish the attempt, still,

still, unconscious of what she did, she continued to grasp the rugged surfaces.

Her faculties seemed strained beyond the power of action; and a settled calm, or rather torpor of despair, now succeeded to the violent emotions to which she had lately yielded. She no longer comprehended the dangers of her situation; and though darkness at length succeeded the mists of twilight, without either Durand or his son having re-entered the chamber, their absence excited neither amazement nor hope in her bewildered mind.

During several hours she continued fixed, as it were by some superior force,

to the spot on which she stood, till the appearance of Durand at length roused her to a sense of misery : but still she moved not ; and whether it were that the singularity of her attitude, and the paleness and wild expression of her countenance appalled him, or that the meditative guilt of his conscience rendered him, at the moment, peculiarly apprehensive, he had no sooner advanced a few paces into the chamber than he suddenly started back. The emotion, of whatever nature it might be, was, however, but transient. Soon he subdued its influence, and holding a small lamp on high, which gleamed over his furrowed features, displaying their
terrible

terrible character, he advanced toward Adelaide.

“Do you know,” said he, at length, “do you know that your life is in my power? that it depends on my pleasure? and that this very night,” he continued, raising his hollow voice, “my orders are—to murder you?”

While he spoke he still advanced nearer to Adelaide, who, equally alarmed by his manner and words, suddenly quitted her hold, and faintly screaming, rushed to the opposite extremity of the chamber.

“You are spared for the present,”
said

• said he, following her to the side on which she now was, “you are spared upon one condition; but——”

• At this instant a sudden crash from beneath, and a confused uproar of voices, interrupted him. He listened for a moment, while the tumult still increased; and in the next, as if impelled by some sudden recollection, he precipitately withdrew, leaving Adelaide once more in solitude and darkness.

Her mind impressed with images of horror, she listened with a beating heart to what she now found to be the voices of several persons in clamorous dispute. The sounds seemed to proceed from beneath

neath the chamber in which she was ; and though frequently the voices rose together, and confounded all distinction, yet at intervals she could distinctly hear the words of the disputants, and the hoarse accents of Durand loud amongst them.

He seemed to be attempting to clear himself from some charges urged against him by the others ; and though she could not distinguish sufficient to enable her to comprehend the subject of the dispute, she shuddered as she listened to the horrible imprecations with which he endeavoured to justify himself. His vindication seemed not, however, to be accepted ; and while, amidst the clamours

• mours of his opponents, he still continued to vociferate, whether it were reality, or the force of imagination, Adelaide suddenly fancied that she distinguished the sound of her own name. Again she listened, and again she believed she heard it repeated; but the tumult increasing prevented her from being perfectly convinced; and quitting a rugged projection in the wall against which she had leant for support, she crossed swiftly toward the door, where, applying her ear to the key-hole, she listened for some moments in fearful expectation, till, as her head gently pressed the door, she felt that it yielded; and while her pulse beat with redoubled quickness, she tried, and perceived that
it

it was unfastened. Softly, yet tremblingly, she unclosed it, and groping her way, with difficulty and cautious steps she descended the spiral staircase on which it opened, often pausing and shuddering with affright as the mournful sounds of contention from beneath echoed through the emptiness of the place, or the damp and time-worn steps endangered her safety.

At length she reached the bottom, and with renewed terror she perceived, through an archway that led to an inner chamber on the opposite side of the passage in which the steps terminated, Durand and Robert, surrounded by a group of men, who, from the savageness

ness of their looks, and from their dress, appeared to be banditti. Their words and gestures plainly indicated that they were not in league with her oppressors, yet they were equally, and more, perhaps, (if their appearance did not belie them,) to be dreaded; and while her heart throbbed with increased affright, she remained for some moments irresolute whether to proceed or return.

The light of a torch from the chamber in which these ruffians were assembled flashed on the opposite wall, and she feared that the glare would betray her; till perceiving, at length, that no alternative remained for her but to hazard this, or return to the scene of her imprisonment,

imprisonment, with a desperate sort of resolution she determined on the latter; and passing quickly along, she had already reached the cloisters, whose broken walls admitted an uncertain ray of moonlight, when the sound of steps convinced her that her flight was discovered; and turning her head, she perceived, through the obscurity, with a sensation of dismay and terror beyond any thing she had yet experienced, the tall figure of a man pursuing her with hasty steps. In wild affright she looked eagerly around in search of some means of escape, till observing an opening near the end of the cloisters, her courage and her strength suddenly revived, and with the fleetness of a fawn she fled toward

toward it. The space she had seen led into a court which had formerly been surrounded with high walls, though now only inclosed by their fallen fragments, and the wild shrubs that had sprung up amongst them. Beyond appeared a long avenue of broken arches, toward which, with increased speed, she still ran, and passing swiftly thro', found herself in what she conjectured to have been the body of the chapel. It retired in long perspective, and terminated in a large iron grate, through which appeared the open country.

Breathless and exhausted, she was now, however, compelled to stop; and, to her inexpressible relief, she no longer
heard

heard the sounds of pursuit : but although the extreme height of the windows precluded the possibility of her getting through them, and that the grate, resisting all her efforts to uncloset it, left her no chance of escaping from the chapel but by the arches through which she had entered it, she dared not as yet hazard returning the same way ; and throwing herself upon the ground, behind a heap of stones and rubbish, she hoped to conceal herself from the search of her pursuer.

The dead silence which still reigned through the place, together with its obscurity, which was faintly interrupted by the moon-beams which streamed through

through the broken roof and windows, strengthened her in this hope; and after remaining for a considerable time, she at length ventured to rise, and passing cautiously beneath the shade of the walls, she was proceeding toward the entrance, when a small square door in the wall, with two hinges on the top, and fastened across the bottom by a large bar of iron laid on iron hooks, arrested her attention. Pausing a moment, she stooped to examine it, and having removed the bar, with difficulty she raised the door; and perceiving a narrow flight of steps, which she concluded led only to a vault, she gently reclosed it, and had already moved a few steps forward, when distant footsteps again

again beat upon the ground. Her heart now sunk within her, and she gave herself up for lost; yet, led by an irresistible impulse, she returned to the door, and raising it with as little noise as its rusty hinges would admit of, she descended the steps to which it led, and scarcely had she done so when a sudden gleam of torch light flashed upon the walls of the chapel. Tremblingly and with difficulty she once more closed the friendly door, and, with all the speed her agitation, and the total darkness by which she was surrounded, would permit, continued to descend. The flight was long, and in many places the steps so broken, that it was with difficulty she could proceed; but the dread of
being

being overtaken seemed to lend her new vigour, while it rendered her insensible of every other danger, and she at length reached the bottom.

CHAP. II.

The wise and active conquer difficulties

By daring to attempt them.

Rowe.

AFTER groping about for some time, Adelaide became at length convinced that the place into which she had entered was not, as from its situation she had judged it to be, a vault, but a subterranean passage; and relieved, by this belief, from the unpleasant sensations excited by the idea of being thus

inclosed in a receptacle of the dead, as well as encouraged to hope that it might terminate in some opening through which she could effect her escape, with lighter steps she proceeded onward.—The total darkness, however, and the winding and lowness of the avenue, in many parts of which she could not stand upright, compelled her to move with caution. Frequently she paused to listen, as, deceived by the sullen echoes of her own steps, she imagined them the sounds of pursuit: but all was profoundly silent; and feeling assured, from the length of time which had elapsed, that her place of concealment remained undiscovered, she hesitated whether or not to proceed farther, till the consideration

consideration of having it always in her power to return determined her to advance, though the faint hope which had at first induced her to do so gradually diminished as the tediousness of the way seemed to increase. Frequently, too, weariness obliged her to stop; but chilled by the icy coldness of the air, and the damp exhalations from the roof and the walls, she feared to rest for more than a few moments, and endeavouring to rally her sinking spirits, she continued to advance.

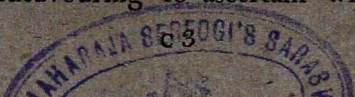
At length, while slowly she groped her way along, her hands touched cold iron, and she quickly perceived it to belong to a door which terminated the
c 2 avenue.

avenue. With trembling impatience she endeavoured to draw back the rusty bolts with which it was secured; but long disuse rendered this so difficult, that she almost despaired of effecting it, and it was not till after many repeated attempts that she at last succeeded.

Grating heavily on its hinges, the door yielded to her efforts; but the obscurity of the place into which it opened, and which, as she cautiously felt her way, she found to be of much greater extent than the avenue she had quitted, rendered her fearful of advancing, till, as she hopelessly strained her sight forward through the gloom, she fancied she

she distinguished a distant ray of light. Scarcely daring to believe it reality, she still paused in uncertainty; but convinced, at length, that her eyes had not deceived her, she hastily advanced toward it, and perceived that it proceeded from beneath a door on the opposite side. Her sensations may be more easily imagined than described, when she also perceived that the door was ajar, and heard from within a low, tremulous sound, as of a person in grief or in agony: but the dangers she had so recently escaped were too strongly impressed on her imagination to suffer her to hazard discovering herself, desperate as was her situation, without previously endeavouring to ascertain whether

this



this person was likely to prove a friend or a foe; and gently and fearfully advancing her head, she beheld, through the narrow opening, two persons sitting before a fire. Their backs were toward her; but though the uncertain light which the fire afforded did not enable her to distinguish more than the outline of their figures, she became convinced that the one whose faint sobs had first reached her ear was a female, who, apparently absorbed in deep sorrow, continued to weep, till her companion, in manly accents, attempted to console her, when she spoke in reply. The interesting tones of her voice seemed familiar to the memory of Adelaide. She listened, wondered, doubted, hoped, and

and feared ! The stranger spoke again ; and certain that she could not be deceived in those tender, well-known accents, so full of intelligence, so expressive of sensibility and refinement, Adelaïde threw open the door, and abruptly entered the chamber.

The noise of her entrance alarming the persons within, they suddenly arose and turned toward the door, when, unable to articulate a syllable, Adelaïde rushed into the arms of the female stranger. Straining her to her bosom, while the other vainly endeavoured to disengage herself, she burst into tears, and at length faintly pronouncing the name of Julia St. Auzanbert ! (for it

• was herself!) was, in her turn, closely pressed in the embrace of her friend.

• Claspings, they wept upon the bosom of each other, while “Adelaide!” “Julia!” was all they had power to exclaim. After some moments had thus passed, during which their mutual amazement and joy at this strange and unexpected meeting solely occupied their attention, the other stranger, in whom Adelaide vainly sought to recognize the features of an acquaintance, and who had hitherto remained a silent spectator, requested an explanation of what he witnessed.

“That the person you behold is a very dear and long-lost friend you may judge
judge

judge from what has passed," replied Mademoiselle de St. Auzanbert, "tho' by what means she is thus restored to me is equally a mystery to me as to you, and from herself we must learn the fortunate circumstance that has led her hither: but first," she continued, turning toward Adelaide, "that you may believe this stranger not unworthy of your confidence, allow me to present him to you as Mr. de Limours, and my husband; and now, my dear friend, indulge me with some account of yourself."

This was a task, however, to which the agitated spirits of Adelaide, though revived by the presence of her friend,

- were still unequal; and requesting Madame de Limours to spare her, as yet, from a detail of particulars, she merely mentioned her having escaped from a band of robbers by the accidental discovery of the subterranean passage through which she had entered.

Madame de Limours understood too well the kind of feelings from which Adelaide was desirous of escaping, willingly to subject her to a renewal of them; and although the circumstances of her own situation were such as she could not recollect nor enter upon without very painful emotions, yet anxious to soothe the agitation of her friend, she immediately began the recital.

The

The friends had not met since the evening, when they had unexpectedly done so in the Hotel de St. Pierre, shortly after the removal of Adelaide from the Ursuline Convent; on the day following which, it may be recollected, she had suffered much uneasiness, from the sudden departure of Mademoiselle de St. Auzanbert, and she now listened, with an interest which entirely withdrew her attention from her own concerns, to the relation of the subsequent events which Madame de Limours had experienced.

On the night of her unexpected meeting with Adelaide she had returned home with her mother, (whose behav-

jour, as has already been mentioned, seldom marked with that tenderness which ought to grace the maternal character, had of late been unusually severe,) and immediately withdrawn to her chamber, and the following morning, without having received any previous intimation of the journey, she was compelled to accompany her to a country seat in a distant province, to which the family scarcely ever resorted, where, by close confinements and other hardships, her parents for some time vainly endeavoured to conquer that steadiness and firmness of mind they chose to term "obstinacy and disobedience." During several weeks Julia de St. Auzanbert endured, with the most
unshaken

unshaken constancy, the various trials, her parents thought proper to inflict; but though, without a hope of awakening them to a sense of justice or of pity, she listened with submitting patience to their lectures and their menaces, her resolution never forsook her, and she still professed and preserved the most inviolable fidelity toward the Chevalier de Limours. The intelligence she received, by the means of a confidential servant, of the determination of her parents to employ compulsive measures, at length, however, induced her to consent to the earnest entreaties of her lover; and despairing of escaping by any other means from the persecutions of her family, with the assistance
of

- of her maid she contrived to elude their vigilance, and elope from her prison. A chaise which the Chevalier had prepared, immediately conveyed them to the house of a friend, where they were united, and from whence, accompanied by the girl who had assisted the flight of her young mistress, they set out, intending to proceed to Paris, and remain there until the intercession of their respective friends could effect a reconciliation with the family of Julia.

They had not, however, travelled many miles before they were pursued and overtaken by the Baron de Jacourt and a party of his attendants, who had for some days been on a visit at the
house

house of Mr. de St. Auzanbert. On reaching the carriage in which were Julia and her husband, the haughty Baron, in a tone of authority but little calculated to calm the indignation of his rival, insolently called on him to resign her. The Chevalier refusing, a desperate conflict ensued, and, notwithstanding the inequality of their numbers, (for one servant was the only escort of the latter,) he soon found himself the victor. Several of the Baron's domestics had fled, and those who remained had taken no other part in the affray than to endeavour to part the combatants—a measure to which the savage ferocity of the Baron would not suffer him to submit, and which motives of self defence

- fence equally compelled the Chevalier to resist.

The Baron was at length severely wounded, and after recommending him to the care of his attendants, the Chevalier yielded to the entreaties of his bride, who, more dead than alive, had been a terrified spectator of the combat, and endeavoured to seek his own safety in flight. With difficulty he accomplished this, as some of the most steadfast of the Baron's followers, perceiving the situation of their master, endeavoured to detain the Chevalier as their prisoner; but, aided by the strength of his faithful Swiss, he resisted their attempts, and with far distant emotions

emotions from those with which they had commenced their route the travellers again set forward.

After a journey of three days, by many circuitous and bye-roads they at length reached Carentan, where they remained for some days, until they could transmit and receive intelligence from the friend at whose house the marriage ceremony had been performed, and to whose knowledge they feared not to entrust the secret of their abode.

The information they soon obtained by the means of this gentleman was, however, such as convinced them of the impolicy of continuing where they were,

as

as they learnt from it that the life of the Baron was deemed, by the medical people who has been sent for to his assistance, in the utmost danger; and that his friends, stimulated by revenge, were making the most rigorous search after his antagonist. Alarmed by these tidings, they entertained thoughts of quitting the continent, but the ill state of health under which Madame de Limours had for some time laboured, from the cruelty of her parents, and which the anxiety of her mind now daily increased, compelled them to relinquish this idea, and they therefore determined to seek for some cottage, where, unknown and unknown, they might remain with more safety than in a town,
at

at least until the amendment of Madame de Limours's health would permit them to prosecute their first plan.

In their search after this retreat they were, however, unsuccessful, till chance having conducted them toward a large and desolate mansion, it occurred to them that if it were, as it appeared to be, uninhabited, it might perhaps afford to them the asylum they sought. On approaching the edifice they were met by a person whom they interrogated concerning it, to whose care they learnt it was entrusted, and with whom it was at length agreed they should rent such a number of apartments as the accommodation of their family required.

In

In pursuance of this arrangement they entered their new abode, where, without having cause to suspect their retreat being discovered by their enemies, they had remained in as much tranquillity as the unpleasant circumstances of their situation would admit of, till the preceding day, when a letter from the confidential friend of Mr. de Limours again awakened the apprehensions of his wife, by informing them that the life of the Baron de Jaucourt was still despaired of, and his family more than ever resolved on discovering their abode—

“Of the situation of which,” added the correspondent of Limours, “I am concerned

concerned to add that I fear they have had some intelligence, and would therefore advise your immediate removal."

Anxious to calm the uneasiness of his beloved Julia, Limours affected to disregard these unpleasant tidings; but she was not to be thus deceived; and they had already resolved on adopting their original plan of embarking for England from the next sea-port, when they were surprised by the sudden return of the Swiss, who had been sent to Carantan for provisions. His wan and terrified countenance announced him as the bearer of some disastrous intelligence; and in this anticipation they were not mistaken.

In

In the market to which he had been sent he had overheard the conversation of some of the people assembled there, who were discoursing together on the inquiries which had been lately made throughout the place and neighbourhood after a gentleman and young lady, with two attendants, by some strangers, one of whom had been heard to declare that he would not rest till he had traced their route; and as the description of the family of whom these persons were in search answered exactly to that of Mr. de Limours, he had hastened home to communicate to his master this alarming circumstance.

The apprehensions which this intelligence

gence awakened in the mind of Madame de Limours were now too reasonable to admit of refutation; and, equally aware of the danger of their situation, the Chevalier readily acquiesced with her wishes of hastening their departure: but the imprudence of commencing their journey during the day was too obvious to be overlooked; and under this conviction they were compelled to delay their removal till the darkness of night should assist their flight.

Although fully aware of the necessity of thus postponing their departure, the weakened spirits of Madame de Limours could scarcely support the interval of
suspence,

suspence, nor enable her to combat the agonizing terrors it occasioned. Every moment increased her alarm; and dreading the effect of this extreme agitation, in the weak state of her health, Mr. de Limours at length yielded to her entreaties to remove from the apartments they occupied, to some chambers underneath, of which they had formerly made an accidental discovery.

“On this compliance,” continued Mr. de Limours, who had taken up the narrative when fatigue had compelled Madame de Limours to pause, “to which I acknowledge, a dread of the consequences of the dampness of these subterranean apartments rendered me
very

very averse, I must now, however, congratulate myself, since it has occasioned you, my Julia, the happiness of meeting your friend—a happiness which, had I resisted your solicitations, and we had continued above, you undoubtedly would not have enjoyed, as the door of this chamber was, when we entered it, fastened on the inside, and would still have remained so, if anxiety to ascertain the privacy of our place of concealment had not induced me to explore beyond it.”

“ A few hours sooner,” exclaimed Adelaide, who had listened with very anxious attention to the narrative of her friend—“ but a few hours sooner had

the events which led me hither occurred, what might have been my fate? Surely I am not presumptuous in ascribing this fortunate concurrence of circumstances to the immediate hand of Providence; and I blush when I reflect on the despondency to which I had yielded."

"We ought not, indeed to despair," said Madame de Limours, with a sigh, "and what you have just said is a reproach to my conscience; for I acknowledge that I am but too apt to do so. However," she continued, affectionately pressing the hand of Adelaide, "I shall look forward to the future with more hope, for I am inclined to consider this meeting as a happy presage, and—"

I re-

“ I rejoice to hear it, my Julia,” interrupted Mr. de Limours; “ but you must allow me to remind you that time wears, and that it is necessary to inquire how, before our departure, we may be serviceable to your friend.”

“ True,” replied Madame de Limours, “ the joy of seeing her once more has rendered me unpardonably forgetful. What can we do for you, my dear Adelaide? and how will you rejoin your friends, and return to your home?”

“ I have neither a home,” said Adelaide, struggling against the painful emotions which these questions revived,

“nor any friends to whom I can apply ; and of this you will be convinced, if you have time to listen to a brief relation of the misfortunes I have experienced since we parted.”

“If it will not be distressing to yourself, my dear Adelaide,” answered her friend, “the recital will much oblige me ; and I doubt not that Mr. de Limours, if you will allow him to be present, will agree with me in thinking we have sufficient time to attend to it.”

“I will not trespass long on your patience,” rejoined Adelaide, “but a knowledge of the outline of my history
is

is necessary to enable you to assist me with the advice I so earnestly wish to request."

CHAP. III.

————— There is a pow'r
Unseen that rules th' illimitable world,
'That guides its motions, from the brightest star,
To the least dust of this sin-tainted mould.

THOMSON.

WITHOUT entering into minute particulars, Adelaide proceeded to inform her newly-found friends of the chief events of which they were ignorant, of the death of her aunt, and of her subsequent imprisonment and release; as likewise of her abode in the convent,
and

and the manner in which she had been decoyed from thence. Emotions of pity and indignation alternately prevailed in the minds of Mr. and Madame de Limours as they listened to this detail, and heard how much she had suffered from the villany of the Baron.

“ A peculiar Providence has indeed watched over you, my sweet Adelaide, or you could not have escaped such complicated wickedness,” said Madame de Limours ; “ but since you are again safe out of the clutches of these villains, I hope you will not hazard any further dangers by quitting the friends you are now with ; and I am certain Mr. de Limours will not permit you to do so.”

“ I do not intend it, I assure you, Julia,” said the Chevalier ; “ and if Made-moiselle de St. Auzanbert refuses to accompany us, she may expect to be forcibly carried off.”

“ It is too consistent with my own wishes, my kind and amiable friends,” said Adelaide, extending a hand to each, “ for me not to accept most willingly and gratefully of your proposal ; and—”

The entrance of a female attendant belonging to Madame de Limours prevented her from saying more. The girl started on perceiving a stranger ; but having received some orders from her
mistress

mistress relative to packing various articles they had been compelled to purchase, and meant to remove, she again withdrew, and Adelaide had once more the satisfaction of expressing the gratitude she felt toward persons who, circumstanced as they were, were yet so desirous of serving another. They continued together in interesting discourse till at length the arrival of the carriage, for which the confidential servant of Mr. de Limours had been sent to a neighbouring town, was announced, when, as the night was already far spent, they agreed to commence their journey without any further delay.

Quitting the gloomy apartment in
D 5. which

which they had till now conversed, Madame de Limours and Adelaide, preceded by the servant, who bore the light, passed through an adjoining chamber, and ascended a short flight of steps which conducted them into an upper room, where they were soon joined by Mr. de Limours. A degree of mistrust of the person who lived in the castle, occasioned by some recent and suspicious circumstances in his conduct, rendered Limours particularly anxious to conceal the knowledge of his departure from this man, who, he doubted not, would as easily be prevailed on to give information against him as he had been to permit him to inhabit the castle; and he had therefore quitted his wife
and

and Adelaide for the purpose of ascertaining whether the present was a favourable opportunity for passing through the building without a risk of discovery. The silence that prevailed, and the lateness of the hour, (for it was now past midnight,) induced him to believe it to be so; and the carriage having been previously stored with the luggage they purposed removing, the party now hastened toward the road, where, at a short distance from the castle, it was still in waiting.

Having passed, without interruption, through several chambers and passages, and traversed a vacant court which opened into the road, Madame de Li-

mours, with Adelaide and the female attendant, were already seated in the chaise, when a difficulty, which they had not considered until now, occurred, and occasioned some perplexity. This was, how the Chevalier and his servant were to proceed, one horse only having been procured for the latter, the place in the carriage which Adelaide now occupied having been designed for Mr. de Limours. The distance of the town from whence the carriage and horses had been hired was such as to preclude all possibility of sending thither for another; and the smallness of the carriage, the luggage, and the weak appearance of the horses by which it was drawn, were equally obstacles to its conveying

veying a fourth person. At length, after a few moments of deliberation, it was determined that Louis should return to the inn for another horse, and follow his master and the party to Valognes, where they would await his arrival.

The difficulty being thus adjusted, the travellers immediately set forward, the Chevalier, on horseback, following the carriage, while the servant, on foot, hastened to procure the means of rejoining them. The moon was now risen high over the woods that hung upon the sides of the narrow glen, through which, in order to avoid the high road, the travellers were obliged to pass, and afforded them light sufficient to distinguish

guish their way, and to avoid the loose and broken stones that frequently crossed ; but the unevenness of the ground compelled them to proceed slowly and with caution ; and after exchanging a few words of congratulation on their mutual safety, Madame de Limours and Adelaide became silent and thoughtful.

The mind of the latter, especially, was sunk, after the various emotions it had suffered, into a kind of musing stillness, which the reposing beauty of the scene, and the creeping murmurs of the night-breeze among the leafless branches above, contributed to prolong. She considered, with gratitude, the various dangers from which she
had

had escaped, while she shuddered, as a person who recoils from the brink of a precipice, at their recollection. With these, however, other remembrances at length mingled, remembrances which inspired her with hope, and would probably have excited a more lively sensation, had not the first events of this evening harassed her spirits too much to permit her now to feel it.

Meanwhile a thousand disquieting thoughts perplexed the mind of Madame de Limours, such as she had neither the power nor the inclination to combat. Long and severe anxiety had increased the natural apprehensive timidity of her character to a degree that
was

was truly pitiable ; and though for a few moments she had experienced satisfaction at having in safety quitted an abode which she no longer believed an asylum from danger, yet this feeling was soon lost amidst the various terrors which crowded on her imagination, and subdued her feeble resolution. Mistaking the suggestions of an alarmed fancy for a presentiment, she believed it almost impossible that some of the evils she foresaw should not be realised ; yet unwilling to distress her friend, she forebore to express her uneasiness ; and a question concerning the road, or a remark now and then uttered by Constance, her attendant, respecting the different objects seen imperfectly in the dusk,

dusk, alone interrupted the silence in which they continued to travel.

At length the morning light, now glimmering in the horizon, showed faintly, at a little distance, upon the brow of a hill, the village they were in search of, and which they soon after reached. It was not without some difficulty that they there found a house which could afford shelter for themselves and their horses; and as Valognes was the place where it had been determined they should await the domestic of Mr. de Limours, they resolved not to rest longer than was necessary for refreshment, but proceeded thither.

The sun had risen high over the mountains when they recommenced their way, and after travelling for several hours, during which the uneasiness of Madame de Limours was considerably aggravated by the doubt of their reaching Valognes, a doubt which the tired appearance of the horses reasonably excited, they had at length the satisfaction of perceiving its distant spires. They alighted at the principal inn, where, while awaiting the arrival of Louis, the Chevalier recommended to his wife and Adelaide to endeavour to sleep, as it was his intention to set off immediately after the arrival of his servant; and in compliance with this advice Madame de Limours and her
young

young friend withdrew to endeavour to gain some repose.

When Adelaide, refreshed by slumber, awoke, she found Madame de Limours awake, but lost in melancholy thought; and she felt a degree of self-reproach at having yielded to sleep, when she observed the dejected expression of her friend's countenance. She had, however, the satisfaction of perceiving that her spirits were cheered by the intelligence which they soon after received of the arrival of Louis; and already apprised of the intention of Mr. de Limours to proceed immediately on their journey, they repaired to the apartment where they had left him; and having exchanged

exchanged their tired horses for others better able to convey them, the travellers again set forward on their route toward Cherbourg, the nearest port of consequence, and from whence they intended to sail for England.

With gayer hopes Madame de Limours now re-commenced her journey. The arrival of Louis, whose absence, by delaying them, she feared would have been the occasion of their being overtaken, and the consolatory tidings he brought of not having either seen them or heard any thing of the persons whose enquiries had occasioned her so much inquietude, and whom she had, in reality, sufficient cause to believe in
pursuit

pursuit of Mr. de Limours, restored to her spirits a degree of chearfulness such as she had not dared to indulge since the commencement of her journey, and with heartfelt satisfaction Adelaide noticed the change. But although she thus participated in the feelings of her friend, and, for her sake, rejoiced in the prospect of quitting a country where Mr. de Limours could no longer remain in safety, with these reflexions came a scruple whether she ought to avail herself of the kindness of her friends, and burthen them with her company any longer than necessity absolutely required; since, notwithstanding the confidence she felt in the sincerity of their professions, yet, in a country

try where they were themselves strangers, circumstances might occur to render an addition to their party less convenient than they at present seemed aware of; and though the idea of separation from a friend, so lately restored to her, so much beloved as Madame de Limours, could not be admitted without very painful emotions, yet the longer she dwelt on the subject, the more she felt averse to hazard the possibility of being burthensome to her.

She resolved, therefore, if there were any convent at Cherbourg, or in the neighbourhood, where she could be received as a boarder, to place herself there, instead of accompanying Mr. and
Madame

Madame de Limours any farther ; and this resolution was strengthened by the consideration of the impracticability of previously consulting the Chevalier de Bellecourt, were she to sail to England ; for although she had not formally accepted his addresses, yet her silence on the subject, and her subsequent and ready acquiescence with his wish of her removing from the convent at Bayeux to the abode of his sister, were, she felt, sufficient to authorise him to consider himself an accepted lover ; and, under these circumstances, to remove to another country without his concurrence, or even knowledge, would at least, she feared, wear the semblance of ingratitude—a sentiment very foreign to

to her heart. Yielding to this belief, and unconscious that inclination biassed her judgment, she would immediately have communicated her intention to Madame de Limours, had not the presence of the servant restrained her from so doing ; for aware that, in the warmth of her affection, her friend would probably oppose it, she wished to acquaint her with every particular relative to the Chevalier, (which the presence of Mr. de Limours had, during the account she had given of other circumstances, prevented her from doing,) that, knowing exactly how she was situated, Madame de Limours might not suppose her conduct either the result of caprice, or a want of affection toward her. Unwilling,

willing, therefore, to communicate what she wished to say before a third person, she determined not to enter upon the subject till their being alone together would permit her to explain herself without reserve; and, pleased to encourage the returning cheerfulness of Madame de Limours, she conversed with her only on topics likely to produce this effect.

Stopping only to change horses, they still continued to travel, when, as the sun was now declining, Madame de Limours, looking from the carriage window, perceived a blueish line that appeared upon the horizon, which, from its situation, and the light marine va-

pour which stained the æther above, she judged to be the distant waters of the English Channel. In this conjecture she was not mistaken; but it was not till after they had proceeded several miles farther that a nearer view convinced her of this, and of the approaching termination of her journey, to which she had so anxiously looked forward.

As Adelaide leaned from the chaise window, she resigned herself to the sweet and gentle emotions which the hour and the scenery awakened. The sun had now left the earth, and twilight began to darken the mountains, while the distant waters, reflecting the
blush

blush that still glowed in the west, appeared like a line of light skirting the horizon. The low murmur of waves breaking on the shore came in the breeze, and at length the busy voices of sailors on board the newly-arrived vessels, the melancholy heaving of the anchor, and the boatswain's shrill whistle, were distinctly heard; soon after which the travellers entered Cherbourg, and alighted at the principal inn. Immediately on their arrival Mr. de Limours went down to the quay to enquire if there was any vessel near sailing for England; and having heard of one which was to sail on the following day, he engaged with the captain to take himself and his party, and then re-

turned to the inn to inform them of having done so.

In the intermediate time Adelaide had availed herself of his absence to disclose her plan of remaining at Cherbourg to Madame de Limours, a communication which was received by that lady with far greater expressions of surprise and disappointment than Adelaide had prepared herself to encounter, and now felt able to resist. While they still conversed on the subject, Mr. de Limours returned: and on being informed by his wife of the cause of the anxiety he noticed in her countenance, joined his entreaties to hers with so much earnestness, that, divided between her wish of complying

plying with their request, and her unwillingness to relinquish her own plans, Adelaide was at length compelled to beg them to allow her to postpone giving a final answer until the following day, when more mature deliberation would better enable her to do it.

CHAP. IV.

As when a wave that from a cloud impends,
And, swell'd with tempests, on the ship descends,
White are the decks with foam ; the winds aloud
Howl o'er the masts, and sing thro' ev'ry shroud.
POPE'S HOMER.

ALTHOUGH repose was become highly necessary to Madame de Limours, whose spirits and frame were equally wearied by the occurrences and exertions of the day, the prospect of losing the society of Adelaide dwelt too heavily on her thoughts to permit her to
close

close her eyes during the night ; and when, in the morning, she repaired to the apartment where Adelaide and Mr. de Limours were already met at the breakfast table, her swollen eyes and dejected countenance so strongly bore testimony of her feelings, and of the sleepless hours she had passed, that the resolution of Adelaide was instantly subdued. Every other consideration yielded to the wish of restoring serenity to a friend so highly deserving of her affection ; and without waiting till a renewal of the subject from Madame de Limours should require a reply, she hastened to inform her of her acquiescence.

The little hope this lady had entertained of such a compliance with her wishes rendered it doubly valuable; and the sudden gleam of joy which animated her countenance, on receiving the welcome tidings, was reflected in that of Adelaide, as she noticed and believed herself to have occasioned the transition. But although gratitude for her kindness, as well as affection for her friend, thus influenced the mind of Adelaide, and governed her actions, neither sentiment could obliterate the remembrance of *another person*, whose important services toward herself seemed equally to deserve them, and to authorize a degree of regard which she had formerly endeavoured, though vainly,

ly,

ly, to stifle ; and as soon as the breakfast was removed, she procured materials for writing, and withdrew to her chamber to inform him, by letter, of the artifice by which she had been induced to leave the convent where he had placed her, of the subsequent circumstances which had occurred, and, finally, of her motive for now consenting to accompany Mr. and Madame de Limours to England ; whom, however, the caution which their situation rendered necessary prevented her from naming.

Scarcely had she concluded this epistle when she was interrupted by Madame de Limours, who came to announce a

summons from the captain of the vessel in which they were to sail, and she had only time to seal and consign her letter to the care of the servant of Mr. de Limours, who hastened with it to the office, when another message obliged them to depart.

As the inn was within a short distance of the place from whence they were to embark, they resolved to walk thither; and their baggage having been previously deposited on board, they set out on foot.

The chearfulness with which, from having restored it to the mind of Madame de Limours, Adelaide accompanied

nied her from the inn, vanished, however, on her reaching the margin of the sea; and although an emotion of sublimest admiration accompanied the astonishment with which she surveyed the immense expanse of waters sparkling in the morning rays, with the vast horizon bending round their distant verge, it was only by a strong effort that she could so far command her feelings as to conceal from the observation of her friends the sorrow she experienced as she entered the vessel which was to convey her from that country which held the Chevalier de Bellecourt, and considered the many leagues which would shortly be added to the space that already separated them from each other.

Far different were the emotions which the same objects excited in the bosom of Madame de Limours. Her mind was now relieved from the terror of pursuit; and the pleasing prospect of safety for her beloved Limours disposed her to consider every thing in the most favourable point of view. She gazed with delight on the blue waters by which she was surrounded, and the distant sails which glided on their surface. Even the hoarse voices of the mariners, as they re-echoed the orders of their captain, were sounds to which she listened with pleasure, and she no longer remembered her late apprehensions but as a subject of comparison with her present tranquillity.

The

The fineness of the weather, notwithstanding the season of the year, (for it was now December,) induced the party to remain upon deck till evening, when the chill vapours that began to ascend rendered it more prudent for the females of the party to repair to the cabin: but too anxious himself to partake of the repose he deemed requisite for his wife and Adelaide, Mr. de Limours still continued on deck; and in conversing with the captain of the vessel, he learnt several particulars relative to England of which he judged it necessary to be informed. After some time, he also descended to the cabin, where he heard, with satisfaction, from the attendant of Madame de Limours, that that lady and Adelaide

Adelaide had, in compliance with his request, repaired to their mattresses, and were already in a sound sleep.

On receiving this intelligence, Mr. de Limours returned to the deck, and perceiving that the twilight of evening was anticipated by an approaching storm, found in this circumstance an additional motive to rejoice in the acquiescence of his wife and Adelaide, as it would save them from some moments, at least, of uneasiness. The apprehensions he entertained relative to the weather were every instant strengthened by the appearance of the heavens. In the east a heavy gloom came on, opposing and contrasting the glowing splendour of the

the setting sun ; while the clamorous sea-birds skimmed in fleet circles upon the surface of the sea, dipping their light pinions in the wave as they fled away in search of shelter.

The wind suddenly shifted, and so brisk a gale sprung up, that the course of the vessel was immediately changed, notwithstanding the active exertions of the captain and his crew ; and having remained on deck till he judged his continuing longer might be inconvenient, as his assistance was not required, Mr. de Limours again descended to the cabin, anxious to calm the terrors which he feared his fair companions would suffer, should the violent motion of the ship,

ship, the tumult on board, or the loud howlings of the tempest, have roused them from their slumbers.

On entering the cabin, he found that Madame de Limours still slept ; while Adelaide, whom the storm had awakened, watched by her side, and endeavoured to silence Constance, whose expressions of apprehension she feared would disturb the repose of her friend. The appearance of Mr. de Limours was, however, a seasonable relief to her feelings ; for though she could not yield implicit belief to the assumed composure of his countenance, or the assurances of safety with which he sought to soothe her fears, she could not wholly disregard them ;

them; and in silencing Constance they were far more effectual than her endeavours.

While Madame de Limours in a deep and heavy sleep remained unconscious of the danger of her situation, Adelaide and Mr. de Limours continued to watch her slumbers, conversing occasionally in a low voice; but their discourse was frequently interrupted by the long peals of thunder that rolled through the air; and anxious to learn if there appeared any prospect of the storm abating, Mr. de Limours at length quitted the cabin, and repaired to the deck, from whence he promised Adelaide he would quickly return.

A considerable time, however, elapsed without his doing so ; and rightly judging that it indicated an increase of danger, his lengthened absence aggravated her anxiety to an almost intolerable degree ; and feeling incapable of affording her any consolation, she every moment dreaded lest Madame de Limours should awaken.

After nearly an hour had thus passed, a tremendous burst of thunder effected what she had apprehended, and Madame de Limours awoke in an agony of terror, as she now perceived the rocking of the vessel, and listened to the fury of the elements, while the loud voices of the seamen from above were heard
only

only at intervals mingling with the storm; and as the reply she had received to her inquiries after Mr. de Limours, of his being on deck, excited new fears for his safety, Adelaide resolved to repair thither in search of him. Quitting the cabin, therefore, without informing Madame de Limours of her intention, she had already traversed an adjoining one, through which it was necessary to pass, when she was met by Mr. de Limours, with whom (after interrogating him on their danger with an earnestness that deprived him of the power of deceiving her, and receiving, in his reply, a confirmation of her apprehensions) she returned to the cabin, where she had left Madame de Limours.

During

During several tedious hours the storm continued to rage with unabated violence, while the vessel was tossed to and fro amidst a sea of foam, breaking the billows, the mast now bowing to the waves, then rising high in air ; and the momentary flashes of lightning, which seemed to quiver over the whole surface of the waters, alone interrupted the darkness that prevailed.

Meanwhile Adelaide, whose mind, though submitting to it with pious resignation, could not remain unaffected by the knowledge of her danger, endeavoured to restrain her emotions for the sake of Madame de Limours, who, abandoning herself to the most violent
grief,

grief, clung to her husband, alternately bewailing their approaching separation, and lamenting the compliance of Adelaide with her wishes—wishes for which she now severely blamed herself.

CHAP. V.

Pale, trembling, tir'd——

POPE'S HOMER.

CONTRARY to the expectations of the captain and the whole crew, the former of whom, though he entertained but little hope of saving it, had resolved to remain on board his vessel as long as there was any possibility of doing so, the ship still continued entire when the storm began to abate, and the morning dawn discovered to the anxious crew that

that they were within a short distance of St. Vallery-en-Caux. On perceiving this, the captain resolved to endeavour to put into that port, as the shattered condition of the vessel compelled him to lay aside all thoughts of continuing his voyage; and with reviving hope he steered her course eastward. Such, however, was the state of the ship, that though his spirits were cheered by the near prospect of land, he was not wholly free from apprehension of her parting before the crew could disembark; but at length she was happily anchored, and himself, the crew, and passengers safely landed.

Mr. and Madame de Limours, with
Adelaide,

Adelaide, and their domestics, proceeded immediately to the nearest inn, which, though within a few yards of the quay, Madame de Limours had great difficulty in reaching, so much were her strength and spirits exhausted by the agitation she had suffered. She withdrew to seek the repose she so much required, but her pillow was long a sleepless one. Added to the bodily indisposition she now experienced was the alarm she had so recently felt released from, relative to her husband; and notwithstanding the emotions of thankfulness with which she considered her escape from a situation of such imminent danger, she could not resist the anxiety and apprehension which were awakened

awakened by this return to a country which she had so joyfully quitted. Mr. de Limours, however, relieved from his terrors for her and for himself, felt the full contrast between his late situation on a dark and tremendous ocean, and his present one; and Adelaide, on this unlooked-for return to the shores she had left with reluctance, experienced no other emotions than those of gratitude for her late preservation, emotions to which she willingly yielded.

The following morning she learnt, with concern, that Madame de Limours still continued very much indisposed; and on repairing to her chamber, she found her so much worse than she had

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expected, that after enjoining her not to attempt to rise, but endeavour to procure some repose, she left her, and sought Mr. de Limours, to inform him of the situation of his wife, and the apparent necessity for her having medical assistance. Tenderly attached to his Julia, Mr. de Limours received this intelligence with a degree of alarm which increased the regret Adelaide experienced at being the bearer of it; and having inquired from the master of the inn the name and place of residence of the most eminent physician, he immediately set out in search of him, lest, by sending a messenger, any delay should be occasioned.

The distance which this gentleman resided from the inn was short, and being fortunately at home, he accompanied Mr. de Limours without loss of time. On visiting Madame de Limours, he pronounced her situation not dangerous, although one which required attention. Rest and quiet he deemed absolutely necessary; and as these were not likely to be obtained in an inn, where the constant succession of company would render the most anxious endeavours to that purpose ineffectual, he recommended her being removed to a private lodging with all possible speed. Acquiescing in the propriety of this, Mr. de Limours requested to be informed if there were any in the neighbourhood

he could recommend; but this not being the case, he had resolved on exploring the town himself in search of one, when Dr. ****, after a few moments' reflexion, recollected having heard of a small house without the town, in a situation remarkable for the mildness of the air. This, therefore, he mentioned; and the latter circumstance appearing of importance to the anxious Limours, he determined on viewing the house, which being furnished, and very lately occupied, he judged might be more favourable to the recovery of Madame de Limours than one in the town. Dr. **** having offered to attend him, they set out together, consigning Madame de Limours to the care of Adelaide, who

who watched over her with the most tender solicitude.

On the return of Mr. de Limours and the physician, they had the satisfaction of finding her refreshed by sleep, and likely to be able to remove in the afternoon to the house they had seen, and with which Mr. de Limours was so pleased, that perceiving the necessity of abandoning, for the present, his intended voyage, he had agreed with the proprietor, and given orders for its being prepared for their immediate reception.

It was not without much uneasiness that Madame de Limours listened to the intelligence of this arrangement, as, not-

withstanding her present illness, she still hoped that a very few days would enable her to leave the place, and, if not to re-commence her voyage to England, (which her late danger rendered her less anxious for than before,) at least to travel into some remote province, from whence they might remove to another country, should they find it necessary to do so.

Perceiving, however, that Mr. de Limours was resolutely determined on the measure, she reluctantly agreed to it; and a carriage having been procured to convey her, suffered herself to be placed in it, and removed to her new abode. On reaching it, her apprehensions

sions of discovery were somewhat lessened by its retired situation. Seated on a gentle eminence within a few yards of the sea-shore, and sheltered from the easterly and northern winds by projecting rocks, the house, or rather cottage, seemed built for the purpose of seclusion ; a hill which rose behind concealing it effectually from the eye of observation, and the only avenue to it being a narrow road which led to no other habitation. In the front, a small garden opened to the beach, and an air of simplicity and neatness pervaded the dwelling which amply compensated for the smallness of the apartments.

To this spot, therefore, it appeared

very improbable that the enemies of Limours should trace him, as, from the moment of his quitting his former retirement, he had taken a different name from that he was there known by; and the having embarked from Cherbourg, which, if he had been followed thither, would no doubt be discovered, must also tend to deceive his pursuers. Convinced of this, he urged it to Madame de Limours, and had the satisfaction of also impressing her with this belief; a circumstance the more desirable, as tranquillity of mind was necessary to the restoration of her health.

At an early hour Adelaide prevailed on her friend to retire to her pillow;
and

and having herself administered some cordial draughts which had been ordered for her, she withdrew to her own chamber: but all the busy scenes of the past, and the anticipated ones of the future, came to her anxious mind, and, during many hours, conspired to banish sleep from her eyes.

In the morning, when, on rising, she opened her casement, she was surprised to observe the beauty of its situation. Shaded from the morning rays of the sun by the rocks, whose rugged projections were coloured with many marine weeds, which, thrown up by the sea, had there taken root, the cottage was open only to the morning light;

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while

while in the west, which her chamber faced, the ocean, fading into the sky, assumed a tint of the faintest purple; and the line of separation between them was now and then discernible only by the progress of a sail, brightened by the sun-beam, along the horizon.

The hill which rose behind the cottage, forming a sort of amphitheatre, was crowned with woods, which, tho' despoiled of their foliage, contributed to shield it from the winter's blasts; and the turf which grew beneath them, sloping to the beach, was still inlaid with a variety of wild flowers and perfumed herbs, whose fragrance, called forth by the morning dews, scented the
early

early breeze. Notwithstanding its now tranquil state, Adelaide could not survey the widely-expanding ocean without shuddering at the recollection of its late horrors; and while her thoughts ascended to Heaven in gratitude for her own preservation, a sigh of commiseration for the hard lot of those whose profession compelled them to spend the greater portion of their lives on this treacherous element, stole from her heart.

On turning from her casement she repaired to the chamber of Madame de Limours, whom she found nearly as well as on the preceding day, but weary of her pillow, from having passed a



restless night. On the entrance of Adelaide she would have risen, but yielded at length to her persuasions to await the arrival of the physician, who shortly after appeared, and forbade her attempting to quit her bed until she had obtained some repose.

While Madame de Limours, obeying the injunctions of Dr. ****, endeavoured to procure, in sleep, an interval from anxious thought, Adelaide employed herself in writing an account of the failure of her voyage, and her present place of abode, to the Chevalier de Bellecourt, to whom she could not but believe the tidings of her intended excursion (which, in her former letter, she had

had communicated to him) would prove a source of much uneasiness ; and, under this belief, she considered it incumbent on her to dispel whatever anxiety the intelligence might have occasioned—a duty she did not feel much reluctance in performing.

As the letter she had received from the Chevalier, the evening on which she had been trepanned from the convent, she now considered a forgery to effect that purpose, she feared to hazard sending her epistle according to the address contained in that fatal letter, and, as when she wrote from Cherbourg, she now again directed to the Chevalier at the house of his uncle,
in

in the neighbourhood of the Chateau de St. Pierre, from thence to be forwarded to him, wherever he might be.

Having concluded it, her mind felt relieved from much uneasiness by the hope of dispelling whatever feelings of a similar nature her former letter might have occasioned to de Bellecourt, as also by the prospect of soon hearing from him, which she equally desired, in order to remove her doubts relative to his sister, and to inform her of his welfare.

Particular injunctions having been left by the physician to prevent Madame de Limours being disturbed, as
rest

rest was what she chiefly required, Adelaïde refrained from going to her chamber for a considerable time ; and when she at length did so, she was met at the door by Constance, who informing her that her mistress had at length sunk into repose, returned to her seat by the bedside, while Adelaïde, fearful of interrupting the slumbers of her friend, softly withdrew to her chamber. Here (the short interval of dinner, which she partook of with Mr. Limours, excepted) she remained alone till evening, and saw the sun descend the western sky, throw all his pomp of light and shadow upon the mountains, and gleam upon the distant ocean and the stealing sails as he sunk amidst the waves.

Then,

Then, at the musing hour of twilight, her softened thoughts returned to de Bellecourt; she again recollected every circumstance that had occurred, every word he had spoken during the late period she had passed in his society; and the longer she dwelt on the recollection, the more she found reason to believe him worthy of her regard. The manner in which he had been spoken of by the Baron de Bertonville she hesitated not to believe was an act of cruel policy, occasioned by the fear of her forming an acquaintance which might interfere with his own projects; and this belief was strengthened, not only by her own observation of the character of de Bellecourt, but by the remembrance of the

the

the opinion her aunt had professed to entertain of him—a remembrance the more delightful, as it seemed to sanction the preference her heart had long cherished, and which she now perceived would have been a more difficult task to conquer than she had formerly been willing to allow.

From this subject, however, her thoughts at length passed to others which inspired her with very different emotions, and she dwelt with concern and astonishment on the recollection of the seeming candour and simplicity of character which had deceived her in Josephine, and induced her to repose a degree of confidence so treacherously repaid,

repaid, for by her means alone could Durand have obtained the information which enabled him to compose the epistle she had believed to be written by de Bellecourt. That a person of whom she had thought so favourably, who had professed so strong an attachment to her, and whose youth and inexperience appeared to render her incapable of disguise, should willingly have betrayed a person who had never injured her, occasioned Adelaide a degree of sorrow which subdued every feeling of resentment toward her, and even drew tears from her eyes.

CHAP. V.

Was nought around but images of rest,
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between,
And flowery beds that slumbrous influence kest,
From poppies breath'd, and banks of pleasant
green. THOMSON.

SEVERAL days had elapsed, during which the comparative tranquillity of mind in which they were spent by Madame de Limours began, though slowly, to restore her health, when she was surprised, one morning, by the sudden entrance of her husband, who, rushing into her arms, pressed her for
some

some moments in silence to her bosom, unable to explain the cause of his emotion ; but severely did he repent the precipitancy which had occasioned him to enter her chamber before he had acquired a proper command of his feelings, when, on communicating the intelligence which had thus affected him, its effects completely overpowered the weak spirits of his Julia, and she fainted, and would have fallen to the ground, had not Limours caught her as she sunk from her chair. Calling loudly for assistance, his voice soon drew Adelaide and Constance to the chamber, who for some time having joined their endeavours to restore her to those of Limours, had at length the satisfaction of
perceiving

perceiving in her countenance symptoms of returning life.

It was long, however, before she revived; and when she even did so, and attempted to rise, such faintness again came over her, that it was not for many moments she could uncloset her eyes, nor suffer herself to be moved from her chair to the bed, on which they wished to place her. Anxiety for her recovery had hitherto solely occupied the thoughts of Adelaide; but when this was at length removed by the revival of Madame de Limours, she felt too much interested by the effect to forbear enquiring the cause of what she witnessed; and it was a relief to her mind

mind such as she little expected to learn, that joy had occasioned the emotion and consequent illness of her friend, who being at length left to repose, Adelaide withdrew to peruse the letter Mr. Limours had put into her hand as she quitted the chamber.

On examining its contents, she found, with the most heartfelt satisfaction, that it announced the recovery of Mr. de Jaucourt, the gentleman whose hourly-expected death had occasioned so much uneasiness and alarm to Mr. and Madame de Limours—a circumstance so wholly unexpected by the latter, that the emotions it excited, although of a different nature, were as difficult for her

her weakened frame to support as those which grief might have occasioned.

During the remainder of the day Madame de Limours continued too much indisposed to quit either her chamber or her bed; and the concern which her husband experienced for her illness was most painfully aggravated by the consideration of its being the consequence of his own imprudence, in so abruptly communicating intelligence of such importance.

On the arrival of Dr. ****, (who being unfortunately from home when he was first sent for, did not arrive till a late hour in the evening,) he found

his patient in a situation that renewed his apprehensions of an event he had before expected, and which soon verified his prediction. Before the ensuing dawn Madame de Limours gave birth to an infant of which she had only been pregnant seven months, notwithstanding which circumstance, and the hours of severe suffering she experienced, both herself and her infant appeared likely, by living, to repay the feelings of anxiety and apprehension with which the mind of Limours was agitated during the interval of suspense.

The recovery of Madame de Limours was slow, and for many days scarcely perceptible, but the growth and improvement

provement of her little daughter was rapid beyond her most sanguine expectations; and in the delight she afforded them, her parents soon lost all remembrance of their former uneasiness. The maternal character in which she now appeared, and the important duties annexed to it, of which, with all the tenderness that ought to grace a parent, Madame de Limours already began to perform a part, endeared her daily more and more to her husband, and renewed and strengthened the affection which the late irritability of her mind had somewhat lessened, but which now revived with increased warmth. In her he again perceived the same goodness and amiable sensibility that had charm-

ed him on their first acquaintance ; and though the bloom of her countenance was faded through indisposition, all its sweetness remained, and it was rendered even more interesting than ever by the air of languor that sometimes mingled with her smile.

Although accounts from the friend of Limours frequently arrived, confirming the welcome intelligence of the nearly re-established health of his former rival and antagonist, and removing the necessity of his continuing to absent himself from the metropolis, Limours resolved on remaining in his present retirement, till the length of time for which he had felt obliged to se-

cure it, and of which there still remained three months, was expired. Fond of the pleasures of a country life, and attached to his present dwelling from the tranquillity he had there regained, of the value of which he was the more sensible, from the long period of anxiety which had preceded it, he was yet more strongly influenced in this determination by the dread of occasioning any agitation of spirits to Madame de Limours in her present weak state of health, and which could not but be expected, were she to return to the place where her family resided before a reconciliation had been effected between them. Until her perfect recovery, therefore, removed the hazard

which would now attend this probability, he determined on continuing in his present abode; and Adelaide, to whom this intention was imparted, was likewise entreated to remain there as long as it was agreeable to her to do so—an invitation which was gratefully accepted.

Soothed by the kindness she daily experienced, and pleased with the peaceful retirement in which she lived, she would have been once more happy could she have been assured of de Bellecourt's welfare; but his silence, which was now prolonged far beyond the period when a letter might have arrived from the habitation of his uncle, or his
sister,

sister, had the letters of Adelaide been forwarded to the abode of the latter, oppressed her with severe anxiety. There were times when, recollecting the perilous situation from which she had herself escaped, an apprehension assailed her of his having fallen into a similar snare ; and no longer doubting the atrocities of which Durand and his employers were capable, it even occurred, if not as a probability, at least as a dreadful possibility, they might have found means to assassinate him : but this thought was so very terrible to her heart that she could not suffer herself to pause upon it.

Again she would consider of all that
G 3 might

might have happened to occasion his silence; yet feeling assured that no slight cause could have power to render him thus neglectful, her mind was again overwhelmed with such apprehension as rendered even the company of Madame de Limours intolerably oppressive; and she would sit alone in her apartment for hours together, when the engagements of the family allowed her to do so without incivility.

The depression of her spirits was too evident to escape the observation of either Mr. or Madame de Limours, to the former of whom Adelaide no longer made a mystery of her attachment to the Chevalier; but as his silence was a
circumstance

circumstance which occasioned them nearly equal surprise, they forebore to speak on the subject when she was present, and endeavoured, by every means in their power, to amuse her mind, and withdraw its attention from what could now prove only a source of uneasiness.

What increased their anxiety for the appearance, or at least tidings, of the Chevalier de Bellecourt, was the necessity of measures being taken to dispossess the Baron de Bertonville of the estates he withheld from Adelaide, which, under the plea of having promised de Bellecourt he should act in, she constantly refused to accept the offer of Limours to undertake; not, in reality,

from the motive she feigned, as the interference of any other friend would be more consistent with the delicacy of her ideas, but from the supposition that the personal attendance both of herself and of Mr. de Limours, were he to act for her, might be requisite ; and until the amendment of Madame de Limours' health would permit her also to accompany them, she resolved not to hazard a possibility of occasioning any inconvenience to her kind friends, nor of the uneasiness which it would cause them, were it necessary for Madame de Limours to remain alone.

Finding her resolute on the subject, though wholly ignorant of her real motive

tive for being so, Mr. and Madame de Limours forebore to urge it further, being not only unavailing, but a topic which always led to the mention of the Chevalier; and Adelaide, by whom their friendly solicitude to amuse her could not pass unobserved, endeavoured, while in their company, to assume a degree of chearfulness she was very far from feeling. But although, in her present state of suspense, chearfulness could not in reality regain its former empire in her mind, her own situation did not so wholly engross it as to render her an uninterested spectator of the happiness of others; and as she beheld the tender satisfaction which beamed in the countenance of Madame de Limours,

G 5

while,

while, pressing her babe to her bosom, she returned its infantine endearments, and which was reflected with a still stronger expression of delight in that of her husband, as he hung over them, she frequently lost the sense of her own unhappiness in that of a benevolent pleasure.

As the means of withdrawing the thoughts of Adelaide from dwelling on painful subjects was always the chief consideration with both Julia and Mr. de Limours, they often discoursed before her on their own affairs, as the most likely method (from the friendly interest she took in them) to effect this purpose; and the further knowledge of
their

their characters, which this unreserved communication afforded her, daily raised them in her estimation.

Being an only child, and her father possessed of a large fortune, Madame de Limours had always, when Julia de St. Auzanbert, been taught to consider herself as his heir; but as his property was entirely at his own disposal, the resentment which, by their correspondents, Mr. and Madame de Limours learnt that Mr. de St. Auzanbert still expressed for the conduct of his daughter, rendered her succeeding to his fortune a matter of great uncertainty; yet tho' their hopes of being restored to their rank in society chiefly depended on this,

as the paternal succession of Mr. de Limours would, from his being a younger son, be insufficient to support them in it, this circumstance had little weight with either, in comparison with their wish of restoring the harmony and friendship which had formerly subsisted between their respective families, and the anxiety of Julia to obtain the forgiveness of her parents. The idea of their displeasure was the only alloy to her happiness ; and the prospect of a reconciliation with them she anticipated with the most anxious impatience.

“ When I look on this dear babe,” said she, one day, “ and feel how very, very dear it is to me, and how willingly

ly I would resign my life for its sake, even my love for you, Limours, the strength of which you cannot doubt, does not silence my conscience, while I consider that I have acted in direct opposition to the parents to whom I owe all the duty which I trust this child will one day owe to its mother. No, my Limours, happy as your goodness, and the blessing I enjoy in this treasure, render me, I feel that I could not, were past times again to return, purchase them so dearly as I have done. Tenderly as I loved them, I felt not the full force of the duty I owed my parents till I became one myself; and the hope of obtaining their pardon for my disobedience can alone support me under the
conscious-

consciousness of their displeasure. As to the fortune I formerly was taught to expect, unless it is essential to your happiness, my Limours, I care not for it; let my father bestow it on whoever he will, so he but gives me his pardon, his blessing."

Tears trembled in her eyes; and desirous of changing the subject to something less interesting, Adelaide broke the silence which had prevailed for a few moments, by affecting surprise at the disregard of riches her friend had expressed.

"No, my dear Adelaide," said Madame de Limours in reply to her, "I
can

can never believe that you estimate riches so highly as you say, or you would not be so indifferent about the recovery of your own ; but for myself, I almost wish to continue poor as I now am, since affluence would afford temptations which, strong as are my present resolves, I might not have the resolution to withstand."

"And may I ask," said Limours, smiling, "of what nature are the temptations you allude to? for I confess, Julia, the dread you express both of them and your own inability to resist them awakens my curiosity."

"Then your curiosity shall be fully
satisfied,"

satisfied," answered Madame de Limours, "if you have patience to listen to me. The temptations I fear are those which daily present themselves to the affluent—the variety of amusements, and the various scenes of dissipation into which most people, who have the power of entering into them, are led, either by their own inclination, or the destructive contagion of example. Do not, however, suppose that I mean altogether to condemn amusements, not even those of the metropolis; for it is not the amusements, but the want of moderation in the use of them, that I consider so seriously prejudicial in its consequences; and confident as I now feel of my own intentions, I cannot answer

swer how far I might have the resolution to practice them, were I again surrounded by the gay scenes of Paris. I might, perhaps, though now methinks I could not," she added, tenderly kissing her infant; "yet it is possible that I might be persuaded to enter into a round of dissipation which would compel me to consign this darling to the care of servants, who, although there may be some few exceptions, are certainly, generally speaking, the most improper of all people to be entrusted with so important a charge; and—"

"Far be it from me, my dear Julia," interrupted Limours, "to wish to render you less domestic than you are inclined

clined to be ; but though I admit that the tender care of a mother must greatly exceed all that could reasonably be expected from those who are paid for their services, I cannot in any other point of view agree with you in thinking servants so improper to be entrusted with the care of a child, unless, indeed, it is left to their care after the period when its education should commence."

"Then I am happy to think, my dear Limours," answered Julia, "that we do not materially disagree in opinion, though probably as to the time when education should commence."

"And at what period, may I inquire,"

quire," said Limours, "do you fix the necessity of its commencement?"

"From the earliest dawnings of reason," replied Madame de Limours.

"Are you serious, Julia?"

"Perfectly so, Limours; and to the neglect of this, which, I am sorry to say, is almost general, do I attribute the far greater part of our subsequent errors. The inattention of most people, in this particular, has indeed always been a subject of astonishment and regret to me; and I cannot comprehend how any person, possessed of common sense, can recollect the deep and lasting impressions

impressions we receive in infancy, without perceiving the necessity of rendering those impressions such as we would wish to be retained. With our first accents do we not also acquire our first ideas? and is it not therefore of the highest importance that this should be always kept in view? Most certainly it is; and yet, at a period when the greatest caution should result from this conviction, the generality of mothers scruple not to entrust their children to persons who not only cannot be expected to attend to it, but who, however well disposed they may be, are undoubtedly, from their own want of education, incapable of discharging the arduous, though delightful task, of forming

forming the infant mind.—No, my dear Limours,” she continued solemnly, “the more I reflect, the more I become convinced that there are but few circumstances which can excuse a mother for such neglect; and considering it thus seriously, were I ever guilty of it, you will allow that I should be highly culpable.”

“I will certainly allow it, my Julia,” answered Limours, “because I am persuaded that you never will be so; and, from a very different mode of thinking, I acknowledge that you have rendered me completely a convert to your opinion.”

CHAP. VII.

Oft woo'd the gleam of Cynthia, silver-bright,
Far from the haunts of Folly,
With Freedom by my side, and soft-ey'd Melan-
choly.

WEEK after week still elapsed with
out affording any tidings of de Belle-
court; while every succeeding day in-
creased the dejection of Adelaide, and
the anxiety of Mr. and Madame de Li-
mours, who perceived, with concern,
that her health began to be visibly af-
fected by the state of her mind. Li-
mours

mours had endeavoured to procure information respecting the Chevalier, by the means of his correspondent in Paris, but every inquiry this gentleman had made proved equally unsuccessful; and while this circumstance reasonably increased the apprehensions of both Mr. and Madame de Limours, they derived some satisfaction from the prudence which had prevented them from disclosing the steps they had taken, until the result should prove whether it were better or not to communicate them to Adelaide. They now, therefore, remained silent on the subject, excepting when her absence left them at liberty to discourse together, and also to consult upon the conduct that was proper to be pursued

pursued with regard to the situation of their young friend.

Adelaide, meanwhile, lost all anxiety as to the recovery of her estates in the stronger uneasiness which her uncertainty relative to de Bellecourt occasioned. Unwilling to leave any possibility untried, she had written to him a third time, and inclosed her letter to his uncle, adding a few lines in the cover, requesting the inclosure might be forwarded without delay: yet even this had failed to produce the wished-for effect, and her mind now sunk into a despondency such as she had neither the power nor the inclination to resist.

Had

Had she not been prevented from this indulgence by the fear of appearing ungrateful for the kindness of her friends, she would have confined herself entirely to her chamber, as she was there free from the restraint which their presence imposed: but the sense she had of their goodness and friendly conduct withheld her from doing this; and though their morning occupations frequently separated them from each other, the evenings, which now closed in at an early hour, always assembled the small family party. To converse on any topic was now, indeed, highly painful to Adelaide, and with pleasure she always assented to the proposal of his reading aloud, which Limours frequently

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quently made, and which left her more at liberty to indulge her own reflexions; but the little attention her answers to what they said on the subject of the books which were read proved her to have paid to their contents, destroyed the hope of amusing her mind—a hope which had chiefly influenced them in adopting this mode of passing their time; and frequently, under pretence of fatigue, Limours threw aside his book, when he perceived the abstraction of her thoughts.

One evening, when this had occurred, Limours, after talking on indifferent subjects, began to discourse with his wife on some circumstances which
had

had happened during their abode in the old castle, and concluded by expressing a wish to know what their host, Durand, had thought of their sudden removal.

“Durand!” repeated Adelaide, roused by the mention of his name; “did you indeed say Durand?”

“Most certainly I did,” replied Limours. “Do you know any thing of him?”

“Do I know him!” said Adelaide, faintly, “Do you not know that he was my jailor, my intended assassin? and—”

“Is it possible that he is such a villain?” exclaimed Limours. “But if he is really the person I mean, we must have been under the same roof with you, for it was the old castle he inhabited in which we spent so many dreary months.”

“Is it possible?” said Julia. “What hours of wretchedness would your society have alleviated, my Adelaide, had we but known it! Yet how singular, that for such a length of time as you say you were there, we should never have had a glimpse of you!”

“No,” answered Adelaide, “it is easily accounted for, when you recollect that

that I was confined to my apartment, and excepting twice, when I was permitted to walk in the garden, I never quitted it, at least with their knowledge."

"But if you quitted it by stealth," said Madame de Limours, "still we might have met, had not the fates been unpropitious."

"I only quitted my chamber at an hour when there was no probability of meeting," replied Adelaide, "unless, indeed, I had known the way to your chamber, and had gone thither. It was not till after midnight," she resumed, after a short pause, "that I dared venture to avail myself of the opportunity

afforded by the accidental discovery of a key which opened the door of my chamber ; and, to confess my weakness, I severely repented my rashness in even then doing so."

" What happened ?" asked Limours, with impatience—" Did any thing occur to alarm you ?"

" I perceive, by your manner, that you are not ignorant of the kind of alarm I experienced," answered Adelaide, " and I entreat you to tell me what you have yourself heard or seen, for I can no longer disbelieve the—"

" You heard a voice preceded by sobs
and

and groans?" again interrupted Limours.

"I did," said Adelaide: "but how did you know it? Have you heard the same? Tell me, I beseech you!"

"I will indeed tell you," replied Limours, "but you must first allow me to entreat your pardon for the deception I practised, and for the consequence of which I felt much remorse, though I little suspected who was the person that suffered from my folly. The voice, the sobs, and groans you heard," he continued, perceiving the anxiety with which Adelaide awaited his explanation, "were all from me, and well do I re-

member the regret I experienced when, the second time of repeating my experiment, I heard the deep sigh and sudden fall of the person whom I sought to alarm. The door which opened from the chamber in which I was, was locked on the outside, and I had no means of going, as I wished to do, to your assistance, since it was indeed you."

"It was indeed me," repeated Adelaide; "and though I now blush at my superstitious credulity, I can scarcely recollect the emotions I then experienced without a degree of horror.—But what could have induced you to do this?"

"To

“To retain peaceable possession of my own part of the castle,” answered Limours, “and to favour the idea of that suite of apartments being haunted, which Durand had circulated amongst his family, whom I imagined the only inhabitants of the castle, excepting ourselves ; and from all of whom, his son Robert excepted, he wished to conceal the knowledge of our residing there, lest by their imprudence it should reach the ears of his master ; and as it was equally our interest that I should remain there, the money I paid for permitting it being as acceptable to him, as the retired situation of the castle rendered it convenient for me as an abode, I readily gave into the scheme he devised, and

promised to act a supernatural part, as far as groans and words, whenever the sound of footsteps gave me reason to fear a discovery."

"Then most certainly you acted your part to a miracle," said Adelaïde, "and I can only regret having yielded so easily to the foolish terror you occasioned me, since, had I done otherwise, and summoned resolution to speak, Julia would probably, if she was with you, have recognised my voice, and I might then have been spared the sufferings I have since experienced; but my spirits were really, at that time, so much weakened by long anxiety, that they yielded to every impression of alarm. What tended

tended also to dispose my imagination to admit the influence of superstition, was a circumstance of a very dreadful nature, of which I had been a spectator the night before I was carried off, and which had so deeply impressed my mind with terrific images, that it took alarm at every hint."

She paused, for the subject to which she now alluded was one on which she had never before ventured to enter, and which she was equally withheld from pursuing by the horror which the recollection excited, and the part she had but too powerful reasons for believing the Baron to have had in this mysterious affair; but the curiosity of both Mr.

and Madame de Limours was already too strongly excited to suffer them to conceal it, and they at length prevailed on Adelaide to disclose all she had seen and heard on that eventful night—a recital to which they listened with emotions of equal horror and amazement.

They continued to discourse on the subject until a late hour, and Adelaide still shuddered at the recollection it had awakened, and experienced somewhat of the fear that had then assailed her, when their attention was roused by the sound of a carriage, and presently a violent ringing of the bell at the garden gate. Mr. Limours, who had been speaking, suddenly paused, and after a moment's

moment's silence inquired if Madame de Limours expected a visit from the doctor ; adding,

“ Though it is rather a late hour for him to come unsent-for, it must surely be him, since we have no other visitor.”

While he yet spoke, the voice of Louis was heard from the passage without. He seemed to be resolutely refusing admittance to some person who appeared equally solicitous to obtain it; and Mr. Limours rose from his seat with an intention of learning the cause of what he heard, when the door of the small apartment in which the party were assembled was suddenly opened, the stranger rushed in, and Adelaide
sunk

sunk in the arms of de Bellecourt.—The surprise and agitation excited by this unexpected meeting were more than her spirits were equal to sustain, and her powers of recollection were for a few moments suspended. Soon, however she revived, and raising her eyes at the sound of his well-known voice, forgot all her past sufferings in the joy of the present moment.—Mr. and Madame de Limours had hitherto remained silent spectators of the scene, but their conjectures relative to the stranger being now confirmed by Adelaide, they participated with sincerity in the happiness which his presence afforded her.—De Bellecourt asked innumerable questions concerning Adelaide, and the extraordinary incidents she had experienced.

enced since they parted, such as her still agitated spirits could scarcely enable her to answer; but she at length related the most important circumstances that had occurred to her, while he listened to the recital with equal concern for her sufferings, and resentment against her oppressors.

From him she now also learnt that he had only received her letters the morning on which, in consequence of the receipt of them, he had set out to come to her; and, with still more surprise, that the epistle which had induced her to quit the Benedictine Convent had really been written by himself.

The lateness of the hour, and the
paleness

paleness which, after the first moments of agitation had subsided, she perceived in the countenance of Bellecourt, induced Adelaide to propose his postponing a further recital to the following day; and having received an invitation from Mr. and Madame de Limours to join their breakfast table the next morning, as the smallness of their habitation deprived them of the power of offering him a bed, he reluctantly took leave, and returned to St. Vallery; while Adelaide, having received the congratulations of her kind friends on the unexpected event of the evening, at length withdrew to her chamber, though it was long before the rapid succession of her thoughts allowed her to repose.

At

At an early hour on the following morning Bellecourt returned to the house of his new friends, who were already in the breakfast room, and by whom he was received with a cordiality of welcome that compelled him to forget the shortness of the acquaintance. Adelaide, however, was not there; but she soon appeared, and Mr. and Madame de Limours observed, with much satisfaction, the glow of delight which animated the expressive countenance of Bellecourt, as he approached, and led her to her seat; while the pleasure Adelaide experienced was considerably diminished by the appearance of indisposition which she now so plainly perceived in his looks.

When

When the repast was concluded, he commenced the recital of all that had occurred to him since their separation ; and Adelaide learnt, with concern, that her apprehensions relative to his health were but too well founded. On the evening after he had left her in the convent at Bayeaux he now informed her that he quitted that place with the intention of proceeding immediately to the house of his sister, the Comtesse d'Albec, but in consequence of a feverish complaint with which he was attacked on the road, his journey had been retarded several days, during which his illness was considerably increased by the vexation he experienced at the delay it occasioned.

As.

As soon as the amendment of his health enabled him to hold a pen, he had written to his sister, informing her of his wishes relative to her receiving Adelaide, and requesting her either to go herself, or send some person, on whose care she could depend, to accompany her from the Convent to the Chateau D'Abec; in reply to which the Comtesse had immediately written to assure him of her readiness to comply with his wishes, but saying, that as the illness of her youngest child prevented her going in person, she would appoint a friend as a substitute for herself, who should meet Adelaide at Caen, to which place from Bayeaux the carriage and domestics of the Comtesse should be sent

the

the beginning of the ensuing week to convey her.

“In consequence of this,” continued Bellecourt, “I took the liberty of addressing a few lines to you, which unfortunately proved a clue to the villain into whose power you were again betrayed; so that I am the innocent cause of all you suffered, and—”

“Do not say so, I entreat you,” interrupted Adelaide; “whatever my sufferings have been, they are all passed now, and must no longer be remembered. But allow me to inquire, did you date your letter from the Chateau D’Albec? and did you mention in it
that

that your sister's carriage should attend you on the evening I received your letter?"

"Neither," answered the Chevalier, with surprise at the question.

"This is very strange," said Adelaide, after a momentary pause: "but the letter is still in my possession, and—"

"May I beg to see it?" interrupted Bellecourt, "for you excite my curiosity."

"It shall be satisfied immediately, then," said Adelaide; and quitting the room,

room, she quickly returned with the letter, which Bellecourt no sooner glanced his eyes over than he exclaimed, with astonishment, that it was a forgery. On perusing its contents, he found they were very similar to what he had himself written, with only the difference of the date, and of the time mentioned for the arrival of the carriage, which, in his letter, he had not named, further than (as his sister had said in her letter) “an early day in the ensuing week.”

The hand-writing was imitated with an exactness that might almost have deceived himself, and would undoubtedly have deceived any other person ; but as Adelaide had never seen any of Bellecourt's,

court's, this circumstance had not, in reality, had any weight with her, tho' it proved the subtlety of the precaution which had been employed to deceive her, and that the letter de Bellecourt had really written must have fallen into the possession of Durand—proofs which were not wanting to excite the just indignation of de Bellecourt.

After some moments, however, as Adelaide was anxious to hear more, he resumed his discourse, and proceeded to inform her that, in consequence of her promise, the Comtesse D'Albec had sent her carriage and servants at the time appointed, to convey Adelaide to the Chateau D'Albec ; but on reaching the
convent,

convent, and learning that she had quitted it some days before, St. Jule, an upper servant of the Comtesse's, whom she had sent to escort Adelaide, had written immediately to inform his mistress of what had happened, and to inquire whether he should return home, or proceed to any other place for the young lady.

“On receiving this letter,” continued de Bellecourt, “my sister wrote to inform me of it, and (little aware of what had really happened, and concluding that it was not without my knowledge you had removed) to inquire where you were, and if you still held your intention of favouring her with your company.

pany. Convinced, as every circumstance, separately considered, tended to render me, that you would not have quitted the convent unless through some artifice of your enemies, the emotions I experienced on the perusal of this epistle were such as, I may now acknowledge, had nearly proved fatal to me. A relapse was the immediate consequence; and the fever attacking my brain, I lay for many days in a delirium, from which I only at length recovered to a sense of the greatest wretchedness at the consideration of what might have occurred to you. My sister, meanwhile, was wholly ignorant of the cause, though informed of my malady; but as soon as the recovery of her child allowed her to do so, she kindly left her home to come

and attend me, and to her care do I chiefly owe my recovery. The inconvenience I felt that I occasioned her, while she remained with me so far from her family, induced me to comply with her wishes; and as I could not prevail on her to return to it without me, I accompanied her to her house as soon as I was able to travel, where, by her sisterly assiduity, my health was at length re-established, notwithstanding the miserable suspense in which I still continued respecting you. What aggravated my uneasiness was the extraordinary silence of my uncle, to whom I had written an account of your former situation, and my present fears respecting you; and to whom also my extreme weakness compelled me to delegate the care of sum-

moning the Baron to account for his conduct, and for your late disappearance. But the very day on which I had intended setting out to his house (which was as soon as a slight relapse of fever enabled me to do so) he arrived at the Chateau D'Albec, bringing with him your letters, the delightful contents of which were a cordial to my heart, restoring me from misery to happiness.—Affairs of importance having required the immediate presence of my uncle in a distant province, he had quitted his home suddenly to go thither, and, under the idea of a speedy conclusion of the business permitting him to return in the course of a few days, had, unfortunately for me, neglected to desire his letters to be forwarded to him; and by

this omission, therefore, (the daily expectation of returning to his house still preventing him from repairing it,) your letters and mine remained equally unopened, as also those which my sister had written to inform him of my illness; but on perusing the few lines in which you inclosed your last letter to me, he learnt that you were in safety; and fearing to trust such welcome intelligence, as he knew this would prove to me, to the possibility of any accident or delay, he instantly set off for the Chateau D'Albec, where, as I have already mentioned, he arrived most opportunely, and from whence he accompanied me part of the road hither."

CHAP. VIII.

Believe me, Marcus, 'tis an impious greatness,

And mix'd with too much horror to be envied.

SHAKSPEARE.

To account for some of the past incidents, it is necessary that we return for a moment to the Chateau de ——, the first scene of Adelaide's imprisonment.

It was not until the following morning that her flight from thence had been discovered by Durand, together

with that of his daughter and the travellers, to whom he had so unwillingly afforded the shelter they required, and whose arrival there he then naturally concluded to have been a concerted plan. His rage and vexation on finding himself thus duped were such as cannot easily be conceived, since the escape of Adelaide annihilated every hope of the future favour of his master, as well as of the success of still deeper views which had lately engrossed his speculative powers: but short reflexion convinced him, that notwithstanding the small prospect of success, still, as his support, and every comfort for the future, would depend upon his recovering possession of his prisoner, every means should be tried to effect this. He communicated

municated his thoughts to his son, and they resolved to set off in pursuit of the fugitives without loss of time.

As they had no means of travelling with the expedition which the circumstances required but by procuring horses at the next town, both those which the Baron had suffered them to retain having been lamed by different accidents, they were compelled to proceed to Carantan, where they, unluckily for her, stopped at the inn which Adelaide and her companions had quitted but a few hours sooner, and from whence, by the information they then received, they were enabled to trace their route to Bayeaux. At Bayeaux, however, all their endeavours to discover what had be-

come of Adelaide and Josephine proved long ineffectual; yet as by the description of the Chevalier they soon became convinced of his having quitted the town without them, it soon occurred to the wary Durand that Adelaide must, as she in reality had done, have taken refuge in a convent.

Under this belief he almost despaired of any means of withdrawing her from thence, were he even to discover the convent in which she was placed; but chance at length was favourable to his wishes. In his way to the place of their temporary abode Robert had one day had a glimpse of Josephine, as she returned from her usual errand to the post-office, and, unperceived by her, followed

followed at a distance, till he saw her enter the gates of the Benedictine Convent. On the following day, therefore, he stationed himself, together with his father, in a situation from whence they could see all who entered or quitted the Convent, and, after some hours of expectation, at length saw Josephine pass the gates in her way to the post-office. The number of people who were also passing at the time prevented them, however, from immediately stopping her; and having concealed their faces in long cloaks, they again followed her, unobserved, until, having received the letter which Adelaide so anxiously awaited, she was joyfully returning with it; when, availing themselves of a moment when there

was no one near, they suddenly presented themselves before her.

The terror poor Josephine experienced at this unexpected meeting was such as effectually to deprive her of the power of either remonstrating against or resisting the will of her father, and tremblingly she was compelled to accompany him to the lodging he occupied in a remote part of the town, where, by threats and menaces, he soon extorted from her all the information he wished ; which, assisted by the letter from the Chevalier de Bellecourt, enabled him to form the plan he so speedily executed.

As the contents of the letter convinced

vinced him, however, that Adelaide would not be sent for by the Comtesse D'Albec for many days, he judged it most prudent to remove Josephine without loss of time from a place where the inquiries which her absence would probably occasion might lead to the frustration of his designs; and after making her walk with him to some distance beyond the town, where Robert was in waiting with a horse, he obliged her to mount it behind himself, and return, with all the speed their mode of travelling would admit of, to her former abode, where he was obliged to commit her to the care of her mother while he returned to Bayeaux.

His plan for deceiving Adelaide into

quitting the Convent was already arranged, and Robert had remained at Bayeaux to make the necessary preparations for its execution ; but whither to convey her Durand was still uncertain, and still deliberated upon, when the recollection of the ruined abbey, where he had one day sheltered himself from a heavy storm, determined him first to go thither, and discover whether it would be possible to confine her there. On examining it, he judged it likely at least to answer the purpose of terrifying her into a compliance with his purposes, if not to serve as more than a temporary prison ; and this was sufficient to determine him on placing her there.

After this, he returned without farther

ther delay to Bayeux, where, having copied the letter of the Chevalier, altering the place from whence it was dated, and the time appointed, and having hired a carriage, and disguised himself and Robert as domestics of the Comtesse D'Albec, he repaired, at a late hour in the evening to the Benedictine Convent, from whence (having already received the forged epistle) he found Adelaide ready to accompany him, and conveyed her, as has already been mentioned, to the ruins of the monastery.

The mattress which she found in the chamber where she was confined, he had taken the precaution of bringing in the carriage from Bayeux, ° and had placed, where she perceived it, before she

she had recovered from her swoon. Had he been at all aware, however, of what was likely to happen, he would not have hazarded her remaining there for a moment; but happily for Adelaide, (since his ignorance on this point proved the means of her deliverance,) he had no suspicions till they were too late. The retired situation of the monastery, in a wild and solitary part of the country, within a short distance of the seashore, rendered it a most convenient place of concealment for whoever might require such; and it had long been resorted to as a place of rendezvous by a desperate gang of robbers who infested the neighbourhood.

The alarm their arrival there occasioned

sioned to Durand and Robert has already been related, as also the subsequent escape of Adelaide; but it was not without considerable difficulty that Durand and his son at length prevailed on the robbers to release them, or convinced them of their innocence of the intention of giving information of their numbers and place of resort, of which they suspected them. After having stripped them of every thing of value, extorted an oath of secrecy from both, and denounced the most terrible threats of vengeance against them in case of breaking it, they at length, however, (retaining the carriage and horses which Durand had hired for the conveyance of Adelaide,) suffered them to depart: but so much of the future prospects of
both

both father and son depended on the possession of Adelaide, that notwithstanding the reason they had to fear being discovered by the robbers, they concealed themselves in an adjoining wood, where they remained until the departure of the banditti left them at liberty to quit their retreat, and return to the monastery in search of her.

With the most anxious impatience they ascended to the chamber, or rather cell, where they had left her, which, with a degree of disappointment that even exceeded their impatience, they found vacant. For many hours they continued to search throughout every part of the building; and the adjoining woods, in the vain hope of finding her there

there concealed; but at length convinced that she was no longer there, they were compelled to give over their search, and, under the probable conjecture of her having fallen into the hands of the robbers, returned to the Castle to consult on the means that yet remained of securing the promised reward of their services from the Baron, since that was all they could now any longer expect.

The expectation of a considerable salary had indeed been the sole inducement by which Durand had been prevailed on to undertake the charge of the Castle of —, and the confinement of Adelaide; but at length other views had presented themselves to his subtle mind—

mind—views which were more likely to gratify his avarice than the generosity of the Baron, and to the execution of which no degree of actual guilt could be attached. Well aware of the motives which had actuated Mr. de Bertonville in the imprisonment of his niece, and equally informed of the extent of the possessions to which she was entitled, the idea of securing her fortune for himself and his family, by compelling her to espouse his son, afforded a possibility of success worth the endeavour.

The suggestion was as agreeable to Robert as Durand could have wished, and various plans for effecting their purpose were already concerted, when the
constant

constant dread of discovery in which he had hitherto lived determined the Baron to remove the possibility of it, and to write the billet which was found by the servant of de Bellecourt, and which, on its receipt, Durand resolved to render instrumental to his own views, by acquainting Adelaide with its contents, and representing the commands of the Baron, and her marriage with Robert, as the only alternatives that remained for her.

The unexpected arrival of de Bellecourt and his servant, whom he had so unwillingly admitted to the castle, compelled him, however, to delay the execution of this design till their departure should leave him more at liberty to do

so ;

so ; and having suffered himself, though reluctantly, to be prevailed on to offer the travellers accommodation for the night, he had retired to rest, in the expectation of the ensuing day affording the opportunity he awaited.

The events of that day, and many succeeding ones, have already been related, and it now only remains to say what were his projects when he returned from the ruined abbey to the Castle.

Assured that Mr. de Bertonville would not confide a secret of such importance as that contained in his billet to the knowledge of any other person, Durand had hitherto delayed replying to it, in the hope of doing so in a manner
for

for which the Baron would be but little prepared, and claiming the restitution of Adelaide's fortune as the right of his son: but when the apparent certainty of her having fallen into the hands of the banditti completely destroyed this fabric of expectation, he determined on compensating himself for the disappointment, by securing the reward to which his compliance with the Baron's orders would have entitled him.

In pursuance of this plan he set out for the metropolis, where, amidst the gaieties and dissipation which his usurped property enabled him to partake of, the Baron vainly sought to lose the consciousness of guilt. He was at dinner with a party of his associates, when
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the wild uproar of their riotous mirth was interrupted by the information that was brought to him of the arrival of Durand; and unable to conceal the emotions he experienced at this intelligence, he abruptly quitted the table, and withdrew to his study, to which he had ordered Durand to be sent, and where, agitated by contending passions, he for some moments awaited his appearance: but notwithstanding the sophistry with which he had endeavoured to silence the reproaches of his conscience, and reconcile it to a measure he believed indispensable to his future tranquillity in the possession of his wealth, he could not listen to the fabricated tale of her death, which Durand had invented for the occasion, nor look on
the

the dark countenance of the man in whom he believed he saw the murderer of Adelaide, without a sensation of horror such as he had never before experienced.

Led on by progressive degrees to the commission of a crime of which he would formerly have believed himself incapable, it was not until this moment, when the contrast of the scene of dissolute gaiety he had just quitted rendered that which Durand now opened to his imagination more striking, that he became fully conscious of the depth of the abyss into which he had plunged, and from the consideration of which his soul now recoiled in horror. Anxious to transfer the guilt from himself, he
blamed,

blamed, while he bewailed, the promptitude with which he believed his orders to have been obeyed ; and Durand, having vainly endeavoured to reconcile him to himself, was at length ordered to withdraw.

On the following day, however, he was again admitted to the presence of the Baron, to whom the impolicy of irritating his associate in guilt had now suggested itself; and after a conference of considerable length, during which Durand extorted a promise of the reward he wished to obtain, by artfully reminding the Baron of the supposed power he now had over him, they parted with mutual expressions of good-will,
in

in which they were mutually insincere.

Compelled to content himself with the promise, instead of the immediate payment of his reward, Durand once more returned to his family, whom, as the necessity of continuing in the Castle of — no longer existed, he designed to remove from thence to Paris, where he purposed remaining until the Baron's performance of his promise should enable him to remove to a permanent place of abode: but the illness of his wife, whose disorder was considerably increased by the distress of mind which the circumstances of her husband's conduct, which she learnt from Josephine had occasioned, obliged him,

for the present, to abandon this intention.

Marguerite was still confined to her sick bed, where her bodily and mental anguish received as much alleviation as the dutiful attentions of Josephine could impart. Durand and Robert were still murmuring at the Baron for the tardiness of his payments; and the Baron, in whom his fancied security could not silence his awakened conscience, was still endeavouring to conceal the remorse with which he was tortured under a forced appearance of gaiety, while, dreading the poignancy of solitary reflexion, his hours were spent in a riotous succession of excesses, when the arrival of the Chevalier de Bellecourt

at the habitation of Mr. and Madame de Limours restored tranquillity and hope to the long-harassed mind of Adelaide.

CHAP. VIII.

So may he rest; his faults lie gently on
him!

SHAKSPEARE.

WE now return to the mention of Adelaide, whose happiness in the society of de Bellecourt, and her kind friends Mr. and Madame de Limours, would have been complete, had not the consideration of the conduct of a person so nearly allied to her as the Baron de Bertonville proved a considerable alloy to it; and notwithstanding the strong feelings

feelings of indignation with which she had always, from her earliest years, regarded an act of injustice, she could not acknowledge the necessity of asserting her rights, and thereby exposing the conduct of the Baron to the eyes of the world, without a degree of regret such as proved the goodness of her heart, although it was more than the occasion required, or could perhaps justify.

However this might be, her friends, who daily perceived in her something new to love and to admire, could not refuse their concurrence in the lenity she wished to practise towards Mr. de Bertonville; and it was resolved, that unless his behaviour occasioned a neces-

sity for the contrary, the business should be arranged with all the secrecy it would admit of. In pursuance of this determination, Mr. de Limours, together with de Bellecourt, set out for Paris, leaving Adelaide with Madame de Limours, whose health, though daily re-establishing, was not sufficiently restored to permit her as yet to undertake so long a journey.

On their arrival in Paris, Limours and de Bellecourt immediately repaired to the house of the Baron, by whom, from his ignorance of the purport of his visit, the latter was received with much apparent cordiality: but feelings of a very opposite nature followed a discovery of the errand of his visitors; and
it

it was not without difficulty that he could at first persuade himself of the truth of their assertion of Adelaide's being still in existence. When, however, he became convinced, neither the prospect of loss of fortune nor loss of character, which it opened to him, could destroy the satisfaction with which he learnt that she had really escaped from the various machinations of himself and Durand.

Oppressed by a load of conscious guilt, the pleasures he had so dearly bought had long since lost their power to charm or soothe his perturbed spirit into forgetfulness ; and notwithstanding the mortification he experienced at this discovery of his intended crime, the

K 4. certainty

certainty of having been saved from its execution was a relief to his mind of too much importance not to overbalance every other emotion. Yet so opposite were these feelings from what either Limours or de Bellecourt had expected to witness, that they could not credit their sincerity, but ascribed them to a refinement of hypocrisy, of which they had but too powerful cause to believe him capable. Whether he in reality felt the satisfaction for the safety of Adelaide, or the contrition for his past conduct, which he expressed, was, however, too unimportant to them to occupy their attention; and after having received from him a promise of an entire restitution of the estates to which her being of age had for some months entitled Adelaide, they

they would have withdrawn, had they not judged an investigation of another circumstance equally necessary.

The dreadful spectacle to which Adelaide had been a witness in the woods of St. Pierre was the subject of which they now, therefore, demanded an explanation from the Baron, whom they doubted not to have been a party in the transaction, and from whom, with a degree of incredulity warranted by their knowledge of his character, they listened to the detail which he gave without any apparent reluctance; but anxious to ascertain the truth more fully than they could persuade themselves the Baron's assertions would entitle them to do, they determined on making further

K 5 ther

ther inquiries of the other person concerned in the affair; and they accordingly despatched a messenger to the Castle of ———, to desire the immediate attendance of Durand at the hotel of the Baron de Bertonville.

On receiving this order, Durand, supposing it related to the payment he expected, readily consented to accompany the messenger without delay; and leaving Marguerite to the care of her son and daughter, set off for Paris, where he arrived nearly at the time he was expected.

Mr. de Limours and de Bellecourt had been for some hours at the house of the Baron, and on the appearance of Durand,

rand, who was shown into the apartment where, with the Baron, they awaited him, they interrogated him on the circumstance they were desirous of having explained, and received, in reply, an account to which they listened with satisfaction, as the exactness with which it corresponded with that of Mr. de Bertonville removed the unpleasant suspicions they had hitherto entertained on the subject.

From Durand they now, more circumstantially than they had done from the Baron, learnt that the corpse which Adelaide had seen was one which Durand had himself stolen from the churchyard of the neighbouring village, and which he had brought from thence to

the woods of St. Pierre, and, assisted by the Baron, (at whose suggestion the whole had been undertaken,) had deposited in the river, where it remained until, in consequence of the sudden disappearance of Adelaide, the Baron had ordered the river to be dragged, when, as he had foreseen, it was taken up, and supposed to be hers. The length of time it had remained in the water had swollen the features so much, as to remove all possibility of a detection of the imposition; and the height of the figure corresponding very nearly with that of Adelaide, and several articles of her dress having been purposely scattered near the river, not a doubt was entertained by any of the domestics then remaining at St. Pierre of its being her;

her ; and with much parade of grief, and pomp of ceremony, Mr. de Bertonville caused it to be removed from St. Pierre to the family vault in Paris, for interment.

Their curiosity on this subject being thus fully satisfied, Limours and de Bellecourt now withdrew, leaving the Baron and Durand together, between whom an explanation took place, for which the latter was but little prepared.

While these events were passing in Paris, the hours of Adelaide were spent in a tranquillity of mind such as she had not experienced for many previous months, and the health of Madame de Limours continued daily to amend.—

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The accounts she regularly received from her husband prevented every degree of anxiety which his absence might otherwise have occasioned her ; and the hopes he entertained, and communicated to her, of a speedy reconciliation with her family, by the means of the friends who had kindly promised to intercede with them, contributed so much to restore her spirits and health, that when, after an absence of scarcely more than a week, Mr. de Limours returned home, he found her sufficiently recovered to enable her to undertake the journey to Paris, to which place, as her husband judged it necessary to return, she was anxious now to accompany him.

As the only objection to her doing so
was

was removed by the restoration of her health, he no longer, therefore, opposed it ; and with far different feelings from those with which they had first taken up their abode there, the party soon quitted their peaceful habitation, and set out for the metropolis.

Fearful, however, of hazarding too great fatigue for both Madame de Limours and her infant daughter, they travelled so slowly, that it was not until evening of the third day that they came within view of Paris, and at length entered amidst its gay scenes, when, as had been already agreed upon, they drove to an hotel, where de Bellecourt, who had not returned to St. Vallery, awaited their arrival.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding the shortness of their separation, the interval had appeared more tedious to de Bellecourt than any he had yet known; and the pleasure he experienced at again beholding Adelaide was such as may be imagined, from the impatience with which he had counted every note of every hour during the last day that preceded her arrival; while Adelaide, whose heart was incapable of disguise, affected not to conceal the satisfaction which the meeting afforded her, and Mr. and Mademoiselle Limours warmly participated their feelings.

So delightfully did the moments elapse, that it was not until a late hour that the party at length separated, and withdrew.

withdrew to repose, to partake of which Adelaide was, however, long incapable, so many interesting remembrances were awakened by their return to a place she had quitted under such different circumstances.

On the following morning Madame de Limours was too much fatigued to appear, but Mr. de Limours and de Bellecourt were already at the breakfast table when Adelaide entered the room. Anxious to learn how her friend had rested after the fatigue of her journey, Adelaide rose from her seat as soon as the repast was concluded, with an intention of going to her chamber, but sat down again at the request of Mr. de Limours, who wished to consult her
about

about removing from the hotel in which they were, to some more airy situation, on account of his wife and child.

While they still conversed on the subject, the servant of Mr. de Limours suddenly entered the room, and whispered to his master, who, after listening for a moment, rose in much apparent agitation, and withdrew with him to an adjoining apartment. In a few minutes he returned, and taking de Bellecourt apart, spoke to him, but in so low a tone of voice that Adelaide could not distinguish a word. By their manner, it was, however, evident that something extraordinary had occurred; and after observing them for a few moments, with eyes strongly expressive of
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the interest she felt, she ventured to inquire what was the matter.

“ Nothing of any importance,” replied Limours: “ but de Bellecourt and I are obliged to go out on business, and I wish you to stay with Julia till our return.”

“ Certainly,” answered Adelaide; but they had already quitted the room, and she soon followed, intending to go to the chamber of Madame de Limours. As she traversed the passage which led towards it she perceived Mr. de Limours and de Bellecourt standing at the head of the stairs, in conversation with the servant of the former. On her approach they descended the staircase, and
imagining

imagining that it was to avoid speaking to her that they did so, she passed quickly ; but as she went, she heard the servant say to Mr. de Limours—

“ You had better not, Sir ; it is a terrible scene, he tells me ! ”

Alarmed by these words, she paused for a moment, till they were out of sight, when, instead of going to that of Madame de Limours, she proceeded to her own chamber, to endeavour to recover from the degree of agitation which the manner of Mr. de Limours, equally with what she had heard, excited, fearing lest it should awaken the curiosity of Madame de Limours.

Having

Having at length succeeded in regaining an appearance of composure, yet still inwardly shuddering at the remembrance of what Louis had said, she repaired, as she had promised, to Madame de Limours, with whom she remained till Mr. de Limours returned, when she withdrew to her chamber. She did not retire, however, without previously observing his countenance; and whether it was the effect of her imagination or reality, she fancied, after she had left the chamber, that he had regarded her with a particular expression of concern.

Shocked, yet scarcely knowing why, she mused for some time upon this, when her reverie was interrupted by
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the entrance of Madame de Limours, in whose expressive countenance she now plainly perceived a wish to impart unpleasant intelligence. Had she not been convinced of the welfare of de Bellecourt, by seeing him pass through the court to which her chamber window opened, a few moments before, she would not have had the power to inquire the meaning of the anxiety she observed in her friend; but feeling no cause for alarm on his account, she hesitated not to demand it; and after some preparatory discourse, Madame de Limours at length informed her that the Baron de Bertonville had that morning put a period to his existence.

Overcome by the shock of this dreadful

ful intelligence, Adelaide sunk back in her chair, and Madame de Limours, alarmed by the paleness of her countenance, would have rung for assistance, but she had not fainted; and waving her hand to prevent Madame de Limours from ringing the bell, she remained for some moments in silence, till at length tears came to her relief, and she wept bitterly, during which Madame de Limours, who well knew the inefficacy of premature consolation, interrupted her not. After some time, however, Adelaide spoke on the subject, and requested to learn whatever particulars her friend had heard on the subject, who now, therefore, gave her a letter, written on the preceding night by the Baron, and which had been found

found on his table. It contained but a few lines, expressive of his remorse for his past conduct toward her, and soliciting her forgiveness, and prayers for the pardon of his late offences, and the crime he was about to commit.

Still more shocked than she had before been, by the perusal of this letter, which proved that the dreadful act had been premeditated, and was not, as she had hoped, the effect of a momentary derangement, Adelaide requested Madame de Limours would now leave her to herself—a request which was immediately complied with.

Her mind deeply impressed with the unhappy fate of this wretched man, she
forgot

forgot all his unjust conduct and intended cruelty to herself in compassionate sorrow for this dreadful aggravation of his crimes ; and yielding to the emotions of grief and horror which the consideration of it excited, the hours passed on till dinner-time, when, struggling against the pressure of her feelings, she dried her tears, and joined the family at table, where, by the delicate attentions of her friends, her thoughts were at length withdrawn from this distressing subject ; and she learnt, with satisfaction, that after she had quitted her in the morning, Madame de Limours had had an interview with her parents, and received their pardon, and permission to introduce Mr. de Limours as her husband, who was, in consequence, to ac-

company her to their house on the following day.

Business requiring the attendance of the gentlemen, Madame de Limours and Adelaide spent the evening alone, during which the future prospects of each afforded sufficient conversation for the former, who wished to divert the attention of Adelaide from dwelling on the dreadful event with which it had already been so much occupied: but it was at present a subject too fresh in her memory to be long obliterated, and she soon recurred to it; and from this at length passed to the mention of the grief she had experienced for the death of her beloved lady abbess.

Madame de Limours listened for some moments in surprise, and at length inquired to whom she alluded; when Adelaide, who imagined she must also have been informed of it, felt a degree of sorrow for having to communicate such distressing intelligence; but on the question being repeated, informed her that it was the Superior of the Ursuline Convent. The astonishment Madame de Limours had expressed was, however, quickly transferred to Adelaide, and accompanied with emotions of the strongest delight when Madame de Limours affirmed herself fully authorised to assert that their beloved lady abbess was not only alive, but in perfect health.—She had that moment seen one of the pensioners, from whom she had received

this account ; and unable to doubt its authenticity, Adelaide now yielded to the satisfaction which such intelligence was calculated to excite. The letter which the Baron had shown her she justly concluded to have been written by himself, for the purpose of confirming her in the supposition of what he wished her to believe, and which (as had already been the case) she scrupled not to impute to the fear of her withdrawing to the convent, and thereby defeating the plans he had formed relative to her imprisonment

CHAP. IX.

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has surviv'd the fall !
Tho' few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or, tasting, long enjoy thee ; too infirm,
Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
Of temper sheds into thy crystal cup,
Thou art the nurse of Virtue ! COWPER.

As the entire reconciliation which had now taken place between Mr. and Madame de Limours and the parents of the latter, rendered Paris a more desirable abode than any other for Julia, who,

notwithstanding their former unkindness, was fondly attached to her father and mother, Mr. de Limours agreed to her wishes of remaining there until the end of spring, which was now only commencing; and they accordingly hired a house suitable to their rank and, to the fortune M. de St. Auzanbert now agreed to give his daughter. Previous to their doing so, however, Madame de Limours had insisted so strongly on Adelaide's continuing to reside with them, that although the late circumstance, and the sufferings she had experienced, (which, notwithstanding their endeavours to the contrary, began to be a topic of attention,) rendered her anxious to withdraw for awhile from public observation, she found it impossible to
refuse

refuse this request ; and as soon as the necessary arrangements were completed, they removed to their new abode, from whence Adelaide often repaired to the Ursuline Convent, and spent many delightful hours in the society of her beloved lady abbess, whose benevolent heart warmly repaid the affection of her young friend.

Several weeks thus elapsed, during which the Chevalier de Bellecourt was a daily visitor at the house of Mr. de Limours ; when, the term of her mourning (which, notwithstanding his past ill conduct toward her, Adelaide chose to wear for the Baron) being nearly expired, her friends, who had promised to espouse the cause of de Bellecourt, at length

length reminded her of the assent she had given (in presence of Madame de Limours) to his proposals, shortly after their arrival in Paris. Convinced of his attachment to her, and of his worth, of which all who knew him bore testimony, she hesitated not to comply with his wishes, and agreed to an early day being fixed for their marriage; justly considering it beneath the dignity of her character, as well as an ungrateful return for his affection, to trifle with his feelings. Few girls of her age, for Adelaide was not yet nineteen, can be said to have any decided character at all; but the circumstances of her life had taught her to reflect with a degree of steadiness beyond her years, without lessening the ingenuousness of her disposition;

position ; and having already decided, she disdained the affectation of sentiments she did not feel. What induced her the more readily to agree to an early day for the performance of the ceremony was, that the Chevalier wished his sister, the Comtesse D'Albec, to be present, who, having already spent some time in Paris, whither she had come in order to be introduced to Adelaide, was now anxious to return to her young family, whom she had left at the Chateau d'Albec. On the day appointed, therefore, the happy Bellecourt received the hand of Adelaide from that of his uncle, the old Chevalier, who, notwithstanding his usual reluctance to quitting his own habitation, could not resist the satisfaction of witnessing the happiness of a nephew,

friends, was also sent for, and reinstated in her former situation ; while, for giving the former ill-treatment she had experienced from Durand and his son, Adelaide restored to them the cottage they had formerly inhabited—an act of kindness which communicated as much happiness to the harassed mind of Marguerite, as the consideration of the bad conduct of her husband rendered her capable of feeling.

Thus perfecting the Christian character by the addition of its sublimest attribute—"forgiveness of injuries," Adelaide doubly enjoyed the blessing she possessed, by rendering herself worthy of them.

THE END.