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THE THREE GIL BLAS.

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A NOVEL.

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LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

THE

THREE GIL BLAS,

in four parts. 1827
OR

FOLLIES OF YOUTH.

A NOVEL.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

FROM
THE FRENCH
OF
LA MARTELLIERE,

VOL. III.

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THREE GIL BLAS.

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CHAP. I.

Musicians.

THE idea of travelling did not much frighten us: what we thought of principally, was how to do it with pleasure and convenience. All our resources were at this moment reduced to about five hundred francs. It was enough certainly to carry us back to our parents, but how would they receive us? They were, no doubt, informed of our adventure, and

forced departure from Strasburgh. What could we expect from them under these circumstances?—and our friendship too, would it not be destroyed?—This thought was sufficient to place us above the reach of adversity, with which it pleased futurity to threaten us.

Charles had learned, during our stay at Frankfort, that the Baroness de Wals had rejoined her husband at Wetzlar, where he had been nominated Counsellor. It may be remembered, that he had lived with her at Strasburgh on sufficient terms of intimacy, to make him hope for a favourable reception. It was rather different with respect to the Baron; but he was married, and husbands are the same every where. After a short deliberation, it was resolved that we should take the road to Wetzlar.

We required three long days for the performance of our journey; for we travelled

travelled consistently with our fortune—that is to say, on foot. We were easy with regard to our effects, as they were deposited with a merchant at Frankfort, whose probity was known to us. Thus, light in heart and in pocket, acting as well as we could for the present, and leaving the future to Providence, we walked gently forward to the place of our destination.

Two days had already passed in our philosophical pilgrimage. We were only a few leagues distant from Wetzlar. The bells were ringing at a neighbouring village; and, as we approached, we heard the sound of music issue from an inn. We determined to halt. We accordingly entered, and found they were celebrating a wedding. A large hall was occupied by the dancers, and the house was surrounded by a crowd of curious people. The orchestra was composed of five young men of nearly our age, and of fine manners

and their language bespoke an education somewhat superior to rambling musicians. We sat down by the side of them, and very soon entered into conversation. They proved to be students of the University of Wirtzburg, who were travelling through Germany, in order to procure, by means of their instruments, sufficient to pay their expences for the ensuing year.

A wandering and almost vagabond life accorded perfectly with our romantic imagination. We saw in it a thousand charms, a thousand adventures, a thousand pleasures, of which the perspective and novelty enchanted us beforehand: and the proceedings of our late comrades made us confident that there was no danger of our being duped a second time.

This reason instantly decided us to propose to them. But, previous to our doing so, Charles advised that we should

should give them a specimen of our talents. We did not wait long before an opportunity presented itself. The musicians had been playing ever since the conclusion of dinner—that is to say, for near four hours, and they wished to have a little rest; but the young girls, who were not tired of dancing, wanted the music to continue. Our offer of relieving them was accepted with joy, and the instruments were put into our hands.

Frederic, whose execution much surpassed our's, had no sooner touched his violin, than they acknowledged him the leader of a band. Surprise, mixed with admiration, seized our new colleagues, who unanimously conferred on him the title of director. A part of his glory naturally spread to us, and we reciprocally exchanged vows of friendship. Our junction was agreed upon; and until we had provided ourselves with instruments,

we were to be allowed the use of those of our comrades, and to scrape alternately for the benefit of the society.

There is no such thing as giving a great feast, without continuing it until the next day ; this, however, lasted three days. Our instruments reposed only during the hours of repast ; the remainder of the time was devoted to dancing. The bride, who was a little handsome, but who was moreover the only daughter of the Bailiff of most of the surrounding villages, had in her train a number of young females of her acquaintance, whom she wished to render witnesses of her triumph : such is, to a young girl, the day of her marriage. As to the bridegroom, he was the cock of the village ; but had sacrificed the inclinations of his heart to interest, and had married an heiress, that he might one day or other enjoy the pride of being covered with the immense wig of his father-in-law.

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It does not require three days to get acquainted with a young girl, who is invited to assist at the pleasures of a wedding. The thing itself has something so ticklish for the ear of a young damsel—and the conversation of the next day is so dangerous!—The sight of the bride with downcast eyes, undetermined countenance, and faltering step, yet more free than usual, gives birth to so many ideas, and heats so violently the imagination, that a small spark only is necessary to kindle a fire in the young heart, already consuming with curiosity and desire. The Germans are not more inhuman than the French. Our clothes were fashionable, and our manners were not displeasing; and the little we had danced with the handsome villagers, had only increased their good opinion of us. A trio, which we sung on the second day, in honour of the new-married couple, gained us universal applause. We were admitted to all the little sports which a

wedding

wedding-day never fails to give birth to; and the bridegroom himself thought that we were possessed of some merit, though we had not married the daughter of a Bailiff.

This connection, though transient, prompted us to draw a comparison between the made-up beauty of our theatrical Queens, and the fresh and plump charms of our young shepherdesses. The preference of course was given to the latter; so true it is, that, sooner or later, we always return to pure and simple nature.

At the end of the third day, when every body had retired, we inspected the state of our cash. Our profits amounted to twenty-five francs; for all those who danced without being invited to the wedding, gave something for the music. We had to receive nearly double this sum, after some debate, from the bridegroom; but

but he was such a niggardly fellow, that he already regretted the expence which his vanity on this occasion had caused him to incur.

He counted the money as he drew it from his pocket ; and after gazing on it with avidity for a moment, he nobly offered us half the sum we had agreed for. We refused it at first ;—he insisted, and grew angry. The Bailiff, his father-in-law, came, and harangued us gravely on the subject. In short, we were obliged to submit, and accept whatever they pleased to give us ; but Charles had already thought of the means of avenging us for this abominable parsimony.

A very large pie, the flavour of which most gratefully saluted our nostrils, was placed, the evening before our departure, on a table in the closet adjoining our bed-chamber. The bridegroom had not thought proper that it should serve for

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the

the wedding, but that it should regale the family, after the company were gone away. The pie was turned upside down, and cut very nicely from the bottom, without in the least damaging the crust. From its enormous belly issued, as formerly from the Trojan horse, two partridges, two leverets, and two dozen of quails, which fled precipitately into the wallet destined for the provisions of the troop. This operation had scarcely been achieved, before the bridegroom, followed by a servant, came to take away the pie. Its flight astonished him. We attributed it to artifice; and wishing our miser a keen appetite, we immediately left the house.

We had already walked three leagues. A small town, through which we passed, gave us an opportunity to provide ourselves with the musical instruments necessary for the continuance of our journey. A rich Baron, whose Castle we perceived

perceived on a hill at a short distance, was to have his birthday celebrated on the morrow. We entered a public-house, and opening our wallet, drew forth a partridge, a leveret, and half a dozen quails, which we devoured with all the pleasure that vengeance and a good appetite could give us.

CHAP. II.

The Birthday.

OUR hunger appeased, and the day beginning to close, we directed our steps toward the Castle, with the intention of commencing our serenade with a little harmony. We had not been deceived; the principal gate was ornamented with festoons and garlands. A great number of domestics were occupied in raising a sort of triumphal arch in the midst of the court. A crown of flowers, suspended from the center, hung perpendicularly

over the cipher of my Lord the Baron ; and from devices of all kinds, made in the style of wedding favours, it very much resembled the *ex-voto* of a chapel. These preparations for the feast appeared to us a favourable omen. We entered full of joy and hope ; and, placing ourselves under the windows of the best-looking apartment, we began our music.

The company was just going to sit down to table ; but scarcely was the sound of our instruments heard, when they eagerly flew to the windows. The party was numerous and select. As soon as we had ceased playing our opening piece, a domestic in a state livery, came, in the name of my Lord the Baron, and requested us to enter the Castle. We followed him. The company placed themselves at the table, and, tuning our instruments, we proceeded, to the satisfaction of our auditors.

We

We were about to commence the third piece. A profound silence reigned in every part of the room, when suddenly we heard a piercing cry opposite to us. At the same instant, the young female who uttered it, fell, deprived of sense, into the arms of the person who sat next to her. This accident alarmed every body present. They arose, ran toward her, and conveyed her into an adjoining apartment. I believed, notwithstanding her paleness, that I recognised her countenance, but I was not certain. Another female hastily followed her; I had time only to cast a glance at her, but this glance informed me it was Louisa.

The reader will, doubtless, recollect the adventure, which is related in the eighth chapter, of the first volume of these memoirs, of the journey we made up the chimney, of our fall, of the contusions which resulted from it, and, in fact, all the agreeables and disagreeables which
accompanied

accompanied and followed that frolic. Cecilia and Louisa, who were the heroines of it, had shortly afterwards quitted Strasburgh, to return home to their friends. This absence, added to more serious events that had since so rapidly succeeded, had entirely effaced them from our memory. Louisa, placed in front of us, had perceived and recognised Frederic; her attachment to him was awakened with new force, and a cry of surprise had escaped her. What could be said in such a case?—How answer the numberless questions which would not fail to be asked?—To faint, was the surest method of getting extricated from such an embarrassment, and that was the plan she adopted.

This event had engrossed the attention of the company so much, that they no longer thought of listening to us. The victuals began to grow cold, and the dispositions they had made for the
promotion

promotion of gaiety, gave place to a crowd of reflections, which occurred in consequence of this sudden and unexpected misfortune.

My Lord the Baron, who fancied himself a man of profound judgment, made on this occasion some very silly observations. It was, according to him, an attack from the nerves which surrounded the stomach, or rather a spasmodic affection, or rather a contraction of the membranes that lined the interior of the breast, or something like it. *or something*

The gravity with which he uttered this nonsense, and the base adulation with which it was received, made Frederic and myself burst into a laugh. My Lord the Baron perceived it; and, looking steadily at my friend, he demanded, in the most serious tone, the motive of his laughter.

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“Since your Lordship does me the honour to address that question to me,” answered Frederic, to whom I had imparted the discovery I had made, “I take the liberty of replying, with all the respect imaginable, that this emotion arises from some trifling cause connected with the memory; and to prove, if necessary, the truth of my assertion, I will undertake completely to restore the young lady, in the space of a quarter of an hour, not only to the full enjoyment of her senses, but to all the good humour she had when she sat down to table.”

“How, Sir! are you a Doctor also?” replied the Baron briskly.

“No, Sir,” said Frederic; “I make use of very simple means; and to convince your Lordship I am no Doctor, I will administer my remedy *gratis*. My comrade here,” pointing to me, “will do me justice. I demand only a quarter of an hour to perform the operation; but it must be in the presence only of my friend

friend and the lady who accompanied the sick person."

"Very well," cried the Baron, on hearing the latter part of Frederic's discourse.

Then calling all the company around him, he ordered us to be conducted to the chamber of the young lady.

She was extended on a couch, with her sister Louisa by her side, administering salts. A wink, which Frederic gave to Cecilia, and another from me to Louisa, sufficed to convey to them the necessary intelligence. They threw themselves into our arms, with all the vivacity of sentiment which had formerly united us. Cecilia had been married six months to a Baron, who was as dull in his intellects as he was slovenly in his person. The two families had arranged and concluded the match without consulting either of the parties interested. The result was, that
each

each retained their former habits. Cecilia passed one part of the day at her toilet, and the other in *fêtes* and balls. The Baron, on the contrary, rose with the sun; his gun on his shoulder, and followed by his hounds, spent his life in the forests, chasing the fallow-deer; and it was only in the hope that there would be a hunting party, that he had consented to accompany his wife to the Castle we were then at: nevertheless, he had the civility to come several times to enquire, through the keyhole of the door, after her health.

“We are making the best of our time,” replied Louisa to him.

“Has she come to her senses?” continued he.

“Yes, Sir,” replied Cecilia herself, “I am astonishingly recovered; but my whole body is in an agitation that——”

“It

“ It is not to be wondered at, Madam —not to be wondered at, in the least ; it is the effect of the remedy.”

And the Baron went quietly away, to inform the company of what he had heard.

Frederic had demanded only a quarter of an hour ; but to do things well, we must be allowed time, and we were accordingly in no hurry. After we had been absent near an hour, we reconducted the ladies into the dining-room. The company were all there, and impatient to reseate themselves at table. Every one noticed the rosy colour which animated the cheeks of the sick lady ; gaiety was once more restored ; supper again made its appearance ; our comrades, who had, during our absence, retired also to take some refreshment, returned ; and each taking his place, the music recommenced, and seemed more charming than ever.

Cecilia

Cecilia and Louisa had promised to take care of us ; and accordingly the latter descended herself to give orders that we should be treated comfortably. They were executed to the very letter, and we were served as well, though we had not the honour of being admitted to the same table, as my Lord the Baron. A large apartment, containing two good beds, was assigned for our own sleeping chamber. We contrived to keep this to ourselves ; and our five comrades were sent to sleep as well as they could with the servants, or in the out-houses.

The next morning was announced with all the pomp which reigns at the Court of the Barons of the Holy Empire. At the break of day a general salute was fired from the artillery of the Castle, and was heard in all the surrounding villages. Two four-pounders, placed on each side of the principal gate, thundered every quarter of an hour ; and the explosions of

of some old muskets, mixing with the formidable noise of the artillery, gave a just idea of the power and grandeur of my Lord the Baron.

On every side, the domestics of the Castle, in their state liveries, were continually running backwards and forwards. There were nosegays, deputations, and harangues without end. My Lord the Baron, clothed in his ceremonial dress of Saxon green, with embroidered seams, buttoned all the way down, and lined with ermine, seated in a great arm-chair, and playing with his favourite dog Medor, listened with disdainful gravity to the nonsensical gabbling of his peasants, servants, and those strangers whom the merits of his cook had attracted to his Castle.

During this majestic ceremony, Cecilia and Louisa found a moment to hold a short conversation with us, without being observed.

observed. They informed us that a hunting party was to take place, and that, in consequence, they had ordered a tent to be pitched in the thickest part of the wood, which on one side bounded the large park of the Baron. This wood was composed of a hundred trees, of every description; and the immense park consisted of four hundred and ninety-seven perches. It may therefore easily be judged, by the artillery I have mentioned above, by the number of domestics, from the extent of the park, and the wood of which I have just spoken, that the Castle of my Lord the Baron of Thunderten-trunck in Westphalia, of whom Candidus makes such a pompous eulogium, was not equal to this, although it had, as he pretends, a door and windows.

It will, perhaps, appear astonishing that they should propose the amusement of the chace on the birthday of my Lord the Baron. I was myself surprised at it; but

but the following particulars are what I learned concerning it. A hog of a monstrous size had been purchased on the frontiers of Westphalia. This hog had been enclosed in a place in the wood destined for that purpose, and fed there during three days. Every body was in the secret, except my Lord the Baron, to whom they wished to give an agreeable surprise, and at the same time an opportunity for displaying his prowess. A part of the company were to lead him to where the hog was concealed, which it was agreed upon to call an enormous wild boar. At his sight, the huntsmen were to take to flight, and leave to our hero all the glory of having overthrown this dreadful animal. They had assigned, for a place of rendezvous, an old oak, at the foot of which we were to assemble, to celebrate, by sounding a martial symphony, the victory of this new Meleager.

Charles had already departed at the
head

head of our comrades. Frederic and I followed them at the distance of about a stone's throw, turning our heads from time to time towards the Castle. The horns at length announced that the company were setting off for the chace, and they majestically bent their steps toward the wood.

My Lord the Baron, surrounded by a numerous retinue, and having at his side his valet-de-chambre, who on that day performed the functions of master of the chace, led the way; my Lady the Baroness, weighing at least two hundred and fifty pounds, and filling, with herself only, an old carriage which she called a phaeton, followed immediately after her illustrious spouse. Some ladies of her acquaintance, mounted on old cart-horses, accompanied her, forming a sort of cavalcade; and a crowd of domestics and other persons closed the march.

As soon as this august society had reached the coppice, Cecilia and Louisa insensibly withdrew, and directed their steps towards us. We did not suffer them to wait. I have before said that the park of the Baron was immense, and this was a sufficient reason for losing ourselves. The absence of the ladies, however, had been remarked, and the domestics were sent in search of them. We were under the necessity of permitting ourselves to be found ;—they rejoined their company, and we our comrades.

After a due quantity of marches and countermarches, they came at length to the place where the Westphalian hog was secured.—They thought they saw something behind a bush ! They approached, examined, and a loud cry was uttered by the whole astonished troop, who ran, dreadfully frightened, exclaiming—

“ It is a wild boar !—a monstrous wild
boar !

boar!—Take care of yourself, my Lord!
take care of yourself!"

They expected an heroic reply from the Baron; but he stopped suddenly, undecided whether he should advance or recede. His valet-de-chambre, otherwise master of the chace, in the meantime tremblingly put into his hand a carbine loaded with two balls and some slugs. He took it, crept gently behind an oak, levelled at the poor beast, fired—but did not hit him.

We witnessed, at some distance, these movements, and had the horns ready in our mouths, to celebrate this memorable victory. It was necessary, however, to wait a little longer. The explosion of the carbine, the barking of the dogs, the cries of the huntsmen, struck the pretended wild boar with such fear, that he began to cry also. My Lord the Baron took this for a cry of rage, and prepared

himself for flight; but suddenly recollecting the, valorous exploits of his ancestors, and wishing to tread in their steps, he again faced about, and with a firm hand seizing the carbine, which had been recharged, he advanced fiercely, once more placed himself behind the protecting oak, and invoking Providence, aimed, for the second time, at the furious wild boar; he pulled the fatal trigger, and killed on the spot one of the finest hogs of Westphalia.

Immediately the sound of the horns and the clarions made the forest echo; and from every mouth was repeated a hundred times—

“The wild boar is dead!—Thanks to the skill and courage of my Lord the Baron!—Eternal glory and honour to his Lordship!”

In the meantime, his Lordship, whom
the

the explosion of the carbine, rather overloaded, had knocked backwards, raised himself with difficulty from the ground, astonished at his victory, and the eulogiums which were heaped upon him. One part of the company pressed round him, while the other ran to see the monstrous animal which he had just deprived of life. They looked at it, they examined it, they appeared to believe all they saw, and the cries of victory recommenced, and were louder than before.

Instantly several domestics ran to carry the intelligence to my Lady the Baroness. The danger which had menaced her illustrious spouse—the valour, of which he had just given such a brilliant proof—the eulogiums, the enthusiasm, of which she is witness, all combined, produce such an effect upon her sensibility, that she sheds tears. She requests to see with her own eyes the formidable animal that he had overthrown. Her phaeton is drawn

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forward ;

forward; four strong domestics receive her, and conduct her, out of breath, into the arms of her Lord. She learns from his mouth all the details that have accompanied this remarkable event. The wild boar is dragged with difficulty to the feet of this august couple, who are struck with astonishment at his enormous size. At length some branches of trees are woven together, and the hog placed upon them; the Baroness is lifted into her phaeton; the horns sound the return from the chace; every one repairs to his post; and the whole party take the road to the Castle amidst the cries of—

“Long life to my Lord the Baron!”

We hastened on before, to celebrate his entry by a piece of music. His Lordship stopped for a moment under the triumphal arch, which had been raised for him in the middle of the court; and casting a look of satisfaction on the multitude
which

which surrounded him, he seated himself, rose again, coughed, spit, blew his nose, took a pinch of snuff, and re-entered gravely into the Castle, commanding the cook to take special care of the head of the wild boar which he had just killed.

None but those who were present, can form an idea of the sumptuous repast which awaited us. I say *us*, because we partook of it, though we were not seated at the same table with my Lord the Baron. The *étiquette* observed at a public dinner at Versailles, is a trifle in comparison with the gravity which reigned here. Every one was in his place. The cook, the confectioner, the grand carver, the butler, the groom of the chambers, the *maitre-d'hotel*, and an army of valets surrounded the company at table. A sullen and pompous silence accompanied the ceremony of the first course : at length the signal was given to the orchestra, and a grand symphony announced the

second course. With it all ceremony disappeared. The servants were sent away, gaiety reigned in every countenance, and the sounds of the orchestra were interrupted only by the cries of—

“ Long live my Lord the Baron !”

At these words a general salute of artillery was heard in the court of the Castle ; at the same moment, the company seized their glasses, and the wines of France, Hungary, Italy, and Spain covered the table. The joy became more tumultuous, and the orchestra more loud.

Already had the enormous *viderkom* passed three times round, when suddenly the folding-doors flew open, and the confectioner, with a naked sabre in his hand, preceding the clerk of the kitchen, marched in with a grave and measured step, and placed before my Lord the
Baron

Baron a large silver dish covered with a veil. Every eye was fixed on this veil. A look from his Lordship induced the confectioner to approach; and, with the point of his sabre, he made it instantly disappear. The astonished assembly beheld, under the form of a wild boar's head, the chaps of a Westphalian hog.

It was, in fact, the head of this poor animal, which they had just placed before his Lordship; at the sight of which, the *viderkom* was emptied, and again filled. Three times more did it make the tour of the table. The men began to totter in their seats, and to look, without being capable of discerning; the women, on the contrary, saw only the more clear. The last tour of the *viderkom* permitted the guests no longer to retain their equilibrium. The wisest laid their heads on the table, and went to sleep; the others fell under it, or by the side of their chairs.

My Lord the Baron was carried to his bed of crimson damask, and my Lady to her canopied couch.

Immediately all those who had it in their power, arose from the table. Cecilia and Louisa gave us a private signal, and disappeared in their turn. Frederic, as leader of the band, sent the orchestra to bed, to which they retired reeling; and we gained silently the apartment of our belles.

They expected us, and it was from them we learned the foregoing details respecting the wild boar. The scheme owed its origin to the confectioner. He was born in Westphalia, and a hog more or less in the sty of his father, was a trifle compared to the obtaining the good opinion of the Baron. He sent to fetch it, named it a wild boar, placed it in the wood under that denomination, and
it

it has already been seen with what noble courage my Lord the Baron put it to death.

This conversation had very much lengthened our interview; but the remembrance of our former escape by the chimney, furnished us with new subjects of mirth. In the meantime, the hour of retiring to bed arrived; the ladies advised us to depart; but this advice was given in a manner as if they hoped we should not take it. Frederic perceived it, and his conversation with Cecilia became more animated.

Unfortunately, the husband of the latter, who was also a Baron, (indeed, who is not in Germany?) accustomed to get drunk frequently, did not feel inclined to sleep all night under the table. Instinct had directed him towards the bed, where he expected to find his dear moiety. He had half opened the chamber door

c 6

before

before Louisa had time to blow out the light; he entered, groping his way, and the first object that encountered his hand, was myself. Drunk as he was, he soon discovered it to be a man, and roared out—"Thieves!"—I, however, presently disengaged my arm, which he had caught hold of, and repelled him vigorously. He fell over some furniture, and his fall made him cry out still louder—"Thieves! murder!"—This exclamation alarmed the whole Castle; the company flocked in crowds to his assistance, and we took advantage of the darkness and the confusion, to regain our chamber.

On the next day, his Lordship complained to the master of the house, on the attempt that had been committed the last night, not so much against his honour, which, by the bye, he highly valued, as against his august person, which was of the greatest consequence, as he was the last of his noble race. A
lump

lump on his forehead, and a contusion on his arm, which the fall had occasioned, appeared to leave no doubt of the serious injury he had received; but his wife insisted upon it that what had happened to him, had been caused solely by his drunkenness, and that he had dreamed the rest.

His Lordship at first refused to credit her; but the two sisters supporting each other, and offering numerous plausible arguments, he began to doubt, and at last was convinced that he had really been dreaming. There was only his swelled forehead and his lame arm that he could not account for; but a Baron of the Holy Empire is not obliged to be a conjurer.

The birthday feast was at length concluded, and every thing in the Castle had returned to its accustomed order. The domestics had laid by their grand liveries, and resumed their ordinary dress. Our services were no longer required; we

were obliged to take our leave of my Lord the Baron, and our audience with him did not last a long time. After a gracious look of condescension which he bestowed on us, he went to his bureau; and taking a handful of crowns, without counting them, he threw them into the hat of one of our comrades, and then turning his back on us, we departed.

The unfavourable appearance of the weather when we left the Castle, did not prevent us from proceeding on our journey. We had travelled about two leagues, when the storm which had menaced us, now burst over our heads. The rain, which fell in torrents, forced us to seek a shelter in the forest, that bordered the right side of the great road. Our five comrades placed themselves under the cover of one oak, and Frederic, Charles, and myself under another. The bad weather continued; and the horizon, wholly obscured with dark clouds, left

us very little hope of being able to continue our route before the close of the day. Frederic observed this to our five comrades, and proposed that we should search in the thickest part of the wood for a place more commodious to make our repast. They applauded the idea, and promised to wait for our return.

We were upwards of an hour in traversing literally every part of the forest, when Charles perceived a hut or cottage at some distance. We approached, and entered it without ceremony. A man of fifty years of age, but strong and hardy, was occupied in cleaning a gun. The sight of us at first stopped him; but he resumed his employment a moment afterwards, asking us what we wanted.

“We are perambulating musicians,” replied Frederic;—“the storm has overtaken us on our journey, and we are looking for a convenient shelter, to eat
some

some refreshment, which we have left with our comrades."

"You are as welcome," said the stranger, "to this hut, as if you were at home."

These words gave us confidence. Frederic went to seek our five comrades. He ran, he called, but nobody answered. He arrived at the oak where we had left them, but no one was there. He looked about, to be certain it was the right place. A paper lying on the ground, met his eye; he picked it up, and opened it. It contained our share of the provisions in question, and a note, in which were written with a pencil these words.

"We have nothing to complain of you; but our society is too large, and we have agreed among ourselves, to part company for the future.—Adieu!"

This separation did not give us so much pain as the provisions gave us pleasure. We forgot that they had retained the money we acquired at the Castle, in favour of the justice with which they had divided the spoils of the pie. We sat down to table;—our host joined us, and by the time the dinner was finished, we had obtained his entire confidence.

He was, as we were informed from his own mouth, a poacher by profession; and such was his skill, that he would wager two to one he hit a small apple at the distance of fifty yards. For ten years that he had inhabited that cottage, he remembered only once that he missed his aim. Frederic, who was passionately fond of sporting, begged of him to procure him a little amusement that way.

“I have only one gun,” answered he; “but I am going to town to-morrow, and you may, if you please, make use of it in my absence. I ought, however, to tell

tell you that you will be in danger, if you go into yonder forest. It belongs to the Comte de Bollen, who prefers a roebuck to the best farmer on his estate. His keepers are ranging incessantly over the grounds, and if they perceive you——”

“That is my business,” answered Frederic quickly, who feared nothing. “As to your gun, I will leave the value of it with you, if you wish it.”

“I want no pledge,” he said; “you have inspired me with confidence; and to prove that I am worthy of your’s, I will prepare you this evening a supper out of my larder.”

On saying this, he conducted us to a small cellar, which was at the extremity of the cottage. He opened a trap-door, covered with earth, and shewed us a quantity of game of all kinds, part of which he intended to carry the next day to market. We chose a piece of venison. He undertook to dress it according to his fashion, and that fashion was equal to the

the best in Europe. A few bottles of wine, which he brought from the same place, made our repast complete.

When it was time to retire to rest, honest Carl (such was the appellation of our host) offered us his bed, which we refused. A few ^{hand} ~~arm~~fuls of dry leaves served us; we threw ourselves upon them, and a sweet and tranquil sleep brought us most delightfully to the next day.

Aurora had scarcely made her appearance, when Carl was on his legs. He bade us good morning, and accompanied his salutation with a glass of brandy, which we accepted. Then giving his gun to Frederic, he said—

“It is my daily bread, and I hope you will take care of it. We shall meet at the close of the day.”—On uttering these words, he threw a sack, filled with game, over his shoulders, and we soon lost sight of him.

CHAP. III.

The Bells,

AS soon as he was gone, Frederic buckled on his pouch, and slinging his gun across his shoulder, plunged into the thickest part of the forest. Charles and I followed him at some distance, charged with provisions for the day. Several hours had insensibly glided away, and Frederic had not been able to fire a single shot. We saw some wild deer and some roebucks, from time to time; but they were at too great a distance to give our friend an opportunity of displaying his skill.

We

We began to grow weary with this insipid promenade, when the report of a gun drew us from our reverie. We ran towards our friend, who pointed, while reloading his piece, to a roebuck that he had wounded, and who was running with difficulty into the thickest part of a neighbouring coppice. The blood which it lost, indicated to us the route it had taken. We hastened after it, and after a few minutes' search, we discovered it behind a bush, where, exhausted by fatigue, and the blood which ran from the wound, it lay struggling against the approaches of death.

I cannot conceive how it is possible to take pleasure in the destruction of any living being whatever! Shooting is, in my opinion, a cruel amusement. It is in the indiscriminate slaughter of harmless animals, that Sovereigns have contracted, by degrees, the habit of sacrificing even their fellow-creatures. — This reflection occurred

occurred to me on observing the poor animal extended before us. Frederic coming up, and the idea of augmenting the provisions of our host, soon made our pity give place to joy. We saw our prey within our power; but it was necessary to convey it to the cottage, and we were full two leagues distant from it. This embarrassment was also much augmented by the difficulty of the road; yet nothing was capable of discouraging us.

We set to work, and had already made a quarter of our journey, when we arrived at a small hill. We were about to mount it, when suddenly we heard a voice calling on us to lay down our arms, and quit our prey. We looked round; it was a game-keeper placed precisely at the top of the hill, at the foot of which we were. Without answering him, we continued our route. He repeated to us the same order, in a voice more elevated, and in a tone more menacing; but we did not even then obey

obey him. He levelled at us, swearing he would fire if we did not instantly stop. Frederic presented his piece also, and putting himself at our head, we kept advancing.

Our numbers at first had deceived him; but observing that only one of us was armed, he fired, and a few small shot grazed the fleshy part of our legs. Frederic returned his fire, and brought him to the ground. At the same instant, a loud whistle was heard. We quitted our roebuck, to fly to the assistance of the aggressor; but on arriving at the top of the hill, he was no longer there. Instead of him, we saw six gamekeepers, collected by the sound of the whistle, and running with all haste, as we imagined, to avenge their comrade. We instantly turned about; and after having buried our prey under some dry leaves, we precipitated our flight towards a village which we saw before us.

Our

Our wounds, though extremely slight, in some measure retarded our speed ; and this circumstance permitted our enemies to gain considerably upon us. Two of them had already arrived at the village, and were endeavouring to raise all the inhabitants they met with in their road, against us. They called us vagabonds, robbers, assassins : we had, they said, seriously wounded one of their comrades, a worthy man, the father of a family, and who was only doing his duty.

At this recital, made in every way unfairly, and in which not a syllable was mentioned of our having been first fired at, a cry of fury and indignation was every where raised against us. We sought in vain to obtain a hearing ; our voices were drowned by the noise of the multitude. They were ready to arrest us, to seize us, to deliver us to my Lord the Baron. The words *prison* and *prosecution* struck our ears. A movement of anger announced to

us that they were going to put their threats into execution. We again took to our heels, and they pursued us with renovated fury.

The village Church was in our road, the principal door of which was open. We threw ourselves into it, and instantly fastened the door. We then went and fortified the other smaller entrances. Some windows, however, which were open, still left to our enemies the means of seizing us. We feared that we should not be secure even at the foot of the altar, and this made us look rather uncomfortably around us. Charles perceived a ladder, which communicated from the gallery with the roof of the Church, and from thence with the belfry. We immediately mounted, and drew after us the ladder in question.

In the meantime the beadle arrived with the keys. The doors were opened, the benches which barricadoed them, over-
VOL. III. D thrown,

thrown, and the crowd entered tumultuously into the holy place. They searched every where : the reading-desk, the vestry, behind the altar, no place escaped them. The beadle, as if inspired by a religious fervour, mounted the pulpit, in order to carry his observation as far as possible. He looked towards the belfry, and how was he astonished to find the ladder was drawn up, and the trap door closed.

“ They are masters of the bells !” cried he, which suddenly spread a consternation throughout the assembly ; and this exclamation informed us what importance our enemies attached to the sound of their bells. Frederic therefore immediately drew up the ropes. This advantage put us into a situation to enter into terms of capitulation with our adversaries ; and Charles looked upon it as a very fortunate circumstance.

The hour of the *angelus* arrived ; but the bells were silent. An uneasy sensation
appeared

appeared amidst the assembly, and they looked at each other in sullen silence. Some old women, who had been attracted by curiosity, asked impatiently when the *angelus* would ring; but the beadle only turned his eyes towards the belfry—he spoke not.

Charles seized this moment for opening the trap door, and addressed the multitude in the following terms:—

“ Gentlemen, we are masters of the clock and roof of your Church; the bells also, so necessary to inform you of the hour of prayer, and to call you together for the celebration of divine service, are in our power. Promise that you will permit us freely to depart, without in the least molesting our retreat, and we will immediately restore to you the possession of these sacred objects. If, however, you persist in the contrary, we declare to you that you shall neither hear the sound of your clock or bells any more, but

live from this moment like Pagans, reprobates, and the excommunicated, without mass, without vespers, and without *angelus*."

This menace caused an expression of horror from the terrified crowd.

"How!—no mass, no vespers, no *angelus*!" cried they on every side; "we ought to go and hear what the Curate says."

A few minutes afterwards, the Curate arrived. They informed him of every thing that had passed, and Charles repeated the articles of capitulation which we had before offered. He was of opinion that they ought to be accepted; because, as he said, Christians could not do without bells. He, however, durst not pronounce his reasons aloud, for fear they should militate against the wishes of my Lord the Count; he therefore confined himself to recommending the line of conduct which doubtless piety and religion dictated

dictated to his dear parishioners, and they deliberated with becoming gravity on this important subject.

The Curate, without seeming to be concerned either one way or the other, dexterously turned every argument in our favour; and they were about to restore us our liberty, when one of the gamekeepers entered. This man apparently cared neither for the bells nor the *angelus*; and on seeing Charles, he cried out vehemently—

“ You forget the shot that brought my comrade to the ground.”

“ And you forget, too, the shot with which your comrade wounded us,” interrupted Charles.

He then entered into a detail of what had passed; and terminated his discourse by inviting the assembly to name a deputation to verify the facts, and inspect

the parties afflicted. The fairness of this offer, joined to the eloquence of our friend, and the smoothness of the words that issued from his lips, moved the auditors. An unanimous cry announced our liberation; and we were on the point of replacing the ladder for the purpose of descending, when we suddenly heard a bustle on the outside of the Church. The noise increased; they entered; the crowd drew back with respect, and all the game-keepers of the Count de Bollen, preceded by the Bailiff and several officers of the household, advanced proudly to the middle of the Church.

“ It is not with more surprise than indignation,” said the Bailiff, “ that I hear of your intention to liberate the three villains who have just attempted the life of one of the servants of the Count, your Lord and master. It is in his name that I oppose such a resolution; and he insists that the guilty shall be immediately seized,
and

and thrown into the dungeons of his castle."

One of the attendants observed to the orator how difficult the task would be, to possess themselves of our persons.

"Well," replied he, "you must keep them in close blockade until famine obliges them to surrender at discretion; and I advise you to watch every part of the Church, to prevent even the possibility of escaping."

"They are masters of the bells," answered the Curate in a grave tone.

"Never mind that," replied the Bailiff, with a contemptuous look; "they will not carry them away."

"Granted, Sir; but they will prevent us from announcing service, from ringing for vespers and the *angelus*."

At these words the Bailiff shrugged up his shoulders, and turned on his heel,

recommending to the gamekeepers, and to all those who piqued themselves on their attachment to their Lord, to keep the strictest look-out to hinder our escape.

CHAP. IV.

The Blockade.

ACCORDINGLY we were closely blockaded on every side. Luckily we had some provisions; but they were not sufficient to last more than three days, even though we should eat only what was absolutely necessary: moreover, we had

no

no water, and this article is always essential in a place besieged. In consequence, it was the first object of our deliberation. The inventive genius of Charles extricated us from this difficulty. A large tub of holy water was placed directly beneath a hole which was in the floor of the belfry; and the rope of one of the bells served us to send down the vessel, in which, since we had commenced the life of itinerant musicians, we had carried our liquor. At first it floated on the surface, owing to its lightness, and the distance it had to descend. We therefore drew it up, and put some shot into it, to make it sink. After several trials, we succeeded; the vessel came up filled with water, and our thirst, which began to be excessive, was allayed.

It is doubtless very agreeable to drink when we are thirsty; but it was equally necessary that we should eat also: and we saw our small stock of provisions decline

very fast. 'This inconvenience became worse the next day; our rations did not answer to our appetites, and our appetites naturally increased, in proportion to the impossibility of satisfying them. For forty-eight hours that the siege had lasted, we had eaten no more than enough to serve for one meal. Our vessel continued to descend; but it returned only with holy water, and that was ill suited to stomachs of young fellows of eighteen. Our wants increased every moment, our distresses redoubled, and famine, cruel famine, besieged and tormented us. A profound silence, a gloomy stupor reigned among us.

The third day was on the decline, and hope, the blessing of Providence, and support of the unfortunate, pointed out no change in our situation. A great number of armed peasants mounted guard all round the Church, and several game-keepers watched in the interior; the
Count

Count had himself given orders to fire on the first of us that should attempt to escape.

Reader, unless you have been in a place besieged, and deprived of food, or in a vessel at sea, without provisions, and even without the hope of receiving any, it is impossible to form an idea of the horrors of our situation. In either of these two cases, we should at least have had fire to boil our water, clothes to change, and a bed or a hammock to sleep on ; none of which had we enjoyed for the last four days. Exhausted with care and fatigue, our limbs bruised by the boards, which served us for beds, we could neither sleep, nor appease the rage of hunger by which we were tormented ; and our wounds, though slight, yet troublesome for want of dressing, created new miseries every moment.

Friendship, that consoling sentiment which had sustained our courage on the most trying occasions, appeared here only to increase our pains. Our pale and haggard air, our hollow cheeks, and heavy eyes, the disorder of our clothes, alike dismayed us; we looked mournfully at each other, reflecting on our frightful situation, and the change it had caused in our countenances. After a considerable pause, Frederic rose, and said in a resolute tone—

“ It is too much to suffer thus; it cannot last, and it would be unjust to desire you to partake any longer the horrors of such a captivity: it was I only who committed the fault, and it is I only who should atone for it. I will go and deliver myself up to the Count; I will inform him of every thing that has taken place; you shall receive your liberty, and perhaps one day we may again meet.”

“ What,

“What, separate!” cried I with vivacity. “Shall we separate in adversity?—Be free, and behold you a prisoner!—Never!—shame and confusion light on him who could be guilty of such an infamous proceeding!”

“Yes, shame and confusion!” repeated Charles with vehemence; and then looking at Frederic with a severe and dissatisfied eye, he said—“What you take for an act of generosity, is, at such a moment, no other than an outrage to our friendship. Be thankful to the circumstances in which we at present are, and to the known impetuosity of your disposition, if Henry and I consent to forget the unworthy proposal you have just made.”

“Ah, my friends!” said Frederic, throwing himself into our arms, “never—no, never shall this trait of your friendship be effaced from my memory. But our wants are so urgent, our circumstances so desperate, that I thought——”

“Never

“ Never mind excuses ; rather let us think of what is yet in our power to do,” replied Charles. He then continued in these terms—“ There appears to me one resource yet left, and I propose it as the only one which agrees with our position ; it is to make a *sortie*. Our guards, it is true, are ordered to fire on us ; but, in spite of the authority of their master, they dare not do it in the interior of the Church, from the fear of spilling blood in the sacred place. I allow the danger to be great ; but at least we shall partake of it together, and either all perish, or all be free !”

After a mature deliberation, the proposition of Charles was adopted ; but we agreed to wait until the middle of the night, to put our project into execution. The obscurity would favour our flight, and prevent our enemies from directing their fire with so much effect as they might during the day. We, in consequence, made every necessary disposition.

Frederic

Frederic loaded his gun, as he intended to put himself at our head. His pouch, as well as our pockets, was filled with stones, which we had taken from the walls of the belfry, and with which we were to disperse the assassins. Friendship and distress were to be our rallying words, in case we should be separated during the tumult.

At length the appointed hour arrived. We embraced each other cordially; and we took the road, on tiptoe, towards the trap-door, through which we were to pass.

“It is fastened,” said Charles, who was going to place the ladder.

In fact, thick planks had been nailed on the outside, which had completely cut off our communication with the gallery. This unforeseen obstacle made us furious; every thing that came to our hands, was
made

made use of to force the passage. The planks that opposed us, began to give way under our efforts; but the noise which was heard in every part of the Church, and which the solitary hour of midnight rendered still more terrifying, alarmed and collected all our guards to one point. At the same moment, we heard the discharge of several guns; but we were happily defended from the effects of it by the thickness of the planks. This disposition in our enemies, proved to us that no quarter was to be expected; nothing could restrain them—neither respect for the religious place they were in, nor the fear of sprinkling with human blood the altar of a peaceable and merciful God.

In consternation at this new check, we retired sorrowfully to the belfry; resolving to perish with hunger, rather than deliver ourselves up to such savage opponents. The night passed slowly and heavily, and the

the morning found us in the same anguish, and in the same resolution.

In the meantime we could discover that all was not quiet in the village. Every eye was turned towards the belfry; the women, standing at their doors, lamented the silence of their bells, and the profanation of their temple. No more masses, no vespers, no *angelus*; even the clock was stopped, and no longer announced to the inhabitants either the hour of labour or that of repose.

The Curate, accompanied by the principal persons of the village, had been many times in deputation to the Castle of my Lord the Count, in order to obtain his bells in exchange for our liberty; but had not been able to succeed. The Count, as vain as he was obstinate, treated us as rebels, with whom it would be disgraceful to capitulate, and whom he would not receive, unless on unconditional submission.

He

He was, in short, persuaded that our provisions must soon be exhausted, and that we must then surrender at discretion. To reduce three young men, besieged and dying with hunger, appeared to him an extraordinary exploit, and worthy of being ranked with those of his illustrious predecessors. We are always more determined in persisting to do wrong, than resolved to do good. The Count would not be diverted from his purpose: he pushed on the siege with vigour; but our resolution was taken, and it was not an easy task to induce us to alter it.

Our captivity had lasted five days, and we had passed fifty-six hours without taking any nourishment. A languor, nearly amounting to fainting, held us in a sort of stupor. Our eyes, half closed, no longer permitted us to distinguish objects, except as if in a mist. Frederic and Charles were extended on the floor. I approached one of the openings of the belfry,

belfry, to take a little fresh air, and perceived confusedly at some distance, a group of females. Their conversation appeared animated; their eyes were fixed, sometimes on the Church, sometimes on the belfry, which they pointed to with some marks of dissatisfaction. I seized a moment, when I thought one of them perceived me, to kiss my hand as a token of respect. It was returned, accompanied with looks of compassion and benevolence. This reciprocity charmed me: I imparted it to my comrades. They arose, placed themselves by my side, and we all three repeated our salutations. They again answered us. Charles immediately made signs with his hand for them to be attentive.

We had unfortunately neither ink nor pencil, and the belfry was too high to make ourselves understood distinctly. Nothing however embarrassed Charles. He took some gunpowder, and mixed it
in

in his hand with a little water; and then, with a piece of wood, cut into the form of a pen, he wrote on a morsel of paper the following words:—

“ Worthy and pious women, one of the finest precepts of our religion, is to pardon offences, and succour the unfortunate. It is now almost three days since we have tasted any food. For God’s sake, bring to the foot of the tower in which we are immured, a basket with some provisions, and fasten it to the rope which we will let down to you. You will thereby save the lives of three innocent persons; and we promise you, as a recompence, to give you this evening the use of your bells, which you have been so long deprived of, through the obstinacy of your Lord.”

This

This billet, twisted round a stone, and thrown with dexterity, fell almost at the feet of the women. They hastily took it up, and seemed to read it with earnestness; then, motioning with their hands, they immediately dispersed, and we saw them no longer.

Who can conceive our joy, the rapture we experienced in the expected attainment of succours, which we flattered ourselves we should at length receive! Involuntary tears moistened our eyelids, almost parched up by three days of abstinence. The mixed sensations to which this idea gave birth, suspended our faculties, and we silently gazed on each other. After five days of anguish, a ray of hope at length beamed upon us; our agony ceased, and we again began to think of existence. Time, however, dragged itself on with an insupportable heaviness; our eyes, although much weakened, were rivetted on the humble and isolated dwellings where we had seen
our

our benefactresses enter; but nothing as yet announced the succours which we expected with so much impatience.—“ If we should be deceived,” said each of us to himself, “ nothing in that case can save us ;” and this uncertainty increased the horrors of our situation.

After waiting half an hour, I perceived some movement in one of the houses on which our regards were fixed. A young female came out of the door. With one hand she pointed towards the belfry, and in the other she carried a basket.

“ It contains provisions,” cried Frederic in an excess of joy.

“ It contains provisions !” repeated we in concert: but who can imagine the torments we felt on seeing her turn, and enter the house of a neighbour !

How cruel, how insupportable is uncertainty ! If this young girl had felt the

the hundredth part of the pain and anxiety which she inflicted on us, by the delay and slowness of her walk, what haste would she not have made to our assistance! It is true, she remained but a short time at the house in which she had entered; but minutes appeared to us as years, and hours as ages.

At length we saw her come out, and direct her steps towards the belfry. She had not proceeded far, before she again stopped, and looked anxiously round her, to see if she was watched; then, making a sign to us, she walked a little faster, and arrived at the foot of the steeple.

The rope speedily descended, and we scarcely gave her time to fasten it to the basket, before we drew it up. Our benefactresses were at their windows, looking with an astonishment, mixed with inquietude, at their basket travelling in the air. It is at length in our hands. We fall on
our

our knees, and the first words we utter, are thanks to the Supreme Power ; we then fly to examine the contents of the basket.

“ Hold, my friends,” said Charles to us, seizing the provisions ; “ let us not destroy ourselves by eating, with too much precipitation, the food sent to preserve our existence.”

On saying these words, he opened the basket, and the first object he drew from thence, was a large bottle filled with wine. We each of us drank a glass, to strengthen our stomachs, which had been very much weakened by inundations of holy water. The next thing was a bottle of nearly the same size, full of brandy. We took each a mouthful of this, with a piece of bread, which Charles desired we would cut very small. After the interval of a quarter of an hour, the same operation was repeated, and always with the same frugality. It is now twenty years since this event took

3

place,

place, and I still believe that these succours would have caused our death, had not Charles taken these prudent and necessary precautions in distributing them. When we had eaten food sufficient to enable us coolly to examine the provisions in the basket, Charles uncovered the whole. It contained the greater part of a turkey, an immense plate of vegetables, with some sausages and pickled pork; a quantity of fruit of all kinds, and at the bottom a sort of tin bottle, corked up with the greatest care.

“More wine!” cried Frederic, in an ecstasy at the sight of so many riches; but, on taking it up, the vessel felt quite hot. What could it contain?—we tasted: it was soup, most excellent, delicious soup.

Oh woman! the sweetest, loveliest, most generous moiety of the human race! how amiable is your assistance!—how
VOL. III. E affecting

affecting your forwardness to oblige!—Your beneficence how well planned, how admirably executed!—Woe to him who renders homage only to the beauty of your countenance, or the elegance of your form; without knowing how to appreciate the qualities of your soul!—he is not worthy either of the delights which your love can procure, or the enjoyment to be found in your friendship!

The celestial manna which fell in the wilderness, did not cause to the half-starved Jews that lively joy which we felt at the sight of the provisions which our spacious basket contained. We looked on each other; we embraced as friends who had met after a long and grievous separation. The warm and nourishing liquid from our tin vessel fortified our stomachs; the colour of youth again animated our cheeks; the mist which had obscured our sight, was dispersed; and new vigour spread itself throughout our frame.

In the meantime, the hour of the *Angelus* approached. The abundance which reigned around us, did not make us forget, as too often is the case, the promises made in the moment of distress. Already the clock, which we had stopped, again pursued its silent and steady course, and the pendulum its uniform movement. Our benefactresses, assembled in a group at a little distance from the belfry, appeared to expect with a lively impatience, the performance of our word. We again signified to them an expression of thanks, and the *Angelus* began to ring.

The abolition of a tax, the news of a great victory, the promulgation of an honourable peace, after many years of disastrous war, could not possibly be received with more enthusiasm than was produced by ringing the *Angelus*, so anxiously had it been desired by the inhabitants of the village. Their joy

E 2

approached

approached to a delirium; men and women, old and young, all quitted their houses. They wished to hear the sound; they wished to see the motion of the bells. Some threw themselves on their knees in the street, others raised their hands towards heaven; they uttered thanks aloud; they cried for joy at what they heard. The arrival of food, which had saved us from death, had not made a deeper impression on us, than what we were then witnesses of in the conduct of these villagers. Our benefactresses, proud of being the cause of this universal happiness, triumphantly boasted of it; and after casting a look of satisfaction on the belfry, gladly returned to their homes.

We had prolonged the *Angelus* beyond the ordinary bounds. Charles advised us to finish it, observing that it was necessary for our interest, not to be too lavish of sounds, which appeared so delightful to the ears of our villagers. This
occupation

occupation had procured us a salutary exercise, after which we paid another visit to the basket.

The severity of Charles did not relax even in this third distribution; only our portions were rather more substantial. By degrees our stomachs were able to perform their functions; and Charles, renouncing his economical charge, which he had filled with so much exactitude, declared us out of danger, and at length abandoned us to ourselves.

When the first wants of life were satisfied, we thought it our duty to contrive some means for making our escape. Our existence was too precarious, our resources too uncertain for us to repose with confidence on supplies which were liable to experience so much inconvenience on their journey. The unfortunate also are very soon considered as burthensome; and, besides, our benefactresses

E 3

did

did not appear to have it in their power to furnish us with our daily food. It was also to be feared that some of the Count's emissaries on guard in the Church, would discover the pious fraud, and give notice of it to their master, which would not fail to replunge us in that state of distress from which we had just so miraculously emerged. ,

These reflections were too plausible not to merit our whole attention. Frederic was of opinion that we should attempt a second *sortie*; but the danger was certain, and the success appeared almost impossible. We were therefore under the necessity of renouncing it. The ropes which we had so happily employed in procuring our provisions, might have served us to descend; but these ropes were very old, and the frightful height of the belfry would not permit us to think of this scheme without trembling. It was necessity alone, more powerful than human

human efforts, that could familiarize us with the idea of the dangers which it presented to us.

The remainder of the day passed in deliberations on this subject; and, after all, we were undecided as to the resolution we should adopt. The clock striking ten, informed us that it was time to retire to rest. We extended ourselves on the planks, and a sweet slumber, which we had not tasted for many days, closed our eyelids, and transported us to the morning of the sixth day.

It was Saturday. All the inhabitants of the village were listening to hear the bells ring for service; but Charles observed to us that the entire use of the bells would render them indifferent to the prolongation of our captivity; they were therefore deprived of their mass. It was, in fact, the only method of entering into capitulation with the Count. The Curate,

E 4

delighted

delighted at hearing the *Angelus* the evening before, was in consternation at this new disappointment. The principal persons in the village, with the Curate at their head, proceeded on another embassy to my Lord the Count, to reclaim their bells, the silence of which, according to him, was a real public calamity. On the other hand, the women uttered loud cries of lamentation, and the public discontent manifested itself with more violence than ever.

The Curate, strong in the support of his parishioners, and of the sanctity of his office, opened with great gravity the subject of his mission.

“How!” said the Count, after having listened to him with a most contemptuous attention; “are the rebels not yet reduced?”

“No, my Lord, they are still masters of the bells.”

“What

“What use do they make of them?”

“Not any, and it is precisely on that account we come to lay our complaints before you.”

“You are very fond of their noise, then?”

“How can my parishioners, without them, know the hour of service, the moment of consecration, or that of the *salut*?”

“Oh, never mind that; I will lend you a drum, belonging to my regiment, and it will announce to them all you wish.”

“They are accustomed to the bells.”

“But they must get used to the drum.”

“It might deceive them.”

“That will be their fault.”

“But how announce a funeral?”

“With the drum.”

“Extreme unction—the service of the dead?”

“With the drum.”

“The drum is an instrument of war, and not proper to announce these religious acts.”

“Add a fife to it then.”

“That would be still worse.”

“You are very difficult, Sir.”

“I speak for my flock.”

“They are rightly called so.”

“I look upon myself as their father.”

“You do well.”

“I am the bearer of their humble wishes.”

“The drum and fife shall be at my expence.”

“We like the bells much better.”

“Did you not say they were in the power of the enemy?”

“But it depends on your Lordship’s pleasure, whether or not they shall be restored to us.”

“How?—In taking them by assault?”

“No, my Lord, but in pardoning three thoughtless young men, who——”

“Thoughtless

“Thoughtless young men!” interrupted the Count in a rage; “thoughtless young men!—And dare you give that appellation to three rebels, who have had the audacity to shoot in my domains, and to assassinate me in the person of one of my gamekeepers?—Are you not ashamed to ask me to pardon so serious an offence, an obstinacy so much to be reprobated, and that solely with the view of deafening what you so properly call your flock, with the abominable jingling of your miserable bells?—No, Sir; an outrage of this description cannot be forgotten by a man of my rank. The rebels shall perish with famine, or surrender at discretion; and if you add another word, I will withdraw the fife and drum I have offered you, and send a Good-Friday rattle to announce your *oremus* with.”

On uttering these words, my Lord the Count turned his back on our Curate and his attendants; and to shew that he was

not willing to listen to any thing farther, he retired to his library, which consisted of twenty-six volumes, bound in Morocco, with gilt edges.

Among the immense number of books which, as I have just mentioned, formed the library of my Lord the Count, three only had ever been able to obtain a perusal, and exercise his judgment. The first which fell under his hands, was "*The Whole Art of Cookery*," enriched with notes. He took it down, opened it, read with attention an account of the ingredients necessary for making a rich sauce which he never before had heard of; but having scarcely digested his dinner, he returned, with great care, this precious book to its place, and took another, entitled "*The Art of training Dogs for the Chace*." It was the second of his favourite authors; but not having at that moment any fault to find with his dogs, he passed on to the third. It

was "*The Rights of the Chace, and Customs of Manors*," and in general treated of all the sublime institutions which feudality gave birth to. He chose this book for the present; but after throwing himself into his great arm-chair, and reading about half a page, he sunk into a profound sleep.

CHAP. V.

A Battle.

THE Curate and his friends returned, and the ill success of their deputation spread quickly through the village. Expressions of sedition and rebellion were heard on every side. They even insulted the gamekeepers who were on duty at the Church; but the latter, relying on the power and authority of their master, resisted, menaced, and, in a few instances, proceeded to blows. A combat at length began. The animosity of the one, and the

the fanaticism of the other, foretold a general insurrection.

Placing ourselves in one of the openings of the belfry, we encouraged, with our voices and gestures, the partisans of the bells, of which we were the temporary guardians. Victory at first declared itself on our side; but the valets, huntsmen, and servants of the Count very soon flew to the assistance of their comrades; and our villagers, being repulsed in their turn, they ran, and overthrew each other in endeavouring to regain their houses.

We were indignant at their cowardice; but convinced, from every thing that passed under our eyes, that the gamekeepers were our real and only enemies, we assailed them with stones from the top of our tower. Alarmed at this unexpected attack, they receded a few steps, and this gave our friends a little courage.

The

The combat recommenced with new fury on each side.

Charles suddenly left us, and began to sound the *tocsin*. This frightful noise brought the peasants who were at work in the fields; it was even heard by the neighbouring towns, and in less than a quarter of an hour, every road which conducted to the village, was covered with people. The gamekeepers, valets, huntsmen, and the rest of the Count's people were now assaulted on every side; and they retired, threatening to fire on the multitude.

This menace only increased the general fury. They were pursued with stones, pickaxes, pitchforks; in short, their route was complete, and the most nimble among them ran to carry the dismal tidings to their Lord. He, worthy of being the son of the heroes from whom he was descended, rose from the table, where

where he had been upwards of three hours, ordered his steed to be saddled, and repaired to his armoury. He there distributed arms, that had not seen the light before for many years. Round his shoulders he threw a large belt, from which was suspended a sword, that one of his ancestors had taken from a Saracen at the conquest of the Holy Sepulchre.

After having performed this ceremony with the most imposing solemnity, he descended into the principal court of the Castle, where all the officers and servants of his household were assembled in haste. His steed is brought forth; and he who holds it by the bridle, is created a Squire on the spot. He vaults into the saddle, and makes to his warriors a short but energetic harangue, interrupted by frequent hiccoughs. His eloquence is listened to with enthusiasm. The army is ranged in close column; and, preceded by its intrepid



intrepid Chief, marches in quick time toward the village.

Placed at a considerable height, we perceived with dismay the approach of this formidable army. It advanced in three divisions, for the purpose of attacking the insurgents in front, flank, and rear. The latter waited firmly for their enemies; but in such a kind of security, that a sudden and well-combined attack would be fatal to them. The whole united force of my Lord the Count was to fall upon the village at the same instant. We discovered his intention; and in order to inform our allies to hold themselves on their guard, the bells rang, and the *tocsin*, which had ceased, recommenced.

The intelligence was but just in time. The three columns poured in at equal distances, in three different places. Courage

Courage and skill were certainly on their side, but we outnumbered them; and we had, besides, the advantage of the bells. Their lengthened and monotonous sounds continued to call in reinforcements from all the neighbouring depôts.

My Lord the Count, although accustomed to fire, and grown grey under the fowling-piece and powder-horn, began to moderate the impetuosity of his charger. He cast his eyes upon the immense crowd assembled at the foot of the belfry, and on those who every moment were increasing around him, with symptoms of uneasiness; but nothing was able to frighten him. He advanced toward the body of rebels who were before him, persuaded that his presence would be sufficient to make them return to their duty. A general murmur arose immediately on his approach. He made signs with his hand that he wished to speak. They were silent; they listened. He raised his
voice,

voice, and began an oration ; but scarcely had he pronounced a dozen words, when he lost the thread of his discourse, and was obliged to remain silent in the middle of his speech.

They commenced hooting him. Without being disconcerted, he again called on them to listen to him. Silence was once more obtained. He endeavoured to proceed, but his eloquence abandoned him a second time; and, with an oath, he ordered his recently created Squire to harangue the multitude in his name. The man, proud of the employment, placed himself gravely before his master's horse, and swelling his voice, cried aloud—

“Rebellious rascals, who——”

Here the orator met with an interruption from the fist of one of the bystanders, which knocked him backward about ten steps. My Lord the Count, immediately drawing

drawing his sabre, prepared to avenge his deputy; and the sight of this formidable weapon became the signal for a general battle. They attack with impetuosity, and resist with obstinacy. The two armies exert their utmost against each other. That part of the allies which took post at the foot of our tower, was covered by a battery of stones, which we directed against their enemies.

The latter perceived the advantage our position gave the villagers; they informed my Lord the Count of it, and he ordered his gamekeepers, whom he had transformed into his body-guard, to fire on the belfry. Instantly we heard a number of balls whistle about our ears, and strike the bells, and beams that supported them. This explosion of fire-arms carried the rage of the confederates to the highest pitch; their number also increased every moment. We seconded their efforts by a fresh discharge of stones, and the compliment was
returned

returned with a shower of balls. The fight became more and more tumultuous. Our enemies, pressed closely on every side, defended themselves most desperately; but, overwhelmed by numbers, they were obliged to give way.

This retrograde movement doubled our courage; and, in order to decide the success of the contest, our battery played with an activity which nothing was capable of interrupting. A stone, thrown with violence by Frederic, struck the arm of the enemy's General. The pain which he felt from the blow, made him drop from his hand the formidable sabre with which he was armed. One of our allies picked it up, and immediately disappeared amongst the crowd. The same stone had also struck the horse; and, frightened with the blow, and stunned by the sound of the *tocsin*, and the cries of the combatants, he wheeled about, and seconded by the
courage

courage of his master, set off at full gallop, and quickly regained his stables.

What is an army without a commander? That of our enemies, deprived of its intrepid Chief, was very soon in complete disorder. Many of their most distinguished Captains, after having had their arms taken from them, and broke, and receiving a sound cudgelling, were dismissed on their parole: others remained knocked down, and half killed on the field of battle. Thus this most terrible combat terminated by the desertion of one half of the enemy's army, and by sending home the other sorely bruised to the Castle of their Lord.

When the confederates were left absolute masters of the field, we announced the memorable victory by ringing the bells. The cherished sounds in an instant melted those souls, which a few minutes before had respired only with ardour
for

for the combat. The Curate who, in imitation of Moses, had been praying instead of fighting, profited of the sounding of the bells to chant the *Te Deum*, and return thanks to the God of Armies, for the success with which he had just crowned such a pious enterprise. After this august and solemn ceremony, they thanked the confederates for their generous assistance; and swearing mutual friendship, they separated.

We had too much contributed to this victory, to be forgotten in the general joy. Our basket descended and ascended many times, filled with provisions sufficient to serve us for at least a week. There was not a religious person in the village, male or female, who did not desire to be permitted to regale us with a dish of some kind or other. Our belfry resembled a cook's shop; there were fowls, partridges, leverets, legs of mutton, all ranged with order and method on the beams which composed

composed the timber-work of the tower. Our cellar was equally in as good condition. It contained wines of every sort; we had even spring water, because we thought the holy water no longer agreed with us. So difficult do we find it to be pleased when in prosperity!

The Curate did not forget the next day was Sunday, and that there was to be an oblation during the service; moreover, he did not forget that without bells, there would be neither service nor oblation. His presents proved how much he wished for our assistance. They consisted of dainties, with sweetmeats of different kinds, and wine of the first quality. We were, in fact, treated like *controulers of consciences*; and our bells were to us as valuable as a good living. The only thing unpleasant was to see that no one thought of setting us at liberty. The discomfiture of the gamekeepers and servants of my Lord the Count, had given

our villagers the power of opening the trap-door, and facilitating our escape.

This proceeding also would have put them once more in possession of their bells; but it happened in this instance, as in many others, and which we have experienced in France upwards of ten years. A discussion arises on a circumstance of importance; the members appointed to agitate it, immediately assemble; they propose, they examine at first, but presently opinions are divided; by degrees they are maintained with violence; the members grow angry; they split into parties; each side is animated by discord; the question becomes intricate; the chief point is lost sight of, and they finish by cutting one another's throats, for the sake of *nothings* with high-sounding names, to impose on the vulgar, and to justify the follies of which they have been guilty.

It may easily be imagined, that in thanking the Curate for his attentions, we did not forget to solicit the re-establishment of the communication by the trap-door in question. On that condition we promised him the use of the bells, not only for the service, the consecration, &c. but also for the vespers, the *magnificat*, and every thing dependant on them. We concluded our epistle by an eulogy on the bravery which his parishioners had shewn in the action, and on the solemnity with which he had celebrated this religious victory.

His answer was not long in reaching us by the means of the basket. It informed us that, since our projected *sortie*, the trap-door had been shut with still thicker planks, and fastened by large cramps of iron; that the evening was too far advanced, and his beadle too much fatigued, to undertake immediately so difficult a work; but that he would, the day after the morrow, take care to open

the so much desired communication, and to put every thing in order, agreeably to the sanctity of the place.

To keep him in this favourable disposition, we gave him a magnificent *angelus*; after which, we paid a visit to our kitchen and cellar. The dishes we selected, were displayed on the floor; we seated ourselves gaily around them, and having supped like Prebendaries, we laid down to sleep upon our table.

As soon as the clock had struck six, Charles rose, for the purpose of ringing for low mass, which was always performed on the Sunday at that hour. The Curate, however, had doubtless divulged our agreement; for the low mass was neglected, in order to attend grand mass, which was to begin at nine o'clock, accompanied by all the bells. In fact, the instant it was announced, the Church, the gallery, the side chapels, every place was filled with people, and a religious joy sparkled in their countenances.

The

The service was performed, with a solemnity which drew forth the admiration of our good villagers. On our part, we chimed and rang the bells with such an address, that the beadle himself could not have done better; and the remembrance of the victory they had gained the day before, the sonorous voice of the Curate, the harmonious responses from the choir, the humming of the bells, and the whole of this religious bustle, filled the assembly with ecstasy. The mass concluded, the Curate returned to his house; but the crowd could not tear themselves from the holy place: they hoped to return to vespers, and this only was able to prevail on them to put a curb on their enthusiastic piety.

The exercise of ringing is more violent than may at first be imagined. Although this employment had been divided between three of us, yet each found his appetite considerably sharpened in consequence.

Happily we had sufficient to satisfy us.

The vespers at length arrived, and were attended with the same success as the service in the morning. The *magnificat* in particular, was received with rapture; and the whole assembly returned home, enchanted with the exactness and regularity we had shewn in the use of the bells. We waited with impatience for the dawn of the next day, which was to be that of our deliverance*.

How short-lived are the pleasures of this life, and its illusions how deceitful! We had passed the day in eating, drinking, and ringing; a thousand chimeras took

* Far be the thought from me of wishing to throw any ridicule on our comfortable and holy religion. It is well known what importance the country people in France attach to their bells:—the ceremony which accompanies a solemn mass, is much oftener considered as a spectacle, than an act of devotion. In Germany it is much more so than in France.

possession of our imagination ; the trap-door, through which we were to pass, and which was to be opened at the break of the next day, appeared in our eyes a triumphal arch, which had been erected to our glory. This idea threw on every thing that surrounded us, an air of gaiety and satisfaction. On a sudden, we perceive a body of troops advancing across the plain ; they come on with considerable expedition ; they arrive, enter the village, preceded by two field-pieces, with lighted matches, the drums beating, and colours flying. They instantly possess themselves of the posts assigned them. Four men are placed in the interior of the Church, with fixed bayonets, and orders to fire on any one who complains, or shews the least motion of resistance. Others are distributed on the outside of the churchyard, with the same directions ; and farther, that they are not to permit any one to approach either the Church or the belfry. A larger body is stationed at the different entrances

of the village, which is occupied by a detachment of sixty men.

These dispositions being all made and executed in less than a quarter of an hour, the two pieces of cannon were pointed against the bells. The commanding officer advanced a few steps, and by the assistance of a speaking trumpet, summoned us to surrender at discretion, declaring, in case of our refusal, that he was ordered to blockade us in the tower, and even to fire, on the first sound of the *tocsin*, which we should have the audacity to make.

The capitulation was too humiliating to be accepted by an enemy, still puffed up by the remembrance of a recent victory. The only answer we gave, was that of flying to the bells, and instantly sounding the *tocsin*. The enemy's artillery did not long remain idle: their balls whizzed over our heads, and the timber work of the
tower

tower received some violent shocks. We were covered with mortar and dust, and menaced with the half-broken beams, which remained feebly suspended over us. No sooner did any one of us approach an opening, to observe the position of the enemy's forces, or the effect which the sound of the *tocsin* made on the inhabitants of the village and its environs, than a musket was instantly levelled at us; and this kind of warfare was not that which least annoyed us. At first, our strength was in a manner equal on both sides: they had two cannon, and we had two bells; but this equality did not long remain. The larger of the two, cracked by the glancing of a ball, uttered only a faint and jarring sound. We were deploring this misfortune, when another ball, pointed with correctness, broke it to pieces. The different parts flew about us in a most dangerous manner; but happily without doing us the least injury. This event gave the advantage to the side of our enemies;

they perceived it by the diminution of our sounds, and their artillery played with increased activity against the remaining bell. Whether from chance, or from skill, they succeeded ; our second, our last bell, like the first, shivered to atoms ! Overwhelmed with this new disaster, we took refuge in one of the angles of the belfry, to deliberate on what step we should next take.

Our surrender was such a trait of cowardice, that none of us thought of proposing it. To get free by force was impossible ; it was equally so to sustain a siege beyond the term our provisions would last ; and all approach to the tower being forbidden, we could not hope for any fresh supply :—add to this, that the noise of the cannon, and the sight of the bayonets, had so frightened our villagers, that they no longer dared to think of opposition. The news of the misfortune which had happened to their bells, completed

pleted the alarm and terror that reigned among them ; and the confederates, whom the noise of the *tocsin* had brought from the environs, were repulsed with the point of the bayonet by the soldiers who guarded the entrance of the village : thus, all hope of receiving assistance was vanished.

The firing of the cannon had ceased from the time that our bells had been destroyed ; but the same vigilance was observed towards us, and the joy which appeared in the camp of the enemy, proved too clearly that they were informed of our distress, and believed their success certain, and not far distant.

In this deplorable situation we again brought forward those means of escape which we had a few days before rejected as impracticable. It may be remembered that we had thought of attempting our deliverance by the assistance of the bell-ropes, but that we had considered them

as too weak for the execution of our project. What the firing of muskets, cannonballs, and all the horrors of hunger and devouring thirst had not been capable of producing, the fear of being forced to surrender at discretion effected. All our reflections turned to this single and only object. We examined the ropes with the most scrupulous attention; they were, in fact, in a very bad state; but they presented to us the possibility of safety, and this motive determined us.

Our larder and our cellar were yet fortunately in a very excellent condition. A piece of one of the bells had broken a few bottles; but there was still a sufficiency left to serve us in abundance for three or four days: and this appeared to us ample time to prepare and execute our enterprise.

CHAP. VI.

Escape.

I HAVE already said that the roaring of the cannon ceased at the same time with the noise of our bells. The siege seemed to be converted into a blockade, which proved that our enemies persisted in the design of reducing us by famine. The cannonade of the belfry, and the exercise we had taken during the day, had too much fatigued our spirits, to dispose us to deliberate on so important a subject as that which was to decide our safety. It was therefore

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therefore agreed that we should retire to rest at an early hour, and that we should rise the next morning at daybreak, to discuss this matter with all the maturity it deserved.

We passed the night on the field of battle, in the midst of the wreck it caused, and rested our heads on part of the broken bells, in the same manner as we are told Charles the Twelfth did on the breech of a cannon. The sun had scarcely gilded the roof of our belfry and the summits of the surrounding hills, when Frederic was on his legs. The ropes were produced; their decayed state was frightful. Our shirts, our garters, every thing we could contrive, was employed in repairing them, and giving them more consistence. The knots, which we formed at regular distances, were to serve us as steps. These preparations occupied us the greater part of the day, after which we agreed on the hour for putting our project into execution.

We

We fixed on midnight. At that time the obscurity would be greatest, and would afford us the best opportunity for escaping the vigilance of the sentinels on guard round the Church. The only thing now which engaged our attention, was, which of us should descend first; but such was the friendship that united us, that this dangerous honour was begged and solicited as a favour by each. Frederic, as the author of our sufferings, claimed this prerogative with so much heat and tenacity, that we thought it most prudent to leave it to chance to decide for us, and not entirely to take from him the hope of obtaining it. We accordingly drew lots, and it fell upon me.

These preparations and discussions lasted until very near the time fixed for our attempt. The clock had struck eleven; the critical moment approached. Two bottles of our best wine were drawn from our stores, and drank during the interval,
not

not so much with a view to render us insensible to the danger, as to dispose us to brave it with more courage.

In the meantime the guard in their round had just passed the foot of the tower. The sentinels were relieved; the tranquillity which reigned around, was interrupted only by a heavy shower of rain, which the wind blew with violence towards the enemy's camp. The moment appeared to us favourable;—we let down the rope with precaution, and the greatest silence. I fastened Carl's fowling-piece across my shoulders, to be armed for all chances; and after mutual embraces, I began my journey.

The knots, which served me for steps, greatly facilitated my descent; and I continued, without any difficulty, until I was about twenty-five or thirty feet from the ground, when the rope broke at the knot on which my feet rested. I had just time
to

to catch fast hold with my hands, and mounted a few steps in that manner. After a few moments' deliberation, I ascended, and arrived at the top of the tower the instant Frederic was preparing to descend. My unexpected return astonished them beyond expression. I informed them of the reason, and they remained immovable with surprise and terror.

The rope was now of course too short; it therefore became necessary either to renounce the project, or devise some method for lengthening the rope. It was Charles who made the discovery, and the pendulum of the clock furnished him with the idea.

“Here is the clock,” cried he suddenly; “this clock must have weights; these weights must be suspended; they can only be suspended by ropes: we have therefore nothing to do but to search for them.”

The

The lock of the gun was immediately thought of for obtaining a light :—this we produced without much difficulty, and, guided by the feeble rays of a piece of wood covered with grease, and lighted, we commenced our search. The conjectures of Charles were just. In the space of a quarter of an hour, we discovered the weights; we cut the cords, and carried them in triumph to our tower. These cords, though not so thick, were much better and stronger than the bell-ropes; and on account of the multiplication of the pullies, were an immense length. We therefore got every thing ready, and I began a second descent, armed as before. I continued to the bottom without interruption, and leaped on the ground. At the same moment one of the sentinels cried out—

“ Who goes there ? ”

I threw myself flat upon my belly. The
same

same cry was repeated a second and a third time, but no answer. The sentinel fired his piece; the ball struck the wall at about six paces from me, and the explosion frightened a large dog, who had taken shelter from the rain in a kind of cavity, where there was a sculpture, representing our Saviour in the garden of olives. Several of the guards came running out of the Church with fixed bayonets, to discover the cause of the alarm. The dog, whom they met upon the road, made a great outcry, and on seeing them, barked still louder; they sought their comrade, and reproached him for his mistake, and then returned, swearing against his awkwardness in making them come out just in the midst of the heaviest part of the rain.

During this time, I crept gently into the cavity I have just mentioned, and was figuring among the Jews who, conducted by Judas, came to seize our Saviour, when
a most

a most violent shower falling at the moment, forced back the guard, who, with their officer, sheltered themselves at about two steps from me. Happily the statues I have just mentioned, were of the natural size. I increased their number, and remained, like them, perfectly immoveable.

After some minutes of silence, the officer of the guard, looking round him, said to his men —

“ It would perhaps be right to have a sentinel stationed here ; this place is too well adapted for concealment.”

“ As you please,” answered one of them ; “ but I can assure you it has not the least communication with the clock ; it is the Garden of Olives. I spent more than an hour last night in examining it. This figure represents our Saviour ; that group is the Jews who are come to take him, and that is the traitor Judas.”

In

In pointing out the latter, his finger almost touched my nose, which was placed by the side of Judas. At length the rain ceased, they departed, and I breathed more freely.

My first care was to approach the foot of the tower. I there found Frederic, who had just reached the ground. He was waiting impatiently for Charles, who was on the road, and intending to fly together to my assistance; for the report of the musket which they had heard, did not leave them any doubt of my having been discovered. My presence set him at ease on that point; and Charles being arrived, I informed them in a few words of my adventure: then, creeping on our hands and feet in the most profound silence, and receiving the rain on our backs, we succeeded in getting out of the churchyard. Some hedges, ditches, and gardens still separated us from the great road, which ran by the entrance of the village;

village ; we were not many minutes before we reached it. A thick forest appeared before us ; we plunged into it, in spite of the darkness, which made us sometimes run against the trees, or roll in the quagmires.

After three hours of a difficult and uncertain march, we believed ourselves in a place of safety. A large and tufted oak received us under its hospitable covering ; and extended round its protecting trunk, we waited, sleeping, the return of daylight.

CHAP. VII.

The Cottage.

AS soon as the first rays of the sun made their appearance, we directed our steps towards the cottage of Carl. Friendship and gratitude equally prompted us to go thither: besides, his gun, the most valuable part of his property, still remained in our hands. We therefore quitted the forest, the better to discover whereabouts we were. We again reached the great road, and perceived with pleasure that we were not more than half
a league

a league distant from his abode. Our joy gave us wings, and we soon perceived through the trees the solitary asylum.

We advanced, arrived at the door, knocked several times, but received no answer. Should Carl have been obliged to abandon his cottage!—This thought gave us some uneasiness. I went to the door, and knocked again; while Frederic approached a small window, and called Carl by his name. At length the door opened, and Carl appeared; but his manner was cold and forbidding.

“What do you want?” demanded he.

“To restore your gun,” answered Frederic, “and to thank you for your kindness.”

“It is too late,” replied Carl.

On saying which, he took the gun, and was going to shut the door of the cottage, without even asking us to enter.

Nevertheless,

Nevertheless, we followed him, though almost by forcing our way, complaining of his coldness, so different from his former behaviour. Hearing this, he turned round, and said to us in a sharp tone—

“To be duped once, is the proof of a good heart ; but a fool only will be duped a second time. I cannot trust persons who break their words.”

Charles began to answer him, by informing him of what had happened to us since our separation.

“I know it all,” answered Carl ; “your imprudence has been punished by eight days of imprisonment, and has cost me this cottage, which I have lived in six years. The gamekeepers belonging to the Count, saw you go out of it. They have denounced me as your accomplice, and I have received notice to quit my habitation. It is sold, and I am
VOL. III. G permitted

permitted to stay here only three days longer."

Frederic offered to indemnify him. He refused us with a sneer; but he could not resist our entreaties to suffer us to stop as long as he remained in possession. The time was sufficient for us to send to, and receive from Frankfort some clothes and linen, which we had left there. Carl even undertook this commission for us. We gave him a letter to our friend, the merchant; and he departed, leaving us until his return, absolute masters of the cottage.

Unfortunate may those be considered, who have never suffered the privations of this life. Their existence is too uniform to offer them any enjoyment. The bed of down, on which the rich man reposes, the high-seasoned food, and exquisite wines that cover his table, are far inferior to the simple repast which the foresight of
of

of our host had provided for us—the clear water that quenched our thirst, and the armfuls of dry leaves on which we slept.

Two days of repose were sufficient to recover us from the fatigues we had undergone; and the horrors of the siege, which we had sustained with so much firmness, appeared to us no longer than as a melancholy dream, destroyed by our awaking, and chased from the memory by the appearance of a fine morning. The third day was on the decline, when Carl arrived. He brought us clothes, linen, and provisions. It was indeed a holiday for us.

In the meanwhile, Carl, whose friendship and cordiality we had so much admired, did not suffer one word to escape him, either with respect to the place to which he meant to retire, or of the means he intended to employ for his subsistence. His behaviour, although

more open, still marked a kind of distrust, which all our frankness was incapable of dissipating. A fragment of a letter, which we had found, during his absence, on the steps of the cavern that concealed his stock of provisions, puzzled us extremely with respect to his character. The short sentences it contained, were sufficient to create suspicion, yet not enough to justify it.

“Come,” it said, “come and join us.—You will live with men of courage.” Farther on——“Our retreat is always secure, and the country abounds with all sorts of——If they attack us, we are strong enough to——” The letter finished with these words. “Leave your wretched hut—you, your wife, and your children.”

The date and the signature were wanting.

This

This letter overturned every idea we had of the honesty of Carl. He had a wife and children, and yet he lived by himself. What reason could he have for keeping it a secret from us?—And why in the letter addressed to him, was a safe retreat spoken of?—Why the fear of being attacked, and the resistance that in such a case could be made?—These fears are never entertained by a person of an honest profession; and although that of a poacher is not very honourable, yet it is not quite so full of danger as to require an association to protect it.

We lost ourselves in vague conjectures, and were unable to fix on any opinion. His generous behaviour to us on our first interview—his disinterestedness in refusing all our offers of indemnification, certainly spoke very much in his favour; but this letter, his silence, the reserved and mysterious air he assumed since our return, presented him to us in so very unfavourable

a light that we anxiously waited for the moment of parting from him.

We were, as I have before said, in a bedchamber not more than six feet square, and separated only by a slight partition from the room where Carl slept. Day had scarcely made its appearance, before we heard the door of the cottage open, and some one wish our host "good morning."

The voice was hollow and rough. Carl answered in very few words, and the conversation was so low, we could not perfectly distinguish it. This whispering made us pay the greatest attention. Charles rose, and listened; I did the same; but the interview was conducted with so much mystery, that we were only able to collect a few words, such as—"dead—kill them—strip them."

These significant monosyllables only
served

served to increase our suspicions. We communicated them to Frederic, and requested him to rise, that we might pursue our journey to Wetzlar. Scarcely were we on our legs, when the door of our room opened, and the stranger appeared. His countenance, harsh and ill-favoured, answered to the sound of his voice. I asked him where Carl was.

“Carl is gone,” said he, “after having given up possession of this cottage, which in future is to belong to me.”

“How!” said Frederic, “is he gone without seeing us—without even taking leave of us?”

“You were asleep, gentlemen,” replied the stranger: “and Carl does not wish to disturb the repose of any one. He desired me to make his excuses to you, and departed.”

Astonished at this abrupt separation,

more than at any thing which had preceded it, we bade farewell to our new host, and left the cottage.

CHAP. VIII.

An old Castle.

WE marched on for upwards of two hours, making a variety of conjectures on the change which, in the space of eight days, had taken place in the character and temper of Carl. We quitted the great road, and struck into a cross road, that had been pointed out to us, for

for the purpose of gaining the town of Walheim, where we intended to stop. This place was still distant more than two leagues, and our appetites began to be importunate.

A lonely and wretched looking public-house was on our right; a mountain called Sturmberg, or the Stormy Mountain, on our left; and on both sides a thick forest. After a little consultation, we entered the public-house. If its outside announced poverty, the inside was not more favourable. In one corner sat an old woman, with spectacles on her nose, knitting stockings; and by her side was a child of about eleven or twelve years of age, reading to her from the Bible.

Our meeting seemed equally to astonish both parties. We requested permission to refresh ourselves. The child brought some glasses, and the old woman a large jug of beer; some eggs and a piece of

G 5

cheese

cheese furnished the remainder of our meal. We entered into conversation with our hostess. We talked of the mountain on our right, and the old Castle which crowned its summit, the ruins of which, seen at a distance, seemed to announce its ancient magnificence.

“It was there,” said she, “that formerly the Tribunal of the Free Judges, instituted by Charlemagne, held its sittings, and from that Castle were issued the decrees of death, which were executed by the invisible hands of its affiliated brethren spread over every part of Europe. In yonder ruined tower, that you observe on the left, built on the point of the rock, Conrad de Thuringe was stabbed while sitting in the midst of his council. The other to the right served as a prison to Robert de Bavière during twenty long years. The great body of the building, which appears behind, contains the hall where the Commissioners of Westphalia

3 used

used to assemble. Beneath that hall is a well of a most frightful depth, and cut entirely in the solid rock. This well, which the Free Judges caused to be dug for their own use, became at length their grave. The Sovereigns of Europe leagued against an Order that made them tremble on their thrones. They laid siege to the Castle, which was defended with a courage and obstinacy until then unheard of; but forced at length to yield from want of food, the besieged preferred a voluntary death, to surrendering themselves to the conqueror."

The good woman was in general fond of talking, but particularly so at this time. Her story included a thousand terrible anecdotes, and each more marvellous than the other. I took the liberty of interrupting her, to enquire from whence she collected her information.

"From my husband," answered she;
a 6 "he

“he was a worthy man, and knew the history of his country to the very bottom. He established this inn, not so much from the idea of gaining any thing by it, as to satisfy the curiosity of strangers, which the Castle attracted hither from all parts of the Empire. It is now near seven years since he was killed !”

Here the good woman laid down her spectacles to wipe away a tear that had started into her eye; and then, pointing to the child by the side of her—

“This,” said she, “is Joseph, who is to succeed him, but he is considered by every body as too young at present; and, besides, people are not so curious now as formerly.”

We were not so much pressed as to be obliged to arrive at Wetlar in any given time; we could not therefore refuse ourselves the satisfaction of ascertaining with
our

our own eyes, the astonishing things that were reported about the antiquity of the Castle, and the extent of its subterraneous apartments. We requested Joseph to be our guide. He accepted the commission with pleasure, and walked before us, mixing with the histories of ghosts and spectres, the events of every description that we had heard of from his mother.

There were two roads that led to the Castle;—the one was impassable, in consequence of a large part of the ruin having fallen and barred the passage; the other was a narrow path winding between the precipices, whose excessive depth made us tremble to look down. The fir-trees, constantly green, and of a great height, rose on each side of us. A gloomy and religious horror seized us, which increased in proportion as we approached, climbing the summit of the mountain. Here the path became so narrow, that the least false step must have been inevitable death.

At

At length, after many efforts, we attained the platform.

An immense edifice, the walls of which were half decayed, and supported by slender columns of a prodigious height; the subterraneous abodes, whose dark and gloomy entrance appalled the imagination; the trunks of fallen pillars, the capitals, and mutilated fragments of sculpture, struck our view on every side. We marched amidst heaps of ruins, and trod on the wrecks of many ages. At each step a fresh horror seized us; and as we advanced, the lofty and decayed walls threatened to crush us under their ruins. We pursued our route with caution, and after two hours' difficult and dangerous labour, we at length penetrated into the body of the building.

“It is here,” said the youth, who was burning to give us a specimen of his abilities, “it is here where the Secret Tribunal
was

was held. You will observe there are many inscriptions on different parts of the walls. My father could read them all; but I have never yet been able to make them out."

They were the greater part effaced, so that it was impossible to decipher them. Charles had made the feudal laws and customs his study, and therefore these Gothic characters were more familiar to him. He pointed out to us a few, which were as follow. "*HE punishes in silence—we strike in the dark.*"—Another was—"*The law sometimes sleeps, but we wake always.*"—A third—"*Tremble, Potentates! our hand is invisible as HE who j—*" All the others were illegible but these few words were sufficient to give us an idea of that association of assassins, who had the presumption to call themselves, by their own authority, between man and the Deity.

On quitting this hall, we entered into a vast corridor, terminated by a chapel, called *The Chapel of Death*; because it was there that the condemned heard mass before they submitted to their sentence. Several gloomy cells, separated by thick walls, were on each side the corridor.

We then turned back; and, after having traversed a great number of apartments, arrived at the celebrated well, into which the Chiefs of this formidable society had precipitated themselves. The trunk of a column lay at a few paces distant; we put forth all our strength, and rolling it to the brink of the well, tumbled it in. A great noise, like that of distant thunder, was heard for some minutes; and the sound, re-echoed by the vaulted roofs above, for some time numerous solitary apartments, murmurs for a considerable time.

“ You

“You stay too long in the same place,” said Joseph, “to see all in one day.”

He then conducted us to the building, flanked by the two towers which his mother had pointed out to us.

A long gallery which, in spite of its age, had preserved some fragments of its former magnificence, separated the two towers. The first, where Conrad de Thuringe had been assassinated, commanded a valley, whose meadows, enamelled with flowers, offered to the eye the most agreeable spectacle. The other, built on the edge of a rock, presented on the one side a most frightful precipice, down which an impetuous torrent dashed its foaming waters; and on the other, the view opened on an extensive country, terminating in a kind of amphitheatre, and strewed with villages, whose Church bells were indistinctly heard in the distance. This landscape, at once imposing

imposing and picturesque, equally astonished and delighted us.

“ Let us stay here a few days,” cried Frederic, enchanted with the variety of the prospect ; “ this tower is worth all the belfries in the world !”

An exclamation of assent was our answer. Joseph was immediately dispatched for a large flagon of beer, a piece of cheese, and a loaf of brown bread. This was sufficient for us to pass the remainder of the day, and wait for the next with cheerfulness. As soon as this resolution was taken, we occupied ourselves about our bed ; and being inured to hard lying, a few armfuls of dry leaves were quite sufficient for that purpose. We spread our provisions ; and after a repast as gay as it was frugal, we sent away Joseph, with orders for him to bring us something better on the morrow.

We

We had arrived at the third day of our residence at the Castle of Sturmburg. Joseph regularly brought us our provisions, and each of his journies produced us some new article of convenience; our lodging became furnished imperceptibly. We had discovered a cabinet, of which the windows and door were still perfect. Its position united all the advantages of an extensive prospect. We therefore resolved to take up our abode there, and the removal of our goods was done in the same moment.

Our mornings were dedicated to excursions round, and in the environs of the Castle. Every thing which could throw light on the history of the terrible Tribunal that had formerly ruled there, was collected with the most scrupulous attention. Charles had found a poniard in the form of a cross; its blade was triangular, and about ten inches long, and marked with the letters H. and G., which
are

are the initials of *Heimlich Gericht*—in English, “Secret Tribunal.” The handle, which was brass, and rudely carved, was, like the blade, covered with rust. This poniard is still in the library of Wetzlar, where we deposited it.

One piece of good luck, they say, seldom comes alone. The poniard we had just found, passed from hand to hand. Its sight carried us back, shuddering, towards the times of ferocity and barbarity, when the steel of vengeance was considered as the sacred instrument of the Divinity. We were all three of us seated at the foot of a tree, communicating to each other the reflections that this murderous weapon suggested, when suddenly I perceived something glittering in the hollow of a neighbouring oak. I arose, ran towards it, and examined it; it was the but-end of a gun. I called my comrades. We drew it with difficulty from the tree. The same concealment contained three others,

others, with a proportionate quantity of gunpowder, and shot of all kinds. We seized them with a joy almost approaching to a delirium. It was doubtless the depôt of a gang of poachers. The forest abounded in all sorts of game, and Frederic being so excellent a marksman, these stores were truly precious.

Our promenade was immediately converted into a sporting ramble. We separated, without going far from each other. The report of a gun was presently heard. We ran, and found Frederic had just killed a leveret. What castles in the air did this leveret cause us to build! Carl lived almost in affluence from the productions of the chace; why should we not follow his example? The city of Wetzlar was only a few leagues distant; it was populous, and the inhabitants were both rich and luxurious; game would therefore certainly find a ready sale among them.

Joseph,

Joseph, who faithfully executed all our commissions, was to be charged also with this, and bring us back, in exchange for the superfluities of our provisions, some articles which we stood in want of. This plan, reflected, commented on, and brought to perfection, furnished us with an inexhaustible branch of commerce and suited us better than any we had yet adopted. The balance of trade was entirely in our favour, because we should dispose only of what was superfluous to us; and therefore whatever was produced in return, must be considered as clear gain. It did not, nevertheless, follow that those with whom we should deal, would not find their advantage in the traffic.

Joseph was waiting for us at the Castle where, as soon as we had arrived, we discharged a grand volley. The leveret was then skinned, and put—not on the spit, for we had none, but before the fire, suspended by a packthread, which each

each of us turned at intervals. The youth, much amazed at seeing a gun in each of our hands, and masters of a fourth, was not able to recover from his surprise. He was persuaded that these arms were a present which we owed to the generosity of some skeleton or ghost, that we had met wandering among the ruins of the Castle; and this event was immediately added to the number of supernatural stories the place had given birth to.

Joseph, at length, being informed of our adventure, and the plan of commerce our prize had suggested, partook of the unexpected sumptuousness of our repast. We named him our agent, and gave him every necessary instruction for fulfilling his new office. The dinner being finished, we again took our guns, and departed, resolving to furnish him with something to satisfy the epicures of Wetzlar.

Our hope was not disappointed; a
roebuck,

roe-buck, five hares, two braces of partridges, and a bird which none of us knew, were the produce of this expedition. Joseph was ordered to take them the next day to Wetzlar. The road which conducted to that city, was much more easy to travel, than that by which we arrived at the Castle. A stout young peasant, whom Joseph had found in a neighbouring village, presented himself the next morning at daybreak, with a large basket. We filled it with our game; and our new agent, furnished with an account of what we desired in exchange, departed with him for Wetzlar.

CHAP. IX.*The Vaults of the Castle.*

WE had not yet visited any of the subterranean part of the Castle, because we had no flambeaux. Joseph brought us two, and we agreed, during his absence, to commence our searches. My intention is not to tire the reader by a long description of the different vaults and dungeons, although they had nothing in common to be met with in Novels.

The order of the Free Judges was, as is well known, in its origin an association

of men, the most distinguished for their abilities and probity in Germany. The total absence of all law, the tyranny of the Lords paramount, the horrible oppression which they exercised over their miserable vassals, exacted at that time—nay, it may be said, commanded the institution of a tribunal, sufficiently powerful to punish so much violence, and put an end to so many atrocities. Unfortunately they went too far. Their power, though extensive, was limited at first; but in a short time it became boundless. Their authority, increasing and cementing with time, degenerated into an absolute tyranny; and an hundred thousand invisible assassins, spread over all Europe, were no longer regarded by an ignorant and superstitious people than as the messengers of vengeance from the Most High, while they were, in fact, no other than the ferocious satellites of a sanguinary tribunal.

Such Judges as these, who promulgated
their

their decrees in silence, and executed them in darkness, could not proceed without dungeons, in which to secure their victims. Those of the Castle of Sturmburg were of an extent and size that sufficiently spoke the distinguished rank from which the Tribunal selected its enemies. The long and gloomy corridors were separated at different distances by spacious vaults cut in the solid rock ; and many marble pedestals were still left standing, on which used to be placed the lamps that lighted these sepulchral abodes.

In the middle of the different apartments was a large round table, made of a single stone, and on which was carved a crucifix. It was perhaps round these tables the Free Judges were seated, when they assembled to hear denunciations against any one ; and on these crucifixes that their associates took the horrible oath of sparing neither father nor mother, brother nor friend, if they stood in the

way of executing the orders of the Tribunal.

We traversed for upwards of two hours, these subterranean passages, and the sound of our footsteps was re-echoed by the dark and solitary vaults. Our torches cast only a red and indistinct light around us, and the solemn uniformity that every where reigned, began to weary our attention. Charles proposed that we should return, and leave until the next day, the continuation of our researches; but Frederic, who had reserved that day for a shooting excursion, was of opinion we should go on. I, however, agreed with Charles, and therefore we returned.

At that moment Frederic's foot slipped from under him, and he fell. A kind of instinct induced him to bring his torch to the ground, to see what had occasioned his fall;—it was blood, and apparently newly shed. At this sight we remained
immoveable

immoveable with horror. After a few moments of silence, we pursued our route in spite of Frederic, who endeavoured to persuade us, with all his might, to discover what could have caused our alarm.

“Another day,” said Charles. “At present we are without arms, and what should we do in case of a surprise?—It is probable that some murder has just been committed here; and prudence advises us to make our escape, unless we were in a condition mutually to assist each other.”

These reflections occupied us until we had regained our habitation. Joseph was not long before he joined us. He had not found it necessary to go so far as Wetzlar, to dispose of our game. An inn, about a league distant from the Castle, situated on the great road, and very much frequented, had been the end of his journey. The game was sold, and he

H 3

brought

brought us not only what we had desired in exchange, and which we had given him a particular account of, but money also. We recompensed him as we thought he deserved; but we took care not to speak before him, of the result of the tour we had made in the vaults of the Castle.

The appearance of the blood, however, gave us considerable uneasiness. From whence had it proceeded?—Were these dungeons the habitation of a band of robbers?—Such a neighbourhood would not at all agree with our taste. This state of uncertainty was too alarming, not to make us desirous of being released from it. Frederic who had destined the next day for sporting, was himself too curious to ascertain the truth, not to sacrifice his pleasure to our safety. It was therefore agreed that this day should be employed in new researches.

In consequence, after a hearty breakfast,

we seized our guns, and once more descended to the subterranean part of the Castle. Joseph, charged with a wallet full of provisions, carried a torch; and Frederic, who preceded us, another. We advanced in this manner in silence. A thousand objects, which had escaped us in our first journey, now fixed our attention, and furnished us with new subjects for our reflections.

Arrived at the place where Frederic had fallen, we carefully examined it. It was still stained with blood; but it was coagulated, and almost dry. This confirmed our conjectures that it had been shed very recently. We continued our march. Some large and deep apertures appeared here and there, and cautioned us to be on our guard. Joseph, chilled with terror, crept close to us, and related numberless anecdotes which his mother had taught him, each of which he concluded, with observing that our safest way

way would be immediately to return. No one noticed his recitals, or accepted his invitations, and we still kept advancing.

Charles had put a few pieces of charcoal in the wallet, for the purpose of marking the angles and corridors we passed:—this was intended to facilitate our return, in case we should happen to stray out of our road. Our steps were at length arrested by a fragment which had fallen from a cleft in the rock. Frederic and I were busied in forcing a passage, when a sudden and glimmering light struck our view. It appeared to be at the end of the corridor. We advanced; we arrived at the spot, and discovered it to proceed from some wood-embers nearly extinguished.

This was a new proof that the subterranean abode of the Castle was inhabited; but by whom?—This was what disturbed us. Were they poachers?—Our finding the

the guns and ammunition, seemed to announce it. Were they robbers?—The blood which we had seen, gave also some weight to that opinion. Were they herdsmen, who from time to time brought their droves of cattle to feed on the declivity of the mountain?—This last supposition was not very likely; because those simple honest people would not dare to enter a place which ignorance and superstition had declared to be the abode of horrible ghosts and spectres.

We were still occupied in reflecting on our new discovery, when we heard a step at some distance. The noise at first appeared to approach us. We listened: It was the march of several persons. We took our arms, and waited for them with firmness; but the noise very soon ceased, and silence again reigned around us. We walked on for some time longer without hearing any one, or without acquiring
H. 5. any

any certainty of the facts which we sought to develop.

It was time for us to take some refreshment, and recruit our strength; we therefore had recourse to our wallet. Joseph, pale and trembling, dared not touch any thing. He had just turned his eyes towards a corridor, which was on his right, when suddenly he uttered a cry of terror, his torch dropped from his hand, and he fell fainting at our feet. We raised him up, and struck him forcibly in his hands. A glass of water, which we forced him to drink, brought him to himself; but his eyes remained fixed on the ground. He was afraid to turn them to the right, which he indicated with marks of horror.

“Let us go away,” said he, as soon as he could speak; “let us go away, or we shall be lost!—I have seen him!—It was he——”

“Who?”

"Who?" demanded Frederic abruptly.

"Didier de Bruxhal," replied Joseph;
"the Free Judge who stabbed Conrad de
Thuringe!"

"Where did you see him?" interrupted
I immediately.

"There, there, there!" and his hand,
cold and trembling, pointed to the corri-
dor on his right.

"But how did you know it to be him?"
said Charles in his turn.

"By the description my father gave of
him."

"And where did your father see him?"

"The first time in this subterranean
part of the Castle, and the second time
on the brink of the great well, into which
he threw himself when the Castle was
stormed."

These questions and answers were made
while we were conveying him to the upper
part of the Castle, for fear would not
permit him to make use of his legs.

When he was a little recovered, we endeavoured to make him feel ashamed of his cowardice ; and, in order to induce him, to explain himself freely on the motive of his fright, Charles declared to him, in a severe tone, that no person should live with us who was so fanciful. Our menaces had little effect on him ; for he persisted in declaring that he had seen the face of a man, pale and meagre, shew itself at the angle of the corridor he had pointed to ; but he was obliged also to acknowledge that his terror had prevented him from being quite certain that it was the face of Didier de Bruxhal, as he had at first declared.

The concluding part of this declaration made us laugh ; but the obstinacy with which he supported his avowal, soon drove the smile from our lips. Joseph was too ingenuous, and too attached to his new masters, to persist in a falsity which would risk the loss of their friendship, and the advantages

advantages his mother derived from us. It was therefore necessary to believe his declaration; and this declaration being true, it was certain that we had observers and spies to watch our actions, and that at the moment when we least thought of it, we might be surprised and assassinated.

What we had ourselves seen, added to the avowal of Joseph, was more than sufficient to inspire us with a salutary caution. We had for some time given up our subterranean promenades; our solitary rambles were also more rare; and when we directed our steps to a distant part of the building, our arms never quitted us. In the meantime, our shooting parties continued as usual. The faithful Joseph carried on our commerce; and we provided not only the inn where he had first presented himself with game, but likewise all those in the neighbourhood.

By these means we were furnished with every thing requisite for our comfort. A table, six chairs, a beaufet, glasses, and earthen-ware of all kinds, proudly embellished our apartment. The frugality of our first meals had given way to a sort of luxury; our ordinary beverage was beer, but the dessert was accompanied with a flagon of Rhenish wine, and we sometimes took our cup of coffee afterwards. On the other hand, our finances without being considerably augmented, at least continued prosperous.

Joseph and his mother every day felicitated themselves on the comforts they enjoyed, in consequence of the flourishing state of our traffic. The good woman regarded us as her benefactors, and never omitted an opportunity of recommending her poor Joseph to our protection. The latter, although a perfect coward, shewed a fidelity and attachment to us, which more and more increased our friendship
for

for him. He at length began, to grow familiar with gloom and ruin which every where surrounded us. Formerly, at the close of day, he dared not take a step in any part of the Castle, without being accompanied by one of us; but now more bold, he would sometimes advance alone, even to the entrance of the dungeons.

From the time the balance of trade was in our favour, we regularly took our three meals a day. After breakfast, we went out to shoot, and this exercise lasted until the hour of dinner, which Joseph always had ready at our return. The interval which separated dinner from supper, was employed in rambling over the ruinous part of the Castle; or, in case of weariness, in conversations about our worthy friend Frank, the amiable Florella, or some of our old acquaintances, who recurred with pleasure to our memory.

Florella,

Florella, in particular, most engaged our thoughts. Her generous proceedings had filled us with the strongest gratitude. Frederic had already written three times to her since our departure from Stutgard; but the wandering life we had led since that time, made it impossible to give her any address that would reach us. We could not, therefore, complain of her silence. As to our friend Frank, we knew that neither time nor absence would alter the attachment which he had vowed to us. His last letter had informed us of the marriage of his sister; and he thanked us in her name for the hundred crowns we had given her, and which had served to establish her in a business that afforded them a comfortable existence.

It is a pleasure to speak of those we love, or have had the happiness to oblige. We one day were tasting this felicity in its greatest plenitude, when suddenly

Joseph,

Joseph, who had been absent for more than a quarter of an hour, ran towards us, pale and out of breath.

“There is some one at the entrance of the vaults!” cried he, as soon as he perceived us at a distance.

“How! another ghost, coward?” said Charles to him.

“I do not say that, Sir,” answered Joseph; “I am not sure it is a ghost, but I am sure I have seen something!”

Frederic did not wait to the end of this information, before he went to ascertain the fact. He ran across the gallery, clambered over the ruins, and darted into the caverns below, all which was the work only of a moment.

The impetuosity of his character had not permitted him to take any arms whatever. We immediately seized our guns, and followed him as fast as we
were

were able ; but such was his agility, that it was impossible for us to overtake, or even to perceive him. We had already gone more than two hundred paces in the thickest darkness, for we had not had time to provide ourselves with torches. Several passages or corridors were before us, and we knew not which to take. It was imprudent to advance, from the large and deep cracks which crossed our path ; it was not less dangerous to call, for fear that our voices, repeated by the echoes of these silent vaults, should draw upon us the whole band of robbers, which this place seemed so well calculated to harbour.

We were in this insupportable perplexity, advancing with caution, and striving who should most condemn the unthinking conduct of our friend, when I felt myself violently jostled by some one who passed close to me. I instantly called “Frederic !” but, whoever it was,
continued

continued without answering me. I fired, and saw by the light of the flash, a man running about ten paces before me. The noise of the explosion made the whole place tremble, and gradually died away in the immensity of the different corridors.

Charles was about to reproach me for my imprudence, when we heard the voice of Frederic. The report, as well as the light, had assisted him in discovering where he was, and in directing his steps towards us. At length he rejoined us, and after many efforts, we once more saw the light of day.

On our arrival at our apartment, we could not forbear blaming him for so unnecessarily exposing himself to the danger from which we had so happily just escaped. He was convinced of his folly, and promised, for the hundredth time, to be more moderate in future; but he could not change his natural disposition, and we shall

shall see, in the sequel of these memoirs, that this promise was not better fulfilled, than any of those he had before made.

We had been upwards of two months the tranquil possessors of that part of the castle in which we had first fixed our abode. Prejudice and superstition had spread themselves so widely over the surrounding inhabitants, that we had not a single visitor. The ground, covered to a considerable distance with fragments and ruins of the building, offered to the eye a savage and gloomy prospect; the cries of the vulture and the hawk, which perched on the top of the lofty towers, those of the owl and other birds, that at the close of day issued by dozens from their retreat, were the only noises that disturbed our solitude. We frequently heard, it is true, the reports of fire arms; but they were at so great a distance, that the fear of being surpris'd or discovered, never presented itself to our imagination.

In

In short, we began to consider ourselves as the actual proprietors; and we took possession of the castle and its dependancies, as if they had really belonged to us.

One day, as we returned from shooting, on entering the great court, Charles perceived at some distance from the entrance to the vaults, an inscription which we had never before remarked. We approached to examine it; the characters were half effaced, and the position of the stone augmented yet more the difficulty we had in deciphering them. Joseph held our guns, while Charles and I occupied ourselves in turning the stone: its size and weight were so considerable, that we called upon Frederic, whom we believed at our side, to assist us. He had disappeared.

“Where is he gone to?” demanded I instantly of Joseph.

“He

“ He ran into the caverns,” answered he.

“ Into the caverns !” replied Charles.
“ Quick, Joseph—give us our arms, and let us follow him immediately !”

We had not advanced more than twenty steps, when we perceived Frederic ;—his eyes still animated, and his dress in disorder, announced to us that something had happened.

“ Well,” cried Charles, on seeing him, “ what is the matter ?”

“ I am going to tell you ; but run, Joseph, and fetch us torches, and all the arms we have got. We must unravel this mystery ; we must assure ourselves of the intentions of our neighbours, and of their motives for watching us.”

Joseph hastened to our apartment ; and while we were waiting his return, Frederic imparted to us his adventure. The same

man, whom he had pursued a few days before, was again watching at the entrance to the vaults. Our friend had caught a glimpse of him; and under the pretext of examining some broken columns which lay scattered on every side, he insensibly approached very near to this mysterious stranger; then darting into the cavern, he ran upon him, closed with him, and endeavoured to throw him on the ground. The latter, not less robust, received him with courage, and defended himself with obstinacy. A violent struggle took place between the two champions; each of them was alternately vanquisher and vanquished, but victory was on the point of declaring for Frederic, when another unknown person came and rescued his adversary. Frederic was obliged to let go his hold; and the two strangers disappeared among the dark corridors, whose various windings they seemed perfectly acquainted with.

In

In the meanwhile our friend remained immoveable, following with an attentive ear the direction of their steps, the noise of which was distinctly heard by him, from the echoing of the vaults. He considered whereabout he stood; he calculated their steps and the distance, with the design of surprising them in their retreat. It was in the midst of these reflections that we came up to him. ,

In a few moments, Joseph returned with some provisions, some torches, and our arms. We seized them, and without farther deliberation, we descended, for the fourth time, into these mysterious caverns.

CHAP. X.

A Discovery.

FREDERIC, with a loaded gun in his right hand, and a torch in his left, preceded us. Charles and I, armed in the same manner, occupied the center, and the march was closed by Joseph, carrying another gun, and the wallet which contained our provisions.

Frederic was not deceived in the direction of the route which the two fugitives had taken. In less than half an hour we arrived at the place where we had formerly discovered the remains of a fire,

VOL. III. I and

and it appeared very probable to us that it might have served as a kitchen to our neighbours, and consequently that their abode could not be far distant. This conjecture made us redouble our precautions.

Our march continued slow and in the most profound silence. We held our guns ready to fire on the first person who presented himself with a hostile intention. The proximity of the danger made us think of our provisions; the wallet was therefore opened, and we seated ourselves in a cavity of the rock, for the purpose of emptying a bottle of wine, which Joseph had taken care to provide. I had just got the glass to my mouth, when I heard a dog barking behind me. I turned round, and perceived a cleft in the rock, through which the sound had come to my ear. This then, doubtless, was the retreat of the strangers we were in search of; but where was there an entrance? We could see no opening large enough to admit us.

Our

Our repast finished, we pursued our march in the same silence, taking care not to leave the environs of the rock. We examined, we sought every where, but no door, no outlet offered itself to our view. We were about to give up our enterprise, and return to our dwelling, when suddenly the sound of many voices at a distance struck our ear. We listened, we recommenced our search: a large crevice, which opened at our feet, impeded our progress, and made us lose a considerable time. At length we overcame this obstacle; the sound of the voices became more distinct; we took them for our guide. We advanced our torches, and perceived a narrow entry almost hid by the projection of the rock;—it was not possible for two to walk abreast, and this manner of presenting ourselves appeared to us the more dangerous, as we had reason to suspect the intentions of those who lived there.

Frederic, whom nothing was able to intimidate, was not to be stopped by this consideration. As the light of the torches might betray us too soon, we placed them against the rock. He then entered on tiptoe, with his piece levelled, and a naked sabre under his arm. Charles and I followed him in the same silence, and in the same attitude. Joseph remained on the outside, and at a signal agreed upon, was to make all the noise in his power, in order to terrify our adversaries by the appearance of a considerable number. Arrived in the grotto, without being observed, we ranged ourselves abreast of each other, and marched to a cavity where our enemies, to the number of nine, were seated round a table. The sprightliness of their conversation did not suffer any one of them to notice our entrance. The table was covered with choice viands and flagons of wine. A large lamp was suspended from the middle, and arms of all kinds were hung round the walls. At
this

this moment Joseph uttered a piercing cry. One of them raised his head, and seeing us, cried out—"To arms!"—His comrades instantly made a movement to seize their guns.

"The first who stirs, is dead!" cried Frederic, in a terrible voice, and levelling his piece.

Our boldness imposed on them; they remained an instant confounded, uncertain whether they ought to defend themselves, or submit.

"How! is it you?" said a voice which we imagined we recognised. "If you come as friends, you are welcome, and we invite you to partake of our feast; but if as enemies, do not suppose we will lose our liberties but with our lives."

The sound of the voice, and the features of him who spoke, struck us with a new surprise. An exclamation of joy escaped us;

we threw down our guns, and found ourselves in the embrace of——of Carl!

The whole troop instantly reseated themselves at table. Carl, who appeared to reign there as Chief, placed us by the side of him, and the repast continued.

Poor Joseph, although half dead with fear, did not cease for a moment the uproar he was making. I ran to fetch him, and made him sit down, trembling, close to me. By degrees, all restraint disappeared, and gave place to an agreeable familiarity. All that the beaufet, the kitchen, and the cellar of our new hosts contained that was most rare and delicate, was spread with profusion on the table.

We took an opportunity of imparting to Carl the suspicions which the fragment of the letter, found in his cabin, had given us on his account. He informed us that the letter in question was an invitation
from

from his friends then present, pressing him to come and join them—an invitation which he had accepted with the greatest pleasure, as, since our affair with one of the gamekeepers of the Count de Bollen, he had not been able to go out of his cabin, nor fire a gun, without incurring the risk of being arrested.

“ But you have a wife and children,” said Frederic to him. “ Why did you keep that circumstance a secret from us ? ”

“ Because it was unnecessary to tell you of it,” answered Carl. “ As to the change which you remarked in my disposition at your return, you ought to have attributed it,” added he, “ to the necessity which your imprudence had reduced me to, of quitting an asylum which I had for ten years peaceably inhabited.”

On saying these words, he rose from the table, and made a sign for us to follow him.

There are men whose first appearance inspires us with confidence, and Carl was of that number. We followed him without hesitation. After a few windings in the interior of the grotto, we arrived at a square vaulted apartment. A spaniel was laying at the entrance; it was no doubt to the barking of this animal that we owed our discovery.

Here Carl for a moment quitted us; but on his return, he led us into a large room, where we saw two women and three children. The elder was the wife of Carl; she was busily engaged in working for the two children, who were at her side. The other was in the flower of her age, and giving suck to an infant, apparently newly born.

“Permit me, ladies,” said Carl to them, on entering, “to present to you those persons whose neighbourhood has caused you so much alarm; you will perceive they are neither of an age nor figure to do
you

you any mischief: quit, therefore, your retreat, and come and live amongst us as formerly.

The gracious reception we received from these ladies, had nothing in it which betrayed the profession of their husbands. Their manners, without being affected, bore the stamp of an education much superior to any thing we could have expected there. We had no difficulty in persuading them that our intentions were not hostile; and they, on their side, informed us that the husband of Madame Walbot, the name of the young mother, at their particular request, had been for some time past watching us, “less with the design,” added she, “of doing you any harm, than to prevent you from doing any.”

An easy and cheerful conversation conducted us insensibly to the hour of supper. We prepared to take leave of our hosts; but Carl, who had regained all his good humour, strongly opposed it. The ladies

joined their entreaties, and we were consequently obliged to remain. At this moment M. Walbot entered; he bowed gravely to us, and after having caressed his wife and the amiable infant she held in her arms, he mixed in our conversation, which very soon became general.

Carl recounted to the company the manner in which he had become acquainted with us; our affair with the gamekeepers, the siege of the belfry, our escape—he omitted nothing. They laughed at it heartily; but the name of the Count de Bollen having been pronounced by Frederic, the younger lady heaved a profound sigh, and turned aside her head, to conceal a tear which rolled down her lovely cheeks.

“Endeavour, my love,” said her husband, who perceived the impression this name had made on her, “to chase away these sad remembrances. We are no longer
on

on the territories of the Count de Bollen ; you are a wife and a mother, and all his authority will not be able to break the sacred tie which attaches us to each other for life.

A woman never is more interesting than when she is fulfilling the duties of a mother. The tears of Madame Walbot had a sensible effect upon us, and we did not believe we committed any indiscretion in requesting her to inform us of the motives which caused them to flow.

“ Our friend Walbot will tell you every thing over his glass,” said Carl. “ Supper waits for us ;—come, let us go, and seat ourselves at table.”

We were fourteen in number, without reckoning Joseph, who waited on us. The repast was better ordered than we could hope for, although it was composed wholly of game ; and the wine, although rare in

that country, was not spared. Gaiety in a very short time animated the countenances of all present. This gaiety gave birth to cheerfulness; and in order to render the evening as amusing as possible, Carl proposed that each person should relate his history.

At this proposition, the ladies made a movement to quit the table. Carl prevented them, in assuring them beforehand that the recitals should contain nothing that could wound their modesty, or be derogatory to the respect due to their sex. The ladies, encouraged by this promise, reseated themselves; and Carl, as being the oldest in company, began in the following terms:—

“ I am the only son of a Professor of Law in the University of Wurtzburgh. The utmost ambition of my father was to make me a Doctor of Laws; but, unfortunately for the success of his plan, I had read Plutarch,

Plutarch, and the names of Pompey, Cæsar, and many others appeared to me more harmonious than those of Grotius, Puffendorf, &c. I took the liberty of acknowledging to my father the predilection I had for the former. He sentenced me for a fortnight to bread and water, in order, as he said, to form my taste. They had taken my Plutarch from me; but I had the address to conceal the Commentaries of Cæsar: I literally devoured them in my prison. At length I was liberated, and my father took me himself to the house of the Grand Rector. I made no hesitation in promising every thing that was demanded of me; for we always promise a great deal when we do not mean to perform any thing.

“The next day, instead of going to the University, I enlisted myself as a volunteer in a regiment of dragoons that was passing through the city. Germany was then at war with France; and I was engaged in

in many combats which took place during that campaign.

“At the end of three years’ service, without any other recommendation than my behaviour and my sword, I was promoted to the rank of officer. In the meantime every measure was taken by both parties to come to a decisive battle, and it took place a few days after. My regiment was ordered to storm a battery, whose fire very much annoyed us. We marched to the attack; whole ranks fell at my side; my Captain was carried away by a cannonball. I took his place, and remained firm at the head of my company. Victory was on the point of declaring herself in favour of us, when I received a severe wound, and was thrown among the dead. My Lieutenant replaced me, the battle was won, and we remained masters of the field.

“As soon as I recovered the use of my senses,

senses, I found myself amidst the dying and the dead, heaped together in the Church of a village, which served us for an hospital. I soon got cured of my wound, and rejoined my corps. All the soldiers of my company embraced me with transport, and hailed me as their future Captain. The rank was no more than my due; but the Lieutenant who had succeeded to my station at the time the affair was nearly finished, claimed it also.

“ I had on my side nothing but justice, and the suffrages of my comrades; but my opponent, on the contrary, was the natural son of a Baron of the Holy Empire, and he had, besides, a sister, who was intimately acquainted with the principal *valet de chambre* of the Minister. These considerations were too strong against me. I had my scars for a recompence, and my adversary received the Captain's commission.

“Indignant at such unworthy treatment, I quitted the service, and returned home to my father. He had not forgotten my former conduct; and the first question he asked me was, if I would consent to become a Doctor of Laws?—We were then at the door of his house. I answered him, “No,” and he immediately shut the door, and left me in the street.

“The influence of a petticoat had deprived me of a Captain’s commission, and my repugnance to a Doctor’s bonnet, made me lose the inheritance of my father; but as a dragoon is never at a loss for a subsistence, I was not long unhappy. I had still some money left, and I purchased the cabin, where I had the pleasure of exercising the rights of hospitality towards these gentlemen. The forest abounded in game; and my wife, who resided in a neighbouring town, was charged with selling the produce of my gun, which I carried to her regularly three times a week.

“Such

“ Such has been the life which I have led for these last ten years ; and if it has been accompanied by dangers, it has also, as you see, given me some pleasures. My wife, thank God, has good health—my children equal my fondest wishes—and as for myself, I live without cares ; and, sheltered from intrigue, I have no longer to fear, thanks to my address, either the influence of a courtesan or a Doctor’s bonnet.”

Thus terminated the history of Carl. Our’s was not so long. That of three Tyrolians, who formed part of our company, was still shorter. They had quitted their mountains, to apprentice themselves to the profession of poacher, which they intended soon afterwards to exercise in their own country.—Four poor students, whom a trick of youth had obliged to abandon the College of Heidelberg, next appeared. The revival with which they obliged us, is not sufficiently interesting to

to obtain a place in these memoirs. M. Walbot alone remained ; he spoke in his turn, and related to us what follows :—

“ My father was one of the principal magistrates of the Comté of Bollen. The time of my infancy was passed almost entirely at the Castle ; because the Countess was amused with my arch tricks, and because my Lord the Count availed himself of the ingenuousness of my age, to get informed of the secrets of his Lady.

“ The virtuous Countess was in the habit of regularly shutting herself up twice a day in her oratory, where she passed an hour or two, either in severely examining her past conduct, or in reading the Lives of the Saints. This extreme devotion gave umbrage to the Count, who was without an heir to his vast possessions, and who bitterly complained of thus losing the moments in which that defect might be remedied. The Lives of
the

the Saints appeared to him very agreeable reading; but he was unable to conceive how any one could prefer that to the laudable employment of labouring for posterity. This idea suggested a project to his mind, and he fixed on me as the most suitable agent to carry it into execution.

“ I was the only one in the Castle permitted to enter the oratory of my Lady the Countess: it was to me that she confided the key, in order to go and dust the reading-desk, lay the book ready, and mark the Saint to whom the day might be particularly dedicated. I acquitted myself of these important functions with a degree of dexterity that charmed my amiable benefactress.

“ One morning the Count called me into his study, and gave into my hands a large book, which he ordered me to lay on my Lady’s reading-desk, and to bring
the

the other to him. I punctually obeyed his commands. An instinct of curiosity induced me to turn over the new book; it contained plates as well as the other, but the subjects were by no means the same. In that given me by the Count, the figures were always two and two; and what still more convinced me of the difference was, that the latter had no demons, boiling caldrons, fierce flames, &c. My curiosity being satisfied, I took to the Count the book which he had ordered me, and a moment afterwards the Countess entered her oratory.

“ The hour of dinner being arrived, the Count sat down to table, and his Lady was not long before she joined him.

‘ Well, Madam,’ said he after a moment’s silence, ‘ how have you passed the morning?’

‘ Much as usual.’

‘ Doubtless

‘Doubtless in reading some pious book?’

‘According to my daily custom.’

‘I am glad to hear it.’

‘It is highly proper to be a little mindful of one’s salvation.’

‘A little, my Lady: two hours every morning, and as much after dinner, is, I think, rather too much. Since we have had two beds, I have not so much of your company in a whole week.’

‘I have my peculiarities, my Lord; and you know my attachment to them is unalterable.’

‘But I have no heir.’

‘Good Heavens! what an idea! Well, my Lord, there is a time for every thing; perhaps it will happen when you least expect it.’

‘Oh, perhaps! but in order that such an event may take place——’

“Here my Lady,^o fearing her ears might be wounded by some over free expression,

expression, rose from table, and walked towards the garden.

“The Count, astonished at not hearing any thing mentioned respecting the book he had substituted, remained an instant absorbed in his reflections.

‘She has not opened it,’ said he to himself; ‘she would otherwise doubtless have reproached me. How then has she passed two long hours? It is not very usual to pray so long at her age. She will let me grow old before she gives me an heir.’

“This was the constant burthen of his lamentations; the poor Count was in despair, and knew not what to think of the matter. Meantime, the book in question had been three days in the oratory, and not a word had been said of it on either side. I had just received the key on the morning of the fourth, in order to

go and perform my usual task ; and having opened the book, was proceeding to examine the plates, which greatly amused me, when my Lady entered the oratory. Casting her eyes over me, she uttered a cry of astonishment, and snatching it from me with precipitation, asked me how I had come by it. I informed her of the orders I had received and executed.

‘ What ! ’ exclaimed she, ‘ has this book been here three days ? ’ and so saying she threw herself into an arm-chair, seemingly buried in thought, and covering her face with her hands.

“ However a woman may be deficient in practice, she never has occasion for more than two minutes to disentangle herself from the greatest difficulty. A single one would have been sufficient for the Countess. She rang the bell ; a domestic appeared.

‘ Go,

‘Go,’ said she, ‘and beg my Lord to step here.’

“It may easily be supposed that the poor husband quickly obeyed the summons.

‘At your service, my Lady,’ cried he, on entering the apartment a moment afterwards. ‘This is what may be called practical piety: instead of a simple oratory, this is henceforth to become a temple in which love——’

‘Stop!’ interrupted the devout Countess, ‘stop! The confession that I have to make, is too important to square with pleasantries of this nature.’—Then, assuming a tone at once reserved and sincere, she continued in these terms—‘You know, my Lord, that my favourite reading is the Lives of the Saints; it is from that sacred book I have drawn, from my earliest youth, the rules of a prudent and irreproachable conduct. Well—would you believe it?—
this

this book was three days ago removed by somebody, and one of a very different nature put in its place. I have forborne to speak to you of the circumstance till now, in order to give to the guilty person time to repent of such palpable malevolence ; or, should the intention have been innocent, to repair the error : but I see too plainly that my silence——’

‘ No more, I beg of you,’ interrupted the Count, trembling, and throwing himself on his knees ; ‘ I only am the culpable party. A thousand pardons, not merely for the imprudence I have been guilty of, but particularly for the suspicions which I conceived from your silence !—Ah ! would you but consent to bless me with an heir !’

‘ Well, we shall see.’

‘ There is no necessity for seeing.’

‘ I will consider of it then.’

‘ That will not be sufficient, Madam ; something more is necessary, and that is precisely what you appear averse to.’

VOL. III.

‘ There



‘There is no haste, my Lord; I am still young.’

‘I allow it; but I begin to grow old, and I should wish to live in my posterity.’

‘That is both just and natural. Be so good as to let me have my book back again, and I promise you that you shall have no cause to complain of me.’

“These last words enchanted the Count. The books were each put in their former places, and the parties separated with marks of the most tender affection.

“The amorous Count did not forget, the following day, to remind his Lady of the promise she had made the preceding morning. Unfortunately, he received at that critical moment an order to repair immediately to Court, where he held a considerable post. There was nothing left but to obey. The desire of preserving his honours and emoluments prevailed even over that of having an heir. He
embraced

embraced the Countess, and departed for Vienna.

“ He expected not to continue there more than three months ; yet upwards of six had elapsed, and no mention was made of his return. I know not what, during this interval, became either of the book or of the oratory ; but my functions ceased the day after the Count’s departure, and the Countess in a short time became so extremely corpulent, that every one who visited at the Castle said openly that it could be nothing but a *schirrositz*, or a confessed dropsy. The domestics, however, always smiled when any one spoke of the devotion or malady of their mistress, and prognosticated the epoch of her cure with an assurance which astonished me. But what surprised me still more was, that their prophecy came to pass. My Lady went for a month to drink the waters of Spa, and, thanks to
K 2 their

their efficacy, she returned from the excursion better than ever.

“The Count himself came back to the Castle a few days after the arrival of the Countess. I had imagined that he would be overjoyed to see his Lady perfectly recovered from her long indisposition. I was mistaken: he became gloomy, silent, and spoke no longer either of the antiquity of his family, or of his desire to leave an heir behind him. My official functions recommenced with fresh vigour. My Lady passed the whole day in her oratory, and my Lord either at table or in the woods, making war upon the game, or the deer in his park.

“One day, as he was returning from his sport, he took it into his head to enter the Castle by the garden. A narrow walk, little frequented, led to the oratory of the Countess, who happened at that time to be engaged, as usual, in her
pious

pious studies. He had the curiosity to venture in. I know not what took place exactly ; but a terrible noise proceeding from that quarter, alarmed the whole house. The Count swore like a madman ; the Countess cried out as if her life had been attacked by assassins.

“ Attracted by such extraordinary sounds, I ran, with several domestics, to learn the cause. As I entered the oratory, I received a box on the ears for my pains. Those who followed me, were still more unfavourably treated. The reading-desk was overturned, and broken to pieces, the holy book torn most profanely, and the terrified Countess took the first opportunity of escaping to her dressing-room with a large confusion on her forehead. During all this bustle, a young man had been perceived leaping the hedges and ditches of the park, and the servants attributed to him not only the confusion that had happened, but also the Countess's

dropsy. For my part, I think we should consider maturely before condemning the conduct of a woman of character.

“The next day was still worse. My Lady had orders to return to her own family; all her servants were dismissed, and I was sent back to my father. He was vexed at the circumstance, because he had till then looked on me as the adopted son of the Count, and I became a serious burthen to him. The treatment I experienced, was correspondent to this idea. My brothers and sisters, who had envied me in the days of my prosperity, indemnified themselves by their unkind behaviour, for the momentary prosperity which the blind partiality of the Count had given me over them. My disgrace was complete.

“I felt it the more, as my dismissal from the Castle had taken place at a moment when my acquaintance with
Theresa

Theresa began to inform me that I had attained my fifteenth year. At fifteen, and with a young girl, considerable progress is made in a very little time. I frequently took the road to the Castle, in order to mourn my hapless destiny with Theresa. My Lord at length was apprized of the motive of my visits, and prohibited me from continuing them.

“ He had abandoned the desire of propagating a future race of Counts of the Holy Empire, but he was unwilling that his name should become extinct, and, to prevent such a misfortune, he had cast his eyes on my Theresa, who being the daughter of his steward, he looked upon as absolutely belonging to him, and wholly at his disposal. He had brought her up from her infancy in this honourable design, as a choice fruit to regale his taste; but this plum was not ripening for him. My eighteen years made more impression on her than the Count’s

sixty, and all the illustrious ancestors whose dingy portraits decorated his gallery.

“ Meantime, the shame of having for a rival the son of one of his Magistrates, had inflamed with anger and indignation the lofty soul of the Count. Twenty times had he sworn on his sabre, taken in Palestine, to make me repent of my infraction of his orders, when my father received his commands to keep me in strict confinement, under the penalty of losing his post. He accordingly shut me up in a room at the top of the house, the door of which was guarded without by my brothers and sisters, who alternately were my jailers.

“ Theresa, on her part, continued to be importuned by the Count, who still tormented by the desire of leaving heirs, to keep up the family name, promised at last to marry her with the left hand, in
order

order that such an unequal union might not contaminate the antiquity of his nobility. A shepherd, to whom I had rendered some trifling services during my residence in the Castle, came to give me this dreadful intelligence, which put the finishing stroke to my misery.

“The idea of seeing Theresa consigned to the arms of such a rival, rendered me furious. I twisted together a quantity of the straw which composed my bed; of this I made a cord, and towards the evening of the third day, after having received my scanty supper from the hands of my guardians, I carefully secured the door, fastened my cord to a beam, and began to descend from the window. The straw broke, but not till I had got more than half way to the bottom; and the fall did not hinder me from instantly taking the road to the Castle.

“The apartment which the Count had
K 5 occupied

occupied ever since the departure of the Countess, was on the ground floor, and looked to the garden. The light of the candles which illuminated that part of the Castle, induced me to turn my steps towards it. My Lord was sitting in an arm-chair, holding in his hands those of Theresa, who was sorrowfully listening to his amorous flourishes. The father of Theresa, proud of the alliance of a Count of the Holy Empire, was concealing his joy under an appearance of gravity, and answered to the compliments of the company by signs of the head, which he took care to accompany with smiles of protection. Several other persons, differently engaged, composed the remainder of this assembly. Every one seemed busy; the servants were continually running backward and forward; every face, except that of Theresa, wore the impression of impatience. I knew not what to conclude from seeing such a large company.

' Here

‘Here is the Notary,’ said a domestic, who at this moment entered the room.

‘Oh Heavens!’ cried I, ‘they are going to sign the contract!—I shall lose my Theresa!—What shall I do!—What will become of me!’

“My despair was inexpressible. The step of a man, who seemed to be approaching me, drew me out of my reverie. I went up to him, and by the light of a lamp, recognised him to be the attorney of the place. Immediately a thought occurred to me.

‘You are waited for,’ said I; ‘but before executing the contract, my Lord desires to have a few minutes’ conversation with you.’

“So saying, I shewed him into a pavilion at the other side of the garden. He followed me without suspicion, and having got him safely there, I double-

locked the door, put the key in my pocket, and went to resume my station at the window.

“The Notary not arriving, the company began to shew signs of impatience. The domestics were summoned, and returned for answer to the enquiries made them, that he was coming. At length the party, tired of waiting, left the room. Some came out to see for him, others to take a turn in the garden. The Count, giving his hand to Theresa, chose the most solitary walk, in order to converse more freely of his ardent passion. This walk led directly to the pavilion in which the Notary was shut up. The latter, impatient in his turn, grumbled, and beat against the door, which not being able to open, he endeavoured to force. The noise struck the ears of the Count. He quitted Theresa, and ran to the pavilion, and soon distinguished the voice of the Notary.

“During

“ During their discourse, I flew to my mistress. She recognised me, and threw herself into my arms. I proposed immediate flight. The danger was pressing; if possible, I was more so. Theresa yielded to my arguments, and abandoned herself wholly to my discretion. I conducted her towards the little gate of the garden by which the Notary had entered; and while the latter, with the assistance of the Count, were forcing open the door of the pavilion, Theresa and I had reached the neighbouring forest.

“ We walked on for several hours in the dark, without any other object in contemplation, than that of getting to a distance from the Castle. The first rays of Aurora discovered to us a little cottage; at which we knocked for admission. It was the habitation of Carl. He opened the door, gave us the most flattering reception, and became our benefactor.

“ The

“The account of our flight interested him in our favour, but did not blind him with respect to our danger. He advised us to seek a retreat out of the Count's domains.

‘I know of none,’ replied I; ‘and if I did, how should I obtain a living without money, without resources of any kind?’

‘I will procure it for you,’ said he, ‘until you have acquired the skill of using a gun with success.’

‘The use of a gun!’ exclaimed I, transported with joy; ‘it is the only thing I was ever properly taught while I was at the Castle.’

‘As that is the case, then,’ returned he, ‘hold yourself in readiness to set off this evening.’

“As soon as it was dusk, we began our journey, laden with provisions for several days. The following morning Carl installed me in this cavern. The furniture you
see,

see, was here previously. I wanted nothing but a gun. I found several in a hollow tree, which Carl pointed out to me, and which served as a depôt of arms, in the event of our being by chance discovered in our subterranean abode.

“At length, after having given me the address of some persons who would take the produce of my labour at a moderate price, he left us, overwhelmed with my thanks and benedictions, as well as those of Theresa. A good Curate of a neighbouring village married us a few days afterwards. Our society soon augmented. Our commerce became more extensive. Theresa has added to my happiness, by presenting me with a son, who resembles her; and if any farther addition could have been made to it, doubtless it would have been by the arrival of my benefactor Carl, and the presence of the new guests who now favour us with their company.”

A general toast terminated this recital; after which, thanking our neighbours for their frank and friendly reception, we requested they would give us their society the following day. The ladies, to whom Frederic addressed himself, accepted our invitation, and Carl promised for himself and his comrades. This matter being agreed to on all sides, we took our leave; and each of us taking up a flambeau and his gun, we returned to the Castle, followed by Joseph, who began to think within himself that all the extraordinary things related of the caves, might not be exactly true.

The silver disk of the moon was then precisely over our heads; it was too late to send home Joseph, who therefore passed the night with us. As soon as the day broke, he went to visit his mother, in whom his absence might have created some anxiety, and whose assistance we stood in need of, with respect to the treatment
we

we were to give our neighbours. He carried with him money, to purchase several things we wanted. At his return he would pass an inn, situated on the high road, where we had recently left our address. It was now more than a month since we had received any news either from Frank or Florella; and we began to feel uneasy at their silence. The attachment of the one, and the services of the other, had given to both irresistible claims to our eternal gratitude.

These ideas, and the preparations for dinner, wholly occupied us when Joseph entered, accompanied by his mother. The poor woman, supposing us in embarrassment as to the mode of entertaining our guests, ventured, in order to assist us, to come to the Castle, where she had not set foot for twenty years before. An ass that followed them, was laden with all we could desire, to give our company a splendid reception.

Astonishment

Astonishment blended with terror, took possession of the good woman at the sight of the mouldering towers, the lofty walls standing by themselves, and the heaps of ruins which it was necessary to pass, in order to reach the place of our abode. Each object that she noticed, recalled to her mind some one of those thousand terrifying anecdotes, invented and authenticated by fear and superstition. She had no sooner begun an account, than immediately another object meeting her eye, she lost the thread of her former recital, to relate an event still more extraordinary and horrid.

Meanwhile, the ass, loaded with crockery and provision, was peaceably browsing the grass which grew among the ruins; thrice had his discordant braying made the walls of the Castle echo. Margaret—that was the name of the old woman—warned by this third signal to put an end to her stories, called Joseph to come and
unload

unload the poor animal. We ran ourselves to do this, begging him immediately to set about the dinner. What was our joy on finding among the earthen-ware and provisions, our musical instruments, which we had left at the inn. Abandoned, and laying absolutely unexercised for three months, they became to us objects of real curiosity. We kissed them with rapture, as long-lost companions, which, though inanimate, would recall to our minds the ideas of past delights, and give variety to the leisure of our solitude. Thus every thing assumes the complexion of the circumstances in which we happen to be; it is not our eyes, but the affections of our souls, that determine the colour and the value of all we possess or contemplate.

We were busied in preparing our instruments, in the intention of rendering the entertainment complete, when Carl and Walbot presented themselves, accompanied
by

by their wives. The powers of the toilet had set off the charms of the latter to advantage. Their white gowns with long trains, made them resemble those phantoms covered with a sheet, which Margaret assured us had frequently been seen by the neighbouring shepherds. We received them as acquaintances, whose friendship we were desirous of cultivating. They knew nothing of the part of the Castle which we inhabited ; we therefore thought it might serve to amuse them until dinner was ready.

The height and extent of the apartments—the remains of barbarous magnificence which were discoverable through the Gothic antiquity of the walls—the gloomy and imposing aspect of the gallery that led to our lodging—the picturesque and diversified prospect which was offered on all sides, enchanted the ladies. But their surprise was at the highest, when they perceived the furniture of all kinds that

that filled our rooms. They had expected to make a very homely meal between four bare walls, without seats or table; and what they saw and experienced, answered so little to the idea they had formed, that they remained for a moment undecided whether they should not call Carl, who had just before walked another way.

That worthy man, struck in the same manner, had been to visit the kitchen, where he had taken, unknown to us, a basket filled with provision of all sorts. His surprise was not less than that of the ladies and Walbot, whom he rejoined soon afterwards. Margaret had received his present with the indifference of a person who has no need of any thing. She was precisely in what the professors of the art of cookery style the *critical moment*; and her design was to give us a specimen of her talents for the business she had undertaken.

It

It was not long before the three Tyrolians, and the four students of Heidelberg, appeared among the rest of the company. We strolled, by the light of torches, through a part of the vaults which led to the well that was spoken of at the beginning of this chapter. Charles explained to them the meaning of the different inscriptions that we had remarked in our former visits. The observations made by Carl and Walbot on the subject, abounded with good sense, and shewed a degree of understanding which announced considerable reading and sound discernment. The four students also took part in the conversation; and some historical particulars which they furnished, as well on the origin of the Free Judges, as on their mode of proceeding, convinced us that they had not lost all the time they had passed at College.

At length the dinner hour arrived. Joseph summoned us, and our appetites
conducted

conducted us to the Castle. We sat down to table. Margaret had done wonders; every thing had been foreseen and calculated; each dish was served up in a style that excited anew the astonishment and admiration of our guests. Joseph, with a napkin under his arm, brought in, and placed the dishes in order; while Margaret received, with a smile of satisfaction, the praises bestowed on her culinary talents.

The quality of the wines corresponded with the rest. Carl and Walbot could not recover from their surprise; they seemed to feel ashamed for having given us only beer the preceding day, when they saw the best wines flow with a degree of profusion. In a short time, however, the joy became general, and no one thought of any thing but how to celebrate, in a suitable manner, the epoch of such an interesting meeting.

This

This meeting might pass for a phenomenon in a place covered with ruins, and consecrated to meditation by several centuries of absolute solitude. The sounds of pleasure appeared strangers to those vaults, at once gloomy and majestic, the melancholy silence of which had not been disturbed during so many years, save by the hissing of reptiles, the screams of the birds of night, or the cries of the various animals that sought shelter amidst their ruins. This contrast heightened our enjoyment. Our presence created a world in the middle of a desert; our voices animated it, and the accents of life and gaiety resounded throughout an asylum, where reigned so lately only the mournful and monotonous silence of the tombs.

The dessert being brought in, Madame Walbot had obliged the company with a song, which she sang with considerable skill and taste. Frederic was complimenting her on her manner of execution, when

when suddenly a celestial harmony proceeded from the adjoining apartment. This was performed by the four students, who had concerted among themselves to treat us with an agreeable surprise. We directly joined them; and conducting them to the window of the apartment, which overlooked the precipice, we began our symphony.

✱ It is impossible to give an idea of the effect which the sound of our instruments produced in this solitude. A universal silence succeeded the first notes we played; the birds, astonished, suspended their own melody to listen to our's; the timid hare left its shelter, sat down, pricked up its ears, and took to flight; then, uncertain whether to go or stay, it returned by a semicircular direction, again stopped, listened awhile, and took to flight afresh; the roebuck remained immoveable on the edge of the rock; his head only moved, and he endeavoured, by moving his ear with

VOL. III. L rapidity,

rapidity, to catch the strange sounds wafted by the zephyrs;—the rocks received them tremblingly, transmitted them from one to the other, and a quintuple echo prolonged them until they reached a little cataract, which terminated the charming valley we were contemplating. Second Amphions, we animated those silent groves, which had never witnessed the soft whisperings of a fond pair—that wild and unproductive spot which had never been trodden by the foot of a cotemporary.

Oh ye little great men! who lay out pleasure-gardens, and construct Chinese pavilions! what are your rocks, your cascades, your palaces, and all your pigmy works, in comparison of those huge masses which the hand of Nature has thrown at hazard around us, and which, after a period of twenty centuries, still wear the impression of their original novelty!

The

The reader will perhaps believe that the circumstances here mentioned, were less the effect of the music, than those of an imagination struck with the picturesque prospect which was before our eyes. I shall endeavour to convince him of the contrary ; and for that purpose will relate a fact, corroborated by the daily experience of more than two months. It may furnish some reflections to the observer of nature, as well as to the amateur of music.

CHAP. XI.

The Lizard.

I HAVE already said that our study, constituting part of a tower built on the summit of a rock, overlooked a tremendous precipice ;—a torrent, at this time not in full force, ran with rapidity in the bottom, and dashed the foot of the tower with its foaming waves. The opposite side offered only to the enquiring eye a wild and uncultivated flat. Never since our abode at the Castle, had the explosion of a gun been heard on this part of the territory ;

territory; the hare, the roebuck, the hind, all reposed in perfect security. We had made a point of respecting this asylum, from the apprehension of terrifying those poor harmless animals that gladdened our sight by the spectacle of their frolics, in the same manner as in the Garden of Eden, the lamb and the panther recreated, by their innocent diversions, the hearts of our first parents.

At about the distance of ten feet below our windows, the rock projected, and this projection formed a smooth space of fifteen inches square. As soon as the sun darted his rays on this platform, a large lizard quitted the recess beneath, which served for his retreat, and came to repose on it. When the shade reached the spot, he immediately quitted it, and returned into his nest, from whence he did not again come out until the following day. This mode of life, so regular and constantly uniform, attracted our attention

some time before we received our instruments. The first sounds he heard, induced him to hurry back to his retreat sooner than usual; but he presently afterwards ventured out again, slowly advancing to the place he was accustomed to occupy.

The next day gave rise to the same observation. His step, however, was bolder. He raised his head, and a sort of shuddering rapidly varied the different colours which his back reflected. The third day his fear seemed to have left him, and his *sortie*, as well as his retirement, exactly kept pace with the appearance, or the decline of the sun.

One evening, on the ninth or tenth day after we had been in possession of our instruments, the lizard having been retired to his concealment about half an hour, we were executing from memory several pieces of harmony. A soft melancholy
gave

gave to our notes that indefinable charm which is usually called expression, but which is really an emanation of the soul, modified according to the affections by which it may be occupied. A *cantabile* that Florella had brought from Naples, happened at this moment to recur to the mind of Frederic. This recollection added to the melancholy by which we were possessed. We had scarcely finished the first part, when we perceived our lizard advance his head out of his retreat. The second part, which was the finest, seemed to fix his irresolution. He quitted his hole; and, notwithstanding the absence of the sun, he took, for the purpose of listening to us, his accustomed position. The *cantabile* being ended, he returned to his shelter; and though we played several other airs in the same key as the preceding, he did not attempt to stir.

It was no longer the sun which fixed the moment of his appearance, but it was

the charm of our harmony. He gave way to it with a sort of voluptuousness;—in order to enjoy it, he deviated from his regularity of life. Sometimes he would lay on his back, for the purpose of exposing every part of his body to the same vibrations. The second day we repeated the experiment. Its effect was the same as before. The second part of the *cantabile* was the signal for his coming forth.

In short, this delightful piece of music became a formal summons which the lizard never failed to obey. Before or after sunrise, in the middle or towards the decline of the day, all hours were equal to him. No sooner had the second part commenced, than he prepared himself to give it all possible attention. All the rest of the concert seemed to be wholly incapable of interesting him. Did we repeat his favourite air, he returned;—if we played another, he remained where he was.

was. Sometimes, in order to prove his judgment, we began with the second part; he immediately appeared, as if to convince us that he knew what he was about, and that he was not to be duped by our artifice.

We had frequent opportunities of renewing our trial of his judgment during more than two months, and often twice, thrice, or four times a day, without once being disappointed in our expectations. I am wrong—two days successively our solitary resisted all our appeals; but it had been raining considerably—the earth was damp; perhaps, also, he might have been indisposed, for the third day he repeated his accustomed movements.

I have since communicated these particulars to several learned societies, and could never obtain any thing like a satisfactory answer. I now submit them to

the judgment of the reader; for those who read Novels and Romances, frequently know more than those who compose them. That, I am well assured, is not saying a great deal; but both the one and the other are generally as good as the critic who judges them, and that is what I intended to say. Let us now return to our history.

If I am not deceived, I left the reader listening to the symphony that we were performing, and occupied, as we were, in calculating, in the intervals, the decreasing gradation of the echo which repeated the sounds of our instruments. It is not very common to see several persons of both sexes met together without the mention of dancing. The dinner had been excellent, the company was disposed to hilarity; Carl, as the president of the assembly, proposed a waltz, and we accordingly set to dancing
waltzes

waltzes in a ruined Castle, amidst heaps of rubbish, and in the midst of the ravages of time and destruction. In a similar manner have we since seen wretches, a disgrace to humanity, dance around the still bloody bodies of their fellow-creatures; but their joy was that of the furies—our's was as pure as the air that we inhaled in that romantic solitude.

CHAP. XII.

A Visit.

THIS exercise lasted about two hours. The sun, which had just retired behind the rocks that appeared to our right, gilded with his parting rays their rugged and dusky tops. This imposing spectacle, this majestic decline, which resembles the death not of the great, but of the good man, had attracted us to the windows. Suddenly we were struck by another phenomenon. It was a man at no great distance, approaching the Castle, handing along two females. The one young and
3 airy,

airy, seemed to sport carelessly along the path, which was bordered with precipices; the other, less agile and more prudent, looked cautiously to her feet, and advanced with apparent difficulty, with tottering step, and her hand extended towards the attentive stranger who preceded them. Who could he be? What could he be in search of, with the two women who accompanied him? We each asked this question, and no one could answer it.

Meantime they arrived at the summit of the mountain, where the road takes another direction to approach the Castle. We quitted the windows, and flew to another, in order to observe the course they should take. They were just entering the court. Having stopped a moment to throw around them a look of astonishment, they continued their way, advancing towards the part of the Castle which we inhabited.

The

The more we observed them, the less we could conjecture the motive of so extraordinary a visit.

“ I cannot be deceived !—it is he !—it is Frank !” suddenly exclaimed Charles.

“ What, Frank !” repeated old Margaret, with a look of exultation. “ Is he come all this way to seek me ?”

“ Yes, mother, it is he ; there he is, with my aunt and cousin ; I know them well enough ;” and so saying, Joseph ran out to give them the meeting.

“ Oh the excellent hearted boy !” cried Margaret, tottering to the door, while tears of pleasure came into her eyes.

“ Excellent indeed !” replied we all three, agitated by a spontaneous and irresistible emotion, and directly followed Joseph, to receive our new guests as they so well merited.

Immediately Frank perceived us, he quitted his mother, darted towards us, and fell.

fell into the arms of the first that came in his way : it was no longer our servant, but our brother, our friend that we welcomed in the most cordial manner to our solitude.

He who remembers the pleasure he enjoyed at the first assignation with his first mistress, can alone conceive a just idea of the transports of joy that this unexpected visit caused us. Frank, after having saluted his good aunt Margaret, introduced his mother and sister to us. We received them like old acquaintances ; and the usual compliments and congratulations having taken place, we conducted them in triumph to the saloon, where the remainder of the society were waiting for us. Every one strove who should be foremost in rendering them a service : the attention which springs from the most unfeigned hospitality, was lavished on them from all hands.

It was observed that the newly-arrived guests had probably gained an appetite by their walk, and suggested the propriety of their taking some refreshment. Immediately we proceeded to the adjoining apartment. We sat down to table afresh: there was still sufficient left to satisfy a greater number than our visitors amounted to.

The widow and Margaret, placed by the side of each other, occupied the seats of honour. Frank sat next to his aunt. The rest disposed themselves according to their own fancy, and the entertainment recommenced and continued, accompanied by the sound of music, executed alternately by us and by our comrades of Heidelberg.

Our new guests could not get the better of their surprise; it was to them a magical picture, a sort of enchantment, to find themselves in the midst of a society, not
brilliant,

brilliant, but amiable, and that in an absolute desert.

Frank had too much sensibility not to be struck by the contrast which our music, that charmed his ears, and the sight of the vast ruins that inspired him with a sort of melancholy, produced around him. He was unable to conceive how, in the middle of those ruins, in a wild and uncultivated spot, separated by frightful precipices from the rest of the world, it had been possible to load our table with the excellent dishes and the exquisite wines before him. Margaret and Joseph, however, soon solved this enigma. He thanked them with heartfelt emotion for the attention they had paid us during our abode at the Castle. The poor fellow set no bounds to the gratitude he fancied he owed us. His mother and sister equally regarded us as their benefactors; and what had it cost us to gain the esteem of so many virtuous hearts? Merely a little of our superfluity.

Ye

Ye sons of Avarice, you are incapable of tasting enjoyments of this nature !

We felt too much pleasure in seeing again Frank and his family, to part with them very early. Already midnight, that hour so favourable to nocturnal apparitions, had spread over the Castle its dismal veil, and no one had spoken of separating. Margaret, Joseph, the widow, her daughter, and the three Tyrolians approached not the windows without manifest repugnance, fearing to be struck with the appearance of some headless phantom wandering among the ruins. They drew closer to each other, and farther from the door, in proportion as the ghostly anecdotes of Margaret increased, or became more horrid. Carl, Walbot, and the four students smiled at their credulity, and continued drinking; while all three of us, seated in a recess of one of the windows, were asking Frank a thousand questions with respect to the situation in which he had left our affairs,

affairs, the motives of his journey, and the means by which he had discovered the place of our retirement.

“ Nothing is more easy to be accounted for than all this,” said he ; “ but permit me to postpone till to-morrow my answers to your questions. My mother is fatigued ; it is time that I should think of providing a bed for her and my sister.”

These words, which he spoke high enough to be heard, were scarcely uttered when Mesdames Carl and Walbot offered to sleep together, in order to give up one of their beds to the widow and her daughter.

This difficulty being thus got over, it only remained to find out how old Margaret was to be accommodated. Carl proposed to her the skins of some deer that he had killed, and which served him for a sofa. She accepted them, on condition that she should pass the night by
the

the side of her sister and niece. For these purposes it was necessary to prepare the beds, which were in Carl's cave. After a fresh bumper round to the health of our new guests, we lighted a number of flambeaux; each of the ladies took hold of a gentleman's arm, and the whole company gaily took the road to the abode of Carl.

The subterranean passages I have before mentioned, lay in the way. Their dismal appearance could not but create a little anxiety in the bosoms of the widow and her daughter, which was not removed by the fresh string of anecdotes that they brought to the recollection of Margaret. It became desirable to counteract this mischief, and Charles soon thought of the means. He proposed to perform the march to the sounds of martial music.

Accordingly we took possession of our instruments; we placed ourselves, with our four comrades of Heidelberg, at the head

head of the column, and thus entered those gloomy vaults, which we took care to call the galleries of the Castle. This word, and the sound of the music, dispelled every idea of fear. The march continued in the middle of bursts of laughter; and our procession, which, but for the resolution we had adopted, would have had the air of a nocturnal funeral, rather resembled a joyful company, who were coming from the celebration of a wedding. To make a great noise, and change the names of things, has for ages past proved to be the whole art of governing mankind: for the last ten years it has been carried to the utmost perfection in France!

When we were arrived at the domicile of Carl, it was proposed to take another glass. The men all agreed; the ladies preferred retiring.

Frank, after having contributed as much as in his power to the accommodation of his

his mother, came with Joseph, and rejoined us. He had given the whole day to the duty of filial tenderness; he had seen his mother in the possession of every comfort she could have desired: he might freely and conscientiously enjoy for a while the charms of friendship. Ah, Frank! there are but few friends, few sons that resemble you!

We did not quit the society before Carl, whom we justly looked upon as its head, had made us promise him a visit the following day. This was to assist at a fresh festival; but the invitation would have been more suitable at another time, because we had previously devoted the day to the satisfaction of our curiosity, and to the enjoyment of those pleasing ideas which the recital of Frank would doubtless give birth to.

Arrived at our own habitation, we all five, for Joseph had accompanied us, threw ourselves on the dried leaves which
composed

composed our humble couch. Sleep soon overtook us ; and after a repose of some hours, we awoke, impatient to hear what Frank had to relate.

CHAP. XIII.

Necessary Details.

HE was waiting only for our questions.

“ Your affairs,” said he, “ are much in the same state as when you left Strasburgh. Two of your adversaries are perfectly cured of their wounds, and you would

would doubtless be at liberty to appear without danger in that city, if the third, called the Chevalier de Saint Romain, had not, about two months ago, been killed in a duel by one of your former comrades. This affair has revived the anger of the Governor, which began to be appeased; and the search set on foot for your discovery, which had been suspended for some time, has been recommenced since this event, with renewed activity.

“ I ought not to forget to tell you that this severity, far from injuring your characters, has only added to the esteem which your conduct throughout the business inspired even in the bosoms of your antagonists. The Chevalier de Blancourt, the rashest, but also the most honourable of them, has never since his recovery lost an opportunity of doing you justice. I have myself heard him in the military coffee-house, before other officers, highly disapprove

disapprove of the conduct and obstinacy of his uncle. It is to be hoped that ere long he will make him adopt more liberal sentiments."

This news gave us much pleasure; it informed us that we had a friend more, and an enemy less than we knew of. Besides, Blancourt was brave, and this quality is seldom found alone. He was young, rich, and vain of the credit of his uncle: his rashness was a defect in his disposition, and not a vice of the heart.

We had scarcely indulged these reflections, when Frank gave into the hands of each of us a pocket-book, embroidered in the first style, and with exquisite taste. Mine had on one side my name, with these words, "*An offering to Friendship by Gratitude;*" on the other three hearts blended, in the middle of several musical instruments. Above was written "*The matchless Trio;*" and at the bottom "*They*

are worthy of each other." Those of my friends were, with some trifling difference, in the same style."

"And to whom are we indebted for these pretty presents?" said Frederic,

"To a young woman," replied Frank, "who is indebted to you for her portion, her husband, and the happiness she is beginning to enjoy."

"And who is this woman?" demanded I anxiously.

"This woman is my sister," answered Frank, dropping a tear while he mentioned her name. "You have forgot your beneficence; but neither she nor her husband will ever forget their benefactors."

"Once more for all," interrupted Charles in a severe tone, "never speak to us again of that: we will talk as much as you please of friendship and attachment, but never of beneficence and gratitude. We are friends; that word comprehends

comprehends at once all our duties and all our pleasures."

Frank promised to be silent on the subject in future, and continued in these terms—

"I did not quit Strasburgh without signifying my intention to those of your acquaintance, for whose esteem and friendship you had any consideration. You will find in your pocket-books the letters which they gave me in charge for you. One of the last I received from you, informed me of the trick that had been played you by the company of comedians with whom you had associated. I believed you in want, and I resolved to set off the following day, in order to supply you with the little money which I still possessed from your generosity."

"Again!" cried Charles, interrupting him in a tone of severity.

“ Pardon me, Sir,” said Frank; “ I will mention it no more.—I was about to leave Frankfort,” added he, pursuing his discourse, “ when my mother fell dangerously ill. Friendship, if I may so call it, summoned me to you; nature commanded me to remain where I was. I obeyed the latter. It was during this malady that I was apprized of your arrival and abode at the Castle of Sturmberg. I was acquainted with this solitude, and in my infancy had twenty times overrun these ruins, when the inn kept by my aunt, was frequented by travellers of all sorts, whom curiosity attracted thither from all parts of the Empire.

“ Your residence in this desert appeared to me the effect of so desperate a resolution, that necessity alone could have suggested the idea. The conviction of this tormented me night and day. I immediately wrote to my aunt, to beg her, in the name of the whole family, to render
all

all the assistance in her power to the three strangers that inhabited the Castle. Her answer informed me that, far from being of any use to you, she, on the contrary, had only subsisted, since your arrival here, on your bounty.

“ Meantime my mother recovered. My newly-married sister went on prosperously in the business she had undertaken. I persuaded my mother to convert into money whatever was not absolutely necessary to be retained, and to set off for Sturmburg, as well to contribute to the assistance of my aunt, as to live near you. She consented with pleasure to my proposal, and three days after we quitted Strasburgh.

“ The city of Stutgard was in our road. You had left some acquaintances there, and I stopped with the intention of telling them what I knew concerning your situation, and to bring you what intelligence
M 3 they

they might have to communicate in return. The morning after our arrival, I called at the residence of Signora Florella."

"Hah!" exclaimed Frederic; "and what did she say to you?—How did she receive you?—Does she still reside at the Castle?"

"One question at a time, if you please, Sir," said Frank, smiling, "if you wish me to answer you correctly.—Yes, Sir," continued he, perceiving that we all three listened to him with the greatest attention, "the Signora still occupies her apartments in the Castle. She was not up when I called. A pretty young woman, whose name is Laura, and whom, doubtless, you know, came to me in the course of a few minutes, to ask from whom I wished to speak to her mistress. Scarcely had your name escaped me, when she clasped me round the neck, loaded me with caresses, and provided for me the
most

most delicate breakfast I ever partook of. My appetite was provoked by the tempting delicacies before me. I did honour to the breakfast, and was about to testify my sense of Laura's kind treatment, when Florella, who had risen in the interval, rang her bell. She was at her toilet when I was introduced.

“ If the reception I had met with from the attendant was agreeable, that from the lady was not less gracious. She asked me a thousand questions on your travels, on the adventures which had happened to you since your departure from Stutgard, on the state of your finances, that of your health, &c. &c. &c. and all with a volubility which left me no opportunity of answering her. I was not sufficiently instructed in these several details to make her a long recital; but she found the means of prolonging it, by making me begin it again. The siege of the belfry

M 4

particularly

particularly affected her. At each danger that menaced you, a tear fell from her eye, and her cheeks became pale, and re-animating at the least glimpse of hope that presented itself.

‘Poor young fellows!’ cried she every now and then, ‘poor young fellows! how much they must have suffered!’

“On hearing the circumstance of the shot which had wounded you, she gave a loud shriek; any one would have thought that she herself had been wounded. In order to console her, I was obliged to add, on my own authority, that you had felt little or no inconvenience from it. On this subject, especially, I had occasion to remark how much that amiable lady interested herself about you. The name of Frederic escaped her twenty times in the course of my recital, and always with an emotion that produced tears. They flowed in spite of herself, when she understood

understood that you had inhabited for some months an old ruinous Castle.

‘Can it be from necessity,’ exclaimed she, starting from her seat, ‘can it be necessity that has forced them to take this resolution?—Follow me, if you please. Oh poor young men!’

“Continuing her lamentations, she conducted me into an adjoining apartment, and opening a secretary, presented me with a purse of gold. I refused to take it. She insisted, and only yielded to my reasons, upon my assuring her that curiosity, and a partiality to retirement, were the sole motives that had determined you to chuse this asylum.

‘Do you speak the truth?’ said she, looking me earnestly in the face. ‘Remember that there are circumstances where I hate the officious deceit which conceals the fact, to spare my sensibility,

as much as the ridiculous vanity that humbles me by a refusal, in the fear of incurring an obligation.'

"I repeated my declarations.

'In that case, then,' said she, 'I beg you to deliver to Frederic a letter, which shall be sent to your inn this evening; and to assure him, as well as his two friends, that I will never forget them, and that they may at all times depend on my assistance, to the utmost of my ability.'

"A page entering at this moment, she put a double louis in my hand, and left the room.

"And where is the letter?" demanded Frederic, transported with joy.

"In your pocket-book," replied Frank, "together with all those which have been addressed

addressed to you at Strasburgh since your departure."

This recital being finished, he went to light a couple of flambeaux, and, accompanied by Joseph, took the road to the caverns, to enquire after his mother, and consecrate the early part of the day to his filial duty.

Immediately Frank left us, Frederic drew from his pocket-book Florella's letter. He overran it with avidity, pressed it to his lips, began it again, paced the room apparently much agitated, then read it for the third time, weighing every sentence, and giving to each word that expression, that vivacity of sentiment with which he was himself animated.

"She is an angel!" cried he, at intervals. "See, my friends! read this letter, and tell me if there is another that can be compared with Florella!"

Never, in fact, was a more interesting epistle written. It was in the true Italian style, which is saying every thing. All that love can inspire of the most tender, friendship of the most affectionate, was expressed in a manner peculiar to the amiable writer. After a thousand offers of service, and the promise of unalterable attachment, she thus concluded.

“The Hamburgeoise cabal is annihilated, and the fate of my rival depended only on a word from my mouth. The revenge I took, was by soliciting a pension for her, which is sufficient for her support, but which I have augmented with a part of my own salary, so far as to procure her a respectable income. This is not the vengeance usually taken by my countrymen.

“As to the Prince, he judged too hastily of me. He little knew me, if he
3 supposed

supposed he could give me a rival with impunity. The momentary preference that she obtained, convinces me that he is unable to appreciate the qualities of the heart. I only wait for the expiration of my engagement, to quit his Court; but he has long been nothing more to me than a Sovereign, and you know what a difference there is in my eyes between that title and the claims of Frederic.

“Continue to let me hear from you frequently. On my part, I promise to apprize you of my departure, and to fix on a spot for us to meet in. Meanwhile, a thousand pretty things to your friends.

“FLORELLA.”

The reading of this letter, and the praises lavished on the writer, made the morning pass rapidly. There were still a number of other letters, with which the attentive Frank had garnished our pocket-books.

books. Charles had one from Madame Herman, whose style amused us greatly. That which her daughter had given to Frank privately, contained only a few lines, written in the Italian language, to me; but those lines were full of ardour and expression. Caroline wrote as she thought; and the feelings of a girl of eighteen are pretty well known.

We were jesting on the quantity of letters we had all at once received, and the slender means that we possessed of answering them, (for the last fortnight we had been entirely without ink or paper), when a message was brought from the cavern, that dinner waited for us. The invitation could not have been better timed; gaiety and our appetites rarely forsook us, and the latter began to be importunate. In consequence, we took up our instruments, and in a few minutes we arrived at the abode of Carl.

It

It was lighted with the greatest taste. A large table, covered with dishes of all sorts, was in the middle. The good, the worthy Carl was desirous of giving us an entertainment, rather than a simple dinner. At the break of day, two of the students in whom he reposed the greatest confidence, had been dispatched to the inn situated on the high road, already mentioned, to procure provisions. The three Tyrolians, on their part, had made a successful excursion among the game the preceding evening, a part of which had been retained, and the remainder exchanged; so that at a very trifling expence, Carl was enabled to treat us with a degree of sumptuousness.

Margaret, who, a few days before, believed the Castle inhabited only by ghosts, was astonished to find in it persons so well disposed to gaiety, and a table so abundantly provided. Her fears began to wear away, and, by degrees her
anecdotes

anecdotes became less dismal. Mesdames Carl and Walbot, and Frank's sister, encouraged by the general joy, freely displayed the genuine amiableness of their dispositions. The two last were musicians; they were requested to sing, and they acquitted themselves with as much grace as talent. In short, good-humour reigned in every countenance and in every heart.

Carl and the respectable widow, seated at the head of the table, resembled our first parents, surrounded with their numerous family. Their observations, though simple, were applauded as sallies of wit; they passed from mouth to mouth, and were repeated with a degree of enthusiasm. Decorum was strictly attended to, but nothing farther; freedom in its most extensive sense, presided, and if it be true, as is said, that we must be at our ease to say any thing good, there could
not

not have been a finer opportunity for our sparkling effusions.

Meantime the dishes before us were not forgotten. We had arrived to that cessation invented by gluttony, and which, in set dinners, separates one course from the other. It is the moment when the stomach, being almost satisfied, gives place to the imagination, and every one endeavours to speak of what he knows best. We had not that miserable vanity which frequently renders splendid repasts so insipid ; no one was ambitious of shining. We were neither obliged to weigh our words before speaking them, nor to measure our sentences, for fear of hurting our own reputation, or offending the delicate ear of our neighbour. Frankness and attention in the men, an unreserved but becoming gaiety in the women, conspired to render this dinner one of the most luxurious I ever partook of in my life.

When

When it was over, the table was removed, not, however, so far as to say that we were not to return to it; and to amuse ourselves, we began to play at those games called *Society*. The widow and the good Margaret, it may be supposed, were not of this party; they had too many things to say, not to employ the opportunity thus afforded them in talking over their affairs.

At first we played at forfeits, then blindman's buff, and afterwards some other games equally innocent. At length Carl proposed a *ronde*; and putting himself at our head, sung, as he danced, several stanzas, which his wife was forced to repeat to him, and the burden of which we repeated in chorus. The hall in which we were assembled, was spacious; the circle extended itself, became contracted, and moved with an elasticity correspondent to the lightness of our hearts.

Suddenly the dog barked. We stopped,
listened,

listened, and an instant after, the sound of several voices was heard through the cleft of the rock which from the caverns communicated to the apartment we were in. Immediately all signs of gaiety disappeared, and every countenance assumed a look of consternation. Our females with the three Tyrolians, Joseph, and the two youngest of the students of Heidelberg ran to conceal themselves in a large recess at the end of the sleeping chamber; the rest seized their arms, and prepared themselves to repulse vigorously those who should have the audacity to penetrate into our retreat.

In the meantime the noise increased, and approached us. The light of flambeaux, proceeding from the entrance of the caverns, cast a few rays of light into the interior, where we were assembled. Carl himself was astonished at a visit of such a numerous party as this seemed to be: it was the only one of the sort that
had

had taken place since his residence at the Castle.

After a few minutes of considerable anxiety, the flambeaux got farther from us, the reflection which had proceeded from them disappeared, and we could only distinguish at a distance the confused noise of the voices which had alarmed us. Frederic wished to clear up this mysterious event; but he was not sufficiently acquainted either with the turnings or recesses which intersected the subterranean passages, to venture along them without a light, and that would have betrayed him.

Carl was the only one who dared, and who could undertake it; but we would not consent, unless he suffered all three of us to accompany him. He at length yielded to our entreaties, and we left the rest of the party, following gently, and at a distance, the direction that the sounds

sounds we had heard, had pointed out to us.

After a quarter of an hour's silent march in absolute darkness, we perceived at the turning of one of the long corridors, by the light of a number of flambeaux, several domestics in livery, and, in the midst of them, four or five gentlemen, one of whom appeared to be decorated with the Order of the Black Eagle. This discovery encouraged us; we were convinced that this unexpected visit had no other object than to satisfy the curiosity of some traveller of distinction; and, satisfied with our success, we gaily took the road back to the cave.

The account we gave, restored joy and tranquillity to our friends. Our amusement recommenced, and we felt more pleasure in the exercise, from being persuaded that we had nothing to fear on the score of interruption. Occasionally
a piece

a piece of lively or harmonious music diversified the entertainment.

Carl at length proposed that we should sit down to table both for rest and refreshment—a proposal that was agreed to without a dissenting voice. A few bottles of choice wine stood in a corner by themselves. The corks were drawn, the liquor seemed anxious to escape from its long confinement, and it sparkled like crystal in our glasses.

Oh nectar of my country! Oh delicious Champagne! thou that givest charms to the fair, and wit to the brave, why is not the task of composing thy eulogium assigned to me!—But I have undertaken a very different work, and am bound to keep my promise.

The amount of our miseries is so great, that of our pleasures so small, that by whatever means we may wish to prolong
the

the one, or abridge the other, it is impossible to establish a just equilibrium between them. We at length took leave of Carl and the company, and returned to our own apartments with Frank. Two whole days had passed in feasting and rejoicing; but the longest pleasures are but instantaneous, and the shortest sorrows those of an age.

Frank had already mentioned to us the necessity he was under of separating from us for some days. The intention of his mother in undertaking the journey to Sturmberg, had been to join with her sister, the good Margaret, in carrying on together the little inn that the latter kept at a small distance from the Castle; but the house was in such a tattered condition, and the road on which it was situated, so little frequented, that after a thorough consideration of the affair, it was agreed between them that Frank should dispose of it as well as he was able,
and

and that with the produce of the sale, added to the ready money which the widow possessed, they should endeavour to establish themselves elsewhere. We were too well acquainted with the heart of Frank, to hope that he would abandon his mother to the care of his sister and aunt. This conviction necessarily led to the idea of a new separation, which tormented us considerably.

The following morning Frank, after having embraced his mother, recommended her to our care, and quitted the Castle. His departure was succeeded by that of the three Tyrolians, who took leave of Carl to return into their own country. The fear of another visit similar to that which had taken place during our meeting in the cavern, was doubtless among the motives which determined them to leave the Castle.

Their absence did not much affect us ;
their

their rustic manners, and the little education they had received, held them in continual restraint ; and though no one had cause to complain of their conduct, they felt themselves that they were not at home in such society. We were quickly consoled for their loss ; but it was different with regard to our four students, who some time afterwards took the same resolution. They were amiable, prepossessing, and well-informed, without affecting that insupportable pedantry which is so seldom shaken off on leaving College. Their departure was the more sensibly felt, because music, which was become our favourite amusement, suffered materially by their absence.

In less than three weeks, our society had diminished by eight persons. Thus the spreading tree which during half the year resounded with the joyful melody of the birds that came to partake its shade, is stripped at the close of autumn ; the

winged choristers of the environs, desert by degrees its leafless branches ; and the tree, so much resorted to, becoming solitary and forsaken, is no longer loaded but with snow and isicles, and the sweet murmurs of the grove are succeeded by the unharmonious voice of the eagle.

END OF VOL. III.



LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.