



THE THREE GIL BLAS.


A NOVEL.


LANE, MINERVA-PRESS, LEADENHALL-STREET.

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THE

THREE GIL BLAS,

OR

FOLLIES OF YOUTH.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

FROM

THE FRENCH

OF

LA MARTELLIERE.

VOL. IV.

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LEADENHALL-STREET.

1804.

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THREE GIL BLAS.

CHAP. I.

Suspitions.

THE good Margaret, with the widow and her daughter, continued to reside in the cavern of Carl. This was an increase of society which could not but be burthensome to the latter. We had several times proposed that he and Walbot should assist us to render habitable an apartment contiguous to our's, and which was more than sufficient to accommodate the three.

Carl, whose benevolence assumed activity the moment any one stood in need of his assistance, rejected this proposal as an affront to his sensibility, and in consequence nothing farther was said of the matter.

Meantime, he was become sorrowful and pensive; he went out at daybreak, and frequently did not return till the middle of the night. These continual absences by degrees became longer. His wife and his friend Walbot ventured to ask him the cause of them; it was a secret which had been confided to him, and neither the tenderness of his wife, the friendship of Walbot, nor the reiterated entreaties of all the persons by whom he was surrounded, had been able to change his resolution. Ever since his abode at the Castle, Walbot had always been accustomed to accompany him; and the produce of their labour was sold or exchanged by the latter. Carl, for a month past,

past, had renounced his society; he went out and returned alone, and although he left home much earlier, and staid away much longer than formerly, he seldom brought with him any provision for his family. This inexplicable conduct had filled his abode with sorrow; a gloomy anxiety tortured the heart of his wife: and as the industry of Walbot was insufficient to support so many persons, want began to intrude itself, and to add to the other distresses of the cavern.

This unfavourable alteration had also struck us. The morose and thoughtful air of Carl had not escaped our observation; but of the rest of his conduct we remained ignorant. Madame Carl, worn out, overwhelmed by the weight of her grief, had contented herself to pour her sorrows into the bosom of Madame Walbot, her friend. She had not to complain of the usage of her husband; but where did he go?—what did he do?—how did he

employ whole days that he passed away from his family?—why, in general, when he returned, was he enfeebled by fatigue?—why did he no longer go out in the company of Walbot, to whom he seemed to have given up the care of procuring her a scanty existence?—She incessantly repeated these questions, which no one could answer; and this horrible state of uncertainty plunged her into despair.

The unhappy seek consolation every where. Madame Carl supposed, for a moment, that her husband might have entrusted us with his secret. M. Walbot came to invite us to the cavern. We found her bathed in tears:—her first intention had been to conceal them from us, but they presently flowed with such violence, that it was impossible to stop their course. At last, her sorrow, long restrained and concentrated, got the better of her resolution, and the confessions that escaped her, as it were in spite of herself

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on this occasion, without diminishing her anxiety, considerably augmented our's. The fragment of the letter, found in the cottage where Carl had first received us, rushed to our memory; the suspicions it had given rise to with respect to him, and which we had rejected as injurious to his honour, came to assail our imagination afresh; the conversation that had passed in a low voice between him and the man who called himself the purchaser of the cottage—the unconnected words *death—kill them—strip them*, which we had heard through the door—all concurred to renew our former sentiments, and to give them the most unfavourable colour.

We were too much affected with the news we had just learned, to give Madame Carl the consolation she seemed to hope for. The inutility of the efforts she had made to discover the secret of her husband, and the cause of his frequent and protracted absences, left her no other

means of being relieved from the dreadful state of suspense under which she laboured, than to have him watched. We proposed it to her:—she consented to it with repugnance, terrified beforehand with the horrid intelligence that the discovery would not fail to produce. The poor woman was jealous, and the summit of misery for her would have been to find herself supplanted by a rival:—this was her only apprehension; the excursions and coldness of Carl seemed to justify it. He was five-and-forty, but still alert and vigorous; he was tall and well-made, and his physiognomy had preserved that masculine and expressive freshness, which the corruption of great cities so soon causes to vanish from the cheeks of our youthful veterans. We took care not to impart our conceptions to Madame Carl; her jealous tears were nothing, compared with the more serious suspicions that we entertained in regard to her husband.

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A circumstance that the jealous lady seemed to regard as perfectly indifferent, because it had no connection with the situation of her heart, appeared to confirm these apprehensions. Her husband returned one night very late, his air more reserved and gloomy than ever, his face pale, and his body in a profuse sweat; his left hand was in a sling, and bound round with a fine cambric handkerchief, which covered a considerable wound. Madame Carl, who had no linen of such fineness, directly supposed the handkerchief belonged to her husband's mistress, and had been lent to him for the purpose of stanching the blood flowing from a wound he had received from the hand of a rival. Our reflections were much less advantageous to him: this handkerchief, so fine as it was, appeared to us, on the contrary, the effect of an attack made upon some unfortunate traveller; and that the wound he had received, was the consequence of the resistance he had met with. Such is

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the usual mode of reasoning; not according to the fair construction of the circumstances themselves, but after the impulse of first impressions. The fragment of the before-mentioned letter still occupied our minds, as her conjugal tenderness never quitted the heart of Madame Carl.

It was neither just nor natural to leave to Walbot alone the care of providing longer for the support of the three females, to whom the habitation of Carl had till then afforded an asylum. They accepted the apartment which had originally been destined for them, and we the same evening conducted them to the Castle, resolved, for the future, to hold no connection with a man, who, after having offered them the most unconditional hospitality, had so shamefully abandoned them to Providence.

Though neither Margaret, the widow, nor her daughter had been present at the conversation

conversation which had just passed respecting Carl; yet what they had seen, had given them no favourable opinion of him.

“That man,” said Margaret, speaking of Carl, “is surely under the power of some apparition, who, after leading him God knows where during the night, is obliged to quit him as the day approaches: for it is very certain that spirits can do nothing with us except in the dark; and you find that Carl is harassed by fatigue every time he comes home. That puts me in mind of a thing of the same sort that happened about forty years ago, to a shepherd who lived in the village not far off. You may see the Church spire from here. This shepherd——”

Frederic, apprehensive of a long and dismal story, interrupted the good Margaret, by addressing a question to the widow and her daughter, in regard to the

conduct of Carl towards his wife, and how she behaved to her husband at his return.

“ I should not think of asking you for information of this nature,” added he, “ were it not that your answers will, perhaps, tend to fix our opinion of him, whom we so lately thought a virtuous character and our friend.”

They both spoke highly of his mildness, his civility, and the propriety of his behaviour. They had frequently heard him complain of the secret which oppressed his heart, and of the oath he had sworn, to confide it to no person whomsoever; but they were women, and the manner in which Carl seemed to abandon his wife, was in their eyes a crime of the first magnitude—one that could neither be excused by the sacredness of an oath, nor compensated by any of the qualities which they acknowledged the criminal to possess.

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This criminal had been our friend. The idea of having lived on terms of intimacy—of having been, if I may so say, the associates of a robber, perhaps of an assassin, made us shudder with horror and indignation, and empoisoned every instant of our existence. The state of uncertainty under which we laboured, was too painful, too burthensome to be long supported by dispositions so impetuous as our's. Frederic swore to elucidate the mystery the following day; and it was agreed that, in case he should not succeed in the enterprise, each of us in turn should repeat it.

The day was still far from appearing, when Frederic had already traversed the caverns, and arrived at a spot at some distance from the entrance. He had put on an old great coat belonging to Frank, and waited, concealed behind a rock, until Carl should appear, intending afterwards to follow him, and endeavour to

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discover

discover the object of his excursions. He was not long, before he perceived him come gently forward, taking all possible precautions, in order that no one might be disturbed; when he directed his steps towards a heath abounding with game of all sorts. He had not proceeded far, when he discharged his piece; and putting what he had killed into his bag, he pursued his route, not following any beaten track, but seeming to chuse the most solitary and difficult road. When he reached the summit of a rising ground, he would stop, less, as it would seem, for the purpose of taking breath, than to cast around him a look of anxiety; doubtless, in order to be assured that no officious eye observed his steps.

Meantime, Frederic never lost sight of him a moment;—sometimes behind a tree, sometimes concealed by a thick bush, he observed him hasten his steps toward a steep mountain, which appeared to him inaccessible:

inaccessible: he was persuaded that the end of his journey was at hand, and that the mystery was about to be cleared up. Carl vanished for an instant, and that circumstance confirmed his conjecture.

Fatigued more by the difficulty of the road, than by the length of the way, Frederic had seated himself in a concealed spot, from whence he could nevertheless perceive the fugitive; but on rising to continue his pursuit, he discovered him again climbing the mountain, and painfully proceeding between the rocks and the precipices on either hand of him. Frederic, not less bold, and more agile, redoubled his exertions; he was himself struck with the dangers and the obstacles that he met with every moment, but nothing could stop him: he continued his project with a degree of ardour which the promise he had made, and his individual curiosity, rendered indefatigable.

He was not far behind him, when Carl, on reaching an eminence, rested on his gun, and cast back his eyes on the dangerous road he had passed. He observed a stranger exactly following the same track. This singularity surprised him; he feared he was watched, and, in order to be assured, he varied his course, turning round, from time to time, to discover the intentions of the person who seemed so resolutely bent to follow him. The latter still advancing, Carl could no longer doubt his design. Accordingly stopping, and facing him, he desired him, in an imperious voice, and with a threatening gesture, either to return the way he came, or at least to take another direction.

Frederic paid no attention to this order, and kept approaching. Carl proceeded a few paces farther;—at length, incensed at the other's perseverance, he cried out—

“If

“ If you advance another step, you are a dead man !” and so saying, he levelled his piece at Frederic.

Carl never menaced in vain ;—this our friend well knew, and immediately resolved not to abandon his project, but to postpone the execution of it. In consequence, as much ashamed at having been deterred by a threat, as dissatisfied with the little success of his attempt, he took his way back to the Castle, where he arrived after six hours’ absence.

We were waiting for him with a degree of impatience easy to be conceived. Our connections, our abode at the Castle, our tranquillity, all depended on the information Frederic was to bring us. Madame Carl, Walbot, and his wife were not less interested in it. Tears and sobs had succeeded the sounds of joy, which so lately had resounded in their solitary dwelling ; they, as well as us, reckoned with anxiety
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the minutes which elapsed before Frederic's return. At length he appeared, and, without giving us time to interrogate him, he related to us the account which has been already presented to the reader.

The mysterious veil in which Carl enveloped all his actions, as well as the menace that he held out to Frederic, and which he would doubtless have put in execution, if the latter had not complied with his demand, redoubled our inquietude, and augmented our curiosity.

M. Walbot, who had joined us, in order to hear from the mouth of Frederic, the result of his expedition, remained, like us, immoveable with surprise at the relation. Suspicions similar to our's, seemed on the point of escaping him; but Carl was his friend, his benefactor:—he dared not risk a conjecture so injurious to the man whom so many preceding actions had rendered estimable in his eyes. We preserved the
same

same silence, agitated, like him, by suspense, and the anxiety which never fails to accompany it.

At length, in despair at not being able to be the bearer of any consolation to the bosom of Madame Carl, and secretly tormented by the fear of having given his friendship to a villain, Walbot left us. He easily anticipated the tears that his report would cause to flow, and, occupied in considering how he should make it in the most favourable manner to the unfortunate sufferer, he, with slow and pensive steps, took the road to the habitation that echoed with her complaints.

As soon as we were alone, we reciprocally communicated the reflections which the presence of Walbot had induced us to confine in our own breasts. We had no reason to doubt the probity of the latter; on the contrary, every thing seemed to assure us of it: but he was the companion,
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the intimate friend of Carl; and that title which, a month before, appeared to us so honourable, so enviable, had become sufficient to inspire us with a secret horror. Though our suspicions amounted to mere conjectures, yet they were supported by such powerful reasons, such positive facts, that they carried a kind of conviction, and wholly unfavourable to Carl. The simple possibility of discovering some extenuating circumstance, had led us, however, to suspend our judgment. It was in consequence resolved that, according to our agreement of the preceding evening, fresh attempts should be made, and continued until we should find out the clew of this terrifying enigma.

The unexpected arrival of Frank enlivened a little our imaginations, overclouded by the gloomy anticipations we had so long entertained. The eye, fatigued by the cheerless aspect of winter, does not behold with greater pleasure the
opening

opening of the rosebud—the earth, still covered with snow, inhales not with greater avidity the earliest rays of the vernal sun, than we shewed eagerness to seize Frank by the hand—than we enjoyed satisfaction at his unlooked-for return. At the sight of him, our sad ideas vanished, and a pure joy restored serenity to our souls. Frank lost not a moment in enquiring after his mother, who, hearing his beloved voice, ran forward to catch him in her arms, from whence he withdrew himself, only to fly into those of his sister and aunt. Worthy fellow! dutiful son! affectionate parent! the most faithful of friends! to love thee is to love virtue: let this word be thy eulogium, as it is our's also.

It will not be doubted that this day was a holiday; the entertainment was less splendid, but it was more gratifying than the two former. It was what is called a repast of friendship, and the smallest table
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is always large enough on such occasions. Satisfaction and mutual confidence were blended in the countenance of every one present; Frank was surrounded by all that was dear to him, his relations and his friends. The widow treated us as her children; and this reciprocal affection gave to the whole party that appearance of one family, whose delightful harmony infused an indescribable charm into the soul.

When the dessert was put on the table, Frank, after having drunk to the health of the company, requested a few minutes' silence, to give his mother and aunt an account of the success of his journey. We were too much concerned in the welfare of this interesting family, not to feel greatly disinterested in the recital he was about to begin, and of which I shall in this place merely set down those facts that may be said to relate to our own history.

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The inn of the good Margaret was sold, as well as a few acres of sandy ground contiguous. Frank brought, in cash, the greater part of the purchase money; the rest was to be paid in the course of three months. This bargain had appeared so advantageous to Frank, that he had not hesitated to conclude it without delay, notwithstanding a proviso, which disturbed him not a little—this was to put the purchaser into immediate possession.

In mentioning this clause with unusual emphasis, the poor fellow cast his eyes on us, as much as to ask whether he had not gone too far in presuming on the continuation of our benevolence to his family. We answered this appeal, by evincing the pleasure we experienced at the successful issue of the business. The project of watching the motions of Carl was then postponed to the next day but one, it being unanimously agreed that the following
should

should be wholly employed in conveying to the Castle the effects belonging to Margaret.

These matters being settled, we had nothing left to occupy our attention, but to give way to the pleasures which the prospect of this happy meeting made us taste beforehand. Our instruments, so long neglected, were taken down; and their sounds appeared so much the more exquisite, as the same harmony reigned in our souls.

The feast would not have been complete, if we had forgotten our neighbour, the old lizard. We regaled him several times with his favourite air; and at each, quitting his solitary retreat, he came to give his usual attention, and to thank us for our complaisance.

The next morning, at daybreak, we
left

left the Castle, under the care of the widow and Margaret, while we proceeded toward the alienated habitation of the latter. In a few hours the furniture was conveyed to the Castle, on the back of an ass; the females began to arrange them to the best advantage, as they arrived: this is their peculiar province, and they never delay it a moment longer than necessity obliges them. Two journies were sufficient, as we all of us each time brought something in our arms;—and we had finished our business before sunset.

On entering our apartment, we hardly knew it to be the same, so great an addition had it received—so many articles of convenience, such a sudden influx of riches dazzled our sight, and astonished our minds: we looked upon ourselves as *Grandeesh*, since we had a bed to lay on, and a few old chairs to ornament our naked walls. Meantime, a good supper waited for us; the table was spread with
unusual

unusual magnificence; a cloth, napkins, drinking glasses, and a thousand little things so useful in the world, and which till then had appeared to us as superfluities, attracted our sight, and fixed our attention.

At length we took our places; the labours of the day had sharpened our appetites, and the satisfaction we enjoyed, gave an additional zest to the dishes before us. We had still a luxury in store, that sweet and refreshing sleep, which exercise and inward content hardly ever fail to procure. The hour for tasting it was arrived; we arose, and bidding good night to all, retired to our chamber.

Three beds, wretched as we should once have considered them, but sumptuous on the occasion I am mentioning, were prepared for our reception. We jumped into them without farther examination; and after four months' residence
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at the Castle, the Aurora of the next morning surprised us for the first time sleeping in the arms of voluptuousness—that is to say, accommodated in the same manner as other people: so true it is, that we owe our enjoyments to privations.

It was already too late to put in execution the project relative to Carl. We were obliged to postpone it once more: Frank, from whom we had no secrets, participated in our suspicions, and offered to assist with his services in the enterprise we had planned. In order to ensure its success in a manner almost infallible, he proposed that we should all four be employed at a time. He reasoned thus—“The object of Carl’s journies being always the same, the road which leads to it, is probably the same also;—my opinion is for us to take different stations in the route, so that, should he escape the eye of one, he may be kept in view by another. If only one

VOL. IV. c among

among us follow him, he runs the risk of being perceived by approaching too near, or of losing sight of him, by keeping at too great a distance. The measure I submit to your consideration, seems free from both these inconveniences, and the secret is too important, to neglect any precautions that may tend to its discovery." The plan of Frank was adopted, and we immediately went to impart it to our neighbours of the cavern.

Madame Carl, as much afflicted as ever, eagerly applauded it;—the most disastrous intelligence began to appear to her preferable to the horrible anxiety which devoured her. Frank, after having thanked Walbot and the ladies for the hospitality they had granted to his family, ventured to ask the former whether he would assist us in our enterprise. He answered, in a firm tone, that he disapproved of the mysterious conduct of Carl; but that being convinced of the purity of his intentions,

tions, he could never think of taking a step which would appear as if he doubted the probity of his friend.

This reply was far from satisfying us: such excessive delicacy seemed to us, on the contrary, to amount to a proof of his being an accomplice. In consequence, from that moment our conversation with Walbot assumed a coldness approaching to disdain. This alteration in our behaviour did not escape his notice; he appeared sorry for it, but continued steady in his opinion: he did not less forcibly stand up in the cause of his friend.

“Gentlemen,” said he, seeing us on the point of quitting him, “I entertained for a moment the same fears, the same suspicions as you do; but I have since maturely reflected—I have, since our last interview, recapitulated all the actions of Carl. I have placed, on one side, his frankness, his fidelity, his generosity;

on the other, all the indications, all the appearances that seem to condemn him; and the result of this examination has been, that a man whom I have seen constantly fulfilling all the duties of a good father, an affectionate husband, a true and disinterested friend, cannot so suddenly have become perfidious to his wife;" then, turning towards us, he added in a low voice—"a robber, or an assassin. Such is my opinion."

"I hope the event may justify it," replied Frederic, coldly.

After which, he asked Madame Carl whether her husband had brought home the game which he saw him kill upon the heath.

"For more than a month," replied the poor woman, sobbing, "I have neither seen nor tasted of any of his production; and, but for the compassion and kindness of M. Walbot——"

She

She was about to continue, when the latter interrupting her—

“My compassion and kindness!” repeated he. “Ah! though they were to continue for my life, I should never repay the services I have received from Carl, nor the debt which my heart has contracted to him.”

“But then,” observed Madame Carl, elevating her voice, “what could he do with the game he was seen to kill the other day?”

“Perhaps an act of beneficence,” answered Walbot, sorrowfully. “However,” added he, “I am ignorant of his secret; but I am assured that his heart is capable of the most exalted virtues.”

This emphatical panegyric, which appeared to us so out of season, was heard by us with no sort of satisfaction: we therefore interrupted Walbot in the middle of it, and

taking leave of the ladies, we immediately returned to the Castle. --

What M. Walbot had just said, far from shaking our resolution, had, on the contrary, served rather to strengthen it. Carl's conduct was in our minds pronounced upon; we had condemned him, and the plan we had concerted, was persisted in, less to satisfy us as to the object of his excursions, than for the purpose of becoming eye-witnesses to the crimes for which they were the pretence.

The fragment of the before-mentioned letter, the disjointed words we had overheard in the cottage, the appearances on every view of the affair, the facts avowed even by his friend Walbot, reflected a stream of light that carried conviction to our minds; the evidence was too strong to be resisted, and we retired to rest in this persuasion.



CHAP. II.

Elucidation.

NIGHT still shrouded the horizon with herebon veil—or, to write as we speak, day had not yet appeared, when we all four arrived on the heath, which was at the farther extremity of the caverns. Each of us, besides his gun and game-bag, was provided with a supply of provision. On reaching the summit of the mountain, where Frederic had been forced to abandon his pursuit, we dispersed ourselves in different directions, seeking for a
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suitable position, from whence we might discover the course Carl should take.

A feeble twilight had scarcely announced the approach of day, when we perceived him crossing the heath, and directing his steps toward us. This tract was so well stocked with game, that he made three successful shots before attaining the foot of the mountain, on the top of which we had fixed our station. During the short time that he was thus occupied, I beheld with enthusiasm the enchanting prospect I commanded;—behind me commenced the gloomy and majestic forest, called the *Grünwald*, composed chiefly of black fir-trees, their heads lost in the clouds, and covering with their dreary and uniform shade, the sterile soil that, nevertheless, afforded them nourishment. At some distance, an island, bathed on one side by a rapid river—on the other, by the waters of a torrent which dashed

dashed down a rocky precipice, added to the variety of the scene.

I was about to forget myself in viewing the wonders that Nature had heaped together in that deserted spot, when the step of a man drew me from my reverie. It was Carl, who appeared greatly fatigued by his exertions. Fortunately I perceived him time enough to throw myself on the ground, and crawl behind a bush, which completely concealed me from his observation.

I had no sooner arrived there, than he came and seated himself in the very place I had just quitted. He laid his gun and bag by his side, and remained an instant motionless, and absorbed in his reflections. I examined his countenance through the leaves; it was full of care and anxiety, his eye was haggard, and a tear stole down his manly cheek.

“Brave man!” suddenly exclaimed he; then, rising, he caught up his gun and bag, and walked forward toward the island I have just mentioned.

As soon as he was at a little distance, I began to follow him. My surprise augmented on seeing him approach the bed of the torrent, which seemed to render the island inaccessible. It happening, however, to be nearly dry, he easily crossed it, and in a few minutes I observed him on the other side.

It would have been impossible for me to have followed him farther, without being discovered; but looking more attentively, in proportion as the distance between us increased, I noticed through a row of trees, a half-constructed cottage, seemingly built against a rock. Carl went up to it;—he entered it; and presently afterwards, I saw him come out again with an axe in his hand. He climbed up to the

top of the rude edifice, and by repeated strokes, drove in the stakes which were to support the roof. A man of a prepossessing appearance, but whose grey hairs announced him to be in the decline of his career, handed him the tools and materials necessary for the labour. Not far off, two young females, of the finest order of forms, were occupied in collecting the branches of some newly fallen trees, which they drew to the side of the cottage; an elderly woman, leaning with one hand against the door—with the other on a stick, was observing the progress of the work, and finished this picturesque group.

Meantime, Carl took not a moment's repose;—the tool did not quit his hand, except while he wiped his forehead covered with sweat, or to exchange it for another:—all his movements were anxiously beheld by the spectators beneath. If he stood upright, every eye was fixed on him, every arm extended toward him; if his foot
c 6 slipped,

slipped, if the blow struck on one side, a shriek of terror was instantly heard, all ran to him, and questioned him, eager to know whether he had received any injury.

The mother, who sees playing around her the infant of her earliest love, watches it not with more constant attention, more tender solicitude, than that of which Carl was the object.—What would I not have given, to have had my friends by me, to witness this delicious scene!

Entirely subdued by my feelings, I remained nearly three hours in the same situation, and Carl still continued his labour: his zeal seemed indefatigable. He at last was obliged to yield to the entreaties of his companions, who conducted him into the cottage. My stomach informed me that it must be for dinner, and I resolved to occupy myself in a similar manner.

It was at this moment that I acknowledged, for the first time, the injustice of the suspicions I had conceived to the prejudice of Carl.

“He a robber! he an assassin!” cried I, indignant against myself, for my precipitate judgment; and tears of regret and emotion involuntarily started in my eyes.

If my repast was not long, neither was that of Carl and his friends. He soon reappeared, and resumed his labour, while the remainder of the party walked along the terrace, which was in front of the cottage. Meantime the work was nearly at an end. The want of assistance, the defect of instruments, nothing could impede the genius of Carl; his activity supplied every deficiency. The part of the cottage, about which he had been engaged the whole morning, was entirely finished. The flexible branches, trimmed by the delicate hands of the two young females,
were

were given into the hands of the old man, and conveyed by him to Carl, who curiously interweaving them, became, by turns, carpenter, mason, and architect; a proof that perseverance and sound judgment render man equal to all circumstances.

The sun was sinking below the horizon, and still a secret charm chained me to the spot where I had been seated since the morning. Already had the signal which we had agreed upon for the purpose of facilitating our meeting, been thrice re-echoed by the surrounding rocks. At length I tore myself from the enchanting prospect, to join my friends, whom I found waiting for me on the heath. The joy that sparkled in my eyes, appeared to them a favourable omen; and twenty questions assailed me at once, in regard to my success. Instead of answering them, I begged a moment's silence; and seeing them disposed to listen to me attentively, I
gave

gave them an exact account of all I had seen.

The charms of the scene I have just attempted to describe, infused into their souls the same delightful emotions which occupied my own; their countenances immediately brightened up, and a smile of contentment displayed their satisfaction at the happy discovery I had made. Suddenly Charles exclaimed—

“But our unjust suspicions! How shall we appear before the beneficent man, whom we judged capable of robbery and murder? What shall we say to Walbot, who, of all his friends, has alone had the courage, the confidence to defend him, and whom we have accused as being an accessory, because he was less blind and more grateful than ourselves?”

“There is but one thing for us to do,” replied I, “which is to confess our faults freely, and to wait in silence for a proper occasion

occasion to atone for them. The first duty now incumbent on us, is to restore peace to the wife of him whom we have greatly injured by our suspicions."

My friends applauded this idea; and instead of going to our own apartments, we went to pass the evening with Madame Carl. She was in the midst of her children—the true place of a mother. Woe to her that quits it! She may find pleasures elsewhere—but happiness is lost to her! Madame Walbot, seated by her side, was caressing her newly-born infant, and making it smile at those of her friend.

Walbot was pacing the apartment with long strides, and endeavouring to appear tranquil, that he might not add to the habitual sorrow of Madame Carl.

Our visit caused surprise mingled with joy, to this amiable society. From the disposition of mind we had evinced the preceding

preceding evening, they had not expected to see us again for some time. Frederic had no great difficulty in turning the conversation on the mysterious conduct of Carl. This was furnishing food for the jealousy of his wife; but it was necessary to probe the wound, before it could be healed. By degrees, without betraying the secret of the man again become our friend, we presented his actions under a more favourable point of view, declaring that we knew him too well to believe him capable of an act of infidelity toward a woman he loved, or of an infraction of the principles of probity he had always professed.

M. Walbot, though astonished at language so opposite to our preceding conjectures, did not hesitate to declare himself of the same opinion. This unanimity of sentiment, pronounced with a certain assurance, which did not escape the penetrating eye of Madame Carl, dispelled in
some

some measure the melancholy that had so long kept possession of her features. She was satisfied with our frankness; and was not ignorant that we had for some time been attempting to discover the secret which oppressed her heart: the change that a single day had produced in our language to her, and in our behaviour to M. Walbot, was, in her eyes, a positive proof that her suspicions were unfounded. Charles put the matter beyond all doubt, by taking the hand of Walbot in the most cordial manner.

“We have,” said he, “been guilty of great injustice to you, and still greater to your worthy friend and benefactor, Carl. Let this confession, which I make in the name of these two gentlemen, be considered as an acknowledgment of our error; as your example will serve to instruct us, that we must never trust to appearances in forming a judgment of the man we esteem.”

This

This unequivocal declaration completed the joy of Madame Carl, and the satisfaction of Walbot. The latter, enchanted with a reconciliation of which our confession convinced him of the sincerity, returned our advances with a degree of candour and emotion, that added considerably to the respect we had entertained for him from the first moment we had met. Madame Carl, his wife, the children, every one was obliged to partake his joy. It was resolved that we should sup together.—Carl, returning sooner than ordinary, surprised us at table. This unexpected meeting gave him great pleasure; and after having embraced his children, he affectionately seated himself by the side of his wife.

A religious respect, a sacred veneration penetrated us at the sight of that beneficent man. For six weeks he had been the sole support, the only friend of an unfortunate family—for six weeks, neither

ther by day nor night, had he enjoyed a moment's repose. The attention of his wife, the caresses of his children, the good wishes of his friends, all had been sacrificed to the duty, the pleasure of succouring the unhappy; and the most odious suspicions had been the recompence of this rare instance of virtuous fortitude.

His temper, however, was neither soured by the continual exertions he had made, nor by the fatigue which must have been the consequence. An enviable serenity sat on his face, tanned by the ardour of the sun; and his eyes, though half-closed by weariness, sparkled with that pure joy which can only spring from inward contentment, or from the contemplation of a fellow creature, whom we have restored to happiness.

It is impossible to describe the various sentiments by which we were agitated during

during this delicious repast. Our looks, as they wandered round the company, became involuntarily fixed on Carl; they seemed to ask his pardon for the injustice of our suspicions, and for the precipitation of our judgment. He at length perceived our meaning, and turning toward us, he said—

“It is some time since we have thus met, and therefore I am feasted like a stranger.”

“Say, like an affectionate husband,” added his wife.

“Like a good father!” cried Madame Walbot; “like a friend—a benefactor—a virtuous man!”

“What am I to understand by this concert of praises?” resumed Carl, observing us earnestly, and trembling lest his secret should have been discovered.

“Supposing for a moment that I possessed all the qualities that you have just complimented me with, my sweetest recompence

recompence would be your esteem, and not your eulogiums."

"You have it, and for ever!" replied Charles, presenting his hand.

"Yes, for ever!" repeated Frederic and I, with the same action.

"My friends, my friends!" interrupted Carl in a softened tone, and rising to conceal his emotion, "you treat me like a spoiled child, who is called an angel because it is not absolutely a monster."

So saying, he took our hands, pressed them in his own in the most amicable manner, and bidding us adieu for the night, retired to his chamber, where, entering a few minutes after, we found him in a sound sleep, enjoying the repose of which his fatigued limbs stood in the greatest need. Such are the slumbers of the just.

The pleasure of discovering Carl more than ever worthy of our esteem, had made the hours pass rapidly. An enjoyment of another nature awaited us at the Castle. It may be remembered that all letters addressed to us, were to be left at the inn, situated on the main road, where Joseph had established his office for the sale or exchange of the superfluous produce of our sporting labours. He had gone there during our absence, and had brought back a letter, directed to Frederic. The latter gave a leap for joy on observing the hand-writing—it was that of Florella. It contained but a few lines; but each sentence, each word was of inestimable value. She thus expressed herself:—

“ I quit Stutgard to-morrow for Vienna, where I am engaged for three years. According to the map of the country,

country, my road passes within two leagues of Sturmberg Castle. It is my intention to make a pilgrimage there of a few days, for the edification I may receive, by contemplating the solitary life of the three brothers of the desert. I trust that they will not refuse hospitality to a pilgrim, who flatters herself she is not incorrigible. Three days more, and we will make a more ample confession of our mutual sins.

“FLORELLA.”

CHAP. III.

Joyful Meeting.

BY the date of this letter, we calculated that she would arrive the following day. There can be no occasion for my saying that the night was passed in reflecting how to receive her in a manner suitable to the sentiments that we all three entertained for this charming pilgrim. At day-break, Frank and his cousin Joseph set off for the inn before mentioned. The latter was to be stationed for the purpose of coming forward to inform us of her approach. The former had provided himself with what was necessary to purchase

a quantity of provisions of all sorts, and the best he should be able to procure.

The widow and her daughter undertook to put the handsomest apartment in the Castle in the best possible order. The choicest of the furniture was carried into it; and a quantity of old tapestry, which had been, time out of mind, in the possession of Margaret's family, served to cover the nakedness of the walls. A bed, composed of our best mattresses, spread with the finest and whitest of our linen, was quickly surrounded with a set of curtains of crimson damask, cotemporary with the tapestry. The floor, the furniture, all was cleaned, and carefully rubbed; and in less than an hour, our activity had restored to this apartment a portion of its ancient magnificence.

In the meantime, Margaret, on her part, was far from being idle. A great fire was lighted in a distant space that served

served us for a kitchen; several stoves, lader with saucepans, were getting forward; and all the earthen-ware that we had so lately fetched from her former residence to the Castle, was spread upon the table in readiness. These appearances gave her an air of importance, which proved to us that she was going to serve up a dinner after her own fashion; and this was saying every thing, for Margaret piqued herself on her proficiency in the culinary art.

Having finished the preparations for the reception of our visitor, it was necessary to attend a little to our dress. Nothing was omitted in our power, to set ourselves off to the best advantage. Our intention was anticipated, and this day became a complete gala day for all the inhabitants of the Castle. The mother of Frank put on her wedding-gown, ornamented with large sprigs. Her daughter had heightened the natural charms of youth and beauty

by a robe, the snowy whiteness of which was finely contrasted by the rosiness of her complexion. A wild flower decorated her auburn hair, and a pink shoe enclosed her delicate foot. Never had I seen her so pretty. Frank and his mother seemed equally proud of her.

Our reconciliation with M. Walbot, and the recollection of the pleasures we had enjoyed the preceding evening, induced us to wish that our entertainment should be honoured by the company of our neighbours. We immediately went to give them the invitation. It was gladly accepted on all sides. Carl, whom we had not expected to find at home, reminded us that it was Sunday, and that he was wholly at our service. We took him at his word; and this unlooked-for news rendered our satisfaction complete.

We had informed the society of the cavern, of the visitor we were about to be
honoured

honoured with, and that we had spared nothing to give her a suitable reception. This was sufficient for the ladies to come arrayed in their best. They immediately began to think of the assistance of the toilet. Madame Carl was at least six-and-thirty; but she was tall, and well-shaped; her eyes, so long weighed down by sorrow, had reassumed their vivacity, and her cheeks their bloom. The impression of cherished melancholy alone remained; and this impression added a fresh charm to a person wholly agreeable. She was an elegant woman, in the commencement of her decline.

Madame Walbot, on the contrary, was in the spring of life; a complexion of vermillion, large blue eyes, and a perfect model of a mouth were the least of her attractions. A certain *en bon point*, without making her less graceful, rendered her charms more fascinating. She sang with taste, could draw delightfully, and pos-

sessed, as if by instinct, all those accomplishments affected by our ladies of rank. Having thus introduced the reader to the persons, who for some days were to compose the society of Florella, I will resume the thread of my history.

We impatiently waited until Mesdames Carl and Walbot had finished dressing, when Joseph came hastily to inform us that a postchaise had stopped at the door of the inn, and that he had seen two young handsome ladies get out of it, one of whom had given him a note, which he presented to us. It contained only these words :

“ Sister Florella to her brothers of the desert, peace and amity ! ”

Transported with joy and impatience, we immediately quitted the cavern, requesting Carl and Walbot to escort the ladies, whom we had intended to conduct in person to the Castle. We ran, we flew towards the inn in question; but scarcely had we scrambled over the extensive ruins, when we perceived at some distance, a man with a woman in each arm. It was Frank between Florella and Laura. Their eagerness had not been less than our's. Frank arriving at the inn at the moment they were leaving it, was instantly recognised; and they, without ceremony, took the road to the Castle under his auspices. At length we approached; and Florella giving Frederic the preference, was pressed, by turns, in the arms of us all. Oh love! Oh friendship! charms of life—source of every bliss—happy those who can taste your enjoyments!—unfeeling he who should attempt to describe them!

After a moment of delicious intoxication, we pursued our route, Florella between Frederic and me—Laura between Charles and our friend Frank. Presently, however, the road became so narrow, that it was impossible to pass two persons abreast. Florella saw our embarrassment, quitted us, and, incapable of fear, tripped gaily along between the rocks and precipices on either side of the way; her light and nimble feet seemed scarcely to leave an impression: nevertheless, her eye was actively employed; nothing had escaped her observation. When we arrived at the Castle, she reminded us, by a crowd of judicious remarks, of each danger that had struck her astonished sight, of each object that had fixed her attention.

The aspect of the lofty and lonely walls which once composed the facade of the Castle, and which now, suspended, threatened to bury beneath their ruins, the curious

ous spectator that should presume to approach them—those mouldering towers, those demolished battlements, those terraces, formerly kept up with the utmost care, now overgrown with weeds and thistles;—this striking picture of the ravages of time and destruction, suddenly impressed Florella with a sort of religious awe. The smile precipitately fled from her half-opened lips, and her astonished eye contemplated, in melancholy silence, the vast heaps of rubbish around her.

“What a situation!” exclaimed she, after a moment’s pause, involuntarily pressing our hands. “I have read many Romances in my time; but never did the description of a deserted Castle make me feel the smallest part of those sensations which I experience at the sight of this!”

Having said this, she stopped, uncertain whether she ought to proceed or

return. We encouraged her as well as Laura, whose profound silence announced not less dislike of such a gloomy retreat. Our design was to surprise them both agreeably, by presenting them to the numerous society who were waiting for us.

Florella and Laura, a little alarmed by the stillness that reigned around them, were persuaded that we were the only inhabitants of the Castle. We had taken care not to undeceive them.

“But where are you conducting us?” cried Laura, observing us cross the first court, and the gallery which communicated with our own apartments.

“To the chamber prepared for your reception,” answered Frederic.

We were by this time at the middle of a large hall, which served us for an anti-chamber;

chamber; and the sound of several voices issued from the adjoining room.

“Surely I heard something!” exclaimed Florella, starting back, impelled by a movement of involuntary terror.

“Fear nothing,” said Frederic; “you will reign here as you reign in the hearts of your friends!”

So saying, he opened the door, and we entered.

All the inhabitants of the Castle and cavern, with the exception of Margaret and Joseph, were assembled in this hall; and, seated in a circle, were conversing together until we should make our appearance. The men were all neatly clothed—the women with that simple elegance, which is superior to the most studied finery. Florella, struck with amazement at the sight of so many persons, remained

a moment immoveable; she knew not whether what she saw, was the effect of some enchantment, or the illusion of a dream. Meantime the party rose from their seats, and gave her the most flattering reception. Each addressed her with a compliment, or an eulogium; the women were also eager to pay her every attention, to anticipate every wish. She returned their politeness by those touching graces, that delightful charm which accompanied all she said. It was not a stranger, to be seen and examined—it was a friend who was to be received and admired. Confidence shone on every face, joy danced in every heart. Florella was enchanted at such unexpected kindness, and Laura shared in her rapture.

“I am no longer surprised,” said the former, turning toward us, “at the long stay you have made in this desert; in the
midst

midst of such amiable society, it is impossible to notice that we are in a solitude."

"For that reason," replied Frederic, gallantly, "we have but one subject for regret, that of not having the pleasure of your company in addition."

Here Joseph came to inform us that dinner was on the table. The gentlemen presented their hands to the ladies, and all proceeded to the dining-room.

If the number and dress of the guests astonished Florella, the sumptuousness of the repast did not occasion her less surprise. Frank, who had received our orders on this score, had too much understanding to leave us any thing to desire. Margaret, on her part, had surpassed even herself:—fish, fowl, game, all was in its place, all was in perfection:—three complete courses had successively been served up in the greatest style. Joseph, stationed behind the chair of Florella, observed every

every one of her looks, and eagerly anticipated her smallest wishes. She would have thought herself still seated at the table of the Duke of Wirtembergh, had not the frankness, and the absence of ceremony, every instant reminded her of the contrary. The dessert corresponded with the dinner; Frank had taken care to make a copious provision of the best French wines: they were those that Florella preferred. Burgundy and Bourdeaux had each their apologists; but the sparkling Champagne had a decided majority.

Florella had too much real virtue, to affect those airs of reserve and abstemiousness which our young ladies so scrupulously practise in company, and make a jest of, when by themselves. As she was the person, in honour of whose arrival the feast was given, she thought it her duty to set an example of gaiety. Accordingly, her delicate fingers uncorked the first bottle; then, after having seen the glasses filled

filled round, she elevated her own, and drank to the inhabitants of the desert. She was answered by a second :—*the pleasures of hospitality.*

“The charms of friendship!” cried Frederic; and by a significant look directed by stealth to Florella, he informed her he dared not say more.

“And why not to love?” exclaimed Carl, regarding his wife. Then, turning toward us, and putting the glass to his lips—“Ye who are young,” added he, “beware of neglecting that deity, for fear he should punish you.”

The toast of Carl was unanimously repeated, and our freedom and gaiety augmented.

A man of genius, and whom posterity, more just than his contemporaries, will one day call a great man, has said, *every thing is concluded with a song.* This man,

as

as may be supposed, had his reasons for the axiom; for me, who aim at nothing beyond comfort, I am extremely partial to the dinners which have this conclusion. Carl had set the example by a Bacchanalian air; Frank and his sister had sung a duet; we had accompanied Madame Walbot in a sentimental air; Florella only remained to be heard: but she was still fatigued with her journey, and no one liked to ask her for a song, under the apprehension of intruding on her complaisance. Happily she was not like a certain singer, who kept silent when he was requested to favour the company, and who never failed to begin, when they were disposed to talk or reflect. A silence of satisfaction and impatience informed her of the unanimous wish; — she perceived it, and without complaining that she had a cold, or making any other apology whatever, she sang a stanza of Metestasio, set to music by Mozart. What style! what a voice! what purity! what expression!

It is surely thus that the cherubims celebrate the praises of the Eternal!

She had finished, but her auditors still continued listening. An enthusiastic silence reigned around her: no one ventured to applaud, for fear of losing the first sounds which should follow those they had already heard with such rapture. Florella, without waiting for entreaty, began a second air from Iphigenia, by the celebrated Gluck. It is impossible to give an idea of the effect that this celestial voice produced in the middle of the desert which we inhabited. All nature seemed to be hushed, for the sake of listening to her; never had the rocks that fenced our abode, or the silent vallies on which we frequently gazed with so much delight, repeated to the surrounding echoes the cadences of such exquisite harmony.

The grand, the true method of enjoyment is to vary our pleasures; the
company

company was amiable, inclined to hilarity—five women, young and pretty—all this naturally led to the idea of dancing. We took up our instruments, and played a waltz;—every one smiled, and followed the measure by the movement of the head or foot; but no one seemed willing to open the ball. Frederic quitted us for a moment; and having presented his hand to Florella, this charming couple put all the rest of the society in motion. Their example was directly obeyed; and this exercise was at last concluded, in its turn, by the bursts of laughter occasioned by a witty remark of one of the party.—Insipid balls of the great world! what are they in comparison of that which was given, or rather which took place at the time I am speaking of, in the Castle of Sturmberg?

However, every thing having an end, it was with our ball, as with all our other pleasures; it grew late. We thought it prudent

prudent to separate; and a sweet repose succeeded the innocent enjoyments of which we had partaken.

A fresh surprise took possession of Florella at the sight of the antique and majestic bed prepared for her. That of Laura was in the same chamber; and to arrive at it, the apartment in which the widow and Margaret reposed, was first to be passed. This was not very accommodating to Frederic; but he was too delicate to take advantage of his situation, and Florella too circumspect to violate the laws of decorum.

CHAP. IV.*Unexpected Entertainment.*

WE had devoted the following day to make Florella acquainted with all the curiosities of the Castle. Our visit was to terminate at Carl's cavern, where Margaret and Joseph had repaired early in the morning, in order to prepare dinner.

The Italians, generally speaking, have great penetration of mind. The pride of treading on the ashes of so many heroes, the monuments of grandeur, the striking
ruins

ruins of which every where surround them, seem to have given to them more than to other nations, the habit of reflection and sound judgment. The justness of the remarks with which Florella accompanied the examination of each object she came to, convinced us of the truth of this assertion. Those spacious vaults, those lofty pillars, the well dug in the rock, those immense caverns, and, above all the rest, those rude inscriptions, speaking proofs of the barbarism of the age in which they had been traced, had occupied us several hours, when Joseph came to tell me in a whisper, that dinner was ready. I accordingly by degrees directed the steps of the party to Carl's abode, where in the course of a few minutes we arrived.

It was lighted up by such a great quantity of flambeaux, that their lustre dazzled even us, who expected something extraordinary. On a part of the rock,
exactly

exactly opposite to the place destined for Florella, there was written, in transparent characters—*sacred to friendship*. It was to the imagination of Frank that we were indebted for this excess of magnificence. No sooner had it struck the eye of Florella, than turning towards us, she said, in a pathetic voice, and affected by the emotion she experienced—

“Ah, my friends! you are desirous of rendering Vienna insupportable to me!—Our separation will be but too painful as it is—do not render it impossible?”

“Would to Heaven!” cried Frederic, animated by the ardour of his feelings, “that it could be so!”

“No, my friend,” replied Florella, “I have promised to go there, and will keep my word; but I promise you also to return to this desert: and as I make it with more pleasure than the former, doubt not I shall fulfil it with equal exactitude.”

Then,

Then, changing the conversation, she asked after Carl, whom she was astonished not to see of the party.

The reader will easily conjecture in what manner he was employing his time. An unfortunate family required his aid; and the most simple enjoyment of the soul had more charms in his eyes, than the most studied, the most refined pleasures of sense. Carl was one of those rare mortals to whom beneficence is indispensable, and the satisfaction of being useful, real voluptuousness. What he possessed, belonged less to himself, than to the victim of adversity who stood in need of it. The united requests of his wife and Madame Walbot had not been able to keep him at home; but he had promised them to return earlier than usual, and he was faithful to his word. His absence had augmented our esteem for him—his arrival added to our pleasure. The company were too well contented with each other, to part
till

till the night was far advanced ; and they at length separated, as well satisfied with this, as they had been with the preceding day.

The morning of the third was destined to a shooting excursion. Florella was passionately fond of this exercise ; she had constantly partaken it with the Prince during her residence at Stutgard. She had brought with her a man's dress, a sort of Hungary uniform ; it was thus disguised, that she accompanied us. Adonis was less beautiful, Hebe less blooming, Diana less agile than Florella accoutred in this elegant and voluptuous attire : she might have been taken for one of those aerial Genii, who, descended from their clouds of azure, visited the garden of Eden, to converse with our primitive sire. Each of her gestures was a grace, every smile a luxury ; it would have required more than human fortitude to resist so many united charms, and Frederic did
not

not pique himself on possessing it. I know not whether they separated for the purpose of rejoining—whether they quitted one another for the sake of meeting again; I remember only that this excursion was the most agreeable we had made since our abode at the Castle of Sturmberg, that we returned loaded with proofs of our dexterity, and that we dined alone, which was not the smallest part of the pleasure.

It was time to present to Florella one of our neighbours whom, till this moment, we had forgotten: I mean the old lizard. As soon as we rose from table, we took our instruments, and approached the window which looked toward the rock, where he had taken up his residence. Florella, whom we had informed of the singularity of the circumstance, could hardly believe it, and her eye was impatiently fixed on the spot that we pointed out to her. Several pieces were performed, during all which he kept close; at length the

VOL. IV. E favourite

favourite *cantabile* commenced. Having reached the middle of the first part, our attentive auditor shewed his head. Florella perceived him, and with difficulty could stifle a cry of surprise, which had like to have escaped her. The second part produced its usual effect; the lizard gravely quitted his hole, and came to take his accustomed place, in order to listen to us. Florella could not contain herself at this sight; she was desirous of examining him more nearly, to touch, to caress the musical animal—her joy was extravagant.

It is said that women are particularly curious; it was probably the intention of Nature: but what appears to me certain is, that their curiosity is far more eager, more permanent than our's. A man, after a few unsuccessful attempts, abandons the object of his labour; a woman, though repulsed a hundred times, constantly returns to the charge; the impossibility of attaining

attaining it, is the only motive that can determine her to desist from the pursuit. Three times had our recluse retired and reappeared, yet Florella was not satisfied. It occurred to us to vary our experiment, by requesting Florella to sing the *cantabile*. With this she complied, but the lizard disregarded her; she then sang the air without the words, and he came forth as usual.

“Surely,” cried Florella, in an ecstasy, “the gentleman is not content with the poet.”

This exclamation made us burst into laughter.

“Do you know,” added she, “that, were we in the fabulous age, instead of in that of wickedness, I should believe that your neighbour had been one of those great personages who so pompously styled themselves protectors of the fine arts, and whom

Apollo, to punish for his arrogance, had transformed into a lizard. Observe his manners," continued she, laughing; "he is treated with a concert, he appears but for a moment, and then retires with dignity and reserve.—Well, what say you?"

We answered nothing, because in Germany, as well as elsewhere, we must not always say what we think.

The apprehension of catching cold or rheumatism, had induced our lizard to disappear. We resolved to leave him to his repose, to receive our neighbours of the cavern, who came to pay us a visit. Games of amusement were proposed; and to augment the pleasure, it was desirable to have the party as large as possible. Frank and Laura were the only individuals missing; they had been seen strolling together among the ruins. This circumstance did not surprise us; Laura was curious, and Frank was naturally communicative.

When

When they returned, the animation of their cheeks shewed the value of exercise. To be sure, Laura's gown appeared to have suffered a little; but the reader knows as well as I, that historical discoveries are not to be made with the same ease, as looking over a map, or fighting a battle on paper.

After two or three hours' diversion of various kinds, Margaret served up an elegant collation. The sight of a well-covered table has always more or less influence on the gaiety of the spectator, especially when he is at liberty to sit down to it. Conversation, the joke, the laugh went round; and the hour of retirement being arrived, the company separated, perfectly satisfied with each other.

A fortnight thus elapsed between entertainments and other pleasures; in six days more, Florella was to be at Vienna. Her departure was fixed for the next but

one, and the short interval was to be entirely devoted to friendship. It was agreed between us, that Florella should give us information of her arrival in the capital, and that we should join her as soon as she should be able to procure us suitable employments. Our correspondence was to be carried on as between cousins, and that for reasons which will be discovered in due time and place. This title, which added a new tie to so many others which already united us, rendered our satisfaction complete; we embraced her as a long-lost relation, and never was a family kiss given with more sincerity, or received with more hearty good-will.

In the course of the conversation, Frederic having enquired her address at Vienna, she answered him with a sigh, and suppressing the tears which were about to flow in spite of herself, "At the Hotel de Polwitz."

"What

“What mean that sigh—those tears?” cried Frederic, alarmed at her emotion.

Her only reply was to fall into his arms; then, affecting a more tranquil air—

“You shall know to-morrow,” said she; “let us not imbitter, by unpleasant reflections, the few remaining moments we have still left to pass together. A letter that I will leave in my chamber, will inform you, after my departure, of the secret, and of my future projects. If I have the courage to leave you, be assured it is only in the hope of accelerating their execution.”

We thought it our duty to press her no farther; and after composing ourselves as well as we were able, Florella begged us to conduct her to the cavern, to bid adieu to our amiable neighbours.

Florella was discreet, and on the eve of quitting us:—these circumstances, as well

as the esteem we had for Carl, determined us to confide to her the motive of the absences of the latter. Florella's own heart was too good, too compassionate to be surprised at an act of beneficence, or a trait of humanity; but when she heard the recital of what I had seen, and the odious suspicions which had preceded our discovery, the tear of sympathy bedewed her cheek.

“How happy are you!” said she. “All that surround you, resemble you! Let Carl be your friend until the happy moment of our next meeting; our hearts are too nearly allied in sentiment, to live asunder. This castle will henceforth occupy the first place in my mind, as those who reside in it, will be the objects dearest to my memory.”

This conversation brought us to the door of the cavern.

Carl,

Carl, as we had presumed, was absent. Mesdames Carl and Walbot could not receive the adieus of Florella, without shedding tears. They had known one another but a fortnight, and already they were friends for life. M. Walbot was out shooting; but we were in hopes of seeing him in the evening. Before quitting this hospitable abode, Florella distributed to the mothers and children, some trifling presents, requesting their acceptance of them, for the purpose of reminding them of the donor. Her care was superfluous—it was impossible to have seen Florella, and forget her. The sweetness of her voice, the touching grace of her manners, the amiableness of her disposition, the expression of her eye, all served to recall her image, all reminded you of the beauty of her features, and of the excellence of her heart.

This last day was a day of mourning and affliction.

“It was cruel,” said the good Margaret, sobbing, “to give us a moment’s pleasure, to leave us to grieve afterwards: go go, if you will, but it will be in vain; you won’t easily find them that will love you better.”

“Oh, that I am well assured of!” replied Florella emphatically, and looking at Frederic and us; “I shall not die, without having tasted happiness.”

The scene threatened to become too serious; Florella perceived it, and to enliven it, proposed a waltz. We were unwilling to refuse her; but the dance was spiritless: it was accompanied with frequent sighs, and with a melancholy silence, which announced that it was agreed to on our part, rather from complaisance than from a disposition to gaiety: accordingly it was soon given up.

In this moment, Florella thought of the lizard, of whom she had not yet taken leave.

leave. She sang his favourite air, and, at the second part, our recluse appeared, to receive her farewell.

“ I shall often envy your lot,” said she to him ; then, exerting her utmost fortitude, she began to sing something else, not that she felt any inclination, but with a view of dispelling our melancholy.

The charm of her angelic voice assuaged for a moment our sorrow ; but the temper of her soul having inadvertently led her to sing an air more analogous to our situation (the Farewell of Andromache), she executed it with so much expression, that our tears, long suppressed, began to flow with violence. She could not retain her's ; we wept, we embraced, and at length retired with our hearts overwhelmed by sorrow, like his who quits the friend of his youth, or the lover's, who tears himself from the arms of his weeping mistress.

In pursuance of the measures taken by Frank, the post-horses were to be ready at daybreak, at the door of the inn where Florella had alighted a fortnight before. The first rays of Aurora had scarcely illumined the point of the rocks which surrounded us, when we requested permission to enter her apartment. She was already dressed, having passed a great part of the night in writing. Laura gave us admission; after which, Florella, having once more taken leave of the widow, her daughter, and Margaret, accepted our arms—Laura those of Charles and Frank, and we left the Castle.

The distance from that to the inn appeared this time so short, that we reached it without having paid any attention to the difficulties of the way. The postchaise was waiting at the door. They entered it; a look and a pressure of the hand preceded the smack of the postboy's whip; the carriage was in motion, and left us
immoveable,

immoveable, sorrowfully following with our eyes the road it overran, and the movements of a hand, which from the door continued, as far as we could observe, to bid us a last adieu.

When we had lost sight of it, a torrent of tears came to the relief of our oppressed hearts; then, slowly returning, we mournfully regained the Castle. The first object that attracted our attention, was Florella's letter, which we were to find on her dressing-table. It was addressed to Frederic, and contained what follows:—

“ But for you, my dear Frederic, I had never known love; but for you and your friends, I should still have had no idea of happiness. It is at the Castle of Sturmberg that I have found it. The divinities of my heart, the two sentiments essential to my felicity, will be
5 henceforth

henceforth *love* and *friendship*. If your thoughts agree with mine, we will live and die in the enjoyment of them!

“It was the Count de Polwitz, Grand Palatine of Hungary, that I knew at the Court of Stutgard, who concluded my engagement for the Opera at Vienna; he assures me of the same advantages that I enjoyed at that of the Prince of Wirtemberg. The Count adds the annual sum of forty thousand florins, and, besides, takes the charge upon himself to furnish my table. This is the confession I have felt so unwilling to make to you. Oh my friend! why has not Fortune been as liberal to you as Nature? I should then subsist on your beneficence alone. My riches, my ambition would then be wholly centered in your love.

“I trust that the Count's influence will enable me to be useful to you in the new metropolis I am going to. I know him

him not sufficiently, to form a judgment of his disposition. It appears to me noble and generous; but I fear his jealousy. Let him, however, think as he pleases: I have none but friends, and my heart is wholly Frederic's.

“ Permit me now to speak a little of your affairs; they are also in some measure mine, since all is common between friends.

“ You have left me ignorant of the state of your finances. To punish you for this reserve, I have left fifty louis in the upper drawer of those which stand in my chamber; they will serve to pay the expences of your journey to Vienna, when the proper time shall arrive that I can give you a summons. You will find twenty-five in a separate purse in the same drawer; these I beg of you to deliver to our friend Carl. I am desirous of somehow contributing to the good he
does

does. Should he refuse them, take them yourselves to the family that has merited, and that receives his daily succour.

“In the same drawer you will also see a folded paper. It contains an inventory of the furniture and effects I left behind me at Stutgard; they are deposited in one of the apartments that you last occupied, and which I hired for the purpose. My intention was to sell them; but my eagerness to arrive at the Castle, to pass a few days longer with you, did not leave me time. I have paid the first six months in advance; if, during this interval, your faithful Frank should have sufficient leisure to take a trip so far, I request him to dispose of them, and to deliver the produce into your hands.

“If the money should be sufficient, I am desirous that it may be laid out in the acquisition or construction of a farm in some romantic, wild, and picturesque situation:—

situation:—such, for instance, as that in which the adoptive family of Carl reside, and of which you gave me the description. Since my abode at Sturmberg, it seems to me that it is only in a desert, far from the busy haunts of men, that the pleasures of love and friendship can be enjoyed in their fullest extent.

“ In consequence, I leave you to act without controul, in such manner as you may judge most suitable. Our souls understand each other; and what directions after that, could there be to give? If my design to settle you in Vienna should meet with insuperable obstacles, our farm shall be the place of our meeting. Reading, fowling, fishing, a good action to finish the day, and who will complain of the sameness of solitude? The grandeur of the rising sun, his majestic departure, all that Nature can boast of the beautiful and sublime, will elevate our souls, ennoble our ideas, and multiply our enjoyments.

ments. We shall lead a life of retirement; but we shall see—we shall hear each other, we shall inhale the same air; and while the world will be a desert for the greater part of our fellow creatures, our farm will be for us a new universe.

“ P. S.—You mentioned, if I am not mistaken, a torrent dashing among the rocks. Ah! were it possible to find at a little distance, a stream flowing, with gentle murmurs, through a bed of flowers! The tempestuousness of the one would be the image of the days which we have passed in the world; the transparency and tranquillity of the other, the emblem of those to be enjoyed in the bosom of friendship. What a perspective!—what felicity!—It is for you, my friends, to realize this enchanting dream—it is to this hope that I am indebted for the courage I exerted in bereaving myself of your society!

“ FLORELLA.”

This

This project delighted not less our imaginations than that of our charming correspondent ; but the execution of it was more difficult than we at first imagined. To quit the Castle, and go to reside in the neighbourhood of Carl's adopted family, and that without any pretence, would be to prove to the latter that we had watched his steps, to discover his secret : and Carl was not a man to pardon such officious curiosity. The task was not more easy, to obtain his acceptance of the twenty-five louis which Florella had desired us to deliver to him. The use to which it was wished that this money should be applied, would have convinced him not only of the discovery, but also of the communication of his secret. We therefore resolved to retain the louis until a more favourable opportunity, or a more plausible pretext should offer for fulfilling the intentions of Florella.

Chance

Chance was not long in presenting it. Carl, though worn out with fatigue, would not renounce a task which surpassed his physical faculties. They daily diminished; but he had a family to support, and a secret to keep. These two considerations were with him superior to the care which he owed to his own health:—it soon visibly declined; his strength left him, and his weakness became such, that he was obliged to keep his bed. In a few days, the symptoms of a most dangerous malady manifested themselves, which were accompanied with violent pain. Carl, however, never complained of what he suffered:—one fear, one anxiety alone tormented him; it was the horrible state of misery in which his speedy death would plunge the unfortunate family, whose support he had for some time been. What will become of them? How will they exist? These were the questions that he was constantly repeating to himself. The danger of his situation, his anguish, the
appre-

apprehension of never surviving his malady, all disappeared before the idea of leaving them exposed to want and wretchedness.

Hope quits us but with life. This sentiment, feeble as it was, still supported Carl, and his secret did not escape him. It was the seventh day of his disorder—a violent crisis, more poignant sufferings, and an increase of oppression seemed to announce to him his approaching dissolution. The tears of his friends, the silent and gloomy despair of his wife and children standing round his bed, informed him of their sentiments of his situation. After a moment's silence and reflection, he requested to be left alone with M. Walbot; and, making him approach his bed, he said to him in a feeble tone—

“A respectable and unfortunate family reside two leagues from hence, among the rocks which border the Grünwald:
it

it is to the head of that family, my former benefactor, and once powerful, though now proscribed, that I have devoted the two months, during which you have supported mine. I do not thank you for so doing, because such a task is an enjoyment for a heart like your's; and I feel that I should have done the same in your place. Reliance having been placed on my gratitude, I have depended, in my turn, on your friendship; to that I henceforth bequeath my wife and children. You have long been their support;—you will not refuse to become their consoler—their father!"—Here Carl fetched a deep sigh; then taking again the hand of Walbot, he continued—"I dare not, after what I have exacted from you, speak farther of the family of my benefactor; but I flatter myself that our friends at the Castle will gladly take that charge upon them."

"I will answer for them with my life," replied M. Walbot.

"In that case let them be called. The
secret

secret I have to communicate, is worthy of them, and it is now too late to think of concealing it."

Madame Walbot came to summon us. We followed her instantly; and in a few minutes we were by the side of Carl.

"I have a secret to impart to you," said he, "and an act of beneficence to require of you. Do you consent to keep the one, and to perform the other?"

We swore it on the pledge of honour and friendship. Hearing this, a ray of joy shone in his eyes, apparently so near to be closed for ever; and after having informed us to the same effect as he had before related to Walbot, he added, raising his voice as much as his weakness would permit him—

"You have not a moment to lose, if you would save that hapless family, destitute

titute of every thing—the victims of persecution, could they be found—without friends, relatives, or assistance ;—abandoned by Nature herself—they had only me for their support—for the preserver of their wretched existence ! Perhaps, while I am speaking, they are wrestling with famine and despair ! Let one of you instantly depart——”

“ One of us ! ” interrupted Frederic eagerly, “ all three of us ! ”

Without waiting for his answer, we ran back to the Castle.

Immediately the best of our provisions and wines were packed in two hand-baskets. We set off for the Grünwald ; nobody was left in the Castle, every one having, for some days past, been occupied in attending to the much-respected patient.

CHAP. V.

The Isle of the Rocks.

THOUGH the road was very rough and unpleasant, rather less than two hours sufficed to bring us to the end of our journey. We had, however, made such expedition, that we were obliged to take a moment's repose on the summit of the mountain, from whence, for the first time, I had discovered the cottage. Behind it was an enormous rock, and it was partly concealed by a double row of fir trees, the tops of which were now tinged with the last rays of the setting sun. Its appearance was solitary and forlorn; had we

VOL. IV. F passed

passed it by chance, we should have supposed that it had been deserted by its inhabitants.

“Should we have arrived too late!” cried I, suddenly recollecting the words of Carl just as we left him; “should hunger——”

This idea struck a damp to the soul of my friends. We started up, we ran, we flew; a minute's delay seemed to us a crime against human nature. An instant served to bring us to the bottom of the mountain; but what a misfortune! The torrent was not dry as at my former visit; it did not even appear fordable; the rain which had fallen for some days before, had rendered it absolutely impetuous. Vexed at meeting with this unforeseen obstacle, we paced the side of the stream to some distance, in the hope of finding a more easy spot to cross it. The same difficulty every where presented itself. At length Frederic stripped off his clothes,
4 and,

and, without saying a word, leaped into the water, and gained the opposite side. We followed his example; and, after going several times backward and forward, our provisions were safely deposited a little way from the cottage. An old man, grey-headed, the same that I had seen assisting Carl in his labour, stood at the door. He observed us resuming our garments. His haggard eye was earnestly fixed on us: a gloomy despair was depicted on his countenance; he saw us approach him without fear, without emotion, without changing his attitude, apparently immoveable as one of the marble statues that ornament a gallery of sculpture.

“We are the friends of Carl,” said Frederic, accosting the venerable old man; “it is from him that we bring you these provisions.”

“From Carl!” replied he. “What, after forgetting and abandoning me for eight long days?”

“After eight long days of illness, which perhaps, ere this, has brought him to the grave,” rejoined Charles.

“To the grave!” cried the stranger, clasping his hands. “Ah! forgive me, worthy, beneficent man, if my miseries have led me to doubt of thy sincerity! Enter this dwelling, gentlemen, and judge of the sufferings I have undergone.”

We immediately followed him into the cottage. The first object that struck our sight, was an elderly woman, laying on the floor, seemingly lifeless. I instantly took a bottle of Bourdeaux wine, and ran to her assistance.

“It is too late!” exclaimed the old man, in the accent of despair. “She is dead—she is happy!—But save, Oh save my daughters!”

On turning to the side to which he directed our attention, what a scene did

we behold! Two young females, almost in the same state as their mother—one stretched on an old rug, pale, and depressed beyond description, with difficulty unclosing her eyes, already overshadowed by the sleep of death; the other, seated on the floor, her back supported against the wall, wringing her hands, and sobbing convulsively. I approached the latter, while Charles attended to the former, and Frederic to the father, who, either from weakness, or overpowered by his feelings, had fallen into his arms.

“ Oh sweet beneficence! Oh sacred humanity! what enjoyments do ye afford to the bosom of sensibility! With what pleasure did we assist these victims of adversity! With what rapture did we witness their gradual restoration! No, the delirium of love can never be compared to that indescribable charm which accompanies a virtuous action!

Three several times, at little intervals between each, I forced down the throat of the unfortunate creature confided to my care, a small quantity of wine. A sort of grass, or herb, that still remained on her discoloured lips, sufficiently announced with what aliments she had lately been nourished. We had brought with us some meat jelly. I lighted a fire, and in a short time, we had a cup of broth ready for each of our patients. The father was soon in a condition to partake of the sustenance which we administered to his daughters. We passed the night watching by their side; and the return of day produced the reward of our unremitting care. They had acquired strength; their eyes were more lively; their complexion, though still pale, began to be animated. It was then for the first time that we noticed the elegance of their forms, the dignity of their countenances, the regularity of their features—in short, that harmonious correspondence observable throughout their persons,

persons, and which constitutes true beauty.

Till that moment, their preservation had been the sole wish of our heart, the only object of our attention. Now, having discharged the debt we owed humanity, we paid our voluntary homage to the models of perfection which it offered to our eyes. Like Pygmalion, we viewed with delight every motion of those delicate limbs, so recently immoveable, and benumbed by the icy hand of death; we beheld with transport those pale and withered cheeks resume the blush of animation, and those sunk and dying eyes sparkle with their primitive lustre.

Let it not be suspected that the purity of our admiration was sullied by any illicit desire. Our friendship for Carl had led us to this cottage; humanity had done the rest. No unhallowed wish, no hope of sensual recompence had obtruded

itself into our hearts during the sacred occupation in which we had been engaged. We only returned thanks to Heaven, for having, in preference, chosen us to snatch from destruction two of its most accomplished creatures. The success of our endeavours was, doubtless, reward sufficient. They lived; we were repaid. But how should I be able to describe the gratitude of a fond father, who, menaced with being left alone in the world, suddenly sees restored to him, as if by a miracle, the two beloved children, for whose sakes alone he thinks life desirable! Oh Flora! Oh Elisca! he, whom a word or a smile from you, would not compensate for years of misfortunes, is unworthy of seeing you, is incapable of appreciating you justly!

Notwithstanding their extreme weakness, these affectionate girls had never ceased to attend their mother with the utmost filial tenderness. She breathed her
last

last sigh in their arms; and that event, as much as the want of nourishment, had plunged them in the horrible situation we had found them in. Both had several times desired to see once more those dear remains, which we had taken care to remove from their sight. They were at this moment unequal to so distressing a scene; but the wish was from Nature, and it is in vain to contend with her. While the father and daughters were bedewing with their tears the lifeless object of their regret, we were busied in digging a grave at the foot of a rock, at no great distance from the cottage, and shaded by a venerable oak.

When this melancholy operation was finished, we went to mix our tears with those of the distressed mourners; then, with all the respect that circumstances would allow, we bore off the body, and consigned it to the earth. Never were funeral honours less pompous; but never were

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more

more sincere tears shed—never did more fervent prayers ascend to the throne of the Eternal.

Over the grave that enclosed these precious ashes, was raised a hillock, on which we erected a little cross, the symbol of our holy faith. A few days afterwards, we formed a seat of turf round the majestic oak that overshadowed the tomb: thither have Flora and Elisca often since retired to discourse on their mother's virtues, and to ask of Heaven length of days for him, to whom they owed their sorrowful existence. The following words were engraved on the rock above:—*She was the best of wives, and most excellent of mothers!*—a simple tribute to her memory; but which was far more estimable than the pompous epitaphs of the sons of pride and ambition.

It was at our return from this melancholy ceremony, that these interesting mourners acquainted us with the cruel sufferings they had undergone during the
eight

eight days' absence of Carl. The four first had been passed in a total abstinence from all nutriment; they every moment expected the arrival of their generous provider, and every moment, while it deceived their expectation, redoubled their anguish, and added to their despair.

“Twenty times,” said the old
“did I quit my cottage, with the
tion of jumping into the torrent,
ming over, and, should I succeed,
into the first neighbouring village
solicit relief. The repugnance I
abandon my wife and children at a
ment when they stood in such need
my support, the almost certain conviction
that I should not be able to vanquish the
rapidity of the torrent, the dread, more
horrible than all the rest, of dying at a
distance from my family, far from the
only beings that attached me to life, de-
termined me at length to partake their
fate.

“ My wife had just expired ; my daughters were about to follow her ; I was myself impatiently waiting for my last hour. Incapable of sustaining longer the heart-rending picture before my eyes, I approached the door to breathe, for the last time, the air of Heaven, and bid a last adieu to Nature, when, aided, doubtless, by that Providence which I had resigned myself, you were in time to snatch us from the jaws of death that already yawned to receive us in its bosom.

The rest is known to you. I owe my life—I owe you, what is far more dear to me, the lives of my children ! May the God that rewards and punishes, recompense you for your beneficence, and listen to the prayers dictated by our feeble gratitude ! ”

The look with which Flora and Elisca accompanied the last words of their father, was more than sufficient to repay their obligations.

obligations to us. Besides, it was to Carl that the glory of this action belonged:—we had no other merit in the affair than from having contributed to its success by our diligence in executing it; but what we had done, was little in comparison of what we proposed to do. This charming family was far from being provided even with all the necessaries of life; the cottage, though sheltered by a rock, was cold and damp; the door would close but imperfectly; the interior announced absolute wretchedness; no beds, no seats, none of those articles of convenience which, from frequent use, are become, if I may so say, objects of real necessity.

These naked walls, and symptoms of misery, almost drew tears from our eyes. A man born in the most distinguished rank, bred up in the bosom of opulence, filling, during a course of twenty-five years, the first offices in the state, finds himself, at the close of his career, stripped
of

of his honours, a proscribed fugitive, without a stone on which to lay his head, or a place of shelter for his family; and, to say all in one word, reduced to exist on the kindness and protection of a poacher! — Oh destiny! but what men were this fugitive and this poacher? They were great by their virtues; and that greatness is far superior to the lustre of titles, and the highest dignities at which ambition can aim.

Our commission being thus executed, it was time for us to return to Carl, and give him an account of the result of our journey. The torrent was become fordable; and we availed ourselves of that circumstance to hasten our departure, positively promising our new friends to see them again in three days at farthest, were it only to inform them of the health of Carl. The fate of that worthy man appeared to interest them so much, that he almost excited our envy.

In

In proportion as we approached the cavern, our hearts beat with increased violence; a melancholy presentiment took possession of us, convinced as we were that the good are seldom fortunate in this world. Happily our fears were unjust; we found Carl sitting up in his bed, surrounded by Frank and all his family. A favourable crisis had arrived the day after we had left him, which had been the means of saving his life; he was completely out of danger: and our recital contributed not a little to hasten his convalescence. He was unable to restrain his tears at the description of the events which had taken place at the cottage. The death of the respectable woman, for whom we had performed the last sad duties, above all afflicted him deeply; but the efficacy of the succours which we had given to the other members of the interesting family, and the state of health in which we had quitted them, conspired by degrees to compose him. We had not yet mentioned to him
the

the twenty-five louis that Florella had charged us to reimburse him. The knowledge of this circumstance, and the use to which the money was destined, drew forth his tears afresh; But these were tears of joy. We afterwards begged he would pardon us, as well for our former suspicions, as also for the motive which had determined us to watch his conduct. At first, he answered us by pressing our hands; then added, in a tone of voice that shewed he was a good deal affected—

“Virtuous hearts are so rare, the wicked so numerous, that suspicion is less an offence to the former, than a measure of prudence against the latter. You were doubtless worthy of partaking such a secret, but it was not mine; and I can assure you that it has cost me as much to conceal it from you, as it can you to have remained ignorant of it so long. Now that you are possessed of it, I leave to you the care of fulfilling, as you think proper,

proper, the august functions confided to you:—one day you may know the family that receives your kindness, and you will then doubly feel the charm that is inseparable from an act of true benevolence.”

We had no occasion for this encouragement; our hearts were sufficiently engaged in the undertaking, without the aid of any farther stimulus. Frank, who was desirous of participating in this good work, solicited, as a favour, to be employed in the purchases we should make. He was precisely the man we wanted. The twenty-five louis were given into his custody, with an inventory of the articles necessary to commence housekeeping, and the same day he set out for Wetzlar.

We were certain of being faithfully served; but in this instance he surpassed his usual intelligence and dispatch. On the evening of the following day, Joseph, who had accompanied him, returned to
inform

inform us that the cart was arrived at an inn not more than a league from Grünwald. That was shortening our road by one half; but this was not the only advantage for which we were indebted to his ingenuity: the road was much easier as well as shorter. We immediately went to rejoin Frank, in order to be ready, at break of day the next morning, to convey the furniture to its destination. Every thing was neat and simple, the chief part of walnut-tree, but remarkably clean and well polished.

As soon as the day appeared, we commenced our operations. The remainder of the road was rough and hilly, though far superior to the other, and it was not till about noon that we reached the torrent; but instead of that impetuosity with which it rushed along at our first visit to the cottage, it was now nothing more than a gentle rivulet. We crossed it without the slightest difficulty, and in
less

less than an hour, all the furniture was safely deposited on the other side.

We proceeded to inform the islanders of our arrival. The old man's joy at seeing us again, was inexpressible; he called us twenty times his friends, his deliverers, his sons; but of all these titles, the last was by far the most flattering, as it gave us a sort of claim to the intimacy of Flora and Elisca. During this time, not a word was said respecting the furniture; the chief cause of our visit was not suspected by any one of the family. Their surprise on beholding it, resembled that which is occasioned by a dextrous change of the scene in a pantomime: they doubted of the evidence of their sight; such bulky moveables, so many articles and effects brought over a mountain, the summit of which appeared lost in the clouds, and across a torrent on each side edged with rocks, seemed to them rather the effect of
a magic

a magic wand, than a simple act of beneficence.

“What means all this?” said the old man, addressing us, and stupified at the aspect of such unexpected riches; “you are resolved, then, that your liberality shall exceed my gratitude!”

“Our only merit,” replied Charles, “is our good-will; we are merely the agents of Carl.”

“But Carl is poor himself,” rejoined the old man.

“No one can ever be poor,” observed Frederic, “while he can be of use to his fellow-creatures.”

Meanwhile, we carried the furniture to the cottage; and, with the assistance of Flora and Elisca, arranged it in the apartments, which had been cleaned and put in order during our absence.

“Oh

“Oh Providence! impenetrable are thy decrees!” would the old man frequently exclaim, raising his hands toward heaven, and his eyes beaming with gratitude; “I have met with benefactors in strangers, while those, for whom during thirty years I lavished my blood, and exposed my life, proscribe and persecute me!”

Our labour advanced rapidly;—the cottage was divided into three apartments, without reckoning a recess, formed by the projection of the upper part of the rock, against which it was raised. This recess had afforded shelter to the unfortunate family, and had inspired Carl with the idea of constructing a habitation on the spot. Already half a dozen chairs and a sofa of Utrecht velvet, a table and a bedstead, not exactly matching each other, but clean, and in good condition, ornamented the outer room, which it was agreed should be the parlour to sit, eat, and receive company in; the second served as the father's sleeping

sleeping room, and the third was adapted to the same purpose for Flora and Elisca. Two humble beds, each composed of a quilt and a couple of mattresses, were prepared in these two chambers; a bureau, a few straw bottom chairs, and a chest of drawers, formed the rest of their furniture.

Every one of these articles, as it passed from our hands into those of our new friends, became to them a fresh subject of astonishment, and to us a fresh cause of enjoyment. There still remained two trunks carefully packed, and of the contents of which we ourselves were ignorant; we waited their being opened with that degree of curiosity which in our young days is the summit of our felicity. Here, in particular, we could not but admire the thoughtfulness and good sense of Frank: he had descended into the most minute details; not a single article of indispensable necessity had escaped his penetration. The first trunk we opened
contained

contained, besides wearing apparel, a small quantity of linen, and several yards of household cloth; the second, all that is required to furnish a little kitchen; and in a separate case, a dozen bottles of wine and cordials, with different sorts of provisions. I mention these things only, as, in my opinion, they are characteristic of true benevolence.

The proud mortal who throws a purse of gold to the poor man that solicits his assistance, is doubtless generous; but he is far from being beneficent. In order to be the former, it is sufficient to be rich, vain, or extravagant; to be the latter, it is absolutely requisite to possess a feeling heart, a fine soul, and to be naturally virtuous.

On our part, we had brought from the Castle all that was necessary to celebrate the day agreeably. The cloth was spread, a cover and napkin were laid for each; and,

and, for the first time during almost three months passed in this rocky asylum, the unfortunate family partook of a meal seated in chairs around a table: ~~the~~ the dishes, it is true, were neither numerous nor studied; but appetite and good humour amply compensated for every deficiency. An enlivening glass, taken now and then, augmented the general gaiety; the liqueur, provided by Frank, turned out excellent; a toast was unanimously drunk to the complete recovery of Carl; and, in rising from the table, all agreed that it was easy to dine more sumptuously, but impossible to make a more delicious repast.

The inauguration of the cottage being thus concluded, it became our next care to supply the colony with sufficient to preserve it from famine. Among the stores contained in the second trunk, were several bags filled with dried roots and vegetables. Frank, who knew something of gardening, assured us that the soil of

+ In every page the author ^{the} feels the effect of a sharp appetite - paints the historical dist

the island was well adapted for this sort of productions. Nothing was more wanting to suggest to us the idea of planting a kitchen garden: the plan was immediately drawn out, Flora and Elisca approved of it, and Frank took upon himself to put it into execution.

I have already said that this isle was formed on one side by the water of a torrent, and on the other by a river, which we discovered to be well stocked with fish. Here then was an invaluable resource for our islanders. In consequence, it was resolved that at our next visit we should bring them all the utensils necessary to turn this discovery to advantage. The chace presented another mode of subsistence not less considerable:—this exercise, as serviceable as it is conducive to health, had formerly been one of the most agreeable amusements of our venerable refugee. His sight was still good, his arm nervous, his limbs active: the isle was also as well

VOL. IV

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stored

*I stole the deliciousness
of an exhilarating glass
all other considerations*

stored with game as the environs of Sturmberg. Although, on account of his birth, and of the posts he had filled, he had different notions from our's respecting the right of sporting, yet we easily persuaded him to avail himself of this resource; and that he might do so with success, Frank received orders to add to the fishing tackle, a fowling piece, and whatever else was needful for the purpose.

After having thus passed the day, we employed a part of the night in repairing the interior of the cottage. The partitions were imperfect, the doors not much better: Carl alone, and unprovided with the tools necessary in the construction of a work like that he had undertaken, had with difficulty so far succeeded, as to form a mere inhabitable dwelling; but Frank had brought an axe, a plane, a hammer, nails, &c. We were desirous of something workman-like. In a few hours the planks that separated the apartments, were consolidated;

solidated; the doors, better hung, turned freely on their hinges; instead of a carpet, a matting composed of rushes, covered the ground, and intercepted the dampness; the recess in the rock, that I before mentioned, was cleared out, and assumed a more advantageous appearance. No longer the haunt of wild beasts that might seek shelter from pursuit, or the heat of the sun, it became the kitchen of an illustrious family, the victims of ingratitude and persecution. They were enjoying the sweets of sleep, while we were occupied in ameliorating the state of their habitation; each stroke of the hammer prepared a surprise for them the following day.

Early in the morning, Flora and Elisca arose to prepare breakfast, which consisted of tea, and was given in as much style as could be expected in such a solitude: it was, moreover, poured out by charming hands, and presented with a

smile so graceful!—Oh Flora! Oh Elisca! what are the profuse feasts of the gay world, compared with the repasts which are enjoyed in your society!

We waited with impatience the return of Joseph, whom we had dispatched to the Castle for our fowling-pieces; our intention was to make the tour of the isle, not only for the purpose of shooting, and to procure provisions, but also to examine the situations, and to chuse the most picturesque and most suitable spot in which to carry into execution the plan of Florella.

We at length pitched upon one that we conceived to merit the preference. About three or four hundred paces from the cottage, going towards the rocks, down which the torrent rushed with resistless impetuosity, was a plain of considerable extent. From thence the eye might observe with delight, on the one hand, the capriciously
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formed.

formed mountains; on the other, the most luxuriant scene imaginable. At the distance of a few yards, a spring of delicious water glided along its pebbled bed; and a little way farther, constituted a reservoir overshadowed by willows. This advantage appeared to us so precious, that without hesitation we fixed upon the spot as the site of our farm. It would be open to the rising sun; in front was all richness and fertility; to the right, the noise of the torrent, the view of the rocky precipices and distant mountains; while on the left, the gentle murmur of the stream, and the silver surface of the river that bathed the isle, astonished by their contrast, and charmed by their variety. Every thing concurred to make this situation one of the most beautiful that the imagination of the painter could create.

The Castle of Sturmberg possessed most of these advantages; but its gloomy walls, its mouldering battlements, its

vaulted caverns, the heaps of ruins we were obliged to pass over, in order to reach it, clouded the imagination, and, in course of time, rendered its abode lonely and disagreeable: besides, there was no water at the Castle; it was forced to be fetched from a well at a considerable distance, and this inconvenience appeared to us so much the greater, as, while weighing the matter in our minds, our eyes were fixed on the spring I have just mentioned, the limpid stream of which invited us to allay our thirst. This circumstance, together with the proximity of the river for fishing, carried all the votes in favour of the Isle of the Rocks.

We agreed to send the description of it to Florella, and that in the course of a few days, the faithful Frank should set off on a journey to Stutgard, for the purpose of disposing of the effects left there by her, and to purchase whatever was necessary to furnish our farm. It was
necessary,

necessary, however, in the first place, to buy the land on which we intended building; and we knew not who was the proprietor. Our venerable friend, who accompanied us in this excursion, informed us that it was the Count de Wallendorf's, and that in his quality of Lord Chamberlain, he resided at the Imperial Court. We omitted not to acquaint the charming Florella with these details. It will be seen, by the sequel of these memories, that in Germany, as well as other places, a pretty woman has only to speak, to be——attended to.

We had set out as a shooting party, and the day was half gone in talking of the farm, the farm-yard, and fishing. We at length entered the forest called the Grünwald, less in the hope of meeting with any great success, than for the pleasure of expending a little ammunition. Never had I seen a place so religiously gloomy:—though it was noon, not a single ray of the sun reached us; a constant coolness

was felt under the umbrageous canopy which had long been suffered to cement, and now formed one inseparable mass.

The game, at first less terrified than astonished at our approach, started from their seats, intently regarded us, then set off with rapidity along the numerous paths which the unequal plantation of the trees offered for their escape. Proceeding forward, we were soon only embarrassed on the choice of what we would kill. A deer that I perceived at some distance, drew my attention: it was on the point of a rock, and was just about to skip to another, when taking aim at the moment he was leaping, he fell dead on the spot. In less than an hour, my companions were equally successful.

Frank and Joseph preceded us, to go and prepare the dinner. We followed them, discoursing all the way on the establishment of our farm; and, after a walk both
useful

useful and pleasant, all the company arrived at the cottage, where Flora and Elisca were waiting to receive them.

Dinner was ready, and was every thing that is required by persons who love and esteem each other. As soon as it was over, Frank took the deer in hand; and after skinning and cleansing it, a part of it was put in pickle, and the remainder dry salted. We had been only three days in the isle, and already a thorough change for the better had taken place: the cottage, which was before exposed to every wind, and unprovided with most of the necessaries of life, now was snug and secure, containing not only the articles of indispensable necessity, but also a few superfluities. A tolerable quantity of provisions were in reserve in the^e hollow of the rock before spoken of; hunting and fishing furnished the means for a fresh supply.

While thus attentive to satisfy imperious wants, we had not been unmindful of what must be classed under the head of refinement or accomplishments. Flora and Elisca both understood drawing, and sang enchantingly; the latter, in particular, used the pencil with exquisite taste. Frank, by our orders, had purchased whatever was requisite for the exercise of these two delightful arts, which are doubly estimable in a place of retirement. Even the dispositions of our islanders had partaken of the unexpected improvement in their situation:—the habitual melancholy that obscured their countenances, had been succeeded by that pure and serene joy, which, after a long course of miseries, is to the soul of the unfortunate, what the first rays of the vernal sun are to the earth, benumbed by the repeated attacks of a long and severe winter. One wish only remained to be realized, that of a speedy return to the charming society we were about to quit.

This

This separation happened the morning of the fourth day. On approaching the Castle, we were met by our friend Carl, supported by his wife and M. Walbot: Madame Walbot, Margaret, and the widow were left behind, to take care of the children, and prepare the dinner; the two latter had passed the whole time of our absence in the apartments of Carl. With respect to him, his strength and spirits were evidently improved; he was extremely anxious to see once more the family, in the service of whom we had replaced him. The recital of the manner in which we had passed our time, and of the state of prosperity we had left them in, occasioned him a degree of pleasure, that doubtless accelerated his recovery. We spent the evening together; the plan of our farm was again brought upon the carpet. Every voice was in favour of its being carried into execution, every wish was for its success. Frank, who anticipated all our desires, offered to depart

the next day for Stutgard, for the purpose of disposing of the effects, the produce of which was to be so beneficially and agreeably employed. We thought ourselves obliged to allow him a day's repose; and it was therefore fixed that he should quit the Castle on the succeeding but one.

As soon as he was gone, we sent to Florella a circumstantial description of the Isle of the Rocks, and of the advantageous situation we had discovered. Our letter was concluded by an account of all that had happened during the three days we had passed in the company of the family she had recommended to our care. The postscript contained, in large characters, the name of the proprietor of the island, and the posts he filled at Court. We did not forget to observe to our correspondent that, as the land was absolutely useless to him, it was probable that the acquisition of it might be made at a very moderate price.

price. We called her particular attention to this, as before proceeding farther, it was necessary to ascertain that we had no opposition to dread in the execution of our intended plan.

About a week after Frank's departure, and the dispatching our letter to Florella, we received news from both quarters. The latter informed us that she had occasion almost every day to see the Count de Wallendorf, who was the intimate friend of M. de Polwitz, and that she hoped, in a short time, to be the owner of the Isle of the Rocks, which from that moment should be called the Isle of Friendship. She begged us, in the meanwhile, to get rid of the effects left at Stutgard as soon as possible. On this point we relied with the greatest confidence on the activity of Frank; his zeal was as indefatigable as his attachment to us was unlimited.

The

The project of the farm, and the absence of Frank, did not, however, make us lose sight of our islanders. They were at this moment provided with all the requisite articles, to profit of the resources which fishing and shooting afforded them. Joseph was our deputy in the Isle of the Rocks, as Frank was at Stutgard. We had sent the former to Wetzlar, to buy paper, with which to hang the rooms of the cottage. Its inhabitants at length determined to pay a visit to their original benefactor, Carl.

This visit continued three days, each of which was a holiday, and the time was passed alternately in Carl's cavern, and at the Castle. The various apartments and environs were examined again. The men, from acquaintances, soon became friends; the women, a little more reserved at first, observed the actions and manners of one another; esteem quickly was mutual,
and,

and, what is very uncommon between the sex, love succeeded before having embraced, and after embracing, not a word of slander was indulged on either side. Nevertheless, each morning, two of us out of the three, under pretence of shooting, went to the cottage to Joseph, and assisted in its embellishment. At the end of the third day, the operation was completed. A paper, of a lively pattern, covered the deformity of the walls, and set off the furniture to advantage. No longer a mere hut for temporary shelter, it now resembled one of those delicious retreats, formerly possessed by our rich epicures, and since inhabited by those who have succeeded them.

We impatiently expected the return of our islanders, to enjoy the surprise which this new improvement would not fail to occasion them. Their entrance into the cottage was one of the purest pleasures I had ever tasted in my life. Flora and
Elisca,

Elisca, after a pause of rapturous astonishment, requested of their father permission to embrace us. He shook each of us by the hand in the most affectionate manner, while tears of gratitude started into his eyes; and afterwards presented us himself to his lovely daughters. Oh Flora! Oh Elisca! the kisses I then received from your lips, still glow on my cheek! It is flattering to gain the esteem of an old man; but it is delicious to affect the sensibility of a young beauty!

At our return to the Castle, we found Frank, who had arrived not long before us. A large chest was standing in the middle of the room. The effects of Florella had been disposed of; the produce amounted to nearly eight thousand florins, which was almost double the sum we had expected for them. The courtiers, on whom her amiable disposition and manners had made a similar impression as on us, had outbid each other, in order to possess something

thing which once belonged to that truly adorable woman. Her library was the only object neglected by them. In consequence, Frank, well knowing our inclinations, had packed all the books in the chest we perceived as we entered the apartment. We could hardly contain our joy at this intelligence; it seemed as if he had divined our fondest wishes. We enjoyed beforehand the delightful hours that so many well-selected authors would be the means of our passing. The chest was instantly opened. What rapture! Voltaire, Rousseau, Buffon, Raynal, all the works of the illustrious men, whose genius and acquisitions have honoured our country, were at our disposal. A complete collection of the best dramatic works of every celebrated foreign author, and another of the most esteemed Romances and miscellaneous compositions were added to it. The bottom of the chest contained an excellent selection of history, politics, and literature in general.

“Oh

“ Oh my friend !” cried Charles, transported with enthusiasm at the sight of so much riches, “ now I am truly happy ! One single reflection has hitherto disturbed my enjoyments ; the privation of every source of instruction and literary amusement. Thanks to the thoughtfulness of the worthy Frank, we shall henceforth have the benefit of masters, who, at least, will teach us as much as our Professors at the University ; but it is not enough to run them over for pastime. We must read, and consider them with attention—in a word, regain the time we have lost. For this purpose, I am of opinion that we should consecrate two hours every morning to study, and the remainder of the day to pleasure.”

His proposal was unanimously adopted, and was put in practice without delay.

The appearance of the bags, enclosing the eight thousand florins, occasioned us
to

to leap with exultation. Already we fondly anticipated the establishment of the farm, where we were to pass our days embellished by friendship and love. However, we had yet no right to the Isle of the Rocks; the deed of acquisition so necessary to the execution of our designs, was not in our possession. It is true, Florella had given us hopes; but she might have presumed too far upon her credit and influence—insurmountable difficulties might arise.

This apprehension tormented us during several days, and still no news arrived from Vienna. At length, Joseph, who every morning went to the inn where the letters were received, returned with a great packet in his hand. We opened it with precipitation. The first enclosure we cast our eyes upon, was an epistle, addressed to the three friends. The following are the contents:—

“ Since

“ Since the day before yesterday, gentlemen, the Isle of the Rocks has been absolutely your’s. I have only one condition to make respecting it, which is, that it be henceforth called *the Isle of Friendship*. It is there, I trust, that we shall, ere long, meet, not soon to part again. The deed is prepared in your names ; of course, it is from this moment the joint property of you all three. I am well assured that while you have a habitation, Florella will never want a home.

“ I have not forgotten our friend Carl, to whom you will deliver from me the accompanying letter ; it contains his appointment to the post of Chief Ranger of the Forest of the Grünwald, with a salary of six hundred florins. I am indebted for this favour to the Count de Wallendorf, who is the Lord of it. I am induced to
hope

hope Carl will take up his residence in the Isle of Friendship; the goodness of his heart must render him an honour to whatever community he may belong to.

“ I would willingly return you my thanks for the services you have rendered to the unfortunate family, were I not well persuaded that you have acted rather from the impulse of your own hearts, than in compliance with the wish expressed by me. Flora and Elisca!—what pretty, soft names! I long to see those who are called by them. Do not conceive, however, that I am jealous. To convince you of the contrary, I solicit, for the father of those two amiable creatures, the absolute possession of the cottage that you have so charmingly ornamented, and four acres of land round it, that you will, doubtless, take care shall be properly cultivated: it is not fit that one unhappy or dissatisfied person should be found in your domains.

“ With

“ With respect to our farm, I hope that three months will be sufficient for its establishment. I allow you double that time to construct the habitations of our neighbours. I am desirous that they may be erected in advantageous situations, and not at great distances from each other; so that a visit may be rather a pleasant walk, than a fatiguing journey. Let the farm be the head-quarters of the Isle, where all public meetings shall be held, all festivals celebrated, and where the necessary institutions shall be framed for the regulation of the colony. Oh my friends! what a delightful perspective! Hasten to abandon your Castle, surrounded by ruins, in order to go and people our enchanted island.

“ I enclose the plans of four dwellings, to be set about without delay. I leave to you the choice of the situations and the allotments. Let there be no attempts at grandeur, but an independents implicity,
that

that bespeaks neither wealth nor misery, that delightful mediocrity which constituted the charm of the golden age.

“No stranger shall be permitted to become an inhabitant of this privileged isle, unless he be recommended by one of the four families already established there; even in that case, his admission to be debated in a general committee, and only to be carried by a majority of votes. These are some of my ideas on the administration of our island. Remember that it is to be inhabited by none but friends; if a single vicious character should insinuate himself into it, adieu to all our projects of felicity!

“The opportunity has not yet offered of establishing you at Vienna;—indeed I have not yet taken the trouble to seek it. To unite—to separate no more!—such from this moment is the object of all my desires—the subject of all my thoughts! I have

have not been less successful at Vienna, than I was at Stutgard. Thursday last I was extremely applauded in the part of Dido. But what are these applauses, bestowed on an acquired talent, or a passable exterior, in comparison of the pleasure I hope one day to enjoy in the society of the islanders?—I have even received some very flattering compliments in the shape of verses to Chloe and Phillis. Believe me, my friends, all this is far inferior, in my eyes, to the little air which constantly accompanied our repasts in your melancholy Castle, or the *amoroso cantabile*, which gave such pleasure to your neighbour, the old lizard.

“I have endeavoured to take advantage of the public partiality, to obtain leave of absence for a fortnight. For what purpose, you will perhaps divine. My request has been refused, under pretence that I could not be spared during the six ensuing months, but with a formal
promise

promise that, after that period, I should be entirely at my own disposal for the two finest months in the year—that is, from the fifteenth of April to the fifteenth of June. From a window of our farm, then, I shall view the next return of spring! What pleasure! What ecstasy! Oh my friends! lose not a moment—let that epoch be celebrated by the inauguration of the Isle of Friendship, and the assembling of all those who are to inhabit it. From thence we will depart together for Vienna, where we shall be ready, amidst the bustle of a Court, to seize the proper opportunity of returning to our solitude. I repeat it, there we are to begin to live—there we are to die!

“Farewell, my friends! Assurances of love and respect to all, not even excepting Flora and Elisca, though you have said too much in their behalf, for me not to be a little prejudiced against them.

“FLORELLA.”

The same packet contained all the papers she had referred to—that is, first, the deed of conveyance by which we acquired the propriety of the Island; second, the plans and particular estimates of the four tenements, the construction of which we were to superintend; third, the letter addressed to Carl, with the appointment of Chief Ranger of all the Forest of the Grünwald.

It is not difficult to conceive the sentiments which took possession of our minds at the reading of this letter. Although no proof of the goodness, or nobleness of soul in Florella, could astonish us, who knew her so well, yet what she had just done for Carl, to whom she was almost an absolute stranger, elevated our admiration to enthusiasm. But it was not Carl—it was not our friend that she thus rewarded;—it was the beneficent man—the support of a deserving and unfortunate family. Oh Florella! I am
far

far from citing you as a model for young persons of your sex; I am far from approving of every part of your conduct; but it has done no injury except to yourself;—it has not disturbed the good order of society. All that know you, admire you; all that surround you, bless you; all that approach you, experience the excellence of your disposition, or are assisted by your benevolence. What is the spot that cannot be effaced by so many virtues? What wrongs will they not atone for? What errors may not be pardoned at such a price? This confession has, I own, affected me; but since it has escaped my pen, I will add, that the woman who shall judge you with severity, resembles you only in the conduct which is the subject of her censure, and yet that she does not the less pretend to the esteem of the virtuous part of society.

CHAP. VI.

The Farm.

AS soon as we had read to the end of the letter, we repaired in a body to the cavern, in order to deliver to Carl his commission from Florella, and to consult with him on the means of effectuating, as speedily as possible, our emigration to the Isle of the Rocks. It was fixed for that day week; by which time he trusted he should be sufficiently recovered to undertake the journey, and to direct the operations about which we were to be employed.

The

The following morning we all three set out for Wetzlar, accompanied by Frank. There, as every where else, any thing is to be had for money. Carpenters, masons, bricklayers, every necessary workman for the execution of our design, we took with us the next day to the island. The proper materials were found in abundance on, or near the spot. The forest, so long silent and solitary, echoed with the reiterated strokes of the axe, the sounds of the saw and plane. The fallen oak covered with its vast branches the earth that for so many ages it had overshadowed. Huge portions of rock, detached by the force of saltpetre from their craggy summits, rolled with terrific crash on the esplanade, where the labourers were occupied in digging the foundations of our farm. Every thing was in motion; the activity was general; the spot, so recently a desert, began to wear an appearance of life and industry. A sort of shed, sixty feet high, was constructed in the course of a week,

and which was destined as a temporary habitation for the workmen, as well as to afford them occasional shelter.

On the day agreed upon, Carl arrived, having left his wife, and all Frank's family under the care of his friend Walbot. His presence inspired us with fresh vigour; he encouraged the labourers, made regulations respecting the working hours, and allotted the various employments to each. As soon as the necessary dimensions had been taken, and the foundation of the farm laid, we walked about to select the most suitable places for the other buildings.

Flora and Elisca, as well as their father, accompanied us in this excursion. Each situation we came to, produced a multiplicity of ideas, and consequently of remarks. Not unfrequently the votes were equal as to the choice of the spot.

Flora

Flora and Elisca were struck with that which could boast of a prospect to please the eye. Carl and Frank, on the contrary, gave the preference to the places where the soil, seeming productive, promised more solid advantages. These questions were debated on both sides with a degree of warmth which proved how much every one was interested in the prosperity of their new country.

After several walks of this nature, the sites were agreed upon in a general assembly, by the majority of persons present: and immediately the workmen were directed to commence their operations.

Three weeks were hardly elapsed, before the walls of our farm were ten feet above the surface of the earth;—when they should be double that height, the carpenters might set to work. Our intention was not to build a castle, but a simple farm, consisting of a ground-floor, a first story,
H 4 a second,

a second, a shelving roof, and a turret, admitting light at the top. The plan of Florella was literally followed; nothing announced ambition or magnificence; the house, though spacious, was of a simple and modest appearance. Frederic, Charles, and myself had our separate apartments; two rooms and a closet were allotted to each; a larger space was destined for Florella; it occupied the middle of the building, and, besides the two rooms, contained an octagon saloon, which was extremely commodious, and intended, at certain times of the year, to be the place of general assembly for the chiefs of the colony. Behind the house, was a square piece of ground, of considerable extent; and at the end a barn, stables, and every thing requisite for the completion of a farm-yard. The brook, that ran at no great distance, was made, by an imperceptible declivity, to furnish a constant supply of the purest water, which it emptied into a large hollow

hollow stone, that served as a reservoir or cistern.

Having thus given the reader some idea of the farm, let us pass on to the other habitations.

They were not in so forward a state as the head-quarters, because the chief attention had been given to the latter, which, in case winter should force us to suspend our operations, was to be a general shelter against the severity of the season. This severity began to be felt; the fogs and mists, the forerunners of frost, already obscured the hemisphere, until dispelled by the rays of the advancing sun; the trees were partly stripped of their yellow and withered leaves, and daily became more naked; the workman every now and then held his fingers to his mouth, to warm them with his breath, or rudely exercised his arms, to reanimate his benumbed faculties. The wind blew with increased violence,

lence, the torrent rushed along its rocky bed with augmented impetuosity, and the whole face of Nature, impoverished by her bounty lavished on the earth, assumed a more serious and repulsive aspect.

It was the approach of this inclement season that had induced us to hasten our operations with such activity. For six weeks they had continued without interruption; about the same time remained to finish them before the usual period of the snow falling, which in that country is frequently from six to eight feet above the ground. We lost not a moment in putting each dwelling in a situation to receive its family. That of Flora and Elisca was only repaired; the three others were found tenantable about a fortnight earlier than the first fall of snow generally arrived.

We employed this interval in bringing from the Castle and the cavern the move-
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ables

ables of every sort that we had collected there, and which were divided between the four families, with the consent of the proprietors;—then, to prevent any idea of distinction or preference, the habitation that each should occupy, was decided by lot.

Flora and Elisca, however, were not obliged to quit their cottage. In this respect Fortune favoured them;—though they submitted with apparent resignation to the general measure proposed, they would, doubtless, have removed with extreme regret from the hillock that covered the ashes of their mother, and from whence they could observe the torrent dash between the rocks into the gulf at their feet. The family of Carl had for their place of abode, the habitation built at the side of the mountain, which was washed by the river: Frank's was near the center of the island, and consequently nearer to the farm. Walbot's was at the

other extremity, where the water of the torrent empties itself into the river.

All these measures having been adopted and carried into execution, every family betook themselves to their separate habitation, and roads of communication were established from one to the other, to render reciprocal assistance, in case of necessity. Independently of the partition of the furniture and effects, each was furnished from the general stock with a quantity of provisions, sufficient for the consumption of a part of the winter. Several journies to Wetzlar had enabled us to provide them all with what is usually denominated the comforts of life; and should there be occasion for temporary succour, every one knew that his neighbour was a friend that might be depended on, to the extent of his power.

We were then in the beginning of November. The earth was already covered with

with snow; we could easily trace the game, and even frequently surprise and take them sitting. This advantage was very great at such a time, as it enabled us to double our stock of provisions; each family was furnished with them in abundance, but particularly that of Frank. As his habitation was nearly in the middle of the island, it was become, if I may use the expression, the general storehouse. It was there that during rainy or stormy weather, the islanders met, either to divide the spoil which one or the other might have brought home, or to dine together, and thus pass the day more agreeably, or at least more gaily.

It may be easily supposed that in the midst of a forest, we did not want wood to counteract the influence of the cold: a large stove, constantly lighted, warmed the apartment in which the company assembled. Three barrels of beer, the usual beverage of that country, had been brought
thither;

thither; it resembled a coffee-house or tavern, where persons meet for the purpose of taking a cheerful glass, or enjoying agreeable conversation. After some hours thus passed together, the society separated, and took the roads to their respective homes.

In one of these assemblies we conceived the idea of distributing the days of the week in such a manner, as to beguile the long winter evenings. It was proposed that on Sunday and Thursday, there should be a general meeting at the farm at dinner, and that every Thursday there should be a concert, which Flora, Elisca, Madame Carl, and Madame Walbot should be invited to honour with their presence, and to assist with their talents. The proposition was joyfully accepted, and these two days by degrees became holidays throughout the isle.

It may be remembered that we had
agreed

agreed to consecrate two hours every morning to study. This rule, which we had set ourselves as a task, had been for some time past exactly practised; but the confusion occasioned by our departure from the Castle, and the constant employment we had found in the construction of our farm, had obliged us to abandon it, or at least to suspend it for awhile. Now that these labours were brought to a conclusion, we determined to resume our literary occupation. The library of Florella contained all the books we could have required. The season, too intemperate to permit much of our time to be passed out of doors, seemed to invite us to make up for the moments we had lost.

The father of Flora and Elisca had more than once urged us to adopt some fixed method in our studies and employment. The perspicuous and enlightened manner in which he spoke of the different acquirements composing a liberal education—his
tone

tone of voice, his words naturally eloquent and persuasive—every thing announced him as the man most proper to direct us in the course of the pursuits we should engage in. Whenever he appeared at the farm or at Frank's, one or other of us always turned the conversation on some historical, moral, or political subject; then, without affecting the scholastic gravity of our present race of orators, he delivered his opinion with clearness and precision. All the principal occurrences of history, both ancient and modern, were deeply fixed in his memory, and afforded ample scope for his reasoning and our instruction. The finest precepts of morality, the fundamental maxims of true and enlightened policy—in a word, all that can contribute to the formation of the beneficent man and the useful citizen, became the topic of our habitual discourse, and which our venerable friend rendered more interesting, by supporting his observations on facts drawn from his own experience.

It

It was in one of those moments of effusion, that we requested him to take upon himself the trouble of tracing out for us the plan of study and employment he had before recommended; this he did with pleasure, and our lessons commenced from the following day. Sunday and Thursday were to continue holidays; the other part of the week was given to history, the law of nations, morality, politics, and the fine arts. Drawing and music were not forgotten; Elisca and Madame Walbot became our instructors in the former, and Frederic was our chief harmonic professor. On my part, I gave them lessons in the Italian language. The best authors of that nation, as may be supposed, made part of Florella's library:—Tasso, Ariosto, Dante, Petrarch, and Metastasio were severally read, explained, and commented upon in their turn; their society became by degrees familiar to us, and the invention and brilliancy of our imaginations amused many of our solitary hours.

Charles

Charles was sufficiently acquainted with English, to introduce us to several of their best writers. Shakespeare and Milton obtained the preference; they both deservedly excited our admiration. But let not those islanders be displeased:—what is their immortal Shakespeare compared with our great Corneille? What authors have they to oppose to Moliere, Racine, Voltaire, and many others who have made the French Theatre the first in the known world? Our judgment, at least, was impartial; being founded on the sentiments we experienced by reading the various works. What a difference between Othello and Zaire, Hamlet and Semiramis, if indeed those pieces can ever be compared together!—Germany also furnished us with food for applause, as well as for criticism. Monsieur Walbot, who had received an excellent education, obliged us with a complete course of literary lectures in that language, which was not then what it is at present.

Thus,

Thus, by a mutual exchange of our acquirements, we established between the authors of these different nations, the points of comparison which were to guide and regulate our judgment. Our Principal, by whom I would be understood to mean the father of Flora and Elisca, had travelled over the greatest part of Europe; he had observed, examined, and studied the dispositions, the customs, the manners, and the moral and physical industry of each people with whom he had resided. It was to him that we submitted the result of our considerations; and I may say to our glory, that he generally found our conclusions just, because no prejudice or partiality stifled in our bosoms either the love of the true sublime, or that rectitude of judgment which springs from the affections of the soul. Thus, after having trembled with horror, or been awed to silence with Shakespeare, we went to admire Corneille, weep with Racine and
Voltaire,

Voltaire, and laugh with Moliere and his jocund brethren.

It will be seen that we were seriously occupied in making up for the time we had lost. Each hour of the day had its destined employment; but the most agreeable of all were, doubtless, the moments when we received the lessons of Flora and Elisca. The former, though not such a proficient as her sister, frequently took the place of Madame Walbot, whom the distance of her habitation, and the care required by her child, often hindered from coming to the assembly. What delight! what rapture! to be seated at the side of a young and beautiful woman, to lean on the same paper, to inhale her breath, to observe, with the corner of your eye, her bosom heave toward you, while her hand is designing with studied negligence, certain forms, which, however voluptuous they may be, are far inferior to those you perceive by stealth!

This.

This kind of life had continued about six weeks, and each day we severally made some progress in our studies. Shut out from the rest of the world, our little society was in itself sufficient for the members that composed it. Not one of our desires outstepped the boundary of our isle, though frequently our grateful wishes would cause us to sigh for the presence of her who had procured us the retirement we occupied. Sometimes assembled around the stove that warmed the hall belonging to Frank's habitation, sometimes at the fireside of our saloon, we observed the earth, and every object entirely clothed with snow, except that the points of the rocks which surrounded our solitude, here and there appeared through the veil of alabaster that covered them.

Often were we amused in beholding at a distance the roebuck raise himself against the trunk of a tree, to reach a mossy clump that had escaped the snow,

or

or the more ingenious deer remove it with his feet, to brow the grass it concealed. Sometimes driven by hunger, they would venture up to our very windows, to seek that nourishment which the earth no longer afforded them. At such times they had nothing to fear; they approached us with confidence—it would have been an act of perfidy to take advantage of their distress.

Meanwhile, our finances began to be in a very critical situation; the same thing had happened to us, that happens to almost every one who has a rage for building. Not only the eight thousand florins, produced by the sale of Florella's effects, were wholly expended, but also the fifty louis which were to have paid the expences of our intended journey to Vienna, and the greatest part of the sum that we had reserved, to provide for casual wants. It is true, we had no occasion for money—that is, no use for it among ourselves; but
it

it became necessary to think of procuring the colony a fresh supply of provisions, as a very small stock only was in hand. This matter being taken into consideration, it was resolved that a general *sortie* should be made the following day.

It took place accordingly, and was as successful as we could have hoped. A part of this produce was divided between the inhabitants, and the remainder Frank and Joseph received orders to sell or exchange for provisions of another kind. The season was favourable to this sort of traffic ; so that the colony was for a long time placed beyond the reach of want ; besides, the same resource was always in our power. A bridge, in the nature of a drawbridge, invented by Charles, and extending from side to side of the rocks, which formed the channel of the torrent, opened to us a free communication with the neighbourhood, and rendered our commerce more easy, our industry more
active,

active, and our means of support more certain. It was composed of two strong pieces of timber, fastened together at the ends by iron hinges. When any one wished to go out of the island, he pushed the bridge, which moved on rollers, till it came in a horizontal direction, when, after advancing to the middle of the precipice, he turned over the second part, at the extremity of which were cramp-irons that fixed in correspondent rings on the opposite rock. The whole was well secured, and kept firm on the side of the island; and strong planks, nailed across at proper distances, rendered the passage perfectly safe and commodious. On returning, the bridge was drawn after him by means of a pulley, and all communication became impossible.

To the numerous advantages that this expedient afforded us, was added that of a more regular correspondence with Florella and the few friends that we still had

in the world. Joseph, whom we retained in our service, went twice every week to carry or bring our letters and the gazettes to the inn, at which the post stopped for the convenience of the district. Though we had no occasion to intermeddle with the other part of the universe, it was to us a source of satisfaction, to see the Sovereigns of mighty empires disputing with each other, sword in hand, for a paltry corner of uninhabited ground, and to take no other share in these bloody quarrels, than that of smiling at their intrigues, or mourning for a moment over the disasters they gave rise to.

The gazettes of Vienna and Augsburgh came to us, as I have before said, twice a week; the former was, immediately on its arrival, taken to the father of Flora and Elisca. The eagerness with which he overran the article entitled *Vienna*, and the indifference that he shewed for all the rest, had induced us more than once to

presume that the circumstance which had forced him to quit the capital, was the effect of some Court intrigue. Carl, to whom we had imparted our conjectures, answered by saying—"It might be so," and proceeded no farther; which was equal to telling us that it would be useless to question him again on the subject. As to the *Courier of Augsburgh*, it was carried to the *hall*, where it was read and handed about in the same manner as at any of our coffee-houses.

One day that we were all three seated by the side of Flora and Elisca, receiving our accustomed lesson in drawing, while their father was walking about the room absorbed in his reflections, Joseph entered, and delivered to him the Vienna gazette. He immediately seated himself by the fire, and began to run over it with his usual eagerness. Scarcely had he cast his eyes on the part he sought for, than clasping his hands, he exclaimed—

“Heaven be thanked!—my children, my enemy is no more, and the Emperor is just.”

Hearing this, Flora and Elisca started up spontaneously, and ran to throw themselves into their father's arms. He embraced them closely, while tears of joy involuntarily filled his eyes.

“It is not,” said he to them, “the hope of repossessing my honours and my fortune that creates this pleasure; but that of being able to justify myself in the opinion of my Sovereign, and of restoring to my name the reputation which it ought never to have lost.”

“Ah!” replied Elisca, “of what consequence to you is henceforth the judgment of an unjust Court or an ungrateful master? We have found in this desert all that constitutes the happiness of life—sincere friends and disinterested hearts!” Then, turning towards us, she added, with

an enchanting smile—"It is to these gentlemen, your scholars and mine, it is to the noble-minded Carl that we are indebted for this asylum, the only one left you by the animosity of your enemies, and the injustice of the Sovereign whom you served so truly. Here you are beyond the reach of calumny, sheltered from iniquity, inaccessible to the wickedness of man."

"Here," said Flora, "every one loves you, blesses you, reveres you; here the hearts of all resemble those of your children."

"Yes, all, all," repeated the old man earnestly; "every where else I have found nothing but ingratitude; it is here only that I have met with benefactors!"—Then, pressing our hands with emotion, he continued—"Never—never will I forget the services that you have rendered to me and my family; for whatever fate I am reserved, this isle will always be dear to me. It contains the ashes of my wife and

the mother of my children; I shall perhaps one day quit it, in order to go and demand justice of him who, after five-and-twenty years' service, condemned without hearing me; but I will return here to die in your arms, and from you I presume to claim the last token of friendship I can receive—to be placed by the side of her who was my companion in misfortune.”

This scene had something so extremely affecting in it, that it was impossible for us to interrupt it for some time. At length, Frederic, whose disposition was naturally lively, succeeded in giving the conversation a less serious turn; some of his sallies produced a laugh from Flora and Elisca, and forced a smile even from their venerable father. We perceived his design, and our hilarity, added to his, soon dispelled all the traces of melancholy that had obscured their countenances. I seized this moment to propose partaking of a family dinner together.

“With all my heart,” replied the old man, “on condition that Carl be of the party. I wish to see, on such a day as this, all my benefactors assembled before me.”

Charles immediately went to fetch him; for me, I took the road to the farm, to order Joseph to bring a few bottles of our best wine, while Frederic, with an apron round him, and assisted by Flora and Elisca, prepared to give us a specimen of his talent for cookery. In less than an hour, every thing was ready, and the society assembled. Carl was in excellent spirits; his example was quickly followed by the rest, and the repast became delicious.

The second bottle of Champagne was finished, the coffee and liqueur were on the table, and a pause took place in the conversation; but this momentary silence possessed a charm, which is seldom found even in the most interesting discourses.

“There

“There can no longer be a motive for concealment,” cried the old man suddenly.

“I am in the midst of my friends, my benefactors; it is time that they should know the man on whom they bestowed their compassion and assistance, at a moment when every thing, even nature itself, seemed to conspire against him. Listen you who are young; and may the history of my life convince you of the happiness of living among these rocks!”

CHAP. VII.

The Ex-Minister.

“ I AM the only son of the Count de Boerenklau, one of the most celebrated, but what is more, one of the most faithful Generals of Maria Theresa. It was to him that august Empress, in a very advanced state of her pregnancy, and flying from city to city before the victorious armies of France, wrote that affecting and sublime letter, wherein she complained that she should soon have no corner in her own vast domains, in which to bring forth the child that she then bore

bore within her, and who was one day to be the heir of so many potent empires.

“It was at the voice of my father, that were raised the thirty thousand Hungarians, who, after her confinement, were reviewed by her in the plains of Garliz, holding in her arms the illustrious infant to whom she had just given birth. Never had the world offered a more striking example of human vicissitude!—never had the lustre of a throne infused more elevation into the soul of a Sovereign, nor Nature more courage into a maternal bosom!

‘Brave and faithful Hungarians!’ cried she, with that tone of conviction which is peculiar to a mother, “I will march at your head—I will, if it be necessary, perish in the midst of you; but defend my son—protect your Emperor, your King!”

‘Yes, we will protect him,’ replied my father; and the whole army repeated unanimously—*‘Moriatur pro Rege nostro Theresia!’*

“ I need not tell you what was the success of this new campaign ; so extraordinary an effort of courage deserved to be recompensed :—it was so. Our Hungarians performed prodigies ; their heroic ardour, their unshaken firmness staggered the coalesced powers. They had seen the House of Austria within a hair’s breadth of destruction ; but a genius, inexhaustible in resources, watched over its destiny. Immoveable in her intentions, as she was firm in her misfortunes, Maria Theresa advanced with a cautious, but steady pace, towards the end she had all along kept in view.

“ The faculties of her mind were equal to every circumstance : Minerva in council, Pallas in the field, she at once conducted her armies, and directed the springs of government throughout her dominions. While with one hand she delivered to her Generals her plans and observations relative to the campaign, she with the other dispatched instructions for negotiation to
her

her ambassadors. So much courage, genius, and activity at length surmounted every obstacle ; several Princes of the Empire seceded from the coalition. Frederic the Great, the most formidable enemy of the House of Austria, was not the last to treat with her ; at length, peace was concluded between him and Maria Theresa, and the latter, after so many calamities, began to enjoy repose.

“ It was about this time that I entered the service as a volunteer. In the course of my third campaign, I was honoured with a commission, and two years afterwards was promoted to the rank of Captain. My father, covered with wounds, and bending beneath the weight of years, was soon forced to quit the army, having first obtained permission for me to succeed him in the command of the regiment that bore his name. I made seven campaigns more at the head of that intrepid corps, during which period I had the pleasure to appoint Carl an officer, after an action that

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did

did him more honour than the rank I conferred upon him. We were not long together before we became friends; pleasures, dangers, fatigues—all was soon in common between us. I had the happiness to save his life in an ambuscade into which we had fallen, while on a reconnoitring excursion;—he has since rendered me a much more essential service, by saving the lives of all my family.

“ In the meantime a general peace was on the eve of being concluded; the different corps under my command received orders to retire into their respective garrisons, and I to hasten to the capital. Some commissions of the most important nature were confided to me; and I had the satisfaction of executing them with success, less from any dexterity in the exercise of diplomatic functions, of which I knew very little, than from the integrity of my principles, and the openness of my disposition. After visiting several of the chief Courts of Europe, I returned to
Vienna.

Vienna. The favourable issue of my negotiations acquired me the confidence of the Sovereign, who, by the death of his mother, had just ascended the Imperial throne:—he made me a member of his Council, and charged me with the care of the war department. This nomination gave me a crowd of rivals, who, jealous of my elevation, soon became my mortal enemies. Cabals were formed against me: the courtiers who solicited favours, either for themselves or for their creatures, offended at my refusal, or humiliated by the little attention I paid to their recommendations, joined the former to crush me. Others, wishing to enrich themselves at the expence of the soldiery, strove to be appointed contractors for the army. I examined their proposals, and, convinced of their knavery, dismissed them as public robbers. I exulted on discovering their avidity, because the enmity of rogues appeared to me an indubitable proof of probity. I knew not then that the wicked
never

never pardon those who prevent them from committing evil, and that there is nothing so misplaced in the world, as an honest man at Court.

“ Among the competitors before whom I had been preferred, was the Count de Waldhorn, a man of high birth and considerable fortune. His prodigality, however, and the extravagant life he led in the midst of his mistresses and hirelings, had greatly diminished his property. His numerous creditors began to be clamorous: there was only one way of silencing them, by selling a part of his estates, and giving up to them the produce; for the Count was one of those high-spirited spendthrifts, who, the slaves of their inordinate desires, have always their hands full of gold, to satisfy a capricious fancy, but without a crown at their disposal, to pay a debt, or to exercise an act of beneficence. The repeated refusals that he had experienced from me, to the reiterated requests he was

in the daily habit of making, had incensed him against me; his jealousy, awhile smothered in his own bosom, at length degenerated into open enmity.

“One of his mistresses, to whom I had refused the rank of Captain, that she solicited for her brother, because I would not behave unjustly to the brave officer who had merited it, particularly excited his animosity. At first a cry was raised against my disposition, which was said to be morose and brutal. As I was desirous that the persons employed by me, should be assiduous, and the public affairs expedited with as little delay as possible, advantage was taken of my zeal, to paint me as tyrannical and overbearing. My occupations left me no desire to frequent company, or to receive others myself; this was sufficient to make me pass for a man proud, disdainful, and difficult to satisfy. All these complaints carefully propagated,

propagated, incessantly repeated, and supported by some caballers in credit, to whom, however, I had not thought proper to sacrifice my conscience, insensibly became the means of my receiving certain marks of coolness. The confidence of the Monarch alone remained unshaken, and for that I was indebted to the scrupulous exactness with which I discharged the duties of my office:—my enemies therefore were cautious not to attack me on the score of my integrity; but they let slip no opportunity of attempting to ridicule my person, my disposition, or my behaviour. These slanderous insinuations, originating in public companies, were repeated in the State offices; and at length, by the most perfidious ingenuity, found their way to the presence chamber, from whence they soon reached the royal ear. The Emperor himself mentioned them to me. I answered him, that having his glory and interest alone in view, it was not
astonishing

astonishing that I had but few friends. The conversation rested there, and I received his orders as usual.

“Meanwhile the cabal added to its strength every man about the Court who was not superior to temptation, and every woman of equivocal virtue. The latter, notwithstanding the contempt with which they affected to treat them, secretly governed my colleagues: several among them stooped so low, as to make requests which I could not grant them, without casting a slur upon the character, or wounding the interests of my master. I therefore positively refused them;—this was what they desired. My entrance into the council chamber left me not long ignorant of the dispositions I had to combat. As soon as I appeared, a profound silence ensued, some cast down their eyes, some frowned, others appeared as if absorbed in reflection, but certainly less on the importance of the measures I proposed,
than

than on the means of thwarting them, or turning them to my disadvantage.—A project, the success of which depended on its immediate execution, was deferred; another that required cool consideration, was expedited without a moment's delay; presently my reports were found verbose, my ideas singular, and my projects expensive, or altogether impracticable. I perceived their drift; but I had the esteem of my Sovereign, and the approbation of my own heart, which consoled me for all the mortification I underwent.

“A disagreeable, of a more serious nature, was about to be added to those I before experienced. Hostilities had recommenced, resources were necessary to carry on the war, and the public treasury was drained. Till then I had discharged, with scrupulous regularity, every demand belonging to my department, made by those who had given their time, or advanced their property for the service of the

the State I found myself obliged to suspend these payments. This measure raised a furious outcry against me; and though I was, beyond comparison, more affected with such a disastrous event than any other member of the council, the whole weight of the blame was nevertheless thrown upon me. It was said that, by my individual authority, I had delayed or suspended the payments, and had thus occasioned the ruin of the patriotic persons, who had stripped themselves of their fortunes for the service of their country. My colleagues, though convinced of the injustice of these reports, suffered them to be repeated without contradiction even in their own offices: they, in fact, privately encouraged them, because the popular discontent afforded them an opportunity of gratifying their personal animosity against me, and that in a way that rendered it impossible for me to accuse them of malevolence.—Thus, covering their hatred with the veil of patriotism, they persecuted

persecuted me with a degree of eagerness which they were the less cautious to conceal, as the only object of it appeared to be the public good.

“ Notwithstanding all the obstacles I met with, I still continued to exercise with courage the duties of my office. In proportion as the difficulties increased, and my functions became more unpleasant, I redoubled my efforts to balance these disadvantages, by persevering in my vigilance and integrity. The war however required money; and as the public treasury could furnish none, it became necessary to borrow it. The contractors presented themselves in crowds. I discussed their terms—I examined their proposed supplies. They appeared to me burthensome to the subject: but the campaign was opened, the soldiers were naked, the magazines empty, the fortresses and arsenals unprovided, the great roads broken up; add to which, that the speediest remedies in such cases are the

the best. I therefore selected from among the proposals offered to me, not those which were recommended for my acceptance by the perfidious persons by whom I was surrounded, but those which appeared to me the least disadvantageous to the country. I submitted these contracts to the examination of the council, in order that the responsibility of the events which should succeed, might not lie wholly on me; but my opponents had calculated with the greatest nicety, and their intention was to crush me under the weight of this burthen. They seemed to approve my plans, and the agreements I had entered into, declining to give them a formal assent in writing, under the pretence either of a variety of other affairs, or of implicitly relying on my judgment.

“ As the public treasury was little to be depended upon, and as the demands for money were pressing, supplies were only to be procured at enormous interest

was I that had concluded the contracts, and consequently was alone accused. My enemies, however, could not then attack either my integrity or my administrative conduct; but they charged me with improvidence, or unskilfulness in the management of State affairs.

“ This report, at first whispered about, was artfully sanctioned by a designing few, and soon after spread abroad with the utmost activity. The most adroit of my enemies, without directly accusing me, expressed certain vague suspicions, with a view insensibly to undermine the edifice of my reputation; others, less ingenious or more hardy, hinted in their respective circles, that I took advantage of the public distress, to share the profit that was made by the contractors. Several of my colleagues, ruined by their boundless extravagance, had diminished their establishments; and this sacrifice, which was sed on them by necessity, was preached by their partisans as an act of patriotism.”

otism.—My disposition, more firm, more independent, could not submit to adopt a proceeding as base as it was hypocritical. I enjoyed a considerable fortune, which I inherited from my father; it was therefore said that I had enriched myself by the perquisites of my office; my establishment continued the same; I was described as prodigal and ostentatious. The money lenders applied for the reimbursement of their advances. If I settled with some of them, the others were industriously told that I had found my account in the preference I had shewn; and when I could pay no longer, it was reported that I appropriated the funds to myself, or to other uses foreign to those for which they had been destined, and to which they ought to have been applied.

“It was not thought sufficient to ruin me; it was necessary also to cry up the virtues of my intended successor. The Count de Waldhorn was the man pitched upon

upon by the cabal to supplant me. He had taken care not to put himself at their head, until it was become a step to favour and popularity to regard me, if not as a rogue, at least as a person utterly incapable of sustaining the weight of the Ministry. The Monarch himself, overcome by the repeated insinuations of my enemies, and soured by some reverses experienced by the armies, began to treat me with less confidence and distinction. I had twice before solicited permission to retire; I repeated my request for the third time, and it was granted.

“ I immediately formed the intention of going to reside on one of my estates, which was part of my paternal property, though it was attempted to make it pass for an acquisition during my Ministry. I formally contradicted this report in a succinct statement of all my acts, and the reformation I had effected during that interval. The facts I produced, were corroborated

corroborated and supported by all the necessary documents, to convince the most incredulous. This statement I printed, and attached it to the account that I published of my ministerial conduct, of the contracts I had concluded, of those I had thought it my duty to refuse, and of the application of the funds entrusted to my disposal. To this account I also added a sketch of the operations of the campaign, and of the state in which I had found the Ministry, when I accepted of it, and that in which I had left it. All was clear, precise, incontestable; but my enemies were too artful to let such a proof of my innocence exist. A few copies of this memoir, sent to the small number of friends I could still boast of, duly arrived as addressed; the remainder were either bought up by the cabal, or seized by the spies that they had employed to watch my most minute actions. I thought of revenging myself through the channel of the public newspapers. But where is

to be found a Journalist sufficiently courageous, to defend the cause of a disgraced Minister against the ruling party? I saw that my efforts would be useless, and I let the matter rest as it was, patiently waiting from my countrymen and my Sovereign, the justice that I had merited.

“The ignorance and presumption of my successor, the Count de Waldhorn, were not long in opening the eyes of the Emperor. The disasters of our arms multiplied; a great part of them were attributed to the errors of my Administration, but enough still remained to convince every rational mind that the machine was ill conducted. A considerable check that was soon afterwards experienced, and the fear that it might be followed by many others, recalled me to the remembrance of the Monarch. I was ordered to repair instantly to Court, and I was named Commander in Chief of the Army that had just been beaten. This nomination justified

tified me, and I accepted it. I was at that time ignorant that the blood of the soldiery, and the good of the State, are regarded as nothing in the eyes of a courtier, when the reputation of an honest man is to be destroyed.

“ I immediately left the capital. My heart dilated with joy on finding myself in the midst of the brave fellows that had formerly fought under my command. But what was my surprise to observe the principal ranks filled with those very persons whose advancement I had refused during my Ministry! Incapable of dissimulation, I received them coldly; but their resentment was already partaken by a great part of the army:—the men had suffered extremely; they had been industriously persuaded that I was the sole cause of the treatment they had met with, that I had enriched myself at their expence, that I had divided the profits arising from the contracts, which the exhausted state of

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the

the treasury, and the urgency of existing circumstances had forced me to agree to; even all they had since undergone, was placed to the account of my mal-administration.

“These discourses, propagated with zeal, and envenomed by the breath of the most implacable hatred, had greatly indisposed the army. Their disaffection, however, was cautiously concealed from me, because a plot was meditating, which, by making me fall into a snare, might tarnish the reputation for courage which it was not thought fit to deny that I possessed. Germany and Italy had both been the theatres of my victories; and what did me still more honour was, that no city, town, or village had to complain of the impropriety of the troops which had been under my command, while dread and devastation followed the traces of the new Chiefs, who were now to obey my orders. I put an end to these excesses, and an
exemplary

exemplary punishment or two completely curbed the licence of the soldiery. The officers took occasion from this, to augment the resentment they bore me. I was generally hated; but, nevertheless, when the enemy were to be attacked, I was always preferred to the other Chiefs; they knew how to cajole and flatter—I to fight and command.

“Several skirmishes had already taken place, and the advantage invariably remained on our side, in spite of the superior number of our enemies. They were desirous of taking their revenge, and prepared for a general engagement. The army under my command, was to have amounted to forty-five thousand strong; it was, in fact, only thirty-six thousand: a full third of which, dispersed at considerable distances, were occupied either in guarding particular posts or passes, or in overawing the refractory districts. I had therefore no more than about twenty-four
K 3 thousand

thousand effective men, to oppose to an army which, daily receiving fresh reinforcements, would soon be increased to double that number.

“I dispatched courier after courier to Vienna, to inform the Minister Waldhorn of my situation, of the imminence of the danger, and the pressing necessity there was for my receiving succours in time, to be spared the necessity of an inglorious retreat. My request might the more easily have been granted, as within thirty leagues of me, an army of fifty-thousand men remained in a state of inaction; but it was wished that I should be beaten, in order to afford an opportunity of destroying me, and my letters were left unanswered several days. This delay gave the enemy all the ~~time~~ that could be required to take the necessary positions, in order to attack me with advantage. At the end of the fifth day, a courier arrived. I doubted not that the reinforcements I had demanded, were on the march; but I was cruelly deceived.

“The

“The army of the enemy,” said the letter I received, “is not more than forty-thousand men, and fatigued with the long march they have just made. Your’s must be forty-five thousand, and its situation is advantageous. This is the time, if ever, to give battle, and to terminate the campaign by a glorious decisive action. Such is the opinion of the Council, and I may add, the order of the Emperor.

“WALDHORN.”

“Thus was I forced to give battle, and that to an enemy who, during the delay that had been purposely practised, had been augmented by at least one third. Every movement announced a speedy attack. I immediately dispatched an order to the officers commanding the troops dispersed in the environs, to put themselves instantly in march, to join the main body

of the army. Six hours were sufficient to form this junction; five had just elapsed, when the enemy quitted their lines, and came on, in order of battle. I declined the engagement as long as possible; but as they continued to advance, it became necessary either to abandon our position, or to stop them in their march. Persuaded that the reinforcements I had demanded, were on the point of arriving, I at length led on the troops to meet the enemy.

“The first shock was equally violent on both sides; a regular firing was kept up, and returned for some time. The hope of fresh troops coming up, every moment redoubled our courage, and the victory remained indecisive. At length, after eight hours of hard fighting, with a degree of firmness, circumstances considered, perhaps unprecedented, the superiority of numbers prevailed; our ranks
were

were broken, our lines forced, six thousand men were left on the spot, and three thousand made prisoners. The reinforcements on which I had depended, arrived only in time to witness our defeat. Twenty times I resolved to place myself at the head of a few brave men, and to seek death in the midst of the enemy's ranks. I was dragged, in spite of my intention, into a little place, towards which we retreated, and which being very strong, was, in case of misfortune, to have afforded us security.

“It is easy to judge in what manner this battle was related at Court; but what is difficult to be conceived, is, that its loss, instead of being attributed to the disobedience or negligence of the Chiefs, who ought to have come up according to my orders, was regarded as a deliberative act of treachery on my part. I took care to dispatch a minute detail of all that had preceded, accompanied, and followed this
K 5 action,

action, with the letter of the Minister, containing the order to hazard a battle; but the conspiracy had been planned in the most artful manner.

“ The Count de Waldhorn suppressed my statement, kept close the letter, and a fortnight afterwards, the Council, assembled for the purpose, declared me, if not a traitor to my Sovereign, by holding direct intelligence with the enemies of the State, at least culpable as the Commander in Chief:—first, for having given battle contrary to the repeated orders of the Council and the Emperor, to hold myself simply on the defensive; secondly, for having begun the action before the junction of the different bodies of troops, which were on the march to reinforce the main army; thirdly, for having by this mode of conduct, not only disgraced my country and my Sovereign, but also exposed to almost certain death the whole army under my command, and which by
3 the

the event, was reduced to one third of its force; fourthly, for having, either by my want of precaution, or premeditated design, suffered the military chest to fall into the hands of the enemy, and which contained sufficient to terminate the campaign with honour. In consideration of which, the Council extraordinarily assembled, divested me of my rank of General, confiscated all my property real and personal, as a security for payment to the Emperor, of two million of florins contained in the military chest, which, by my improvidence or perfidy, had been taken possession of by the enemy.

“ Every article of this sentence, as may be easily proved, was an act of injustice, supported upon a palpable falsehood. Indignant, rather than terrified, at such complicated baseness, I quitted the army, to fly to the Court, and justify myself in the face of my Sovereign. Every door was carefully shut at my approach; every eye

was turned from me. I, however, succeeded, after reiterated attempts, in gaining the apartments of the Emperor. I caused myself to be announced; I entered; I fell at his feet; I was about to speak.

‘Your conduct has been shameful, horrible!’ exclaimed he, with a severe countenance. ‘I leave it to the Council to judge you according to your deserts!’

“Having said these words, he left the room, without deigning to hear a syllable in my justification.

“I was going to present myself before the Council, less to prove my innocence than to recall my past services; but the order for my arrest was already made out and signed. My wife and daughters fortunately met me in the gallery of the palace; my travelling carriage was in waiting at some little distance: they forced me to ascend it with them, and we immediately

diately left Vienna, without knowing where to find an asylum in which to shelter ourselves from the animosity of my enemies. I had a small estate in the low countries: I at length determined to withdraw myself, in the hope that, from its trifling value, it might have escaped the general confiscation of my property.

“ We had already travelled without once stopping, to a place within two leagues on this side of Wetzlar;—the horses were fatigued, and it became necessary to wait till they were refreshed. We alighted at a little inn, where a wretched repast was ordered to be prepared, to recruit our strength and spirits for the remainder of our journey; when suddenly the postillion rushed in, to inform us that several horsemen, with an *exempt* at their head, were at a short distance, on full gallop. I was desirous to wait for their coming up; but my wife and children clung round me, and besought

besought me with their tears and prayers, to provide for my own and their safety. Not a moment longer was to be lost; we immediately left the inn, and made the best of our way on foot to the neighbouring forest. We walked on for several hours; no shelter, no hospitable roof was in sight. Hunger, fatigue, anxiety, all conspired to augment the horror of our situation, when, by the kindness of Providence, Carl appeared to my astonished eyes. I recollected him the first moment; and our surprise was not greater than our joy at such an unexpected meeting. We sat down at the foot of a spreading oak, where I briefly related my misfortunes, which drew tears of sorrow and indignation from my former companion in arms. Meanwhile, Elisca, faint for want of nourishment, fell senseless on the bosom of her mother. Carl immediately raised her up; and while I ran to fetch some water from the torrent not far distant, to restore her to herself, he lighted a fire, and
roasted

roasted a brace of partridges that he took from his game-bag.

“After this timely repast, he wished me to accompany him to the cavern, which he told me he inhabited; but I understood he was not alone: and having every where found men perfidious, I no longer dared to put myself in their power. While we were walking by the torrent, we perceived on the opposite side a rock, hollowed out seemingly by the hand of Nature.

‘There,’ cried I, ‘is my habitation, and that of my family!’

“The torrent was then nearly dry; we all crossed it, to examine with more attention the asylum which the rock appeared to afford. Carl closed the entrance by branches of trees, and we gathered a quantity of dried leaves, that served us for beds. In that manner we passed the first night.

night. The next morning Carl began to construct the cottage, which is that we now inhabit: in less than a month it offered us a shelter, and many comforts; a fortnight afterwards it was transformed into a delightful abode.

“Here let me stop. Since that epoch every instant has been marked by some new act of beneficence; and it is you, my friends, who have reconciled me to my fellow-creatures. The Count de Waldhorn, my persecutor, is just dead, and the Count de Polwitz appointed his successor.

“The Count de Polwitz!” exclaimed Frederic.

“Himself,” replied our venerable friend.

“I do not know him; but it is said that he is an honest man: and I depend so much on his justice, as to expect all I desire from my Sovereign.”

Thus

Thus finished the recital of the unfortunate Count de Bœrenklaw.

The death of a wicked man is a cause of rejoicing to the good. We continued at table till the dusk of the evening. Our neighbours, not finding us at our homes, or at the hall, took the road to the cottage, where they agreeably surprised us. Good-humour was imprinted on every countenance, and each added something to the general stock of gaiety. Frank informed us that he had seen an enormous wild boar at a little distance from his dwelling, and proposed that we should hunt him the following day;—his motion was unanimously agreed to, and it was resolved that the head should be eaten at the habitation of whomsoever should kill him. This was the first wild beast that we had discovered in the island. The company separated, in consequence, to make the necessary dispositions, and promised to meet by seven the next morning

ing at the hall, which being, as I have already said, situated near the center of the isle, was our usual rendezvous, when we formed a sporting party.

As soon as we were returned to the farm, Frederic consulted us on a design which the history of the Count de Bœrenklaw had suggested to him:—this was, to send to Florella a circumstantial detail of the events which he had related, and to urge her to use all her influence to determine the Count de Polwitz, who had just accepted the Ministry, to cause the conduct of our ill-treated friend to be investigated afresh by persons of character and integrity.

“What a pleasure,” cried he, “will it prove to us, to be instrumental in doing justice to so brave, so worthy a man!”

We cordially agreed to his proposition, and expressed our approbation of it in
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the warmest terms. Indeed, I must say, though I may be blamed for my want of modesty, that one of us never did a good action without its being partaken either in fact, or in the intention, by the two others.

The next day happened to be a post-day. Joseph was to go for the newspapers, and to take our letters. We finished our packet before we went to bed, from the fear of delaying for a moment the justification so richly merited, and so ardently desired by us. Florella's heart was too feeling, too virtuous, not to fly, of her own accord, to meet half way the wishes that we expressed to her with such warmth. We forgot not to remind her that it was to her generosity this unfortunate family had been indebted for the first consolation they received. We conjured her, by the most pressing entreaties, to crown her beneficence with this act of justice.

“He

“He is the Chief of the colony,” wrote Frederic; “the President of the Isle of Friendship; he is unhappy—he is oppressed. These are his claims to your protection. The day in which he shall have satisfaction made to him for his wrongs, will be the most solemn festival for the inhabitants of the island, and that wherein you will receive the homage most worthy of you—most agreeable to your heart.”

The packet was delivered to Joseph, who carried it to the usual place, the following morning; while we proceeded to the hall, in order to meet the rest of the party, pursuant to appointment.

An excellent breakfast awaited us. The Count de Bœrenklaw, in spite of his sixty years, was the first at the place of meeting. The intelligence of the preceding day seemed to have renewed his youth: his melancholy countenance had resumed
its

its serenity, and a beam of gaiety shone in his eyes, so long obscured by sorrow and disgusting reflections.

After having partaken of the best that Frank's kitchen afforded, we set out in pursuit of the formidable animal that was to fall by our hands. The earth being covered with snow two feet deep, we were soon enabled to trace him. He was first perceived by Carl, who, taking aim, struck the bristled monster behind the ear, and a shout of triumph announced his victory. We all flocked round him; the animal had fallen dead on the spot, so well had Carl directed his piece. While we were examining our prize, Charles and Walbot proceeded forward, and soon afterwards returned with proofs of their success. We had thus fully answered our hopes, and it only remained to reach home with our spoils, which was rather a difficult operation, owing to the roughness of
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the road: the snow also continued to fall at a considerable rate.

Charles and Walbot were sufficiently loaded with the produce of their own dexterity. Carl, Frederic, Frank, and myself carried the boar between us, while the Count proceeded before, to announce our return, and to order the preparations for dinner. The grateful widow and the good Margaret were overjoyed at the success of our excursion. The repast that they served up, shewed their satisfaction at so copious and seasonable a supply.

It must be confessed that we began to stand in need of it; the quantity of snow that had fallen for the last week, having kept us at home against our inclination. We dined like sportsmen, which is saying every thing; after which, we agreed to meet the following day, in order to partake together of a part of what had been brought

brought in by Charles and Walbot. We little thought of the event which was to hinder this meeting from taking place.

For the last ten days, it had not ceased snowing; it was at least three feet deep, when we returned to the farm. As we had wood in abundance, the cold which accompanied this season of the year, did not much trouble us; on the contrary, the days when the weather was bad, were those of which we profited the most, because we devoted them entirely to study. Music and drawing filled up the intervals, and our holidays were usually passed either in instructive conversation with the Count, or in the society of our friends, assembled at the hall.

We were now at the evening of the 20th of February;—a violent wind arose about midnight, and continued for several hours successively. We were fortunately well sheltered, and neither the
wind

wind nor the snow which accompanied it, prevented us from passing the night in the most profound sleep. I could see from my bed, the summit of the rocks which stood on the verge of the island; and every morning, as soon as I awoke, my eyes were naturally directed towards that picturesque prospect, which I contemplated with a sort of enthusiasm. What was my astonishment, on this memorable morning, at not perceiving any of the objects which had so often afforded me so much pleasure! I looked, and rubbed my eyes; but I could discern nothing. It must have been daybreak two hours before; yet no glimmering of light entered my apartment. Surprised at this obscurity, I arose to discover the cause. My fire was not quite out; I lighted a candle, and ran to open the window; it was closely stopped up by the snow! At first, I believed that it had been drifted by the wind against the house, and that it could not be more than a few inches thick: in consequence,

consequence, I strove to remove it with my hand; but my arm sunk up to my shoulder in this stubborn wall, without overturning it. My surprise augmented at the appearance of this phenomenon, the reason of which I could not conceive.

I proceeded to the apartment of Charles, and from thence to that of Frederic. They were both asleep; for though they had awoke at their accustomed hour of rising, yet, observing it was dark, they had conceived it much earlier than it was; and had continued in their beds. I assured them of their mistake, and going to their windows, found them in the same situation as my own. We reflected for a few minutes on so extraordinary an event; after which, we went up to Joseph's chamber, and from thence to the turret, where we at length perceived the light of day. This turret was sixty feet from the earth, and the snow nearly touched it: there was consequently fifty-eight feet

in height round the building, which must have completely concealed it from any one without.

CHAP. VIII.

Singular Enterprise.

THIS phenomenon, however incredible it may appear, is not difficult to be explained. Our farm, as I have before said, was on a rising ground. The wind, that blew with extreme violence, had swept the snow from the neighbouring heights, and driven it towards the farm,
4 where

where it had accumulated to such a prodigious quantity.

The Count de Boerenklaw's cottage being in the same direction, must doubtless have shared a similar fate: and what principally afflicted us, was the knowledge that the family were almost destitute of provisions. The idea that Flora and Elisca might suffer from want, filled us with the most anxious apprehensions. How gladly would we have taken them a supply! But by what means was the cottage to be approached? It was about three hundred paces from the farm. To attempt reaching it, seemed madness; but in proportion as the enterprise presented difficulties, it appeared to us the more glorious to surmount them:—in fine, we resolved to dig a passage under the snow, which had sufficient consistence to give us hopes of succeeding in our project. We began it without farther delay.



The

The snow gave way at first pretty easily. We proceeded ten paces in about five minutes; but as we pushed it before us, it became by degrees more solid, and soon offered a resistance impossible to overcome. Charles, who observed the cause of this opposition, took the place of Frederic, and throwing up the snow on each side, we advanced with less difficulty. Two planks, six feet long, nailed one on the other, in the shape of a carpenter's square, assisted us to form this passage, which was only large enough to admit one person at a time. We had reason to fear that a sudden fall of a portion of the congealed element above us, would close up our retreat, and perhaps bury us beneath it. To prevent this accident, we took care not to enlarge the passage. The clusters over our heads mutually sustained each other, and our progress continued in silence, in a space of about eighteen inches wide.

This

This expedition was of so uncommon a nature, that the ideas it inspired, beguiled the severity of the cold, and the hardness of the labour, although, in spite of the latter, we were nearly benumbed to inactivity by the former. Presently, however, another difficulty appeared, which was, how to direct our steps towards the cottage;—indeed how was it possible to keep in a straight line, enveloped, as we were, by those walls of alabaster, that excluded us from every method of observation? It is true, we had taken certain dimensions from the window of our turret; but our progress had rendered them useless. We therefore continued to advance on the side which made the smallest resistance, and thus by degrees completely changed our intended course.

The cottage which we were desirous of attaining, was situated to the right of the torrent, on a plat of ground of about five-and-twenty paces broad, and nearly three

hundred long; consequently, we had, at the first, to penetrate a distance of three hundred paces under the snow. Two thirds of this distance was effected; a little fortitude and patience would accomplish the remainder. Our courage did not fail us; but prudence also was necessary, and it was for want of that inestimable quality, that we all three were on the verge of destruction at a moment, when we were least expecting such a catastrophe.

According to our calculation, we could not be more than four-and-twenty paces from the cottage. We kept advancing by the aid of our wooden instrument before described, until suddenly an immense pillar of snow gave way, and fell before Charles, who was at our head. A mechanical instinct induced him to start back, that he might not be overwhelmed by its fall: meantime, this pillar drew after it several others, and we presently heard a rumbling noise, which appeared to be at
no

no great distance from us. While immovable with astonishment, we endeavoured to conjecture what could occasion this sound, which, situated as we were, was sufficient to create some degree of alarm. Huge quantities of snow, still greater than the former, separated from the immense mass, and upon their falling, we saw, with inexpressible terror, that we were on the brink of the precipice, down which the torrent rushed with an impetuosity beyond description. At this sight we were seized by an excessive shuddering, and immediately fell on our knees, to return our thanks to Providence for having preserved us from destruction, which a step farther would have rendered inevitable. We afterwards embraced with the most heartfelt joy; for it is certain that the death of one would have occasioned that of the other two, who, by striving to save him, would doubtless have shared his fate.

It is impossible to conceive an idea of the sensations that we experienced during the first moments succeeding this event, the mere remembrance of which still makes me tremble. Winter has nothing more horrid, solitude nothing more wild, Nature nothing more striking than the spectacle which was before us. The torrent that we passed dry-shod, a few months back, now dashed its foaming waters on their flinty bed, with a degree of violence that produced clouds of smoke from the concussion, and made the fall resound to the most distant parts of the island: its borders, then so placid and smiling, were now covered with a yellow scum, while the waves beneath were hurled sheet upon sheet between two walls of snow, that resembled mountains of alabaster.

Having admired awhile a prospect so awfully sublime, we renewed our labour, altering our direction, which we were not likely

likely again to miss;—in fact, after four hours' application and exertion, we arrived at the door of the cottage. We knocked several times, but no one came to give us admittance, so impossible did such a visit seem to its inhabitants. In order to enter, therefore, we were obliged to scale one of the lower windows. Our sudden appearance in the midst of those dear friends, might be compared to one of those changes of the scene that terminate in so agreeable a manner, some of our theatrical pieces. They were all petrified with astonishment; but when we presented the different provisions we had brought for them, their surprise was succeeded by gratitude.

The Count shook each of us by the hand, affected even to tears, by what he called our fraternal kindness. Flora and Elisca displayed not less sensibility. Alike agitated by joy and curiosity, they could not conceive by what miracle we had

penetrated to their presence. The recital of our enterprise, and the danger we had been in, excited their utmost admiration, and visibly increased their emotion. A look from Flora was directed to Charles—it was but a look; yet what would Charles have given, to know all that was expressed by that look!

The purpose of our errand being thus fulfilled, we returned to the farm, tranquillized with respect to the situation of this interesting part of the colony. We several times repeated our visit, always enjoying fresh sensations of delight on reaching the cottage;—this was the only point of communication we had during a fortnight. At the end of that period, our provisions began to fail us; a brace of hares, and part of a roebuck, which had been salted down, with a small quantity of pulse and roots, were all we had remaining; for the four last days we had been without bread. This deprivation
caused

caused us no little anxiety, not only on our own account, but also on that of our friends at the cottage, who were not even so well supplied as ourselves. We had several times ascended to our turret, in order to examine whether there were any means of opening a passage to the hall, which, as before stated, was the general storehouse of the colony. The distance was not so great as to the cottage; but the ground was more irregular, and the snow had by this time acquired a degree of consistency, which greatly increased the difficulty of the operation.

Before we commenced the undertaking, we divided our provisions, and carried one moiety to the cottage, where we deliberated on the measures to be taken, in order to re-establish the communication with the hall. The Count strenuously insisted on partaking the labour with us; but we resolutely opposed, and at length succeeded in making him abandon this
I. 6 intention.

intention. We quitted him for the purpose of putting our plan into immediate execution; but the friendship of Frank spared us the necessity of so doing. On arriving at the farm, we found him with Carl and Walbot, questioning Joseph as to what was become of us. The same motive which had induced us to force a passage to the cottage, had influenced him to make a road to the farm: he had previously done a similar service to Carl and Walbot, where the difficulty was not nearly so great. They were loaded with provisions of all kinds; but though the distance was not more than two hundred paces, they had not been able to penetrate to the farm until after ten hours of persevering application.

This proof of the friendship of our neighbours, inspired us with the most lively gratitude. Carl, on his part, was overjoyed to find that we had carried assistance to the family of his ancient General; he

he would not return to his own until he had paid his respects at the cottage. It was a visit in a body that we made to the Chief of the colony. This mark of attachment could not fail of giving him the greatest pleasure: our intention was also to invite him to come and partake of the fresh supply that we had just received.

The reception we met with, fully equalled our expectations;—we dined together, and that day is one of those which I place among the happiest of my life. There was from fifty to sixty feet of snow above our heads; yet we were seated around the table in as much tranquillity as if the flowers of spring, or the fruits of autumn had embellished the earth. The harmony that prevailed among all the inhabitants, the eagerness with which every one assisted his neighbour, gave our society a charm that it is impossible to meet with
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in the gay world. We must have lived in a desert, as Florella expressed herself, in order to appreciate justly the joys of love and friendship.

Nearly a month elapsed before Joseph could leave the island, to go and enquire for the answer of Florella to our last letter. He brought back two from her. By the first, she thanked us for having afforded her an opportunity of being serviceable to so respectable a character as him in whose behalf we had addressed her; —the other informed us that her first attempt had been crowned with the completest success, that the Count de Polwitz had greatly interested himself in the affair, and that, ere long, she hoped to give us the most satisfactory intelligence in that respect. She recommended, in the meantime, the greatest secrecy, reserving, as she said, for her only reward, the annunciation in person of the Council's decision, which she

she trusted to be enabled to bring before the twentieth of April.

It was then the twenty-fifth of March; we had consequently only to wait for her about three weeks longer;—they were passed, as the preceding had been, between healthful exercise, improving study, and agreeable society. The rays of the sun had at length dissolved those mountains of snow under which we had been imprisoned for the space of six weeks.—The rage of the torrent had subsided—its borders were no longer covered with scum; the earth, the trees, the bushes—all resumed their vernal garb; yet Nature, already so beautiful, was to be still farther embellished by the presence of Florella, whom we daily expected. Her apartment was prepared for her reception; Joseph, for several days back, had been stationed at the neighbouring village, in order to apprize us of her arrival. She intended to take

take us by surprise, and, by way of punishment, we resolved to be beforehand with her.

At last, on the twenty-third of April, Joseph came running, out of breath, to inform us that a travelling carriage had just stopped at the inn, and that he had seen three females alight from it, one of whom he recognised to be the same that had visited us at the Castle.

Frederic immediately proceeded to the cottage, to request that the Count de Boereuklau and his charming daughters would repair to the farm without delay; from thence, he went forward to the habitation of Carl and Walbot, where he repeated his invitation.

In less than half an hour, all the inhabitants of the island, with the exception of Margaret, who was busied in preparing

preparing dinner, assembled at the farm. Joseph and Walbot had the charge of the artillery, consisting of nine fowling-pieces. Frederic, Charles, Frank, Carl, and myself, with the Count de Boerenklau at our head, holding each a flower in our hands, proceeded as far as the bridge, to receive our long-expected and much-desired guest.

CHAP. IX.

The Inauguration of the Isle of Friendship.

IT was neither to the beautiful woman, nor to the celebrated actress, but to the benevolent, the beneficent Florella that we offered these tokens of respect. Our homage entirely differed from that which is paid to a coquette by a lover anxious to obtain her affection, or to the unsuspecting innocent, the object of illicit desire; it was a tribute of esteem, of admiration rendered to an interesting woman, who, in the age of pleasures, knew of none so grateful to her soul as those of beneficence.

We

We had not been waiting more than a quarter of an hour at the entrance of the island, when the three travellers, attended by a boy from the inn, presented themselves on the opposite rock.

“Who comes there?” cried the Count.

“A friend!” replied Florella.

Immediately the drawbridge was let down, and we all three darted forward, to offer our arms to our charming visitors. They trembled as they crossed the precipice beneath their feet; and as soon as they entered the isle, the bridge was drawn up, and a discharge of nine pieces of musketry announced our march towards the farm.

Previously, however, the Count, as the President of the colony, instead of pronouncing a pompous harangue to Florella, presented her a nosegay, which he accompanied with a kiss. His example was followed

followed by every one present, and we afterwards advanced, the artillery still playing, to the chief quarters of the island. Florella, much affected, had hitherto kept silent; she looked at us one by one—she smiled; but her heart was too full, to permit her tongue the power of expressing all she felt.

I have already mentioned the capacious and elegant saloon which belonged to the apartments destined for Florella. The doors, the windows, the mirrors were ornamented with garlands of flowers: it was there that she was received by the female part of our society, all dressed in white. This unexpected sight, the general eagerness to assist her, that tribute of affection and gratitude which she saw beaming in every eye, filled her's with tears;—her soul was inadequate to such a combination of delicious emotions: she fainted in the arms of Madame Walbot, who happened to be at her side. Let the

the heart, devoid of sensibility, respect this weakness, which it never can itself experience.

While every one is busied in restoring Florella to herself, it may be proper to inform the reader who the two females were that accompanied her. One of them, it will be easily guessed, was the amiable, the faithful Laura; the other was neither more nor less than an orphan, whom Florella had taken under her protection, not to wait upon her, but to give her a suitable education, and to establish her advantageously. Six thousand florins were deposited in the hands of a Banker at Vienna, as the fortune she was to receive on her marriage:—her name was Rosina; she was the daughter of a merchant, known and respected from 'thirty years' undeviating probity, but whom a bankruptcy had ruined, and brought to his grave. The half of this destined fortune arose from the liberality of Florella, the remainder from

from the wreck of the father's property. The age of this interesting creature was between sixteen and seventeen; a charming figure, well shaped, the mildness of an angel, and a thousand nameless graces—such was Rosina. It will be presently seen with what view Florella had been accompanied by this agreeable companion.

The faintings occasioned from excess of joy, are neither dangerous nor lasting; Florella was soon brought to herself again, and appeared more beautiful than ever. Flora and Elisca accompanied her; it was Venus between Juno and Pallas. This charming trio were already firm friends; a few minutes suffice to create an intimacy between sympathetic hearts. Their's had answered each other; the compact was concluded; an indissoluble friendship was thenceforth to unite them.

Meantime, a great table was set out, and spread in the middle of the saloon.
Florella

Florella occupied the seat of honour; opposite to her was the Count de Boerenklau; the rest placed themselves according to their liking, or rather as it happened, except that Florella made a sign to Frank, to sit by the side of Rosina. She had her reasons; never did a couple appear more suitably matched. Frank was made to please; Rosina possessed every qualification to charm: they soon became acquainted. Friendship, freedom, gaiety all that can render a repas delicious, was found united at this. At length the dessert was brought in;—the middle of the table was occupied by a dish covered with a napkin. After a moment's silence, Florella, approaching the Count, said to him, with an enchanting smile—

“ My Lord, this is the best part of the dinner, and it is reserved for you alone.”

The Count, astonished at what he heard, and vainly seeking in the eyes of Florella

Florella the meaning of her words, at last uncovered the dish which she had presented to him. It contained several papers. The first was a letter, in which the Count de Polwitz congratulated him on the unequivocal and public declaration of his innocence which the Imperial Council had just made in respect of his conduct. It informed him, in consequence, that the sequestration had been taken off his property, and that he was at liberty to enter again into the possession of his estates, with the enjoyment of a considerable pension for the services he had rendered to his country. The letter thus concluded—

“ I conceive, my Lord, I have merely fulfilled one of the duties of my place, in soliciting the justice of my master, in favour of a man so unworthily calumniated. If you have any obligation to me, it is for having chosen the hand which

which has taken it in charge to deliver you these proofs of the equity of the Emperor, and of the respectful consideration of your friend

“POLWITZ.”

“Let me then kiss that adorable hand,” exclaimed the Count, overpowered by the weight of his feelings, “let me kiss that hand which had before rescued me from misery, and now restores me my honour unsullied.”

Saying these words, the noble veteran, weeping with joy and gratitude, approached Florella, to seize the favour he had so earnestly desired; but the cunning creature prevented him, by throwing herself into his arms, and after having received a sonorous salute, she said to him, with a smile peculiar to herself—

“If this kiss be a mode of returning thanks, I confess, my Lord, that I have been robbing you. These gentlemen,” added she, pointing to us, “are the authors of the service for which you fancied yourself indebted to me. This letter will prove to you that I have merely followed an impulse originating with them.”

She then delivered to the Count the letter which we had written to her two months before.

No, it was impossible to experience twice what we all three felt at this moment! We were become the heroes of the piece:—it was too much for the Count; he knew not in what terms to give vent to his sensations. Flora and Elisca thanked us for him and for themselves. Carl impatiently waited for an opportunity of expressing his sentiments of our magnanimity, as he styled it. Every mouth sang forth our praises, every heart gave us its blessing.

blessing. It might have been thought that we had saved the lives of every individual present, so forward was each of them to evince his gratitude. Oh indescribable charm! what pleasure can approach to the pure and celestial joy that results from an act of beneficence?

From this moment the gaiety which had presided at our repast, was augmented to rapture, to ecstasy:—toasts were drunk; congratulations given and returned; the utmost freedom, combined with the utmost decorum, prevailed. It was agreed unanimously that so interesting an epoch could not be too highly celebrated. Dancing was mentioned:—we took our instruments, and the Count opened the ball with Florella, whom he afterwards delivered over to Frederic. Charles had already engaged Flora; I had done the same by Elisca, and Frank never quitted Rosina. Madame Carl was the only one who took no part in this exercise: she

was in an advanced state of pregnancy, and expected daily to be confined. The Count and Florella readily promised to be the sponsors; the approaching event would therefore be the cause of another merry meeting. The company did not break up till the night was far advanced. Madame Carl and Madame Walbot slept at the farm, as their homes were at a considerable distance; the rest of the company returned to their respective dwellings, and all the inhabitants of the island soon enjoyed the refreshing balm of peaceful slumber.

Florella was not like our ladies of fashion, who pass in bed or at their toilet the finest part of the day;—the morning was destined to be employed in making her acquainted with the different habitations of our neighbours. Her first visit was to the Count's cottage, where every thing had been prepared to give her the reception she merited. The Count, followed
by

by Flora and Elisca, came out to meet her; the rest of the islanders attended us in the cottage. After partaking of a breakfast, of which Flora and Elisca did the honours, Florella carefully examined this solitary abode, the work of the worthy and beneficent Carl. Every object inspired her with fresh esteem for that excellent man. It was truly difficult to conceive how one person without tools, and almost without assistance, had been able, in less than six weeks, to carry such an undertaking into execution. Florella testified her surprise at it to Carl.

“Nothing more easily accounted for,” replied he. “I was labouring for my benefactor.”

The repairs and ornaments which we had added to it, were not forgotten: Flora and Elisca took care to point them out. A glance of the former directed to Charles, a look of the latter to me, and a slight

pressure of the hand given by Florella to Frederic recompensed us all three. I have already said, and I repeat it, a good action never goes without its reward, even though it should be conferred upon an ungrateful heart.

After having examined with attention all this part of the island, not excepting the venerable oak that overshadowed the grave of the Courtes, we returned to the cottage. It was not calculated to dine so large a party; but, seated beside a pretty woman, or what is better, the woman we love, we are never too much crowded. This dinner passed similarly to that of the preceding day; the company did not separate till a late hour, and then to meet again the following morning at the dwelling of Walbot.

Thus each day commenced by a walk, and terminated with a sumptuous repast, and the charms of agreeable society. The same.

same freedom, the same good humour accompanied the reception we met with from Carl. The tour of Florella concluded by an entertainment given at the hall:—the weather being extremely favourable, our friend Frank served up dinner under the shade of some lindentrees, which ornamented the front of his habitation.

From the eminence on which we were seated, we had a view of almost every part of the island. The prospect was enchanting, from the variety and picturesque contrast of the objects which on all sides presented themselves. The good Margaret had employed the utmost extent of her talents, to make this repast fully equal to any one which had been given in the island; we were actually astonished at such profusion, such magnificence, and could not help expressing our surprise. We were answered to the same effect as Florella had been by Carl, relative to the

construction of the cottage :—" Nothing more easily accounted for ; I am entertaining my benefactors."

Five successive days of visiting and feasting is pretty well ; the sixth was passed by each at their respective homes, and, to speak for ourselves, was not the least agreeable. In Florella we united all that a woman can possess of beauty, grace, and amiableness. Rosina added to a charming figure angelic sweetness ; and Laura, who is no stranger to the reader, was deficient neither in taste nor wit. It may therefore be conjectured that the solitude of the farm was supportable.

We passed three entire days at it ; on the morning of the fourth, Carl came to inform us that his wife had presented him with a fine boy. The preparations for the christening were immediately set about. The Count called, to accompany Florella on a visit to the lady in the *straw*. The widow

widow and Margaret, at the important crisis, had rendered her all the assistance she could have received from a professional man; the mother and the infant were charmingly.

The following day, the Curate of Bolzheim, a village about a league off, came to perform the ceremony. It was the first birth celebrated in the island, and this religious rite was attended with all the solemnity that so interesting an epoch demanded. The godfather's name being Charles, Florella added to it Frederic and Henry; so that the new islander bore the names of all three, which were duly inscribed on the register of births:—two copies were made out for the purposes of deaths and marriages, which together with the former, were given into the custody of Walbot, who was unanimously appointed Syndic of the colony.

Nearly a month had elapsed since the
M 5 arrival

arrival of Florella; but the days, so tedious to the unhappy, passed with us so rapidly, that neither of us so much as thought of counting them. Meantime, Florella was persuaded she had found in Frank the most suitable of husbands for her amiable orphan; and her intention was to terminate this affair before she quitted the island. Frank had confessed to us more than once, that he adored Rosina; but nothing which could be construed into a confession, had yet escaped the latter. The strictness of the education she had received, would not allow her to explain herself to our friend in such a manner as to give him hopes that his attachment was returned. Florella undertook to discover the state of her mind without farther delay.

Accordingly, the morning after this resolution had been adopted, when Rosina came down to breakfast as usual, we appeared engaged in conversation respecting

respecting Frank, each of us praising him for some good quality :— one boasted of the excellence of his disposition ; another, of the goodness of his heart ; a third, of his filial piety. - It seemed to be who should speak most in his behalf. During this panegyric, we were secretly observing Rosina : - her eyes were cast down ; but pleasure beamed in her countenance, doubtless enjoying the praises she heard lavished on one more dear to her than she perhaps had imagined.

“ And pray, my dear Rosina, what do you think of him ? ” said Florella, pouring her out a cup of tea.

“ Me, Madam ! ” replied Rosina, blushing extremely ; “ I do not know why I should be asked such a question. ”

“ Why, you surely are sufficiently acquainted, to have formed some sort of opinion of him ! ”

“ He appears to me a very worthy young man. ”

“And nothing more?”

“Nothing more.”

“Well, that is a good deal, but not enough.”

“What is your meaning, my dear Madam?” said Rosina, much embarrassed, and directing her fine blue eyes towards us.

“Observe me, my dear Rosina,” answered Florella, “these gentlemen may hear what I have to say, since it respects an affair in which their happiness, as well as your’s and mine, is concerned. Young Frank has solicited them to ask your hand of me. I need not tell you he loves you: he is their friend—he is mine; but that circumstance ought to have no effect in an engagement of such a nature. Friendship and esteem contribute in a great measure to domestic happiness; but at your age, something more is required. Consider, my dear friend, reflect, consult your inclinations; your felicity is the only object of my desire. We are going
to

to take a little walk; when we return, I will come to you, and you shall dictate the answer I am to give to these gentlemen."

"My reflections are made," cried Rosina, reddening more than ever.

"So much the better," replied Florella, returning. "I like a decisive disposition. — Well?"

Rosina answered, covering her face, and throwing herself into the arms of her benefactress.

"Come, come," added Florella, "I see that your heart is engaged on our side, and that our friend Frank is as happy as he deserves to be. Nothing more remains, than to fix the day;—when a good action is to be done, there is no time to be lost. Are you not of that opinion, Rosina?"

"Certainly, Madam."

"Sup-

“Suppose we should say at the end of a week from this time?”

“A week!”

“Well, I know that is a long period to wait for, and that the poor young fellow would die with impatience at such a delay. I am sure you would not afflict him.”

“Well then, I leave it entirely to you,” said Rosina, running out of the room, to conceal her confusion.

Joseph was immediately dispatched for Frank, who had charged us with this negotiation. We did not suffer him to remain long in the uncertainty by which he was tormented. He could hardly contain himself upon learning that the moment of his happiness was to take place in a week; he threw himself on his knees before Florella, to thank her for this fresh instance of her goodness. She sent him to Rosina, whom we perceived through the

the window, walking among the rocks by the torrent. In less than five minutes he was at her feet. Rosina raised him up, accepted his arm, and they took the road back to the farm together. Florella was enchanted at the success of her enterprise; —to make two persons happy by one action, was to her benevolent soul the first, the sweetest of pleasures.

The day, so much desired by the young lovers, at length arrived. A hillock of turf, enamelled with flowers, and overshadowed by spreading oaks, represented the altar of Hymen. All the inhabitants of the colony, the men with nosegays in their hands, the women dressed in white, ranged in a circle, waited in religious silence the commencement of the ceremony. The venerable Curate of Bolzheim, who had baptized Carl's infant, came, for the second time, to perform in the island the functions of his sacred ministry. It was to him that the young pair

took the oath of eternal love and attachment to each other; it was from him, after a pathetic exhortation on the holiness and the duties of the new state into which they had entered, that they received the nuptial benediction. Never was a marriage celebrated in a more simple, and at the same time in a more august manner. A hillock of earth for the altar, a grove for the temple, of which the canopy of Heaven was the dome—thus, in the infancy of the world, were united its inhabitants, and thus were united Frank and Rosina.

A large tent had been pitched under the linden trees, which ornamented the entrance to the hall. In this was served up the wedding dinner. Rosina positively refused the place of honour; she insisted upon its being taken by the respectable widow, by the mother of her Frank. The latter, as dutiful a son as he intended to be an affectionate husband, was enchanted

at this mark of deference of his bride for his parent. He placed himself between them, and joining their hands in his own, he renewed his oath to render them both happy. After dinner, M. Walbot produced the marriage register, in which the names of the young couple were entered. The Curate of Bolzheim, whom he had detained to drink their health, gave to this act the most incontestable authority. When he had signed it as Minister, we did the same as witnesses; and this formality being fully executed, all the company, with the exception of the good Curate, repaired to the farm.

The day of Florella's departure was fast approaching. Her intention was to take us with her to Vienna, and that of the Count to accompany us in the journey, as well for the purpose of returning his thanks to the Count de Polwitz, as to regulate his affairs: — his property had been in a state of sequestration nearly seven months.

months. The confusion that this measure must necessarily have created, the inevitable loss it had occasioned, called imperiously for his presence at the capital. It therefore became an object of consideration how the government of the island should be administered during our absence. All the authority of the Count devolved, by right, on Carl, who, after him, was the fittest person for President of the Colony. Walbot, as the most suitable for the formation of laws and internal regulations, was confirmed in his office of Syndic; and Frank named Treasurer General of the island. Florella had deposited a considerable sum in his hands. These funds were to be employed according to the unanimous suffrage of the three, either in repairing, or ornamenting the different dwellings, or in any other way that might turn to the public benefit.

CHAP. X.

Departure for Vienna.

THESE dispositions being made and settled, we waited tranquilly for the fifteenth of June, the day on which we were to begin our journey. Florella's carriage was still at the inn of the village. The Count, accompanied by Flora and Elisca, were to follow us post. At the time appointed, after having taken an affectionate leave of all the inhabitants of the island, we set off, and in three days arrived without accident at Vienna.

Thus

Thus were we thrown into the world once more. Florella had a house in the *Faubourg de Leopold*; but as it was not seemly for us to reside with her, we had apartments provided for us in the Count's hotel, which was in the vicinity of the Court. This hotel was nearly stripped; all the domestics having as usual availed themselves of their master's misfortunes, to divide his property, and ruin him entirely. The several tenants declared they had paid their rents punctually; the agents swore they had received nothing; and on applying to the servants for information, instead of accounting for the sums they had possessed, they demanded their wages, and insisted on some recompence for the losses they pretended to have sustained.

The Count, surrounded by a crowd of knaves, found himself involved in a labyrinth, from whence he saw no means of escaping. Charles, however, who was well versed in legal affairs, took the business in hand,

hand, and promised to extricate him without much difficulty. In less than a month, he obliged some to account, reduced the demands of others, and drew considerable sums from several of those who had protested they had received nothing, and against whom he was forced to take compulsory steps, in order to obtain restitution. The persons who had been employed by the Count, observing his fortune was about to be re-established, accused each other, in the hope of preserving their places. Charles took advantage of this disunion, to procure the documents and information of which he still stood in need; after which, dispatching this host of rogues, the Count's affairs began to assume an appearance of order. The latter had an estate in Hungary, which produced him nothing but the title of Palatine, and some other honours as insignificant as they were ridiculous. He determined to sell it. Charles was commissioned for this purpose, and immediately

ately set off for the spot. He acted with such zeal and judgment, that at his return, the Count found himself, in point of fortune, in a situation unheard of for a great Lord—I mean, that he had plenty of money, and owed no debts.

A great change had taken place in public affairs during the absence of our friend Charles. A dangerous insurrection had broken out in Brabant, on account of some alterations projected by Joseph Second. This Sovereign, either too impatient for the existing circumstances, too philosophical for the people he had to govern, had neglected the necessary precaution of keeping separate the civil power and the religious authority. His views were wise and profound; but he had neither made himself acquainted with the dispositions of his subjects, nor of the nature of the obstacles which he had to surmount. He knew not that at the end of the eighteenth century, Brabant was scarcely

scarcely arrived at the seventeenth, when, wholly absorbed in commercial speculations, she had neither the penetration nor the maturity requisite to perceive that almost imperceptible line of demarkation, beyond which religion becomes fanaticism, and liberty degenerates to licence and anarchy. In consequence, every day brought more alarming news to the Court. The revolt augmented, and acquired strength in proportion to the forces employed to suppress it. Several Members of the Council, alarmed by these symptoms, proposed methods of prudence and moderation;—they were dismissed, because Joseph the Second, like all other Governors, believed that with bayonets and cannon, it was impossible to be in the wrong with his subjects.

Florella took advantage of these changes in the Ministry, to place us all in respectable situations. Frederic was the private Secretary to the Count de Polwitz;

witz; Charles continued to regulate the affairs of the Count, which fully employed him; and I was appointed an Under Secretary for Bohemia. My salary was three thousand florins a year; but my colleague soon gave me to understand, though not in so many words, that with a little *prudence*, my income might be tripled, or even quadrupled. I had no occasion for this augmentation; I lodged at the Count's hotel, and dined every day either with him or Florella.

On the concert evenings, the first persons of the Court met at her house. It was in that society, I had the honour of seeing M. W——, and M. C—— A——, who have both since acquired such distinguished celebrity. It was there also that I heard it declared by persons more sincere and more philosophical than are usually found at Court, that the revolution of Brabant, so near akin to our's, was owing neither to the severity of the Prince,

Prince, the ignorance of the people, nor to the fanaticism of the priesthood, still less to the love of their country and of liberty; but to the misunderstanding subsisting between two powerful men, who had been set at variance with each other by——a *cotillion*! I more than once heard the coffee-house politicians and the smatterers in diplomacy, exclaim——“ Oh! oh! this is another *cotillion* revolution!”

Miserable creatures, who fancy yourselves great men, because you have money to pay those that impose on you! —who pretend to settle the destiny of the State, in the same manner as the gardener arranges his cucumber-beds! Tell me, I pray you, how quinquina destroys fevers, how the vaccine prevents the small pox, how mercury cures the other, &c. and then I will allow you to assign causes for the maladies of empires, and remedies for their recovery.

I had occupied my post about three months, when, one morning in my way to the office, I was accosted by a stranger, who called me by my name. I had not yet acquired the arrogance assumed by the generality of those in situations like mine; and therefore immediately stopping, I asked him his business with me.

“Something of considerable importance,” he replied, “and which is well worthy of your attention. I live at a very short distance from hence. Will you do me the favour to walk home with me?”

As I am not naturally timid, and as the stranger had something about him which inspired confidence, I followed him without hesitation. After having ascended to the third story of a house, near the place where he had addressed me, he ushered me into an apartment, which was at the back of the building. The first
object

object that struck me, was a young woman, holding in her arms an infant child, to whom she was giving suck;—four others were beside her; the two eldest about eight or nine years of age, were engaged in teaching the younger to read. The mother got up, on seeing me enter the room. I bowed to her; and requesting her to be seated, I perceived, by her eyes, that she had been crying. The stranger having handed me a chair, and taken another himself, spoke to me in these terms:—

“ Sir, the employment that you have occupied during the last three months, was filled for forty years by my father. His probity did not suffer him to reap any other advantages from it, than the salary which is attached to it. In consequence, he left me no other fortune than the prospect of succeeding him. Accordingly, I had enjoyed it for twenty years, when you

were appointed. How I lost it, you are going to be informed.

“ A post of the first respectability was become vacant by the death of the Baron de Staroski. A great number of competitors applied to procure it. Their petitions were deposited in our office, and a part of my labour, and that of my colleague, consisted in making extracts from these petitions, for the information of the Members of the Council. Among the persons applying for this situation, were two gentlemen, one the father of a family, a man of acknowledged probity, and who came recommended by twenty-six years’ faithful service in a similar, though far less lucrative employment. He had been ruined by the war in Bohemia; and this circumstance, as well as his extraordinary reputation, seemed to me to entitle him to the preference. The other was rich, proud, insolent, and cared nothing for the esteem
of

of any one, because he knew not how to merit it; but he had left on the desk of my colleague, three rouleaux, of a hundred ducats each; and this bribe inclined the balance in his favour. Such injustice shocked me, and I did not conceal my disgust:—a hundred ducats were offered me, which only served to increase my indignation. My report was prepared, my conclusions formed; I presented them to the Council, and, conscious of my integrity, retired home as usual. On arriving at the office the following morning, I found my colleague in high spirits;—his recommendation had been confirmed, and a quarter of an hour afterwards, I received my dismissal. I have thought it my duty, Sir, to give you this information, were it only to acquaint you with the sort of man you have to deal with.”

I was about to thank him, and take my leave, when, stopping me, he added—

“This is not all:—my existence, that of my wife, and of my children depended on my place; and it is in your power to procure it for me again.”

“How?” cried I, much surprised.

“By presenting this petition to the Count de Polwitz,” answered he, “whose Chief Secretary I know to be your intimate friend.”

I took the paper which he held out to me, and on examining it, found it to be just, clear, and neatly composed; every word carried with it the stamp of truth, every sentence produced conviction. I took the charge of it with pleasure, and my promise restored joy and hope to this afflicted family.

The same evening I sent it to Frederic, with a particular account of the recital I had heard from the stranger. A service was to be rendered to an honest man, the victim of oppression; and an act of justice

justice to be exercised upon a rogue, whose knavery had prospered. What powerful reasons were these for determining Frederic to support the petition with all his influence! My expectation was not deceived. Three days after, the petitioner was appointed in the place of my colleague, who previously received information that his services were no longer required. I had myself the pleasure of announcing this intelligence to the former. His protestations of friendship and gratitude, the tears of joy which streamed down the cheeks of his wife, the caresses lavished on me by the children, filled my heart with those sweet emotions, to which it had been a stranger for the six months past that I had resided in the metropolis.—Oh vanity of Courts! Oh pleasures of the world! what are you all in comparison of the simple, but pure enjoyments that nature and friendship offered us amidst the rocks of our island!

This also was more than ever the time to regret them. The affairs of the low countries became daily more embarrassing; the revolution that had just begun in France, had reanimated the spirit of revolt, and inspired the Chiefs of the mal-contented with fresh courage. The severe measures which till then had been employed, had produced no other effect, than that of farther alienating the minds of the inhabitants from the Government. M. de Polwitz had advised measures of prudence and conciliation; but the Monarch, offended at such a proposal, told him that he would enter into no compromise with rebels. Two months afterwards, it became a subject of discussion in the Council, whether war should be declared against France. The Count de Polwitz was the only one who dared to give a negative to this proposition, although he knew it had already secretly received the sanction of his Sovereign.

“ Let

“Let us,” said he, in open council, “leave the French to quarrel among themselves, and wait for a favourable moment of overthrowing the faction which shall have got the better of the others, instead of uniting every party against us.”

The Prince, either too deeply prejudiced, or irritated with his moderation, which he called pusillanimity, gave him a look of discontent, and left the chamber.

From this moment every thing proceeded from bad to worse. The insurrection in the Netherlands had turned into a civil war. France, against which hostilities had commenced, was transformed into an arsenal; numerous armies, composed chiefly of young men, were raised and organized in all parts; they were then despised—they have since been the subject of universal admiration: and these Carmagnoles, ragged, harassed, and half-starved as they were, afterwards became heroes, who made the chief powers

of Europe tremble on their thrones. M. de Polwitz predicted what would happen; but it is frequently dangerous to prophesy at Court.

Joseph the Second at length paid the tribute to Nature; but his plans still subsisted, and his successor was desirous of putting them into execution. Meantime, the public misery increased, the war approached, money was wanting, the people murmured—all was confusion; the Council sat from morning till night, but nothing was determined on. The Count de Polwitz and Frederic frequently passed whole hours together:—sometimes our friend was obliged to bear with the ill humour which the former brought from the Council chamber; he then cursed most heartily both his place, and the honours belonging to it.

Neither was Frederic the only one among us that was affected by the complexion,

plexion of affairs; I was equally overburdened with labour. We only saw Charles and each other for a few minutes at breakfast:—our gaiety had disappeared; drawing and music were abandoned and forgotten; it was seldom that we could pass an hour at the house of Florella, who also seemed agitated by no small degree of anxiety. Charles only still preserved the evenness of his enviable disposition. Highly esteemed by the Count, who treated him as his son—respected, to say the least, by Flora and Elisca, he daily enjoyed the charms of their society; while, worn out with fatigue, disgusted by the intrigues of the Court, the head full of politics, and the heart void of sentiment, we painfully wasted our time, surrounded by heaps of dusty papers. What a difference between the Court of Vienna and the Isle of Friendship!—Why did we quit it? was the question we frequently asked ourselves.—Alas! the human mind grows weary of every thing, even of happiness.

That is our excuse;—it was necessary we should breathe the air of a Court, in order to appreciate justly the charms of our solitude.

The political horizon, however, grew every day more gloomy;—a misunderstanding arose between the Members of the Council. The Ministers, acting in opposition to each other, committed blunders upon blunders. The courtiers not in office, took advantage of them, to ruin their characters, and succeed to their places. One evening, when business had detained me till ten o'clock, I left my office, and on my way home, heard myself called by my name. Turning round, I found it was by one of Florella's domestics, who gave me a letter, and left me, without waiting for an answer. I opened it, and the following words, written with a pencil, were the sole contents:—

“The

“The Count de Polwitz has just been seized;—your friend runs a risk of sharing the same fate! Let him set off without delay to the island, whither I will follow in a few days. Adieu!”

The billet was not signed; but I easily recognised it to be the hand of Florella. I immediately proceeded to the hotel. I ran upstairs;—fortunately Frederic was there. I gave him the letter, and we consulted on the necessary step to be taken. Scarcely had Charles begun to deliver his sentiments, when somebody knocked at the door of the antichamber. I went to open it, and discovered an *exempt*, followed by four soldiers.

“Are you Frederic De ——?” said he.

“What is your business with him?” demanded I.

“Here is my authority,” replied he.
“I have nothing farther to explain.”

I threw a glance on the paper; after which, assuming a resolute tone—

“Away, Sir!” cried I. “I am ready to follow you.”

Frederic, who had heard this dialogue from the adjoining apartment, was about to appear, and convince the officer of his mistake. Happily Charles, who had guessed my intention, stopped him in time, and drew him away by another door, out of the reach of my guards. We went down stairs; a carriage was waiting in the street. I ascended it with the *exempt* and two of the soldiers; the other two, with the rest of the escort that had carefully surrounded the building, proceeded to the guard-house

The

The *exempt* was more communicative than gentlemen of his profession usually are. A few words dropped from him as we rode along, by which I discovered that M. de Polwitz had been arrested, on suspicion of holding a traiterous communication with France. A commission had been appointed to elucidate the matter, and examine his conduct, as well as that of seventeen others confined for the same cause.

The coachman drove us directly to the hotel of the Baron de Thorn, who was the President of this commission. I was ushered into a lower hall, where most of my pretended accomplices were already assembled, busied in conversation until they should be summoned to undergo examination as to their designs. The windows were secured by strong iron bars, and the door was guarded by an officer and twelve soldiers. While waiting my turn to be interrogated, I learned that,
according

according to the nature of our respective guilt, we were to be sent either to the Citadel of Preslau, or to that of Braskio-wiz in Bohemia. I secretly promised myself to make neither of these journies; and assuming the airs of innocence and intrepidity, I waited patiently to appear before the Commissioners.

It was seven in the morning before I had this honour. Two soldiers introduced me. The commission was composed of seven persons.

“Your name?” demanded the President.

I declined telling it. They looked at each other, and remained for a moment irresolute how to proceed.

“What connection have you with the Count de Polwitz?”

“None.”

“Were

“Were you not his Private Secretary?”

“Never. I was, and still am one of the Under Secretaries for Bohemia.”

A messenger belonging to my office, resided at the hotel. He was called in, and immediately confirmed what I had stated. The President sent for the *exempt*, reprimanded him for his negligence, and set me at liberty, after having made many apologies for an inadvertence, of which I had been the victim. Mistakes of this sort are made every where; but they are generally of much longer duration, and the authors of them are careful not to allow themselves in fault, whatever injustice may be the consequence.

As I was going out of the hotel, I perceived Charles asleep in a chair in the outer hall, where he had passed the night. I awaked him; and, after he had expressed his satisfaction on finding me in safety, we repaired together to the Hotel de Boerenklau.

Boerenklau. There we learned that Frederic would wait for us at the third stage on the road to Wetzlar; that Florella, as soon as I should be restored to liberty, would take us in her carriage, and depart instantly; and that the Count de Boerenklau intended to accompany us, fearing fresh persecution from the son-in-law of the Count de Waldhorn, who had just been appointed to succeed M. de Polwitz.

CHAP. XI.

Return to the Island.

THE equipages of the Count were already prepared, and our packages occupied no long time. Our departure was to be postponed no longer than the following morning. We took advantage of the interval to purchase pencils, colours, books, and musical instruments. The works of Haydn were not forgotten. We went to bid adieu to that celebrated man, with whom we had become acquainted at the house of Florella. After having likewise paid a visit of ceremony to the Count de Wallendorf,

Wallendorf, the former proprietor of the Isle of the Rocks, we returned to the hotel, from whence we sent our baggage to be packed in the evening, as we were to be with Florella the next morning by six o'clock, and were anxious to prevent a moment's farther delay.

It was then the eighth of May. The weather was beautiful; the freshness of the air invigorated the body, and elevated the spirits. Day had scarcely appeared, when we arose, impatient for the commencement of our journey. We believed we were the only persons awake in the hotel; but the Count's carriage was already at the door. Flora and Elisca, in riding-habits, were waiting breakfast for us: however, as we had promised Florella, we took our leave for the present, and repaired to her house. She was ready to receive us; and ascending the carriage, we left Vienna as the clock struck six, after an
abode

abode of ten months and twenty-three days.

We found Frederic at the third stage, where he had left word he should stay for us. The Count soon afterwards came up, and the following day we arrived at Wetzlar. In passing through a large town two leagues beyond that city, we were stopped by a quarrel, which had arisen at an inn-door, between a man apparently intoxicated, and the innkeeper. A few yards farther on, a great crowd was assembled before a barn. Frederic, having stepped out of the carriage, in order to force a passage, recognised in the drunken champion, our ancient theatrical comrade, M. Glaser, one of the Bacchanalians mentioned in the second volume of these memoirs. The famous company, of which he was an illustrious member, were at this moment about to represent the tragedy of Julius Cæsar in a ruinous barn. Oh vanity of vanities! they performed in a barn—

we

we had been performing at Court ! Our characters, it is true, were more brilliant, but their's were much less dangerous. All is vanity !

We were only seven leagues from the Isle of Friendship. In proportion as we approached it, our gaiety increased ; nature grew embellished, and the air became purer and more salubrious. We at length arrived at the last village, where I proposed to leave the carriages, and go the remainder of the way on foot. The Count passed on in his, and desired us to follow him. In a short time we were at the entrance of the drawbridge ; but what was our surprise on seeing it enlarged, so as to resemble that of a considerable fortress ! The two carriages crossed it with ease, and in an instant we were surrounded by all our old friends. Shouts of joy echoed from all parts, and mingled with the sound of musketry, which announced our arrival.

Carl,

Carl, as the head of the islanders, handed Florella from the carriage; and having respectfully saluted her, seized the hand of the Count, his venerable commander. Frank and Walbot were extremely affected at this meeting. Rosina, whose shape was visibly altered since we saw her, wept with joy at the sight of her benefactress, and the friends of her husband. The usual salutations and enquiries being given and answered, all the party gaily advanced to the head-quarters of the colony.

The widow, her daughter, and Margaret, together with Mesdames Carl and Walbot, impatiently expected us. Health and contentment were painted on every countenance. Joseph had taken off the horses, and put them into the stable. I went out to give him some orders; but at each step I took, my astonishment augmented; every thing was changed and improved. I called to Charles and Frederic, who were equally surprised as I had been, and sent for Florella. The
Count,

Count, with Flora and Elisca accompanied her, and we walked together through a magnificent garden, laid out and planted during our absence. The borders of the stream by which it was watered, were adorned with bee-hives. At a little distance we perceived a flock of sheep; white as snow, frisking on the flowery turf; and farther off, four fine cows, grazing in a fertile meadow.

“ You had a farm,” said the Count, smiling; “ but you had neither a garden nor any stock. I have thought it my duty, as president of the colony, to furnish every habitation with what is necessary for its support. You have treated me as a father; it is my turn to treat you as my children.”

“ We are and always will be so,” exclaimed unanimously, and at the same moment, every one present, penetrated with respect and gratitude.

Meantime

Meantime, Flora looked tenderly on Charles, Elisca honoured me with a smile, and Florella pressed the hand of Frederic.

“ I understand you, my children,” said the Count, after having observed us for a moment one after the other. “ I am old, and your happiness is too dear to me, to defer it much longer ; but——”

*Here the author's appetite intervenes
his narrative is described*

Here Joseph interrupted him, by coming on to inform us that Margaret was fretting, for fear the dinner should get cold. We therefore returned to the saloon, and sat down to table. Never did family repast offer a picture of more social intimacy. Each seated by the side of her he loved, might say to himself—“ I am surrounded by real friends.” Laughter was freely indulged, and the song and the glass were occasionally introduced. Gaiety, the parent of wit—and confidence, the offspring of esteem, presided at the entertainment.

Florella, struck with the contrast between such a society, and the life she had lately led, proposed to perpetuate this meeting by an obelisk to be erected in the front of the farm. Her idea was highly applauded, and unanimously adopted. The Count, filling out a bumper, gave as a toast, "*The unity of the islanders.*" Frederic afterwards drank "*Prosperity to the colony.*" M. Walbot had a talent for versification: the following was an *impromptu* relative to our situation, compared with the life of a courtier:—

Here Envy never shews her baleful head,
 Favour and Malice are alike unknown;
 Free from those ills by pride, by avarice bred,
 Love, Friendship, and the Arts our moments crown.

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