

Adventures in a Castle.

An Original Story.

(CONCLUDED.)

ALL conception from this moment failed me, and, upon returning to life, I found myself on a bed in a cell, similar to that in which I had been confined. I was attended by some of the ruffians, whose motives for their present attention I could not scan. Whether they were actuated by humanity, or whether remorse had stung the villain who had attempted my assassination, I could not tell, tho' from what knowledge of their dispositions I had gathered from painful experience, I rather supposed it was the reproaches of conscience, not yet grown callous by repeated acts of barbarity. To whatever cause their conduct was to be attributed, whether to sensations of remorse, or the dictates of compassion, I was soon convinced the sentiment was short-lived, and had expired with returning animation; for soon as I had emerged from the state of insensibility into which I had fallen, their assiduities gradually decreased, and my only assistance was in the strength of my constitution, which safely bore me through the strange vicissitudes of my fate. My convalescence was tedious and painful; I had lost a considerable quantity of blood, which occasioned extraordinary debility, and my wound was deep. I had received the dagger of the assassin in my breast, and surely it is to be attributed to the intervention of my guardian angel, that I escaped the impending destruction. My debility was so extreme, that my guards did not think it necessary to secure the door with more fastenings than a simple bolt, which was in itself ample security; for my strength and ardour were too much exhausted, to make an attempt to regain my liberty, had the fairest prospect been opened before me.

At length the ability of my only nurse, "Dame Nature," restored me by the genial influence of sleep (the enjoyment of which was a pleasure I had not for some time been gratified with) to the blessings of health. I had scarcely retrieved the possession of this glorious blessing, which had been so long banished from me, when the royal troops encompassed the castle, to avenge my wrongs on the author of all my misfortunes. I longed for an opportunity to join the detachment, and assert my own cause,—my ardour disdained to be confined within the circumscribed limits of my prison, but my power would not second the inspiration. The tardy hours seemed to have almost ceased to revolve, my heart was with my brother, but my arms, which ought to have been extended, to hurl the bolt of vengeance on the heads of my oppressors, were imprisoned within the walls of the hateful castle. At length arrived the night of horror, when the polluted walls of the castle, which screened the guilty ruffians from the hands of justice, tottered to their foundations; when the "cloud-cap't towers" trembled with the intensity of the heat, and threatened ruin to all beneath them. I had notice of the commencement of the conflagration, by the gleams of light which illuminated the horizon, and rendered "darkness visible." A horrible death was now before me, and the innate principle, inherent in the breast of man, that of self-preservation, induced me to examine the door of my apartment. But the faint hope, that some one actuated by humanity, might have left it unsecured, vanished. The flames gradually increased, and already enveloped the towering ramparts, when the bustle in the castle announced some uncommon attempt to escape the devouring element, which was making rapid strides to involve the whole of the inhabitants in one common destruction. Abhorring a death so painful as was presented to me, I endeavoured to loosen the bars with which the window was secured, and alight on the battlements. The urgency of my situation inspired me with uncommon strength.—I succeeded in the attempt to escape from the window, and reached the battlements in safety. I was now nearly at the summit of the castle, and all below me was involved in smoke, from which at intervals the flames would burst forth, and aspire to the highest turrets. Perseverance and composure, aided by my exertions, surmounted every obstacle, and I at length reached the ground, with only a trifling burn I received as I rushed through the flames. Thus, my kind and compassionate friends, you have heard the

whole of my unfortunate story in detail, and situated as I now am, surrounded by those who endear existence to me, I defy all the storms of fate, and the frowns of fortune. Hope befriends me, and whispers to my heart, That happiness shall again be mine."

Tranquillity being thus restored to the family of Dupont and his wards, whom he regarded with parental love, the chateau was re-occupied, and Louis made an excursion to the Castle de Alencon, where he was received with an unaffected welcome. No obstacle recurring to oppose his wish, to pay his addresses to the lovely Antoinette, he took the first opportunity of a secret interview, to offer his heart and hand to her acceptance. Free from affectation, Mademoiselle de Lantz avowed a reciprocal attachment, and soon as the period of mourning, which the laws of etiquette required, for her brother's death, had expired, they were united in the silken bands of marriage.

The Duke with rapture beheld the happiness his beloved children enjoyed, and, through his influence with the King, the succession to his titles and estates, were settled upon Louis.

The humane Surgeon, of whom honourable mention has been made, had only one surviving daughter, whose charms made an impression on the susceptible heart of Henry Boileau, that was not to be effaced. The attachment was mutual, and much to the satisfaction of their friends, whose intimacy would be cemented by their union.

Large additions were made to the Chateau, and in this delightful retirement, far distant from the busy and tumultuous scenes of life, the Duke of Alencon, Mons. Berquin, Louis (now Count de Vauban) his brother Henry, and the venerable Mons. Dupont, with their respective families, passed the remainder of their lives, in the enjoyment of a greater portion of felicity, than is the usual lot of mankind. No tales of woe, no descriptive scenes of carnage and bloodshed, ever disturbed their tranquillity, but possessing within themselves inexhaustible resources of amusement, they lived insulated from the rest of mankind. No foe to domestic tranquillity, ever passed their threshold, no intestine uneasiness inhabited their retirement, but as far as possible for humanity, they enjoyed *permanent and unalloyed happiness*.

HAVING brought this story to a close, it may not be superfluous to account for the author's adding this to the multitude of similar trifles, with which the literary world

abounds. 'He is confident, that attempts of this kind, are productive of nothing but amusement, and are frequently barren even of this. Tales, (unless moral,) novels, and romances, are justly considered as weeds in the garden of literature, which prevent the growth of, and attract the attention from, more useful productions. To drive away the *monster ennui*, to pass away those hours of leisure, which fall to the lot of every one, and to derive from it amusement, were the motives by which he was actuated. He does not pretend that it inculcates any new moral, but if he may be exonerated from censurè, in increasing the number of works of this kind, if it has conduced to the amusement of any, he is satisfied. Approbation he does not court, but to incur censure he has strove to avoid, and he hopes that this tale will find refuge in its insignificance, from the penetrating eye of criticism.

JULIUS.

[JULIUS is entitled to the thanks of the editor, for the punctuality with which he has forwarded the copy of the *Adventures in a Castle*.—That the literary world abounds with trifles of this kind is true; and this, no doubt, in some measure, forms a criterion by which to judge of the taste of the age; tho' a taste for this kind of reading, is not, perhaps, peculiar to the present one. The story under consideration inculcates a moral, if not new, yet good.—Avarice, stimulating to treachery and a variety of vicious acts, in the person of the Count de Vauban, meets with deserved punishment; while the innocent objects of his horrid persecution, are extricated from his cruel snare, and finally brought to the enjoyment of more perfect domestic felicity, than they would otherwise probably have attained, had it not been for those very circumstances to which his machinations gave birth—corroborating a divine truth, that the wicked are often snared in their own devices. The reader will also observe, (and it does credit to the writer,) that the language is free from those passionate exclamations, that often insinuate a degree of profanity into the mind, and with which tales and novels frequently abound. Should Julius continue his correspondence, as he has hinted to the editor may be the case, he will always meet with merited attention.]