

*Adventures in a Castle.**An Original Story.*

(CONTINUED.)

THE Count de Vauban had been long invisible at the metropolis, being so much engaged in his plans to get Louis again in his hands. But as soon as the intelligence reached M. Dupont, of de Vauban's being at the head of the banditti which infested the vicinity, he prepared to remove to Paris, sensible that when in possession of power, he would regard no law, human or divine, to effect his infamous purposes, and glut his sanguinary revenge on Louis. Once alone did de Vauban find an opportunity to make an attempt upon the person of Louis, which was before the commencement of their journey to Paris, when one night he made an assault upon the chateau, hoping to be able to force his entrance. But the family were roused at the first attack, and seizing all the warlike weapons which they could find in the house, they obliged them to retire. It was a fortunate circumstance that the owner of the chateau, upon the first intelligence of the existence of a band of robbers in the neighbourhood, had procured musquets and ammunition, in order to be prepared against any event. This occurrence hastened their departure, and the next day they set out for the capital, where they had prepared a residence.

Vice seldom fails ultimately to receive its punishment, and the marquis de Lantz was another instance of the reward of villainy, whether executed or merely concerted. 'Tis true the imbecility of his mind, and his cowardice, prevented the execution of his unnatural designs against the life of his father, but it did not diminish his atrocity in the conception of such an idea. He had made an excursion to Dijon, where, among his careless unthinking companions, he had been passing away the tardy hours, and was returning home for want of the necessary money to support his extravagance. He had not recovered from the influence of wine, when he entered the forest, which had been the theatre of murder perpetrated by the lawless dependents of de Vauban. He had sunk into a slumber, and the spell which bound him in the embraces of Morphus, was so potent, that he heard not the whistle of the banditti, nor knew of their approach, till his attendants were fired upon by them. All who could fly, made their escape, as no tie attached them to the fate of de Lantz, who scarcely was roused from his stupidity, till the robbers roughly

ordered him to deliver up his money. This demand he was unable to comply with, as he had spent the last livre at the gaming-table. Wine inspired him with something like courage, of which his natural disposition was entirely destitute, and snatching up his pistol that lay at his side, he discharged it at the person next him. This was the signal of his fate, the murderers instantly dragged him from his carriage, and buried their poignards in his bosom.

Thus was the miserable death of this wretched being, whose heart was never inspired with one sentiment that would reflect honour on himself, accomplished by the means of his colleague in the atrocious attempt, to deprive his father of life. Such was the end of a life which that one crime indeliably stained, and which, had he possessed the talents of the Count de Vauban, would have been productive of more mischief to society. Soon as the murderers had satiated their revenge, and taken ample vengeance for the wound he had given their comrade, they returned to the castle to dispose of the trifling booty they had obtained, and convey the wounded ruffian. The Count possessed sufficient sagacity to know, that his petty despotism would be of short continuance, as the outrages the banditti under his command, had committed in the province, must shortly reach the royal ear; and the consequence would be fatal to him, but it was too late to think of obtaining pardon, and he flattered himself that he could make his escape at any time, when imperious necessity should command such a proceeding. Had the Count de Vauban been educated in the principles of virtue, he would probably have become an ornament to society, but unlimited indulgence had suffered his good qualities to be obscured, and by the continued practice of engaging in bacchanial festivals and carousals, his heart became at last as depraved as we behold it. When M. Dupont arrived at Paris, he made a report to the king of the numerous murders and robberies that had been committed in the province of Burgundy. The Duke of Alencon also, who mourned his son cut off in the prime of life by the hands of lawless ruffians, was determined to destroy the combination of the villains who infested this fertile part of the kingdom, and revenge the death of his son. His influence at court was considerable, and he was permitted by the king to lead a body of the regular troops against the Count, to conduct him to the capital, if he made a voluntary surrender of his person, or in case of resistance, to destroy the haunt of the banditti, and bring him

to condign punishment. In order to prevent the escape of the Count, the Duke of Alencon, accompanied by Louis Boileau, and M. Dupont, with the troops under his authority, marched towards the castle with rapidity, lest the intelligence of their approach should give the alarm, and de Vauban escape the fate due to his atrocious guilt. But all their caution did not prevent his receiving notice of their arrival, and acting according to the dictates of prudence. With every necessary precaution to prevent a surprize from the banditti, the troops invested the castle, and a messenger was dispatched to demand the surrender of it to his Majesty's commission; a refusal was the answer, unless the commandant of the party would pledge his honour to procure them a free pardon. This offer was not accepted, and they were ordered to surrender unconditionally, depending on the clemency of the king, or death was denounced as their portion, the instant they were taken. Inflated with visionary ideas of the strength of the fortifications, and confident of the plenty which abounded from the stores of provision, which the provident Count had taken care to lay up, they bid defiance to regal authority, and dared them to the assault. Several petty conflicts were maintained with the banditti, who, though inferior in point of numbers, counterbalanced it by their ferocity, and several were killed on either side. To conquer or die, was the maxim the ruffian defenders of the castle faithfully adhered to, and the soldiers of the royal party were unable to obtain any advantage. Finding they made but very little progress towards the object of their excursion, the leaders of the detachment determined upon a vigorous attempt to overcome all resistance. For this purpose they prepared torches and fire-brands, resolved to set fire to the castle, and bury its infatuated inhabitants in the ruins. Humanity however induced them to make a final offer of conditional pardon, if they would give up to the arm of justice the Count de Vauban. The proposal was rejected by the banditti with disdain, for although dead to every sentiment of rectitude and humanity, the imaginary tie of honour bound them to the Count, and they resolved to procure his pardon or perish with him.

JULIUS.

*(To be continued.)*