

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

(CONTINUED.)

Undaunted by the certainty that he was at a great distance from his companions, he persisted in his resolute undertaking, and grasping a brace of pistols, with cautious steps pursued the assassin (who had by this time ceased to descend,) thro' the winding avenues of the subterranean apartments, when he suddenly fell through a trap door into the vault below. Here he remained a considerable time senseless from the fall; one of the pistols, which he held in his hand was discharged, and the report reverberating from the gloomy cavities, vibrated on the ear of the astonish'd Gerald with such an awful sound, that he remained almost lifeless with terror. When reason had resumed her functions over his mind, he removed himself as fast as his trembling limbs would bear him, from the spot which had inspired him with such dreadful apprehensions, unable to comprehend from what cause they had arisen. While Gerald was proceeding to execute his diabolical purpose, far other sensations pervaded the breast of Louis: providentially he had not received any material injury, and when he had recovered from the swoon into which his fall had thrown him, he arose disappointed, because he now believed himself incapable of preventing the accomplishment of Gerald's murderous designs on the unknown victim. Picturing to himself some unfortunate man fallen into the hands of his enemies, and suffering under the dagger of the nightly assassin, he paced with hasty steps the cavern into which he had been thrown, when a deep groan assail'd his ear. His first sensation was an involuntary emotion of fear, but listening for some minutes attentively, and not hearing it repeated, he attributed it to his perturbed imagination.

After some minutes had elapsed it was repeated, and he heard it too distinctly to suffer him to consider it as the wanderings of his own disordered fancy. Advancing towards the place from whence the sound proceeded, he perceived the reflection of a light proceeding from an iron grate, and which upon a nearer view he found was placed upon a small table in the adjoining vault. Near it was a man in chains, lying on a miserable bed of straw, from whom the groans which had alarmed him issued. He had scarcely reached the grate when an opposite door opened, and Gerald, the same whom he had followed so long, enter-

ed the vault. Louis had one pistol charged, and that he determined to use in the preservation of the helpless sufferer, and as the assassin was preparing to execute his infamous purpose he exclaimed,—“Infernal instrument of tyranny, go to that world where thy black soul shall suffer torments worthy of so foul a miscreant,” and at the same moment Gerald received a ball in his breast from the hand of Louis. Roused by the noise from a broken slumber, the prisoner raised himself from the floor, and presented to the eye of the astonished Louis the ghastly countenance of his brother Henry. Joy at once more beholding those beloved features, inspired him strength, and grasping the bars with a nervous hand, he wrenched the whole out of its position, and in an instant he found himself in the arms of his brother. When the first emotions attendant on such an occasion had subsided, they resolved to return by the way Gerald had entered the dungeon. Louis therefore searching the pockets of the deceased murderer, found the keys which fastened the chains round the body of Henry, and liberated him. Leaving the lamp upon the table they quitted this gloomy dungeon, intending to direct their steps towards the mansions of the living without any light, rather than expose themselves to detection. Carefully moving along the vaults, they passed the trap door, through which Louis had descended, and ascended the staircase; as they were moving along the dark passages at the top, they heard the report of a pistol at some distance, and in a few minutes they were joined by M. Dupont, who placing his finger on his lip in token of silence, beckoned them to follow him, and proceeded with hasty steps in the direction towards the door by which they had entered the castle: but as they were descending the spiral staircase, they heard a hoarse voice at the bottom, calling to others, and bidding them “guard all the out-lets, and they had them safe enough.” They, upon hearing this, measured back their steps with rapidity, and were as quickly pursued by others, whose hoarse voices proceeding in different directions, announced their approach. The fugitives were obliged to separate, and Louis and Henry entered a recess, which by its gloom favoured their concealment. Unfortunately, their pursuers thought proper to search it, and they were both discovered, conducted to separate apartments, and put in fetters, to prevent the possibility of their escape. Henry, reduced in mind and body by the severity of his confinement, suffered himself to be bound without murmuring, but the ardent spirit of his brother Louis, disdain-

ed confinement, and it was with difficulty they secured him. He demanded for what reason he was to be kept a prisoner, and heaped curses upon them, but they only sneered at his impatience, and left him to his own thoughts. Meanwhile, M. Dupont, and those who accompanied him, had found their way to the subterranean apartments, and by means of a breach made by the all-destroying hand of time escaped from the walls of the castle. His first step was to go to court, where he stated to the king every circumstance, and was allowed a body of soldiers to search the castle. They did so, but in vain, not a soul was to be found, all was undisturbed solitude, and he was under the necessity of leaving his wards to their fate. Months passed away, but the cloud of mystery was not dispelled, when one evening, when the family had all retired to bed, a violent knocking was heard at the gate. This untimely intrusion roused M. Dupont, who dressed himself, and went below to know the cause: he found the servants huddled together, disputing who should open the gate, for since the inexplicable disappearance of Louis and Henry, a superstitious fear had pervaded the bosom of every domestic. M. Dupont ordered them to follow him, and he opened the gate, when in rushed a figure covered with blood and dust—a sanguine stream issuing from his arm, which hung lifeless at his side.

The servants uttered a cry of terror, and clung round their master, when the stranger sunk on the floor, fainting through loss of blood. A couch was prepared for him, and every attempt made to recall departed animation, but in vain: the face was cleansed of the blood which besmeared it, and the pallid features proclaimed that the stranger was the lost Louis. Grieved to the soul to be obliged to lose him the moment he was found, M. Dupont exerted himself to blow into existence the latent spark of life, and was at length successful. The blood flowing from the wound in his arm was staunch'd, and a deep groan issued from his lips. The faint prospect of recovering him stimulated the faithful guardian to new exertion, and he had at length the satisfaction of perceiving his eyes open, and a reviving cordial completely restored him to life: But a delirious fever raged through his veins, and he raved with all the incoherence of madness: “his brother, his murdered brother,” was the principal object on which his wandering fancy seemed to rest. Seven days he existed under the influence of madness, when his ravings subsided, and he sunk into a state of insensibility. M. Dupont

was sensible that the crises of his disorder was at hand, and conceived his inanimate situation as only a prelude to dissolution. "Ill fated youth, he exclaimed," evil was the planet that presided at thy birth, under its influence have all thy days been tainted with misfortune, and the dart of death is already extended to deprive thee of existence. Small has been thy portion of happiness here, but thy reward is yet to come."

The worthy owner of the chateau had sent for a surgeon from the neighbouring village as soon as he had discovered in the person of the wounded stranger his beloved Louis. M. Burton, the surgeon who was expected, was an English gentleman who had studied physio and surgery under the most eminent of the profession in London, but owing to some disgust he had taken to his native country, he retired to France, and took up his residence at the village in the vicinity of the chateau, where he continued the practice of his profession, with equal ability and success. He possessed a perfect knowledge of the French language, as he had resided in the kingdom for many years, and could converse on any subject with ease: his sentiments were expressed without affectation, and his conversation displayed superior talents and refinement: it may therefore be supposed, that he was a frequent visitant at the chateau, where his arrival was ever greeted with an unaffected welcome. He had married a French lady, by whom he had one daughter, and this endearing tie bound him still closer to the country. Upon Monsieur Burton's examining Louis's arm, while he was insensible, he found that a ball had been lodged there, but it was luckily extracted without injury. At M. Dupont's request, this humane gentleman, whose heart was ever alive to sensibility, consented to remain at the chateau till reason superceded madness, or his patient paid "the great debt of nature." The crises of his disorder was fast approaching, his breath grew short, and delusive hope was banished from every bosom, and gave place to despondency. Every countenance wore the livery of sorrow, and gave the strongest testimony of the love they bore to him; at length he appeared to have entirely ceased to suspire; all his melancholy friends were seated round the bed, waiting the moment when his soul should depart "to him who gave it." The silence which had reigned for some time, was at length interrupted by M. Burton's saying in a low tone, "I believe all is now over, but there is a possibility that he yet lives, and may be only sleeping." Then turning

to one of the servants he ordered him to bring him a small mirror, which he placed before his lips for a few minutes, and upon examining it found it sullied, and communicated the pleasing intelligence to his mournful auditors, that he yet breathed, and was asleep, which he considered as a happy omen. Several hours did the unfortunate Louis remain perfectly insensible, but at length he moved, to the revival of the hopes of his friends, and in a few minutes opened his eyes, and stretching out his hand to M. Dupont gently pressed his, while a faint smile gleamed across his countenance, on which they thought the unremovable seal of death had been affixed. From this time his health gradually returned, and in a few weeks he was able to leave his room, but not a word was uttered by him respecting the affairs of the castle, and whenever it was alluded to, it seemed to turn his brain to madness. As it seemed to affect him in such an extraordinary manner, M. Dupont deferred an explanation of past events, till he was perfectly restored, and time had in some measure obliterated the traces of this unknown misfortune from his memory, or at least destroyed the keenness of the injuries he had received.

JULIUS.

(To be continued.)