

1801

The Gothic Story of Courville Castle; or the  
Illegitimate Son, a Victim of Prejudice and Passion:  
Owing to the Early Impressions Inculcated with  
Unremitting Assiduity by an Implacable Mother  
Whose Resentment to Her Husband Excited Her  
Son to Envy, Usurpation, and Murder; but  
Retributive Justice at Length Restores the Right  
Heir to His Lawful Possessions. To Which is Added  
the English Earl: or the History of Robert Fitzwalter

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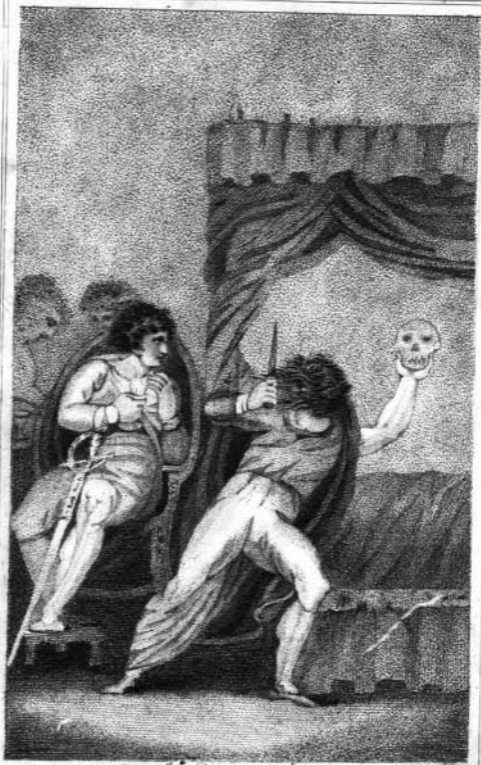
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*Alphonso startled at the appearance of a figure, holding a rusty dagger in one hand, & a human skull in the other.*

THE  
GOTHIC STORY  
OF

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To which is added the  
*ENGLISH EARL;*

or the History of  
**ROBERT FITZWALTER.**

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Though education in a great measure stamps the man, virtue is within the reach of all; and although the path may be rugged, the reward is sure.

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THE

GOTHIC STORY

OF

DE COURVILLE CASTLE.

From the Lady's Magazine.

"GRACIOUS Father! what can this mean?" said *Alphonso* to his servant. "I know not," answered *Philip*, "unless your uncle be dead."—"But it is very extraordinary," replied *Alphonso*, "that there is no person in the castle; however, be it as it may, we had better turn our horses, and look for some place to rest at to-night; we may perhaps gain some intelligence of this affair." They accordingly rode through the forest, and struck into a path, which they supposed might lead to some habitation; but as no such appeared, and as night was approaching very fast, they began to despair of finding any. At last they descried a light, glimmering at a distance; which seemed to proceed from some window; they therefore spurred their horses, and made toward it. The light was, however, soon extinguished, and they remained in total darkness, not knowing which way to take. Fortune, at length, favoured them, and they arrived at a small cottage, the inhabitants of which were retired to rest. They immediately concluded it was from the windows of this cottage they had seen the light; they therefore knocked loudly at the door, which was opened by an old woman, who demanded what they wanted. "Dame," replied *Alphonso*, "we have lost our way in this place; not knowing what road to take, we should be obliged to you if you would let us have a night's lodging here, as we mean to depart early in the morning. You may depend on it, I will reward you for your trouble."—"That is no matter," answered she; "you are very welcome, if you can put up with our poor hut. But you seem tired; alight, and I will make a fire." *Alphonso* dismounted, and tying his horse to a tree, followed her into the cottage. The woman offered to call up her husband, but *Alphonso* would not allow her to disturb him; telling her he did not intend to go to bed, but would sit by the fire till morning. The woman seemed surprised; but at length consented to go to bed, after setting before them some bread and cheese, with a jug of ale, which was all she had in the house. *Philip*, who was very tired, fell asleep; and *Alphonso* sat runnating on the adventure of the preceding evening.

It is now necessary to acquaint the reader who *Alphonso* was. He had the misfortune to lose his parents while he was quite an infant, and was afterward brought up by his uncle, the count *de Courville*, who was a man of an austere behaviour, impatient

of controul, and of a tyrannical disposition. *Alphonso* had, however, the good fortune to become a great favourite with his uncle, who thought he saw some of his own spirit in him. He had indeed a manly dignity in his carriage, which was blended with so much gentleness, that every person at first sight was unavoidably prepossessed in his favour. His uncle would often regard him with a steady look; would then knit his brows, and with a deep sigh, turn his face away, and seem lost in thought; then he would start up, and say, "It must not be." He would then take a walk, and return home as composed as ever. One day he called his nephew to him: "*Alphonso*," said he, "you are now of an age when travelling would be of service to you; I would wish you, therefore, to get ready as soon as you possibly can; I have only one piece of advice to give to you:—never let your passions get the better of your reason." *Alphonso* took his hand; he found it tremble violently. He looked up in his face, and saw his countenance change alternately from red to pale. But his uncle assuming a stern frown, said to him: "Retire, I have now no more to say; remember my advice; you may need it." *Alphonso* bowed, and obeyed. He was struck with his uncle's behaviour: he was used to his sudden changes of temper, but thought he was now more than usually solemn. Fear of he knew not what made him shun his uncle as much as possible, till the day came on which he was to set out; he then went to his chamber, took his leave of him, and departed, attended by his faithful servant *Philip*.

Nothing worth remarking happened, till one day, as he was riding through a wood on the confines of *Germany*, several banditti rushed upon them, dragged *Alphonso* off his horse, and robbed him of all he had. They then did the same to *Philip*, and left them almost dead with the bruises they had received in making resistance. Soon after, a carriage happened to pass by, with an elderly gentleman, who, perceiving the situation they were in, ordered his coachman to stop, and give them some assistance. *Philip*, who was a little recovered, related what had happened, and who they were. The gentleman then desired his servant to help *Alphonso* into the coach, and drive home. As soon as he arrived, he ordered a bed to be got ready, and had him put into it; he had so much care taken of him, that in a few days he was able to leave his apartment, and go down to dinner. When he entered the parlour, he was surprised to see a young lady there, and was going to withdraw; but the baron *de Stairville* (which was the gentleman's name) taking the young lady by the hand, led her toward him. "My dear *Alphonso*," said he, "I will now introduce my daughter *Julia* to you."—"This, my dear," turning to her, "is the young gentleman you have heard me say I have such an esteem for."—"You are too good," replied *Alphonso*, "I am sure I can have no claim to such kindness." He then paid his respects to *Julia* in a most graceful manner; the day was passed with mutual satisfaction, and when night came, each was sorry to part. *Alphonso* retired to bed, but not to sleep; dis-

ferent thoughts occupied his mind. His generous disposition could not bear to lie under an obligation; and as he was now able to travel, he thought it would be wrong to stay long in a place where he had already received so many favours; but still an irresistible impulse made him wish to remain longer: he felt a partiality to that place, which he imputed to gratitude; but he was mistaken—*Julia* was the magnet that attracted him, though he did not allow himself to think so. Morning appeared before he closed his eyes. *Julia* had not passed a better night. The image of the amiable *Alphonso* was continually before her eyes; she thought him the most elegant young man she had ever beheld; she arose pale and languid: her father observed it, and asked if she was ill. She blushed, and turned it off by saying she supposed it was raking last night made her look so pale, as she used herself to go to rest early. They then talked of the different places *Alphonso* had visited, and, among others, of several curious hermitages he had seen and greatly admired, as they were the beautiful productions of nature. "Talking of hermitages," said the baron, "puts me in mind of an extraordinary adventure which I met with some time ago. If you please, I will relate it." They expressed their desire to hear it, and the baron began as follows:

"One morning, happening to rise rather sooner than my usual hour, I took a walk among the neighbouring mountains to pass my time till breakfast. The romantic appearance of the scenes around me so enchanted my imagination, that I insensibly strolled farther than I intended, and was bewildered in the intricacies of the place. While I was deliberating what course to pursue, I perceived a figure at a distance approaching toward me. I therefore advanced to meet it; but as soon as the person saw me, he turned back, and fled with precipitation. Curiosity now impelled me, and I ran forward with speed, in hopes to overtake him; but turning a corner of a rock, I lost sight of him. Fatigued with my pursuit, I sat down on the ground, and began to consider which way I should return; when I thought I heard a deep sigh, as if uttered by some person near me. I turned round, but could see no one. In a few moments it was repeated still louder. Starting up, I cast my eyes behind the place where I sat, and saw a thick cluster of bushes; and looking nearer, I perceived the entrance of a cave, at the further corner of which was a venerable old man, kneeling before a little wooden table, and seemingly in fervent prayer. When he saw me, he rose up and invited me to sit down. I then inquired whether he was the person who had fled from me among the mountains. 'I am,' said he; 'and though you may think me an unfociable wretch, I can assure you I have my reasons for wishing to avoid the sight of man, which must ever remain a secret. My misfortunes are such as preclude all hopes of enjoying happiness in this world.'—'That is out of your power to say,' replied I, 'the vicissitudes of this life are many; we ought always to live in hopes, without which, life would be miserable. Indeed, no one should give himself to

despair.'—'I do not,' answered he, 'but having lost all I ever held dear, I have no wish to live otherwise than I do at present: all I wish, is never to see mankind again. Heaven knows I have been an innocent sufferer by the perfidy of one of my own race—a brother too; but I forgive him, and may the Almighty do the same.' Grief now overcame him, and he threw himself on the ground in an agony not to be described. I tried all in my power to sooth him, and at length succeeded, and he became more calm. I then begged his pardon for intruding upon his solitude, and entreated his assistance to find my way out of the mountains. He then conducted me through them, and brought me to a path that led me to the plains. 'I must now leave you,' said he, 'as I have already passed my limits; but lest you should think me inhospitable, you have my permission to visit me again, if you have any inclination: I may perhaps be tempted to tell you my tale of horror; but I must exact your promise never to let any one see me but yourself; my life depends upon concealment. You may not, perhaps, believe me, when I tell you that it is not for my own guilt I fear detection; but that I wish to avoid the discovery of my enemies.' We then parted, and I gave him a solemn promise never to bring any one with me. I have seen him twice since; but never could make him deviate in the least from his first determination. He seems a man of great learning, and by his conversation, I think he is of a noble, generous disposition. But I tire your patience by such a long story."

*Alphonso* and *Julia* assured him, that they were highly pleased with it; and only wished to see such an extraordinary man; but as it was impossible, they must content themselves with hearing of him; though from the baron's description of him, they should be very much interested in his welfare. Another week passed away, and *Alphonso* had yet fixed no time for his departure. Though he knew he had no longer excuse for staying; yet he could not bear the thoughts of parting from his beloved *Julia*, as he was certain he was not indifferent to her. He therefore thought his best way would be to acquaint the baron with his love for *Julia*, and trust to his generosity. He accordingly sent a servant to the baron's apartment, to inquire whether he might be admitted to an hour's conversation with him. The baron, who was reading in his room, was surprised at the message, and wondered what *Alphonso* had to say to him, that he wished to speak privately; he therefore sent word back, he should be very happy to hear whatever he had to say, and begged him to come immediately. When *Alphonso* came into the room, the baron took him kindly by the hand—"What," said he, "can my young friend have to say, that he wishes to be so private? something very particular, no doubt, else he would not have sent such a formal message. But come, sit down, and let me know all." *Alphonso* then told him, he found it impossible to depart without making him acquainted with his love for his amiable daughter, whom he adored from the first moment he beheld her.' When



he had done speaking, he looked at the baron, wishing to read in his countenance an answer favourable to his hopes.

After a few moments silence, the baron rose from his seat, and taking *Alphonso* by the hand, said: "This is what I feared, yet it was out of my power to prevent it. *Julia* and you are formed for each other, and I freely give my consent upon one condition, which is, that you finish your tour, and, if you then can obtain your uncle's permission, *Julia* shall be yours. I will allow you one week to prepare for your departure, and to take leave of my daughter; remember, however, should your mind ever change, and you should find you love another better than *Julia*, I absolve you from any promise you may have made me. You may now seek *Julia*, and acquaint her with what has passed." *Alphonso* bent his knee to the ground, and taking the hand of the baron, thanked him, with a heart overflowing with gratitude. The baron raised him up, and embraced him kindly. *Alphonso* then left him, to go in search of *Julia*, whom he found in the parlour.

After some trifling conversation, *Alphonso* related what had passed between him and the baron; apologising, however, for not consulting her first; "for," said he, "had the baron refused his consent, I would have fled from this place, without making even my adorable *Julia* acquainted with my unhappy passion. Pardon then my presumption, and cheer me with the hope that you will agree to be mine." *Julia*, to whom dissimulation was unknown, frankly confessed, that of all mankind, she loved but him alone.

Nothing now damped their mutual joy, but the thoughts of their approaching separation. *Alphonso*, however, pleased himself with the idea, that, after a short interval of time, they should meet, never more to part. Young and sanguine, he thought not of the numerous vicissitudes of life; he thought nothing could prevent his union with his beloved *Julia*, if his uncle would but agree to it, which he made no doubt of his doing, as the baron was descended from a noble family, and possessed of an affluent fortune. The week soon passed away, and the hour of his departure arrived: *Julia* clung round his neck as she would to an affectionate brother, for, in the distress of the present moment, she gave way to the impulse of her affection. *Alphonso*, after embracing her tenderly, tore himself away. He then took a respectful leave of the baron, mounted his horse, and departed. Melancholy ideas now, for the first time, darted across his mind, and he, more than ever, dreaded the austere manners of his uncle. The different customs and diversions of the kingdoms he visited, dissipated in some measure the gloom which hung upon his mind; these, however, soon began to lose their novelty, and he determined to return home immediately. This resolution he accordingly put in practice, and, attended by *Philip*, set out for *De Courville Castle*. But what must have been his surprise, when he arrived there, to find the castle entirely desolated! The owls had taken up their abode in the turrets, and moss and

ivy covered the walls, and almost hid the windows from their sight. *Alphonso* thought he might still find some person in the castle: he therefore rode round the moat, till he came to the place where the drawbridge stood, but found it drawn up. This increased his surprise, as the bridge could not be drawn up unless some person was within the castle. He therefore determined to try whether the moat was shallow enough in any place to admit of his crossing it; and soon found a part which was nearly dried up, where he passed; and, going to the gate, knocked and called as loud as he could. No answer was returned; and he could hear nothing but his own voice echo through the castle.

What followed, has already been related. We will now return to where we left *Alphonso* in the peasant's hut. When morning dawned, the old woman got up, and called up her husband, who seemed very much surprised at the sight of *Alphonso*. His wife then told him, how they begged for shelter from the inclemency of the night. The man was satisfied, and they sat down to a homely breakfast. During their repast, *Alphonso* questioned them concerning the castle. While he was speaking, the man surveyed him with a scrutinizing look, and when he had ended, replied, that he knew very little about it. The woman was more communicative, and told *Alphonso*, that she knew the count *De Courville* had left the castle because it was haunted, for all the servants had told her that the count seemed very much troubled in his mind, and that they often heard frightful noises. The man bade her hold her tongue, and not repeat such idle stories. *Alphonso* surveyed him attentively, and thought he discerned something in his manner which indicated his being above the mean condition he appeared in; but he had a reserve in his behaviour which repelled his curiosity. He then told them who he was, and said, he should wish to have some part of the castle made habitable for him to reside in till he should gain some intelligence of his uncle. The man readily agreed to assist him, and they set out to examine the castle. They tried in vain to open the gate; it was so strongly secured, that it bade defiance to their utmost strength, and they began to despair of being able to enter it, when *Alphonso* recollected a small wicket which opened into the forest, where his uncle used often to walk in an evening. They went round to it, and with some difficulty opened it: they then passed through the spacious court-yard, which was almost overgrown with grass; and then forced the gate, which opened into the south side of the castle. But the cold and damp was so excessive, that *Alphonso* almost gave up his resolution of residing there. He determined, however, to search it throughout, in hopes to find some memorandum or letter, to account for his uncle's sudden departure; nor was he deceived; for, after searching through several rooms, he came to the apartment where the count used to sleep. He looked round, and perceiving a whole-length portrait of his uncle, he involuntarily made a stop, fixed his eyes steadfastly upon it, and thought, for the moment,

he stood before him. It had the same stern frown which had often made *Alphonso* tremble when a boy; the colours were rather faded, which gave the countenance a more gloomy cast. He stood looking at it for some time, when he was roused from his reverie by the loud clapping-to of a door. His imagination was so bewildered that he gave a sudden start, and struck against the picture, the nail of which giving way, it fell with a loud crash, and broke the frame to pieces. *Alphonso*, through attention to the picture, had not observed that the man, with his servant *Philip*, had passed on; when missing him, they turned back, and let go the door, which they were opening; and that was the cause of the noise *Alphonso* had heard. After they had recovered from the surprise this foolish incident had thrown them into, *Alphonso* was proceeding to take up the picture, when he saw a small parcel of paper lying on the ground: he took it up and found it to be a letter directed to himself. He broke the seal with eagerness, and was just beginning to read, when his eyes were arrested by an object which he had not observed before; this was a door which had been concealed behind the portrait. *Philip* persuaded him to see what it led to. *Alphonso* took his advice, and putting the letter in his pocket, opened the door, which was fastened by three iron bolts. The room it led to was small, and had but one window to it, which was guarded with cross bars of iron. The furniture was mean: it consisted only of an old moth-eaten damask bed, a table, a chair, and an empty chest. In one corner of it stood a book-case, but the books were so demolished by the rats, that they could not have been used for many years. They examined every part of the room, but could find nothing more worthy observation; and as day was far advanced, they thought it best to return to the cottage, where they might learn from the letter what was best to be done. This was agreed to by all, and returning by the same way they came, they soon reached the cottage. *Alphonso* then took out the letter, and read as follows:—

“*The Count DE COURVILLE to ALPHONSO:*

*To you, Alphonso, I address these lines, uncertain whether they may ever fall into your hands: if they should, they may serve to remind you that you have an uncle who, however undeserving, still loves you with the greatest affection. This castle is yours. No doubt you think my sudden departure from it very mysterious. I know you have an understanding superior to many of your age, and will laugh at the idle tales which are circulated through the country. Far different was the cause that occasioned me to withdraw myself from the castle.—It was conscience, Alphonso! Start not: I am a wretch unworthy of a thought. I may one day unfold a tale of horror: you will then know what a monster I am: yet if a sincere repentance can atone for my past crimes, I may still hope for pardon. I must lay aside my pen—my reason almost fails me.—*

"I have walked off the agitation of my mind, and am more composed. Monsieur L——, at Vienna, will remit you what cash you may need. I would wish you to reside in the castle. I repeat, it is yours. I have been an usurper of your rights. Your father was my elder brother, not the younger, as I always pretended.

"Farewell, I must go far—far distant from hence. Do not forget the remembrance of me.

"F. DE COURVILLE."

*Alphonso* turned pale as he perused the letter, which, instead of clearing up the mystery, involved him in still greater perplexity. It seemed written with an air of calm despondence; and he hesitated whether he should acquaint the peasant and his wife with the contents. He at length determined to keep some parts of it a secret; he therefore only read that part of it to them which concerned his residing at the castle, and the money in the hands of Monsieur L——. The man listened with an air of impatience, and, when he had finished, asked, if that was all. *Alphonso* replied, there was not any thing more of consequence. The man still seemed dissatisfied, and walked out of the room with an appearance of chagrin. *Alphonso* observed it, but imputed it to his doubts of being rewarded sufficiently for his trouble, though he had too much delicacy to take any notice of it. In a few days part of the castle was ready for his reception; and with an heavy heart, he once more took possession of the place where he had passed his days of childhood. These were no more; and with increase of years, increase of trouble seemed to threaten his future hours. He looked forward with anxiety for the time when he should once more see his beloved *Julia*. His fears for her welfare almost obliterated the thoughts of his uncle's letter, which, when he did think of it, served but to increase his uneasiness. He wandered about the castle, to divert the melancholy which preyed upon his mind, and would frequently bewilder himself in the numerous windings of the stair-case, from which issued smaller ones, leading to the different wings of the castle.

One day, as he was musing on his troubles, his progress was impeded by a large iron door, which he had never before seen. Observing the situation of it, he found he was in the north wing of the castle, the part which was reported to be haunted. Unheeding of that, he endeavoured to open it. On his pushing it with violence, it gave way (for it was not fastened), and opened with a creaking noise. He entered a large furnished apartment, which seemed to have been used as a hall. In this apartment there were two doors, but they were both fastened with strong iron bars and padlocks, and *Alphonso* was obliged to return without satisfying his curiosity; but he determined to bring *Philip* with him the next day, and try to break the door. With a little difficulty he found the right stair-case, and went back to his chamber. He spent the rest of the day till *Philip* came in from

the village, which was about ten miles distant from the castle, in writing to the baron, to relate the events which had occurred since he left him. When he had finished, he told *Philip* of the doors which he had found in the apartment, and desired him to get some instruments proper to force them. *Philip* endeavoured to dissuade him from undertaking so dangerous an enterprise, as he termed it. *Alphonso* laughed at his ridiculous fears, and bade him obey his orders. *Philip* trembled—"For mercy's sake, sir, consider what you are going to do; who knows but those rooms are really haunted, and by venturing into them, you may incur the displeasure of the spirits?"—"I thank you for your care," said *Alphonso*, "but must again tell you it is needless: my resolution is fixed; and were all the old women in the village to come and assist you in your idle tales, they never could change my determination. I have told you my mind: look to it." *Philip* left the room, muttering at his master's rashness, which he found it was in vain to persuade him to relinquish. When he was gone, *Alphonso* threw himself upon the bed, and tried to banish in sleep the uneasy thoughts which crowded on his imagination. But vain were his efforts: the rooms, his uncle's letter, all filled his mind with perplexity; and the morning found him in the same state as when he first lay down to rest.

As soon as day-light appeared, *Alphonso* hurried on his clothes, and summoned *Philip*, who very reluctantly complied, and fetched the instruments which he had prepared for breaking the door. When every thing was ready, they sallied forth, *Alphonso*, at *Philip's* earnest request, carrying his sword in his hand. When they reached the great door, they found very little violence was necessary; for the wood was so rotten that a few blows shattered it to pieces. They entered a large gloomy apartment which still contained the remains of former magnificence. There were four windows, but at such a height from the ground, that *Alphonso* was under the necessity of getting on a chair to see what part of the country they overlooked. The prospect before him was wide and dreary: a few huts were scattered here and there, and a chain of mountains terminated the view. On turning to get down, he perceived something on the floor. It was a book; he stooped to pick it up. But what horror did he feel when he saw the floor stained with blood! In one part was the exact print of a hand, and the traces of the fingers continued as if the body had been dragged along some paces further. *Philip*, who kept close behind him, observed it at the same moment, and was so overcome with terror that *Alphonso* could scarcely support him. He placed him on a seat, and sat down by him. As he sat, he felt the wainscot shake, and turning to discover the cause, perceived the pannel move. He pushed it back with his hand, and found it opened wide enough to admit his body through. He determined to enter and examine whither it led. *Philip* entreated in vain; *Alphonso* was resolute, and thinking it better to go on than to return back alone, he tremblingly followed *Alphonso* into

a long dark passage. They groped their way for a considerable time, till at length they saw a faint light at a small distance. Overjoyed to see the light again, they hastened toward it, and found themselves in a small room, which, on a more attentive observation, *Alphonso* recollected to be the same he had before seen behind his uncle's picture, on his first viewing the castle. *Philip*, glad to find himself in his own part of the castle, as he termed it, fell on his knees, and entreated *Alphonso* to give over his search for that day. In pity to his fears, his master complied, and they entered *Alphonso's* bed-room; where they sat down and discoursed on what they had seen. *Alphonso* recollected the book he had found, and still had in his pocket. He took it out, and opening it, read in the first page the name of *Rosalie de Courville*. A dreadful idea now flashed on his mind, and he exclaimed in a voice of anguish: "They have murdered my mother!" The agitation of his mind overpowered him, and he sunk lifeless on the bed, by the side of which he sat. *Philip* was almost distracted; he flew backward and forward calling for help. Luckily the peasant at that juncture happened to call to know if they wanted anything. *Philip* entreated his assistance, which he readily gave. They undressed *Alphonso*, and made him take some wine, which a little revived him. The next day he was so much recovered, that he resolved to renew his search. He accordingly ordered *Philip* to prepare some lights for the purpose of examining the dark passage. They went into the room adjoining his bed-chamber, but were much surprised at not being able to find the entrance from the passage. They looked all round in vain. *Alphonso* at length determined to go once more into the great room, though he could not avoid feeling a secret horror when he again entered the place. He turned his eyes to take one more view of it, and saw a large chest in one corner, which he had not observed before. His curiosity was now awakened, and he wished, yet dreaded, to see the contents of this chest. His resolution was soon fixed, and he took out of his pocket a bunch of keys which he had found in some of the other apartments. He tried them, and found one which opened the lock. *Philip* held the lid up, while *Alphonso* raised a folded piece of baize, under which was the body of a woman; though the features were so much decayed that it was impossible to recognize them. A cold shivering seized *Alphonso* as he viewed the horrid spectacle, which confirmed his former suspicions. He hastily closed the chest, and beckoning *Philip* to follow him, hastened out of the room, locking the door after him. When he reached his own room, he ordered *Philip* to go immediately and saddle their horses, for he was determined never to rest till he found the perpetrator of the horrid deed. *Philip* entreated him to consider the time of the evening was improper to begin a journey, it being then eight o'clock. *Alphonso* was convinced of his error, and agreed to wait till the next morning. He desired *Philip*, in the mean time, to observe the greatest secrecy respecting what they had seen; he

then dismissed him, and threw himself upon the bed. Horrid dreams disturbed his rest; the spirits of his parents seemed continually flitting before him: toward morning he dropt into a short slumber, from which he was awakened by *Philip* telling him the horses were ready.

*Alphonso* now rose, no longer the gay and handsome *Alphonso* he had once been, but a pale emaciated figure, with the appearance of one in the last stage of life. His mind was disturbed with a variety of conflicting motions: his eyes, sunk and spiritless, plainly indicated how ill he had rested the preceding night. After a slight repast, he secured all the doors, and making a memorandum of the situation in which he left the apartments in the castle, with slow and heavy steps he passed the hall.

The closing of the heavy door roused him from the stupor into which he had fallen, and recalled his wandering imagination to the unhappy purpose of his intended adventure. He now for the first time recollected the inconsistency of his plan, in setting out in search of he knew not whom; his beloved *Julia* obtruded on his mind, and he resolved to visit the baron her father, and making him acquainted with the shocking circumstance, ask his advice. He remembered, also, that it would be necessary to make some plausible excuse to the cottager for his abrupt departure. He therefore turned his horse toward the cottage, and being under the necessity of telling them a falsehood, said, that he had received a letter from the baron *de Stainville*, which informed him that his presence was absolutely necessary; giving them a strict charge not to let the castle be entered, on pain of his displeasure. The man promised he should be obeyed, and *Alphonso*, having assured him that he should not be long absent, and made him a present for his trouble, departed.

He took the road to *Naples*, and night coming on as he had just reached an inn at the entrance of *Castile*, he determined to halt, and retiring to the room allotted for him, sat himself down to consider his present situation. The money he had with him was nearly exhausted, and it was now impossible for him to obtain a fresh supply; he must therefore be indebted to the baron *de Stainville* for the present. He reflected also that it would be impossible for him to marry *Julia*, in his present situation; as, though his whole dependence was on the friendship of her father, yet he could not imagine he would ever consent to her union with one, neither possessed of friends nor fortune. His reverie was interrupted by a deep groan from the room adjoining that in which he was: the sound startled him, and he listened attentively for some time. It was repeated: after which, some words seemed to be uttered by the same person, but in so low a voice that it was impossible to understand the purport of them. A third groan succeeded, accompanied by a faint shriek. *Alphonso* imagined he might be capable of affording assistance. He softly opened the door, and perceived a man lying on the bed, seemingly in the agonies of death; a beautiful female was kneeling by the bed-side; her hair, without any covering, hung loose

and dishevelled about her shoulders; her dress was in the utmost disorder, and torn in many parts. The sight awed *Alphonso* so much, that he knew not whether to advance or recede. He had not time to consider; for the lady looking round, uttered a loud scream, and fainted in his arms. He now found it was his dear *Julia* he held in his arms, and endeavoured to recal her to life by calling on her name repeatedly. After some moments she recovered, and pointed to the bed.

The sick person had just opened his eyes, and fixing them upon *Alphonso*, exclaimed, "Take him away, I have not murdered him. Why does he come to torment me?" The well-known voice vibrated on the ears of *Alphonso*, and with horror he found it to be his uncle. He flew toward him, forgetting in an instant all his former meditations of revenge; he grasped his almost lifeless hand, and bathed it with bitter tears. His uncle forcibly snatched it away, and starting wildly up in bed, cried, "Keep him off! I did not do it; it was his father, not he, that injured me." Then he sunk back, and seemed to be thinking on something very earnestly. He looked at *Alphonso* again; and said in a kind of whisper, "yet he looks kinder than the others; perhaps he does not know what I have done."

*Alphonso* could no longer support the distressing scene, and drew toward the window. When he was out of sight, his uncle fell into a doze. *Julia* advised *Alphonso* to keep where he was, lest the sight of him, when he awoke, might be attended with dangerous consequences. The entrance of the physician interrupted their conversation; and he having felt his pulse, declared he had no hopes, yet desired he might be kept quite still, as he might perhaps have one more interval of reason, but it entirely depended on his being kept perfectly quiet. After prescribing the medicine he thought necessary for his patient, he departed.

*Alphonso* and *Julia* continued to watch the patient, through the night; and when the morning approached, he awoke, and looking at *Julia*, said, "I have had a delightful dream. I thought I saw *Alphonso*; but it cannot be." *Julia* finding it was a proper opportunity to introduce him, answered, that if she thought he would not be too much agitated, she would tell him something that would please him." He promised to be composed. She then told him, that she had sent for *Alphonso*, and expected him to arrive hourly.

"I wish," said he, "that he would come, for I am afraid I shall never live to see him. If I do not, give him the packet which you will find in my coat-pocket, and beg him to pray for me." *Julia* perceived he was affected. Pretended to listen. "Hark!" said she: "there is *Alphonso*." She then went toward the door, and drew *Alphonso* to the bed. His uncle feebly held out his hand to him, but could not utter a word. *Alphonso* took it, and dropped on his knees. His uncle raised himself up; and looking wishfully, exclaimed, "heaven bless you, and forgive me!" then uttering a deep groan, fell back and expired.

As soon as the first shock occasioned by the news of the death



of the count was over, *Alphonso* proceeded to search for the packet which his uncle had mentioned; and having wiped away a tear to the memory of his former tender protection, he began to read the paper; the contents of which were as follows:—

*The History of FERNANDO COURVILLE.*

“MY father, the only remaining son and heir of the illustrious house of *De Courville*, had early in life, to gratify the wish of the old count his father, married a lady of equal descent with himself, though at the same time he had no great inclination to marry. The lady his father had selected for him was far from being calculated to render the married state agreeable; she was excessively capricious; and if not immediately gratified in whatever she wished, would throw herself into pretended fits. My father, wearied with her continual ill temper, soon entirely neglected her, and frequently absented himself from home. But her pregnancy being now far advanced, as he was fearful of losing his first hope by her sudden starts of passion, he paid her more than common attention. She was very shortly after delivered of a son who was named, after his father, *Alphonso*. My father was extremely delighted, and it seemed as if his whole life were wrapped up in this his darling. At length, after the charms of novelty had ceased, he relapsed into his former indifference. One afternoon, after he had been absent three or four days, being rather fatigued, returning to his chamber, he was surprised to find the door fastened on the inside. He immediately called to my mother, who was within, desiring her to open it. He heard a faint scuffle within, and in a few minutes she opened the door, and apologised for keeping him waiting, as she had been asleep. My father made no reply, but walked to the window, which was open, and looking out, saw a man running along the parapet. He turned round, fury flashing in his eyes. “Wretch!” exclaimed he, “instantly inform me who that villain is, who, I am confident, has been in this apartment.” She fell on her knees, assuring him she had never injured him in any respect, and that chance alone had caused him to be there. She still endeavoured to conceal his name, till my father, drawing his sword, threatened her with immediate death; when she tremblingly replied, it was *Felix*. “What!” re-echoed my father, “*Felix*, my valet! ’Tis well madam: your paramour shall instantly leave the house.” He kept his word. *Felix* received his dismissal, frantic with fear; and happy in escaping chastisement, departed immediately. My father ordered a separate apartment from my mother, who now, too late, saw her imprudent conduct. With a desperate resolve, she forced herself into his presence, entreating in the most submissive manner for pardon. In vain did she sue; my father was inexorable, and spurned her from him. Real fits succeeded, and in this situation she was delivered of me. Her life was for some time despaired of;

at length she recovered. An inveterate hatred to her husband succeeded. He could never be prevailed upon to see me, as he had great reason to suppose I was illegitimate. He paid a greater attention than ever to my brother *Alphonso*, who thrived rapidly. My mother was so enraged, that she endeavoured, as I grew in years, to fix an implacable resentment in my youthful mind against my father and brother, for such in reality they were. She unhappily succeeded but too well. A new cause of dislike soon took place. *Alphonso* being of an age to leave home, was sent to the university, and returned so accomplished, that I, from envy of his superior endowments, actually felt that hatred which had been before nourished by the unremitting assiduity of my mother. I had, to be sure, private masters for my instruction; but as my education was not the same my brother received, I did not imagine it could be in any manner so beneficial to me. Every little childish whim was indulged by my mother, who imagined her future schemes of revenge centered in me: and as I early displayed a propensity to vice, instead of repelling it, she artfully encouraged it to that excess, that it ever remained in me. My mother's horrible design never succeeded in her life; for she was one night seized in a fit, in which she expired. I did not feel that affection for her at her death, which a child naturally does for a parent, who has been taught by them to honour their virtues. On the contrary, I seemed to have got rid of a tormentor, and thought I should now be master of myself. In that I was deceived: for my father, having ordered my mother to be interred with the respect due to her as countess *de Courville*, yet without that pomp she would have claimed had his affection never been estranged from her, immediately received me into the family, and I was treated in every respect like my brother, except in my father's caresses. With rage I beheld his partiality for him, and determined at a future day to gratify my thirst for revenge.—Here would I draw a veil over the remainder of my guilty career. My whole frame turns black with horror, as I think of the deeds which I am about to reveal; yet, as I have begun, I will struggle with my feelings, and though I harrow up my very soul in the recital, will still persevere. And, oh! may it prove a wholesome admonition to youths, to conquer with unremitting vigilance even the slightest incitement to vice; and may parents take warning by my unhappy one, to be careful to instil early principles of rectitude and honour into the minds of their children. But to proceed. My brother, who, as he had been properly educated, ever placed his confidence in his father, now acquainted him with his prepossession in favour of an amiable young lady, sister to one of his fellow-collegians, and asked permission to pay his addresses to her. My father, confident that the affections of his son would never be placed on an undeserving object, readily gave his consent, and they were soon after married. Amid the joy and hilarity of the wedding, I lost my usual fullness, and joined in the festivity. The lovely *Rosalia* attracted

my notice, and I secretly wished she had fallen to my lot: yet my wishes were then unmixed with those guilty ideas which afterward took place. My father's death, who had long been in a declining state, terminated the rejoicing. I joined with my brother in unfeigned lamentation, and was for some time inconsolable. This sorrow soon gave place to my former malice, when, upon opening the will, I found that he had left his whole estate to my brother, at the same time enjoining him to be my guardian till I came of age, which I wanted two years of; and after that, I was to be allowed two thousand a year, while I continued worthy of his favour; but if I proved undeserving, I was to be left entirely at his mercy. I stifled my resentment as much as I was able, and assumed the resemblance of great affection for *Alphonso*; while he, trusting in his own rectitude, did not suspect the fraud which I was practising upon him, and treated me with the greatest tenderness. The opportunities I now had of being with his wife, created in me a passion for her, which I determined to gratify; and I continually persecuted her with my assiduities. When I first declared my sentiments, she started from me with detestation in her looks; and nothing prevented her acquainting my brother but her fear of embittering his future hours with continual apprehension. She ever after avoided me with the greatest caution. Stung to the quick at the denial I had received, I meditated a most bloody revenge. I accordingly one day decoyed my man, a poor harmless youth, into the remotest part of the castle, on pretence of something I wished to remove; when drawing my sword, I bade him prepare for death. He begged to know his crime. I evaded his question, telling him I did not chuse to enter into particulars at that time, but that I would spare his life on one condition. He promised faithfully he would comply with whatever I desired. I made him on his knees take the most solemn oath that imagination could devise; which done, with a savage joy I bade him rise; then taking a dagger from my pocket, and presenting it to him, "here," said I, "take it," my hand trembling as I held it toward him; "my brother possesses my right—dispatch him—you understand me—be quick and sure."——

*Alphonso* gave a scream of horror; the paper dropt from his hands; a mist gathered before his eyes, and his arms dropt motionless by his side. *Julia* in vain called on his name; he was insensible to every thing around him, and remained in that state for some time.

After a short time *Alphonso* recovered himself sufficiently to proceed with the narrative:—

"The poor wretch received the dagger in speechless agony. I immediately quitted the place, that I might not be any more witness to his emotion, for my heart was not then sufficiently callous to talk with composure of the bloody act we were about to perpetrate. Some days elapsed ere I heard any further concerning the business. One morning my man watched an oppor-

tunity to speak to me, and informed me, in faltering accents, that he had considered the matter, and judged it would be imprudent to shed blood, but had thought of a scheme which he made no doubt would meet my concurrence. I desired to be made acquainted with it. It was to decoy my brother from the house, with some well fabricated tale of distress, to which he would listen with avidity, and contrive to have him drowned in the moat, which was deep enough, at the north end of the castle; and thus, he said, when his body should be found, his death would be more easily imputed to accident. To what lengths will the love of life carry a man! The plan seemed more safe than what I had first suggested; and we determined to adopt it. We did so; it succeeded to our most sanguine wishes; and your father was, one foggy evening, precipitated into eternity, to satisfy the ambition and diabolical desires of an unnatural brother. Yet think not that he escaped punishment. No, *Alphonso!* his every succeeding hour has been embittered with the pangs of a guilty conscience, the most severe punishments in this life, and the cause of endless misery in a future. Your mother was for some time inconsolable; nothing but her affection for you could have preserved her life. You were then about five years old, and the smiling image of your ill-fated father. After a decent time had elapsed, I again renewed my importunities to your mother, and even offered her marriage. My proposals were received with increased disdain. This roused my violent temper. I knew full well that the likeness you bore to your father served to keep him in her memory, and I determined to separate you. I caused you to be torn from her arms, and herself to be confined in an apartment adjoining mine; while a report was circulated that she had destroyed herself by some unknown means. Her faithful attendant also was insinuated into a gloomy chamber, in the most remote part of the castle, where I imagined her secure from any communication with your mother. I supplied them with food. You were admitted to her presence occasionally, to make her more ardently wish for liberty. But even that strong incitement was insufficient—such was her just abhorrence of me. Several years elapsed in this manner; when one morning I went to *Rosalia's* apartment to renew my proposals, and was most dreadfully alarmed to find it deserted. *Rosalia* was not to be found. I cast my eyes toward the window. It was secure as usual; no pannel was removed, nor could I discover any means by which she could have escaped. I immediately repaired to the chamber of her attendant. She was sitting at the table, reading. I flew toward her, and seized her arm, in a frantic manner, demanding *Rosalia*. I accused her of assisting *Rosalia* to escape. She replied, with heroism, ‘I have assisted her, and glory in the act of rescuing her from the power of a tyrant.’ I demanded to know the manner of her escape. She smiled at my threats, and scornfully refused to tell me. I was no longer

master of myself. I drew my sword, and plunged it into her body. She fell, and expired in a few moments."—

"Thank heaven," interrupted *Alphonso*, "it was not the body of my mother. Perhaps she yet lives." He proceeded with the history :

"Remorse instantly took possession of my soul. I shuddered at the act I had committed. I stood petrified with horror. Fears for my own safety prompted me to conceal the body. I looked round with dreadful apprehension, and found a large empty chest in the room, in which I carefully deposited the body, and quitted the apartment, which I never again entered. I have ever since remained ignorant of the means your mother used to make her escape, as to have made any inquiry among the domestics would have betrayed myself. I dismissed the deluded creature, who had first aided my crimes, as the sight of him was become odious to me, first binding him down by the strictest oaths to secrecy. He has since married, and resides in a cottage, some small distance from the castle. My conscience now smote me severely for my former crimes, and I determined, by the greatest attention to your morals, to atone in some measure for them. I really felt an affection for you, but the sight of you always revived terrific emotions in my mind, and I resolved, as soon as your age would permit, to send you abroad. I did so ; but your departure, instead of alleviating my uneasiness, served but to increase it. Left to myself, my former deeds rushed upon my mind, and overpowered me. I could no longer bear the reflexion, and determined to quit the castle for ever, make a confession to you of my crimes, and lead a wandering life. I summoned my vassals together, told them that I intended to reside on an estate of mine in a distant country, and had no further occasion for their services, but discharged them. I left my orders with the cottager to admit no one into the castle but yourself, and to circulate the report of it being haunted. I then bade a long farewell to *De Coursille Castle*."

The manuscript was finished ; but one thing still remained to be cleared up, which was—how *Julia* and his uncle came together. "You know," (said *Julia*), "the terms upon which you and my father parted. It is necessary to say, how much I was interested in the event ; and not hearing from you for a considerable time, caused me much uneasiness. My father earnestly endeavoured to persuade me that you had forgotten your *Julia* ; but vanity, or some secret monitor, whispered the contrary, and I flattered myself that by some accident your letters had been intercepted. About that time an event happened which was near separating us for ever. My father was returning one evening from a visit to the hermit, and was overtaken by some of those banditti by whom you was so great a sufferer at the time we first became acquainted. But by the timely assistance of a gentleman, who with his servant was riding past, they dispersed the ruffians, and my father was rescued. Gratitude to his preserver

obliged my father to invite the stranger home. Alas! it was near becoming a fatal invitation to me. He staid with us a week, and during that time conceived an unfortunate prepossession in favour of me. I soon perceived his growing partiality; indeed, I must have been blind had I not; his attentions were so particular as to leave no room for doubt. The consequence was an application to my father, who readily gave his consent, provided I could consider myself as free from my engagement to you. He flew to me with my father's answer. I received his proposals with disdain, and assured him that I would never become his wife. He cast a malicious glance at me, and left the house that day in high displeasure. About three days after, as I was taking a walk in the adjoining wood, as was usually my custom, I was forcibly seized by two men, who bound my mouth and eyes. When they gave me my liberty I found myself in a carriage, seated by that odious villain who had thus violated the laws of hospitality.—'Now, madam,' said the wretch, 'I think I can repay your disdain, and be assured, you shall never become my wife.' I shuddered at his words, yet paid no seeming attention to them. We travelled at a great rate, and I fainted through fear and want of air, for the blinds had been kept close drawn up. When I recovered, the windows were quite open, and the carriage standing still. A gentleman rode by. I had the presence of mind to scream out, and call for assistance. He instantly forced the coachman from his box, and opening the coach-door, demanded why I was detained. The wretch immediately drew a pistol from his pocket, and discharged it; but the bullet missed your uncle—for he it was, whom providence had sent to rescue me. Your uncle in his turn drew another pistol, which he fired with better success; his adversary fell, uttering dreadful imprecations. He however had the malice to fire again as he fell, and the ball penetrated your uncle's shoulder. By this time a number of people had come up to us; for the coachman had run to an inn, which providentially was not far distant, to procure assistance. They conveyed us to it; your uncle was put to bed, and a surgeon was sent for, who, upon his arrival, pronounced the wound to be mortal. What must have been my situation but for your fortunate arrival! I now entreat you to conduct me to my father's as soon as possible, as I cannot with propriety remain longer in my present situation. I have only to add, that your uncle, when he was assured of his approaching dissolution, entreated that his remains might be conveyed to *De Courville Castle*."

*Julia* ceased. *Alphonso* still remained in a musing posture. He was perplexed to know how to act. He was equally convinced with *Julia* of the impropriety of her continuing with him; yet his uncle's corpse could not possibly remain at the inn. He thought of a plan, yet he did not like to propose it to *Julia*. Her thoughts had been occupied by the same subject; and the same thought had struck her. She therefore saved *Alphonso* the

pain of the proposal. "I know," said she, "it is inconvenient for you to return with me. Suppose you let *Philip* go; he will prove a sufficient protection."—"Will my *Julia*," exclaimed *Alphonso*, "put up with his protection?"—"Surely," said she, seeing he was extremely agitated, "we shall meet the sooner for it. *Philip* will make an excellent conductor."—"He is a worthy fellow," replied *Alphonso*, "and will protect you to the last moment of his life."—"I can trust in him," returned *Julia*; "so to-morrow I propose to take leave of you."

*Alphonso* sighed at the mention of taking leave; a fatality seemed to attend them, and still threatened to separate them. They both retired to rest in very ill spirits. *Julia* rose early. *Alphonso* was already risen. They ate a sparing breakfast; a chaise waited to convey *Julia*; they took a hasty farewell. *Philip* mounted his horse, and they drove off. *Alphonso* seemed to have lost his very life; he remained quite inanimate. The noise the men made in bringing up his uncle's coffin roused him from his lethargy, and he bethought him of his melancholy office; the day passed heavily on; night came—a sleepless one to *Alphonso*. The morning arrived, the hearse was in readiness, and the corpse was deposited in it. He ordered it to follow him at a slow pace; he himself was to be at the castle to prepare for the melancholy ceremony. He settled with his host, mounted his horse, and set off for *De Courville Castle*.

When *Alphonso* reached the castle, the man whom he had brought with him as a substitute for *Philip* appeared not a little dismayed at the desolate appearance of the place; but *Alphonso* having, by liberal offers, banished part of his fears, they rode round to the village, and hired some men to assist in clearing the rubbish and weeds from the principal entrance of the castle. With some difficulty they opened the great gates, which creaked with disgusting noise upon their rusty hinges, and found the castle exactly in the situation he left it. The recollection of the cause of his last quitting it, and the melancholy one of his return to it, rushed with force upon his mind, and he leaned his head against the wall in silent agony. The men stared at him with stupid wonder; but recollecting himself, he started up, and led the way to his apartment. A fire was soon kindled by a lantern which they brought with them; and *Alphonso* then instructed the men in their several departments, and before night the grand hall was rendered fit for the reception of his uncle's body. The vault was then opened. *Alphonso* took a torch, and descended into it; but the noisome damps of the place almost stifled him. He cast his eyes around; and a coffin, newer than the rest, attracted his notice. He approached, and viewed the plate. It was that of his father. He dropt his torch, and knelt by the side of his coffin.—"Shade of my reverend parent!" exclaimed he, "let me not incur thy anger, that I dare thus to violate thy sanctuary, by admitting the remains of thy murderer—witness my filial tears." He was interrupted by a faint

scream, and a noise which seemed as if some great weight had fallen. He started from his knees, and looked round; but his torch was extinguished. He listened; all was still. He drew his sword from the scabbard, and groped about for the steps. For some time his search was in vain, and he stumbled constantly over broken pieces of coffins; till at length, at some distance, he perceived a glimmering light. For some minutes he was unresolved whether to advance or recede. He plainly distinguished the forms of several men slowly advancing, and heard his own name distinctly repeated. His fear so nearly overcame him, that it was some time before he could recal his scattered senses sufficiently to recognise his own attendants, who, finding him continue so long in the vaults, began to be alarmed, and had, though with great dread, descended in search of him; he having wandered in the dark so far from the entrance, that he did not recollect the situation sufficiently to prevent his fright at their approach. He forbore to mention to them the scream he had heard, lest it should depress their spirits, and only told them that he had let his torch fall, and thereby extinguished it.

When they had completed their business, he dismissed all but the one he designed to keep in his service until the return of *Philip*. With him he retired to his chamber, and endeavoured to recruit his spirits with a bottle of wine (for they had provided themselves with whatever they thought would be requisite); but he vainly endeavoured to impute the sound he had heard to imagination; it seemed still to ring through his ears with additional horror. His harassed spirits demanded rest; and he accordingly retired to a chamber which had formerly been *Philip's*, and, securing the door, sunk upon the bed. He had slumbered about an hour, when he was roused by a loud noise in the corner of the room. He raised his head from his pillow, and listened attentively; it was silent; and he once more composed himself to rest. He was again startled by a violent shaking of the curtains of his bed. The moon then suddenly emerged from a cloud; and by her light he perceived a figure, of enormous bulk, at his bed-side. He immediately grasped his sword, and jumped up, when the figure retreated. He started from the bed, and pursued it round the room. The moon was again obscured, and he was left in darkness. He groped about, till a door was flapped with violence in his face. Terror now totally overpowered him, and the sword dropt from his hand. He continued transfixed with astonishment, till a violent knocking at his door recalled his senses. For some time he was irresolute, till the voice of his servant demanding entrance, cheered him; and with some difficulty he found the door, which he opened. The man instantly caught hold of him, exclaiming, "for heaven's sake, sir, save me! Let us quit this dreadful castle to-morrow. You have surely let all the spirits out of the vault; and they are determined to torment us for disturbing them." The mention of the vault revived in *Alphonso* the re-



membrance of his adventure in that place. He was for some time unable to reply; at length he demanded of the man, if he had heard any thing.—“Aye,” said the fellow, “I believe I have. Why, I thought my door would have been burst open; for there was a rare push against it; it made it crack again.” *Alphonso* was more and more surpris'd: he determin'd to discover the mystery, but forbore to urge the man further at that time, lest he should augment his fear. Day in a great measure dispell'd their terror, and they discours'd calmly on the subject. *Alphonso*, after a time, by expostulation, entreaty, and offers of a liberal reward, obtained from the man a promise to watch with him the ensuing night. Their attention was so much engross'd, that they thought not of repose; and the arrival of a peasant announced the approach of the corpse, before they had broke their fast. The gates were thrown open, and the body of the count decently committed to the vault; after which it was once more clos'd by the rustics, all of whom he dismiss'd, except one.

*Alphonso*, again left to reflexion, pondered in his mind his strange destiny. “Surely,” said he to himself, “I am doomed to be the sport of fortune, pursuing, by a strange fatality, shadows which vanish from my grasp, while others continually rise to harass my spirits, already almost broken by disappointment and sorrow. Oh! my *Julia*, even now, perhaps, you may be in need of my arm, to save you from some unforeseen danger. May you not be at this moment calling upon thy *Alphonso* to rescue thee, in vain, while he is perhaps rushing into eternity unbidden, and may, ere to-morrow's dawn, be numbered among the silent dead? Had I not better quit this spot, by horrid murder stained, where injured spirits call aloud for vengeance, and with my *Julia* seek some peaceful cot, where, with her, I may spend my future days in domestic happiness, far from the pomp and fatigue of grandeur? But Oh! my parents, hard is the struggle betwixt love and filial piety?”

This soliloquy was interrupted by his attendants, who enter'd to know his orders concerning the propos'd plan. *Alphonso*, after some consideration, resolv'd to abide the event. He accordingly desired the men to procure some wine from the village, and to keep a large fire, two most requisite things for so cheerless an adventure. The intermediate space between them and the time appointed for them to station themselves, he determin'd to fill up by inspecting the castle. He revisited all the rooms, and found them as he had left them. The apartment where he had before beheld the horrible spectacle shock'd him greatly; and closing the door with disgust, he descend'd the stairs. The men soon return'd with the wine; they took some slight refreshment, and betook themselves to their watch. They drew their chairs close, and replenish'd their glasses. All continued quiet; the bell slowly toll'd one, and the men began to nod. *Alphonso* continued in a musing posture, but was soon

startled by the opening of the door of the small closet, over which the portrait of his uncle had hung. He concealed the light, the better to observe what passed. A figure, flocking to behold, entered; it appeared to be a human form, but the sex could not be distinguished; a ragged mantle covered its shoulders, and fell on the ground, and a quantity of long black hair hung over the face, and entirely concealed it. One arm was bare, and dreadfully torn, with which it grasped a rusty dagger; the other held a human skull. It walked with a solemn step to the window, where it continued some time with its arms folded, then starting with a hasty step, turned to the bed, and groped about as in search of some other object. *Alphonso* thanked heaven for his escape, as he made no doubt he should have been murdered, had he been in the bed; he advanced softly behind the figure, while the men guarded the door. *Alphonso* sprung upon it, and wrested the dagger from its hand; it uttered a tremendous scream, and fell to the ground.

The poor wretch was a considerable time before he had power to articulate a syllable; at length, raising his head, he fixed his eyes upon *Alphonso*, exclaiming, "O save me! save me from that horrid phantom!" *Alphonso* was very much agitated; he imagined he had heard the voice before; but where, he was at a loss to conjecture. He raised the man from the ground, and, with the assistance of his attendants, placed him upon the chair; and removing the hair which covered his face, discovered, to his infinite astonishment, the peasant formerly servant to his uncle, and the murderer of his father. "Villain!" exclaimed he, while every joint trembled with emotion, "vengeance is now within my reach. Prepare to expiate all thy crimes. In me behold the injured *Alphonso*." His arm was uplifted to give the blow; when, roused by the impending danger, the man sprang forward, and averted the stroke. "Hold, hold! I conjure you," cried he, frantically, "I am not the monster you suppose. Your father died not by my hands."—"Beware," cried *Alphonso*, "how you deceive me; think not to dupe me by your detested artifices."—"Yet hear me, I entreat you," rejoined the man, dropping upon his knees; "my guilty story must not be revealed at present, in consequence of a most solemn vow exacted from me by your uncle. All I dare say is, that your father, in all probability, yet lives."—"Heaven be praised!" interrupted *Alphonso*, "Rise. I have now the power of absolving you from your oath. The count is no more. Take therefore some refreshment. In an hour I will return, and hear what you have to say in your defence; but, remember, upon your sincerity depends your life." *Felix* bowed, and assured him he might depend upon his fidelity. *Alphonso* then left him, and secured the door; leaving the servants to watch lest he should attempt to make his escape. He took a stroll round the castle, it being then morning. At the time appointed, he returned. *Felix* requested they might be private; and *Alphonso*

laying his sword before him, ordered the attendants to withdraw. The man then related what the reader is already acquainted with.

“ I was greatly shocked,” continued he, “ at the count’s proposal; but I knew the violence of his temper too well to imagine that he would hesitate a moment to put his threats in execution. A plan providentially struck me, which I resolved to carry into execution without hesitation. I acquainted your father with the plot against his life, enforcing an oath of secrecy, and procured him the dress of a labouring man, in which he escaped from the castle. I then, by means of a trifling reward, prevailed upon a poor man, who worked in the village, to dress himself in your father’s clothes, and go upon some pretended message to the castle. The fogginess of the evening assisted my design, and the poor unsuspecting wretch was by my own hands precipitated into eternity. You may perhaps wonder why I should scruple to sacrifice your father at a time when I could unrelentingly put a period to the existence of another. To my shame, I confess that it was not humanity which influenced me. Alas! No. I flattered myself that at some future time the secret would be discovered by the remorse of your uncle, and that I should be handsomely rewarded. The corpse passed very well for that of the count, and was interred with all funeral honours. The new count soon found an opportunity to discharge me from his service, and settled me in the cot where you may recollect you first saw me. Your residence at the cottage roused me to a sense of the injustice I had been guilty of, and I lamented I had not defied the count’s threats. The poor murdered victim seemed continually before my eyes, and disturbed my mind with the most horrid reflexions. My wife saw my uneasiness, and incessantly importuned me to let her know the cause. Her solicitations vexed me, and I treated her with unusual severity. On a sudden a great alteration took place in her behaviour, and she scrupled not to tell me that she suspected there was no good going on, by my frequent absence from home. Words followed words; she said, I had of late talked strangely in my sleep, and that she had great reason to believe I had been guilty of murder; and threatened to have me apprehended, if I dared to use her ill again. I plainly saw she would not fail to keep her word, and determined to get rid of so dangerous an accuser. Guilt gradually steals upon the mind of man, and renders his heart callous to the calls of humanity. I felt very little compunction at shedding the blood of my unhappy wife, whom I buried at the end of my garden. Severe was my punishment; day and night her ghastly image floated before my eyes. My cottage became insupportable; I quitted it, and sought refuge in the desolated castle. Solitude only increased my horror, and my reason was the sacrifice. I have but a faint idea of what passed since then. How I subsisted, I cannot tell. I only know, that I often fought the count’s

apartment, in hopes to murder him (for I forgot his having quitted the castle), and I remained chiefly in the vault among the coffins : and but for your courage in sitting up last night, your life would have been sacrificed through my mistake. I have now made a full confession of my guilt, and leave it to your generosity to dispose of me as you think proper. I am ready to submit to the laws of my country."

He ended. *Alphonso* paused some time. At length, said he, "you must for the present remain my prisoner. I will consider what is best to be done. Ill as you deserve life at my hands, yet if I find your penitence to be sincere, your punishment will be mitigated accordingly." He then quitted the room, leaving *Felix* guarded as before. The trampling of horses feet drew him to the window ; and, to his infinite joy, he saw his faithful *Philip* dismount, covered with dust. He ran hastily to meet him, and interrogated him as to the cause of his speed. Almost breathless with apprehension, he exclaimed, "How is my *Julia* ? Is she safe ?"—"Safe enough, for aught I know," replied *Philip*. "For aught you know !" echoed *Alphonso* indignantly. "What mean you ?"—"I mean," rejoined *Philip*, smiling significantly, "with submission to your honour's impatience, that I have had something else to think of beside madam *Julia*, dearly as she is beloved by your honour and myself." *Alphonso* was irritated beyond measure. "How dare you, insolent fellow !" and his arm was uplifted ; but he was stoped by *Philip*, who lifting up his arm with one hand, while he thrust the other hastily into his pocket, exclaimed, "Stop, stop, my dear good master. Don't put yourself in a passion. First look at that," giving him a small case, "and I am sure you will not be angry long." *Alphonso* opened it. "Heavens and earth !" cried he, "what do I behold ?—The portrait of my mother ! How came you by it ?"—"That," said *Philip* exultingly, "you shall be acquainted with in good time ; but, at present, I am so confounded hungry, that I cannot possibly begin so long a story till I have satisfied the cravings of nature : so, my good master, the sooner the better ; mean while you may amuse yourself by contemplating the features of that sweet lady." *Alphonso* could not help smiling at his honest impertinence. "Really, *Philip*," said he, "you are very insolent to trifle thus with my feelings."—"Not at all, my dear master ; do but consider how you are trifling with mine. I have not tasted a morsel of food these six-and-thirty hours, and have rode post all the time ; and you cannot have pity enough to reserve your impatience till I have made my meal." *Alphonso* found it vain to contend ; he therefore directed him where to find some bread and ham, of which, with the addition of some wine, *Philip* made a most excellent repast, and liked it so well, that he tired *Alphonso's* patience to the utmost extent ; which at last he gratified, by giving the following account of his expedition :—

"I conducted *Julia* safe to the baron's. He received her with transports, and bestowed numberless blessings upon you for your honourable conduct. He entertained me with liberality, and desired you would hasten with all possible speed to receive your reward; then dismissed me with a handsome present. I rode at a most furious rate for some miles, till both myself and horse were thoroughly fatigued. I looked round me, and perceived that I had missed the beaten track in my hurry, and had pursued one which led to quite a different path. Night grew on apace. I feared to return, lest I should involve myself still further in the intricacies of the path. As I looked round and round, I thought I saw a faint light glimmering through the hedge: I looked over, and found I was not deceived; but how to find the spot, was the greatest difficulty. I however determined, let what would be the event, to proceed forward. I spurred my horse, and went onward. I soon found myself at the entrance of a kind of cave, at the farther end of which I saw a lamp hung, which no doubt was the light of which I was in pursuit. I was at a loss whether to enter or not. Perhaps, thought I, it is the quarters of some of the banditti with which this place is infested. Upon second consideration, I alighted; and tying my horse to a tree, listened attentively at the mouth of the cave. I heard a low murmuring voice, seemingly in prayer. 'Oh, ho!' said I to myself, 'there is no harm here; banditti never pray.' So I mustered up all my courage, and entered a kind of chamber, rudely hewn out of the rock. At the farther end was a bed, or pallet, upon which lay a venerable looking man. He held his beads in his hands, which were clasped together. He did not perceive me for some time; when he did, he seemed rather startled; but recovering himself, stretched out his hand, saying, 'come hither, my son. I have not beheld one of my fellow creatures for so long a time, that the sight of you rather alarmed me; but sure providence sent you to me at this critical moment, to ease my mind of a secret which I feared would die with me. You have an honest countenance.' You see, sir," said *Philip*, interrupting his story, "the old man had not forgot to compliment. 'However, I think,' continued he, 'I can confide in you.' I assured him, that I would do whatever was in my power to assist him. 'I am now,' said the hermit, 'past all human assistance. I feel the hour of my dissolution approaches fast. Listen then attentively to what I am about to relate. It is now, as near as I can calculate, about nine months and some odd weeks, that, as I was at my evening oraisons, I heard a deep sigh, not many yards from me. I rose immediately, and hastened to the entrance of the cave, where I found a woman lying on the earth. Her dress was rent in many places, and her hands and arms, which were beautifully white, were terribly scratched. I endeavoured to raise her from the ground; she had apparently fainted from excessive fatigue and long fasting, for her body was

worn to a mere skeleton. My efforts at last succeeded, and I brought her into my retreat. My scanty fare of bread and water was all I had to offer her. Alas! it was but poor nourishment for one in her situation; she, however, ate and drank greedily. I prevailed upon her to lie down upon my bed, and I sat up in my old wooden chair. Her strength was totally exhausted, and nature demanded rest. She slept for a few hours, and awoke much better. She then told me a tale of horror, which I am bound never to reveal, and entreated me to direct her to some place where she might rest in safety. I directed her, in the best manner I was able, to the convent of St. *Agnes*. I would have conducted her thither myself; but I am too feeble to walk ten yards. She thanked me in the most expressive manner, and departed in tears. Some time after she was gone, I chanced to walk to the mouth of my cave. As I passed, I thought I saw something glitter. I stooped for it, and picked up the picture which I now give you.' He then took this very miniature from under his pillow. 'I soon perceived,' continued the hermit, 'that it was the resemblance of herself. I have never been able to get it conveyed to her since. What I request of you is, that you will go to the convent, and find her out, which you easily will by the miniature, and beg her to remember poor father *Michael*.' The poor old man was quite spent. I promised to fulfil his request. You may guess, sir, with what joy I executed it. The poor hermit did not outlive that night. I left his corpse where it was, and hastened to the convent. I showed the picture at the gate, and easily gained admittance to my dear mistress. She, poor soul! did not know me. I related my message, and delivered the picture. The necessary care was taken to inter the body of father *Michael*. I then proceeded to make myself known. The dear lady was almost frantic. She, with transport, sent me forward to you, and bade me tell you she dies with impatience to embrace her son. So away I fled, at the hazard of my neck, to relate the joyful tidings. Thus ends my story."

Great as was the joy of *Alphonso* at the prospect of being once more enfolded in the arms of his mother, his satisfaction received some alloy, from the uncertainty he was in respecting his father. "But, alas!" said he to himself, "could he but be found, my happiness would be complete. My *Julia* could not fail to meet their approbation, and our union would be sanctioned by the blessing of our parents." Then turning to *Philip*, "where, my good friend, is the convent of St. *Agnes* situated?"—"It is in *Languedoc*," answered *Philip*. "I will set out at day-break," rejoined *Alphonso*. "Oh, bless your soul!" cried *Philip*, eagerly, "it is full two days journey from hence. You cannot possibly go unattended. You will surely take me with you."—"Impossible," cried *Alphonso*, "your presence is absolutely indispensable at the castle. You must guard our prisoner till my return; beside attending to the workmen who are

to be employed in repairing the castle for the reception of the countess's mother." Philip was very much displeas'd at this management. "I would give now," cried he peevishly, "—aye, I would give my very best doublet to witness the meeting. But, there now! that is always the way."—"Philip," said Alphonso, smiling, "I am gratified by your fidelity; but sure you are very regardless of your own interest, to be so little elated at the prospect of your preferment."—"Hang preferment!" replied he, "I would rather follow you, was it to the end of the world, than—but who in the name of wonder comes here?" and, without adding a word, he quitted the room precipitately; but presently returned with a letter, which he still retained in his hand, examining the superscription with great attention. "By our blessed lady!" resumed he, "here is some news. Pray, St. Jerome, our lady Julia be well; for it was brought by my old friend Pedro. But I did not stop to ask questions; and sure I am, it is a woman's hand-writing, the nurse's, mayhap." Impatient at his long harangue, Alphonso snatched the paper from his hand, broke the seal with eagerness, and read as follows:—

"Will you, Alphonso, condemn your Julia for thus breaking through the bounds of propriety prescribed our sex, in thus addressing you?—No. I am certain the mind of him I write to is superior to so weak a prejudice. Why should the sentiments of the heart of the virtuous be concealed? Mine in favour of you I will never blush to acknowledge? But why have you been so long silent? I cannot, will not believe you unfaithful. Sicknefs, perhaps! and Julia is not near, to soothe, by her attentions, the hours of pain. Perhaps my too officious care exaggerates the cause. Pardon the misplaced zeal. Oh, Alphonso! great joy awaits you. Does not your heart tell the whole? Your father lives. If, as I trust, you are impatient to behold him, haste hither; for here he is to be found. Yes, Alphonso, he is here, and looks with affection on your Julia, calls her his dearly beloved daughter. Fly, then, upon the wings of love and duty. We are impatient for the return of the courier. Detain him no longer than to assure him of the state of your health, and dispatch him to your faithful

JULIA DE STAINVILLE."

Alphonso perused the letter in extasy, and immediately ordered the messenger into his presence; and, after rewarding him handsomely, dismissed him with a note, purporting that he was well, and that he designed to set out immediately for *De Stainville Castle*. Philip was transported with joy, when Alphonso communicated to him the purport of the letter. "Now," said he, exultingly, "I shall see my dear old master again. How will he wonder to see me! Oh, what joy there will be in my dear mistress too! Sure, you will not deny me? Now you see, my dear, dear master, Felix has told you the truth; so you may trust him with the Rewardship; for I do not care a fig about it."

*Alphonso* was rather averse to the measure, as he deemed it an encouragement to vice; but to satisfy his faithful servant, he with some dissatisfaction consented.

After leaving the necessary orders, they departed, and rode forward with the utmost dispatch, hardly allowing themselves time for the necessary rest or refreshment. About noon the following day they arrived at the convent. After ringing the bell, the superior attended, and conducting them into the refectory, requested them to wait the coming of the noviciate. After a short period of anxious suspense, the door opened, and *Alphonso* found himself encircled in the embraces of his mother. Years of sorrow had deprived her cheeks of the roses which gave the finish to beauty; grief and misfortune had brought on a premature old age; and her figure, though wan and emaciated, still retained elegance and dignity. Her interesting appearance deeply affected *Alphonso*, while her cheeks glowed with rapture and delight at beholding such a son. Mutual explanations ensued. *Alphonso* informed her of the death of his uncle. "Unfortunate man!" said the countess. "May he be pardoned for all his crimes! I sincerely forgive him. But, oh, my husband! *Alphonso* would have set forward immediately for the chateau; but the countess restrained him. "Ah, no, my son! Do not, by your affectionate zeal, endanger your own life. Let us defer our departure till to-morrow; for think, my *Alphonso*, after all my misfortunes, should I lose you, happiness would no more visit your poor mother." In compliance with her desire, *Alphonso* took his leave, and procured at an hotel accommodations for himself and *Philip*; and in the morning, having obtained a carriage for their conveyance, he returned to the convent.

His mother was prepared to receive him; and after taking an affectionate leave of the lady abbess, and rewarding her with a handsome present, took leave of the sisters, and was ushered into the carriage by her son. *Philip* meeting them here, set forward to inform the baron of their approach.

As they came near the castle, the spirits of the countess sunk; and when they stopt at the gates, her agitation was so great that she fainted, and was conveyed by *Alphonso* into the parlour. She soon revived; and on opening her eyes, beheld the affectionate *Julia* leaning over her with mingled emotions of surprise and concern. *Alphonso* entered the room, accompanied by a gentleman, and the baron, who no sooner beheld the countess than he sunk lifeless into the arms of his son, which were extended to receive him. The countess sprang to him, exclaiming, "My lord! my husband! He opened his eyes; and fixing them on her, "My *Rosalia*!" said he, "is it indeed you? Nature surely cannot support this excess of joy.—My son!" to *Alphonso*, taking a hand of each. "Oh, my parents, may this interview be a happy one. Receive the congratulations of your *Alphonso*, and bestow upon him your blessing."



He knelt down, and was embraced, by turns, by his delighted parents. Nor was *Philip* deficient in expressions of joy. His grateful heart overflowed with rapture, as he received the praises of the count and countess for his fidelity.

Tranquillity being restored, curiosity succeeded; and each being anxious to know what had befallen the other, the count thus began:—

“ For some days after I had quitted the castle in the disguise *Felix* had provided me with, I continued to wander as secretly as possible about the grounds, in hopes of gaining a transient glimpse of my *Rosalie*. Distracted at the failure of my plan, I several times meditated openly bidding defiance to my inhuman brother; but again I was restrained by the tremendous oath I had taken, and which not the prospect of instant annihilation could induce me to break. Despairing at length of again seeing my adored wife, and forced by the pressing calls of nature to seek for sustenance, I quitted the wood, and wandered, unknowing whither till, exhausted with fatigue and grief, I sunk, almost in my last agonies, upon the earth. Some peasants passing, and perceiving my situation, humanely proffered their assistance. They conveyed me to their homely cottage, and nourished me with the produce of their honest labour. Their kindness was but ill repaid; a dangerous fever seized me, and confined me, an expensive burthen upon their hands. Alas! how often have I prayed for a termination of my wretched existence! I recovered slowly; and with what trifling property I had in my pocket rewarded my charitable benefactors, who, gratified and astonished at my liberality, followed me with their blessing. To divert the anguish of my mind, I undertook a pilgrimage to *Loretto*. My food by the way was some milk which I procured from the kind goatherds, and some coarse bread with which they supplied me. The sun was just sinking beneath the horizon, when I one evening threw myself on the ground, and taking from my wallet a few crusts, began to make my scanty meal, which I softened with my tears, and indulged myself in giving full vent to my grief. The stillness of the scene around me contributed to tranquillize my mind more than it had admitted of for some time past. I envied the lot of the apparently happy labourers; and comparing their state with mine, how agonising was the comparison. My thoughts were, however, soon diverted from my own sorrows, by the rustling of leaves behind me, and a voice exclaiming, ‘ help, help!’ I cast my eyes around, but could not perceive any thing. Again the same words were more distinctly repeated, though in a more feeble voice. I started from my seat, sought the spot from whence the sound proceeded, and discovered lying in a deep valley, some paces distant, a venerable figure. I endeavoured to raise him, but my efforts evidently gave him pain. I was at last successful, and I assisted him to the spot from which I had risen. The hermit (for such I conjectured him to be) renewed his acknowledge-

ments as soon as the power of articulation was restored, and entreated I would assist him to his cave, to which he showed the way. I complied, and was sorry to find that his attempt to walk increased the sprain which he had given his ankle. 'Alas!' said he, as we proceeded, 'what poor weak creatures we are. But for your fortunate arrival, I should in all probability have expired.' I felt happy in his society; the benignity of his countenance, and piety of his demeanor, insensibly interested me, and won me from my sorrows. In short, we agreed to share our fates together; and I, with no small satisfaction, took up my abode with the venerable *Austin*. We each, in turn, went to the neighbouring village, and procured from its generous inhabitants the means of subsistence. I continued, in his society, to drag on some months of comparative tranquillity, until my happiness was terminated by the death of my aged companion, who was seized with an apoplectic fit, and expired in our cell. The sight of his cold remains, and the dreariness of the solitude, which I was nevertheless averse to quit, preyed upon my mind, and brought on an intermitting delirium, which seemed daily to increase. All the satisfaction I enjoyed was in holding conversation with my departed (as I supposed) wife, and assuring her of the haste I was making to join her. In one of these paroxysms I was intruded upon by the worthy baron, to whom I owe all my present felicity—a felicity which amply repays all my past sufferings."

Thus ended the count a recital which, from the interest his auditors took in his fate, could not but greatly affect their sensibility. Unwilling to give further scope to gloomy retrospections, the relation of the countess's adventures was deferred till another opportunity; and the remainder of that evening was employed in arranging their future plans, among which the union of *Aphonso* and *Julia* was an affair of no small importance. The count and countess did not for a moment withhold their consent; and the baron with joy again renewed his, since every obstacle that had hitherto impeded it was happily removed. After an evening past in the truest domestic felicity, they each retired to their respective apartments, to enjoy a repose undisturbed by care. They met the next morning cheerful and happy; and, at their united request, the countess commenced her recital:—

"I am confident," said she, addressing the count, "I need not attempt to describe the emotions I experienced on receiving the account of your death, which our dear *Aphonso* has already explained. By your own feelings, you may judge of mine. The purpose of *Fernando* was, however, defeated; for the idea of your being no more, served to strengthen rather than abate my aversion to him. I spurned his proposals of an honourable alliance; and, with horror and detestation in my looks, accused him of your murder, and demanded justice. He turned pale; his lips quivered. 'Tis well, madam,' exclaimed he;

'you may, perhaps, repent this conduct. I now leave to your choice; either accept my hand, my heart, and fortune, or a prison for life.' I smiled contemptuously, and hesitated not to prefer the latter. His fury was indescribable, and he took special care to embitter my choice with the most poignant anguish. My infant was torn from my arms, and I left in total ignorance of his fate. Day after day I was visited by my inhuman jailer, and my child offered as the reward of my compliance with his wishes. What a trial! I have since wondered how my reason held under such complicated misery. But for the kind attention of my faithful *Junette*, I should inevitably have sunk under the accumulation of distresses which I endured. The wretch, fearful that even her soothing might contribute to strengthen my resolution against him, caused her to be forced from me, and confined in a separate apartment. He regularly brought me my allotted portion of food, and continued to persecute me with his abhorred proposals. Driven to desperation, I should certainly have put a period to my miserable existence, had the means been in my power. I was reserved for a better fate. I had thrown myself one day upon my knees, imploring heaven to relieve me, when I was roused from my devotion by a noise at the further end of the room; and before I could distinguish the spot from whence it proceeded, beheld *Junette* at my side. She entreated me not to be alarmed; and pointing to an aperture in the wainscot, caused by a sliding panel through which she had entered, entreated me to change dresses with her. Ignorant of her intentions, I acquiesced; after which she desired me to secure whatever I had left of value, and follow her in silence. All I had was a few jewels then in my pocket, and my mother's picture. I immediately followed her through the panel, and proceeded along a dark narrow passage, almost breathless with agitation. She suddenly stopped; and stooping to the ground, entreated me to assist her in raising a trap-door, by means of a ring fastened to it. We succeeded, and descended a winding flight of stone steps, so much impaired by time as to render them almost impassable. I trembled violently, and followed her with the greatest difficulty. She entreated me to exert all my resolution, by which means alone I could possibly effect my escape. We reached the bottom, and I found myself in a large vaulted chamber, the damp of which was so excessive, that water dripped from the roof in many places, and the noisome air of the place almost overcame me. I entreated *Junette* to stop a little; and seated myself, almost incapable of proceeding, on a broken fragment of stone. 'For heaven's sake, *Junette*,' exclaimed I, 'when did you discover this subterraneous passage?'—'I will acquaint you, madam,' said she, seating herself by my side, 'as we are now in a place of safety for the present. You may perhaps recollect that it was from count *Fernando's* recommendation that you first took me into your service; but I believe you are ignorant how unworthy I was of

your kindness. You seem surpris'd, madam. I have no longer any concealments from you. All I can say in my vindication is, that I have ever had the most sincere attachment to you. I early fell a victim to the seducing arts of *Fernando*. In consequence of my imprudence I was renounced by my poor mother, who fell a sacrifice to her daughter's crime. Deluded by a promise of marriage, I sought my betrayer, informed him of my situation, and entreated him to procure me some place of security. He no more deceived me with false promises; but told me, that if I could obtain any place during my approaching illness, I should then be received as an attendant upon his sister-in-law, whom he represented as a worthy and amiable lady. Indeed, madam, I little knew his designs upon you at that time. But I fear I tire your patience. My sister received me, where I staid the necessary time. My child died, and I was received by you, as *Fernando* had planned. How faithfully I have served you, I am now about to prove. He took me from you, as you know, and confined me in a small apartment adjoining his own, the door of which was concealed by a portrait of himself; and he did not think I knew of any other communication. Fortunately, I was acquainted with the passage which, without stairs, goes upon a gradual ascent to the apartment where you were confined; the entrance to it was made of black crape, and fixed so artificially as to appear nothing more than the back of the chimney."

*Alphonso* here explained this to be the mysterious passage which he had found in his search with *Philip*, and which had hitherto so much perplexed him. The countess then proceeded:—

"Through this passage," continued *Junette*, "I groped upon my hands and knees, at a time when I knew his daily visit to me would not take place for some time. I had proceeded a considerable way, when my hand struck against the large ring which secures the trap-door. I pulled with all my strength; my efforts were attended with success, and I discovered this spot. Farther on is a burial place, the iron gate of which if with my assistance you can climb, you may make your escape into the wood without being discovered. My dress will effectually disguise you; and if you keep the path to the right, it will lead you to the cottage where my sister dwells; and she will put you in a method to discover an asylum." I demanded why she would not accompany me. Tears filled her eyes. "No, madam," she replied, "you will be much better able to escape alone; beside which, I hope, by staying, to awaken remorse in count *Fernando*, and perhaps influence him to do me justice. If not, I have no wish but to die by his hands." All my remonstrances against this strange resolution were ineffectual; she was determined to return. Poor girl! I sincerely lament her unimely fate. She conducted me to the gate in the wood, which with some difficulty I climbed. I embraced her affec-

tionately, and we parted for ever. I pursued the path she had pointed out, and fled with all the swiftness in my power, looking back every moment in fear of a pursuit. I reached the cottage about sun-set; all was profoundly still; the doors and windows were old, and the moss growing on the threshold too fatally indicated that it was uninhabited. I pushed the door with my feeble hands; it opened, and the bare walls showed the extent of my misfortunes. I flung myself, overcome with fatigue and disappointment, upon the floor, and in that deplorable state would have welcomed death as a friend. I had, according to my own calculation, already travelled six miles, and was incapable of proceeding further, even to seek a shelter for the night. In the morning I again commenced my solitary way, unknowing whither; nor could the urgency of my situation overcome my dread of pursuit. Every footstep or carriage I heard approaching, I hurried out of the way, heeding neither hedges nor ditches as obstacles. How I supported the fatigue, is incredible; it proves what the human frame is capable of enduring when excited by necessity. I was on the point of expiring, when I reached the cave of the venerable father already described; and where our good *Philip* first gained intelligence of me. His kindness preserved my life. When pursuing his directions I reached the convent of *St. Agnes*, I easily procured admission. My rank and misfortunes won the heart of the amiable mother, and she treated me with the tenderest care. My hopes, though vague, of again seeing my son, induced me for a long time to resist her earnest entreaties to become one of the sisterhood; till, overcome by her persuasions, I at length consented; fortunately, I had so long withstood her solicitations. I must not, however, omit to say, that the loss of my mother's portrait was considered by me as the greatest of misfortunes; it has, nevertheless, ultimately tended to restore me to this dear circle."

The countess ceased, and received the congratulations of the party, who were mutually delighted at the *eclaircissement*. They all joined in lamenting the fate of the unfortunate *Junette*; and *Philip*, who had been an old pretender to her favour, was so much concerned, that he vowed never again to think any more of matrimony.

The next object of their care was the plans for their future establishment. *Alfonso* and *Julia* were publicly betrothed to each other, and it was agreed that the whole party should return to *De Courville Castle*, for the purpose of solemnizing their nuptials. This plan was carried into execution. The happy and amiable pair were united, and received the full reward of their filial piety in the approbation and pleasure of their parents. The count and countess *De Courville* purchased an elegant chateau, near the castle; which, by its vicinity, proved a desirable residence for the new married pair. Thither they retired, after a month spent in the most splendid festivity, ac-

accompanied by the old baron; peaceful prospects were again restored to the poor tenantry of the count, who had been so long neglected; the rents were collected, and the grounds cultivated; and, in the happiness of his dependants, the count beheld the reward of his attention. *Felix* was pardoned and discharged, not without receiving the means of providing himself with a comfortable subsistence from his master, who was unwilling, by leaving him totally destitute, to impel him to the commission of greater crimes.

The baron did not long survive the marriage of his daughter. At his death he bequeathed one-third of his estate to *Julia*; the remainder, with his title, to *Alphonso* and his male issue for ever. The acquisition of fortune or title was not in their eyes a compensation for the loss of such an indulgent parent, and they regretted his death with unfeigned sorrow.

*Philip*, become respectable from his recent services and advanced age, was rewarded by *Alphonso* with a handsome independence, yet chose to continue with his master and mistress (which he did) till his death.

The count and countess continued happy spectators of their children's felicity, and had the delight of beholding an amiable offspring rising around them, and reflecting their virtues. Taught by experience, the first lesson they instilled into their youthful minds was to subdue their passions, as the most essential means of obtaining happiness and self-approbation. With joy they perceived their instructions were not ineffectual; and, as their minds and persons expanded, their principles of piety and virtue grew more powerful.

When the count and countess *de Courville*, stricken with years, sunk peaceful into their graves, they had the satisfaction to leave behind them children such as the fondest parents could desire—a family united among themselves by the strongest ties of duty and affection. Though education in a great measure stamps the man, virtue is within the reach of all; and although the path may be rugged, the reward is sure.

THE

## ENGLISH EARL;

or the History of

## ROBERT FITZWALTER.

IN the beginning of the twelfth century lived *Robert Fitzwalter*, renowned for his skill in arms and unbounded liberality, at a rich and hereditary estate in the north of *England*; where his wife having died in childbed, he dedicated the remainder of his days to the education of his children, which were two sons, and a daughter, the innocent cause of her mother's death.

*Robert* (for that was the name of the elder brother) had attained his twentieth year, *Edwin* his eighteenth, and the blooming *Amanda* her sixteenth, at the period when this history commences; at which moment the dispositions of the young *Fitzwalter* began to appear in the form they were to assume when arrived at maturity. That of *Robert's* was a perfect emblem of his father's, an union of loyalty, honour, and benevolence. *Edwin's*, on the contrary, was formed for perfidy. Devoid of courage, he was at once ambitious, cruel, and aspiring; though at the same time that he tyrannized over his vassals, he wore, in the presence of his father, the mask of humility and innocence; while *Amanda*, possess of charms that would have graced the *British* throne, united to a virtuous disposition a kind and benevolent behaviour toward her inferiors.

A considerable time now elapsed without any particular event occurring worthy of remark; during which period they led a life of uninterrupted happiness; but, alas! the peaceful laurel was now banished from the *British* shore; and *Fitzwalter* having received a summons to attend his royal master, had but just time to pack up what necessaries he wanted; which done, he left his children in the care of a trusty servant, *Gregory*; and taking a hasty leave, mounted his horse, and set off, followed by a few attendants, to the *British* court.

The moments now passed on heavily at the castle, at least with *Robert* and the fair *Amanda*, to whom the absence of the earl their father seemed an endless source of affliction; when one evening *Robert* having rode out, as it was his usual custom, gave way to reflexion; and ruminating on the uncertainty of his father's fate, wandered to a considerable distance from the castle; and at length, on recovering from his reverie, found himself in the midst of a gloomy forest, with no other food than the berries, or (as the night was fast approaching) any other bed than the grass whereon he might repose his weary limbs, being extremely tired. He, however, alighted from his horse, and fastening it to a tree, he threw himself on the grass, where he slept quietly till after day-break, when he was awaked by the loud discourse of some people near him. Alarmed at this circumstance, he instantly arose, and looked cautiously among the trees; but, to his infinite surprise, he could discover no one, although he still heard the voices of men as disputing. At length, upon listening more attentively, he heard one of them exclaim, "she belongs to me. I first discovered her, and in spite of all the furies I will have her."

The idea of a lady being in danger instantly roused the courage which had hitherto lain dormant in the breast of *Robert*, who immediately mounting his horse, rode toward the place from whence the sound proceeded; when, on turning a clump of trees, he discovered two armed men endeavouring to force a lady of incomparable beauty. Enraged at their perfidy, he rode up to them, and in a tone of fury demanded them to

desist. The ruffians, startled at this unexpected encounter, quitted their hold, but no sooner perceived the youthful countenance of their opponent, than they laughed at his temerity, and seizing their trembling captive, were about to renew their infernal purpose; which was no sooner perceived by *Robert*, than he flew on them with the fury of a lion, and at one blow lay the ruffian who stood nearest to him at his feet; which his companion no sooner saw, than he fell on his knees, and implored his mercy, which *Robert* instantly granted, on condition of his making an ample confession of their intentions against the lady, which the ruffian did in the following words:—

“ ’Tis now three years since the decease of count *Ferdinand*, in whose service *Hugo* (the ruffian whom you have just slain) and myself have lived ever since the days of our childhood. He left his only son *Edward* sole heir to the castle, and the vast possessions belonging to it, which are situated on the borders of this forest. Used to a life of idleness and debauchery, we had long viewed the charms of the lady *Elfrida* his sister with an ardent desire of possessing them; and conceiving this event propitious to our wishes, we waited with impatience for a favourable opportunity to effect our purpose, which did not take place till this morning, when, under the pretence of attending her in her morning ride, we decoyed her into this forest, where but for your providential interposition, she had fell a victim to our brutal wishes.”

Pleased with the sincerity and remorse which the surviving ruffian displayed in the courie of his narration, *Robert* not only pardoned, but took him home to the castle, and shortly after placed him in his service. His next care was to unbind the lady, who in the most courteous manner returned him thanks for her delivery; when having placed her on his horse behind him, he conveyed her to the castle of her brother, where, as count *Edward* was gone in search of her, although *Elfrida* would have had him wait his return, *Robert* partook of a slight repast; and then taking leave, set out on his journey homeward, followed by his new attendant.

During his absence from the castle, every one was anxious for his life, excepting *Edwin*, who, envious of his brother's virtue, was never more delighted than when he thought him exposed to danger. Nevertheless, he was among the foremost to welcome his return to the castle; while the unsuspecting *Robert* seemed to derive new pleasure from this fresh instance of his brother's affection, who no sooner heard the adventure of the day related, than he broke out into the most extravagant encomiums of his brother's valour; and in the evening, to crown his hypocrisy, retired to his chamber, offering up a thousand prayers for the preservation of his beloved life.

He no sooner reached his apartment, than he gave way to the natural malignity of his temper, and began to reflect on the most probable means of destroying the life of one whom he



looked on as a stumbling block in his way. 'Twas some time before he could hit on any thing that he might depend on, 'till reflecting on the late adventure, the new attendant of *Robert* struck him as a proper instrument for his purpose. With this idea he retired to rest; and seizing the first opportunity of conversing with *Jaques* (for that was the name of the ruffian) alone the next morning, he, by offering him a large reward, and promising him his protection, brought the half-repentant villain to his purpose. This point was no sooner settled, than they proceeded to consult on the likeliest means of putting their plan into execution; when it was agreed that they should meet in the gallery-chamber about midnight, and from thence enter the chamber of *Robert*, and put a final period to his existence; after which they separated, promising to meet again in the evening. The appointed hour at length arrived, and the perfidious *Edwin* no sooner found the castle buried in silence, than he repaired to the gallery-chamber, where he found his base associate waiting his arrival. They immediately drew their daggers, and stealing along with cautious steps, at length reached the chamber-door of *Robert*—'twas fast. "Vengeance and fury!" exclaimed *Edwin* in a rage, "our plan is foiled, and the puny boy must still live to cross the path of all my earthly joys." So saying, he left the spot, followed by *Jaques*, as he durst not force the door, for fear of awaking his brother, whose valorous arm he well knew he was not able to withstand.

Several days now passed over in perfect tranquillity; during which period *Edwin* and his perfidious colleague had frequent meetings; and at length *Edwin* invited his brother to sup with him; when after supper, *Jaques*, who was the only servant that attended them, having set three goblets of wine upon the table, he was invited by *Edwin* to sit; which *Robert* readily agreeing to, *Edwin* took a goblet in his hand, and drank the speedy return of the earl their father, in which he was readily accompanied by *Robert*. *Jaques* followed the example, and emptied his goblet at a draught, but had not done so long before he grew pale, and uttering a groan, fell from his chair in the agonies of death; which was no sooner perceived by *Edwin*, than he exclaimed, "the die is cast, and this place must no longer afford me an asylum." So saying, he rushed from the chamber, and leaving the castle, wandered no one knew whither. In the mean time *Robert* leaned over the dying ruffian with a mixture of pity and surprise in his countenance, the latter of which was considerably augmented when *Jaques*, in a faint voice, entreated him to be on his guard, adding that the poison which he had drank in mistake was intended by his brother *Edwin* for him; at which words he gave a groan, and expired. *Robert* then left the room; and ordering some of the servants to take care of the body, retired to his apartment, to give vent to the grief which this discovery of his brother's perfidy had occasioned.

A considerable time now elapsed without *Robert* being able

to gain the smallest intelligence of the fugitive *Edwin*, although he used every means in his power to discover his retreat; toward the latter end of which period, the earl, who, as we before mentioned, had been absent at the wars, having arrived from the Continent, landed on his native shore, and immediately set out for the castle of his ancestors; when, on his entering a gloomy forest within a few miles thereof, he was suddenly attacked by a party of robbers, the foremost of whom he, with one blow of his battle-axe, laid dead at his feet; but at length, being overpowered by numbers, he was forced to submit; when having bound him hand and foot, they laid him across his horse, and then conducted him, through the most intricate parts of the forest, until they arrived at the mouth of a spacious cave, when their captain ordered him to be taken from his horse, and carried into the cave. The entrance to it was dark, and so extremely narrow, that only two men could go in a-breast. The robbers alighted, and taking him from his horse, led him through a long gloomy passage, when they at length entered a spacious cavern illuminated with a vast quantity of lamps, where he was loaded with chains, and confined in a small cavity of the rock; while the banditti, after having divided their booty, gave way to mirth and revelry, making the hollow cave resound with their licentious cries, till their brain at length becoming distracted through intoxication, the scene was changed to one of riot and confusion, nor ended till, rendered totally insensible, they sunk into the arms of sleep, leaving the ill-fated earl at leisure to reflect on the horridness of his situation.

The sun had been risen some time before any of the banditti were stirring; when at length one of the robbers entered the cell of the captive earl, bearing a small basket of provision and a pitcher of water, followed by his captain. The beaver of the one who bore the provision was up, while that of the other was down, as indeed he scarcely ever had it otherwise, seeming always apprehensive of a discovery. The robber had no sooner set down his load than, upon a signal from his captain, he retired: when the captain, addressing himself to his prisoner, promised him his liberty, on condition of his becoming one of their society; and on the other hand perpetual bondage, in case of a refusal. The earl heard him to the end with silent indignation; and upon being pressed for his answer, replied, with undaunted firmness, that he would sooner bare his bosom to their sabres than submit to so infamous a proposal. Enraged at his fortitude, the captain half drew his sword, with a design of dispatching his captive, till recollecting that severity, and a suspension of his daily food, might induce him in time to yield to his proposal, he put up his sabre; and after bidding him consider of the terms he had offered, quitted the cell, venting a thousand curses on him for his obstinacy.

The earl was no sooner alone than, instead of giving way to

that affliction which his present hopeless situation might have been supposed to occasion, began to think on the most probable means of making his escape; but though he formed many schemes, yet they all still proved abortive, for want of some one beside himself to assist in the execution of them; but fortune, however, at length favoured him, at a time when he least expected it, and presented a mode for his escape which he had never before thought of. One of the robbers, more humane than the rest of his comrades, had for some time, notwithstanding the orders of his captain, regularly visited the captive earl at midnight, bringing with him on those occasions an ample supply of such necessaries as he thought the earl might stand in need of. To this man then the earl at length ventured to express a desire of once more enjoying that liberty which he was then deprived of. The robber sighed; while a tear of pity ran down his hollow visage; and muttering something against the cruelty of his captain, was about to leave the cell, when the earl called him back, and at length, on promising him a large reward, succeeded in gaining him over to his purpose. They then separated till the next evening, when, meeting at the usual hour of midnight, they, by their joint exertions, contrived to work a passage through a small hole in the cell, which they had now enlarged sufficiently to admit one person to pass through at a time; when, taking advantage of the banditti being engaged in their nocturnal revels, they stole forth unperceived; and, after several hours smart walking, arrived at the extremity of the forest; when perceiving a light at some small distance before them, they directed their steps toward it, and at length found themselves at the foot of a draw-bridge belonging to an ancient castle, which, to their no little surprise, was still down. They immediately crossed the moat; and on their arrival at the castle-gate, the earl gave three loud knocks, when it was immediately opened by the porter, who demanded his business; to which question the earl courteously replied, by telling him that he was returned from the wars, and having lost his way, was nearly worn out with fatigue; therefore humbly solicited a night's lodging under the roof of his noble master. The porter retired, to deliver the message to his lord; and returning in a few moments after, conducted them into his presence, who, after a few questions concerning the general issue of the war, ordered him to be conducted to his chamber, and his attendant to be taken care of.

Refreshed with the peaceful slumber he had enjoyed, the earl rose betimes the next morning, and no sooner heard that count *Edward* was come down (for the castle wherein he then was belonged to the noble brother of *Elfrida*), than he repaired to his study; and, after returning him his thanks for the asylum he had afforded him, took his leave, and with his attendant mounting a couple of horses, which the count had caused to be provided for them, set out for *Alnwick Castle*, elated with the

pleasing idea of once more beholding the youthful scions of his house. As their horses were good, they reached the desired haven about noon, where the earl's arrival spread a general joy over the faces of all the inhabitants of the castle, while *Robert* and *Amanda* rushed into his arms, and almost smothered him with their caresses. The first emotions of joy were barely subsided, when the earl missing *Edwin*, demanded the reason of his absence, and was no sooner made acquainted with the cause thereof (although *Robert* did it with the greatest precaution), than he fainted away, and was conveyed in a state of insensibility to his chamber, where, upon his coming to his senses, he was attacked by a violent fever, which rendered it impossible for him to quit the room for several weeks. At length time, and the tender assiduity of his daughter the fair *Amanda*, removing in some measure the affliction he laboured under, he was enabled once more to rejoin his two remaining children in the breakfast parlour.

The earl was no sooner recovered, than it was agreed that *Robert* should set out in quest of his ill-fated brother; and as a further inducement toward the latter discovering himself, it was also settled that *Robert* should wear on that occasion the armour of *Jaques*, as they did not doubt but *Edwin* would, on seeing him so disguised, come from his concealment of his own accord, concluding it was no other than *Jaques* himself, and that he had by some means discharged the poison he had swallowed. The next morning being appointed for the journey, *Robert* mounted his courser, and set out in quest of *Edwin*. He travelled the best part of the day without meeting with any adventure worthy of remarking. At length he found himself on a wild common, without the least vestige of a human being, or any of their dwellings, the earth and sky being the only objects that met his attention wheresoever he turned his eyes. His appetite now began to grow keen; and, although possessed of money, he had no means of satisfying the cravings of nature; but what added still more to his misfortune was, that the night advancing very fast, he began to be apprehensive that he must take up his lodging among the furze that grew thereabout in great abundance. However, as his fortitude ever remained unshaken amid the greatest danger, so it inspired him with fresh vigour on this occasion. Offering a prayer to heaven for protection, he clapped spurs to his horse, and directing his course at random across the common, arrived about twilight at a small village which stood on the skirts thereof. He rode for some time before he discovered a convenient place where he might procure that refreshment he stood so much in need of. At length he perceived a small cottage, the door of which was standing open. He immediately alighted, and fastening his horse to the rails, walked into it, where he found a decent middle-aged woman sitting by a good turf fire kindled on the hearth, who started at his sudden appearance, but was no

sooner made acquainted with the cause of his intrusion, than she, with that true spirit of hospitality which is ever to be found among the *British* peasantry, told him he was welcome to such scanty fare and lodging as her humble roof afforded. *Robert* bowed his thanks, and seated himself by the fire.

He had not been long thus comfortably situated before the husband entered with a large basket of provisions, who no sooner discovered a stranger sitting by the fire, than he exclaimed, "Hey day! who have we got here?"—"A poor traveller," replied *Jeanette* (for that was the name of the female peasant), who having lost his way, is almost perished with cold and hunger."—"Then, if that is the case, wife," replied *Andrew*, "I think the contents of my basket will soon settle the business, when aided by a can or two of our best ale mulled." He then emptied the contents on the table, saying, "see, *Jeanette*, what the hospitality of the count has afforded us." Finding the peasants begin to grow warm in their encomiums on their benefactor, *Robert* ventured to ask them, in a careless manner, his name, and what family he was descended from; upon which *Andrew* gave him the desired information in the following words:—

"We were both servants to count *Ferdinand*, in which situation we led a life of uninterrupted happiness, 'till, worn out with age and infirmity, our good old master died, but not without leaving a small annuity to such of his servants as were either grown old, or had married in his service. We were among the latter number; and no sooner saw our benefactor deposited in the family vault, than we retired, with the permission of our young lord *Edward*, who succeeded his father in his title and estates, to this cottage, where we have lived ever since, while our situation is rendered still more comfortable through the hospitality of the count, who not only furnishes us with the surplus of his table, but frequently throws in a small sum of money into the bargain."

The peasant then proceeded to inform his guest of the attempt on lady *Elfrida*, together with her being rescued by a strange knight, who brought her back to the castle in triumph. *Robert* smiled at the encomiums with which this latter part of the story was interlarded by *Andrew*, who little thought he was addressing himself to the identical knight he had been speaking of; and therefore interpreting the smile to be one of approbation, he proceeded with his narration, as follows:—

"Several months now elapsed without any thing happening to disturb the tranquillity of the inhabitants of the castle, when one morning the lady *Elfrida* was discovered to be missing. Distracted at this intelligence, the count sent out his servants in all directions; but, alas! all their endeavours proved useless, and, in spite of the most diligent inquiry, they have not been able to obtain the smallest tidings of her since."

The cottager here ended his narrative; and as the night was

far advanced, they retired to their respective apartments, where *Robert* spent the hours in restless uncertainty, as to the fate of his brother and the absent lady. The day therefore had no sooner made its appearance in the east, than he left his chamber; and having taken leave of his host, and made him accept of a trifle for the trouble he had given him on the preceding night, he mounted his horse, and resumed his journey, which he continued 'till the evening, when coming to a vast forest, he resolved, as there was no habitation near, to spend the night under one of the most shady trees. With this view he alighted; and fastening his horse to a tree, seated himself on the ground; where, overcome with fatigue, he soon sunk into a profound slumber, from which he did not wake 'till the next morning, when, to his no small surprise, he found himself deprived of his sword, and chained down in a dark and gloomy cavern. 'Twas in vain that he endeavoured to account for so strange an event. The more he reflected, the more his ideas became confused; and he therefore resolved to leave the unravelling of it to time. In this situation he remained several days without seeing any person except the robber, who brought him his scanty allowance of bread and water; during which period he could not hit upon any certain method of making his escape, 'till the idea struck him, that the banditti were generally so covetous after money, that they would barter the lives of their dearest friends for the sake thereof; when he resolved to try the effects of bribery on his keeper. Accordingly, the next day, after some previous conversation, he broke his purpose to the robber; but, to his infinite astonishment, found the fellow proof against the bait; who with a stern air left the dungeon, telling him he had not yet learnt to betray his trust.

Chagrined and disappointed, *Robert* threw himself on his bed of straw, in an agony of despair; when he felt something hard under him among the litter. This awakened his curiosity; and he stretched out his hand, in order to discover what it was; when, to his infinite horror, it proved to be a dagger; and 'on its blade and dudgeon gouts of blood;' while the rust which was on it declared it to have lain there for many years. As soon as he recovered from his surprise, *Robert* instantly resolved to make use of it in freeing himself from the ignominious bondage he was held in. With this view he frequently struck it against the projecting parts of the rock; and having notched it sufficiently for his purpose, attempted to file off his chains; which at length, after a deal of labour, he happily effected. He had just freed himself from his disgraceful manacles, when perceiving two of the banditti approaching, he plunged the dagger in the breast of the foremost, who gave a groan, and expired; while the second fell on his knees, and implored his mercy; which *Robert* granted, after having made him swear on the sword which he had taken from the fallen robber to conduct him in safety from the abode of the banditti,

at the same time promising him a situation in his family for life. The robber then, as a token of his sincerity, surrendered up his sword; having done which, he immediately conducted *Robert* through several turnings, 'till they came to a flight of stone steps, descending which they passed on through a long passage, illumined here and there with the glimmering rays of a solitary lamp, 'till they at last found their progress impeded by a large door covered with black. At that moment a shriek from within was heard by *Robert*, who immediately with the fury of a famished lion (although the robber endeavoured to prevent him) rushed against the door. It flew into a thousand pieces, and presented to his view, in the person of the captain of the banditti, his long-lost brother *Edwin*, who was then in the action of forcing *Elfrida* to his wishes. The unexpected appearance of *Robert*, whom *Edwin* thought fast bound in an obscure dungeon, nearly petrified him with astonishment. Incapable of resistance, he suffered himself to be disarmed by his brother. He was then, together with the lady *Elfrida*, led forth by *Robert*, who, with the assistance of his new ally, brought them out of the cavern; and taking some of the horses belonging to the sleeping banditti, arrived in safety at an adjacent village, where he put up at an inn; and having ordered the lady *Elfrida* to be taken care of, he took his brother *Edwin* to another apartment; where, after many gentle remonstrances, he at length prevailed on him to give the following account of his transactions since the time of his sudden disappearance from the castle:—

“ You recollect, no doubt,” said *Edwin*, in a tone of seeming penitence, “ the distractedness of my behaviour, when, on finding the fatal mistake my associate had committed, I left the chamber so abruptly; nor need I add, since I make no doubt but he informed you of it, 'twas my intention to poison you, had not providence so happily frustrated the wickedness of my design. Grown frantic at the disappointment, I wandered I knew not whither, and at length found myself in the midst of a gloomy forest, where I was immediately surrounded by a strong party of banditti, who took me prisoner; while I, regardless of my fate, suffered them to lead me to their cavern without making the least resistance; when after a few days captivity, their captain having been slain, they made me the offer of succeeding him; which, as it was consonant with the natural malignity of my temper, I readily accepted. In this situation, I treated such captives as chance threw in our way with the utmost severity, 'till at length, in the course of my rambles, I met with my father returning from the wars, whom I took (after a strong resistance) prisoner. 'Twas my intent to imprison him for life; but fate ordained it otherwise; for one of the robbers being drawn over to his interest, they took the opportunity, while the banditti were buried in sleep, to escape. 'Tis impossible to describe the rage with which my bosom was first in-

spired when I made the discovery; but it was soon abated when, on the ensuing evening, a party of my desperados brought in the lady *Elfrida*, whom they had seized while she (as was her usual custom) was taking her evening ride in the purlieus of the castle. I instantly became a captive to her charms; and having ordered my comrades to retire, without any further preamble, bade her prepare to gratify the desires she had inspired me with. To this she answered only with a look of indignation; and upon my proceeding to force her, repulsed me with scorn. Enraged at her firmness, I called two of the banditti, and ordered them to convey her to the black chamber, adding, that if she still remained inflexible, she should remain there for life, with no other nourishment than bread and water. From that time I acted as her gaoler, and regularly carried the scanty pittance to her dungeon, where she still continued to treat my offers with disdain. Not long after, you were brought in by some of the banditti, who had surprised you while sleeping in the forest. At first, owing to the armour you was disguised in, I thought *Jaques* had by some means escaped the effects of the poison; but when, on raising the beaver, I discovered your well-known features, my bosom thrilled with savage delight; and I caused you, while yet sleeping, to be conveyed to one of the dampest cells, and heavily loaded with irons; which done, I exulted when I reflected on the disagreeable sensations it must occasion, when you should awake, and find yourself in so terrible a situation. Last night I had fixed for the full completion of my designs, which were the possession of the object of my wishes, and the termination of your existence, whom I looked on as an inseparable bar to the ambitious views I had formed of attaining that rank and title which of right belongs to you alone. The result of last night's adventure you are fully acquainted with, and I have only to add, that whatever may be your decree, I am ready to submit."

Here *Edwin* finished his narration; when *Robert*, after promising his brother forgiveness, in case of his reforming, retired to rest, leaving him in the care of a couple of rustics, whom he had hired for the purpose.

The next morning, after having taken a little refreshment, *Robert* left the inn, together with the lady *Elfrida*, and his captive brother, attended by the robber and the two rustics, and resumed their journey. After travelling a few miles, he was suddenly attacked by an armed knight. The contest was for some time maintained with equal fury on both sides, till victory decided in favour of *Robert*, who at length threw his antagonist from his horse, so much wounded as to be unable to rise. *Robert* instantly alighted, and raised the stranger's beaver, in order to discover who it was that had so rudely assailed him, when *Elfrida* exclaimed, with a shriek of horror, "it is my brother!" and immediately fainted in the arms of the attendants. *Robert* then caused the wounded knight to be replaced on his horse;



and as soon as the lady *Elfrida* recovered, the whole cavalcade moved on slowly to *Alnwick Castle*, whither, as it was but a few miles distant, they arrived soon after in perfect safety; when *Robert* having seen his guests conveyed to their respective chambers, inquired of *Amanda*, (whom he met coming to welcome his return) of his father's health during his absence; but, alas! that pattern of *English* hospitality and benevolence was no more. Grief for the perfidy of the fugitive *Edwin*, and the long absence of *Robert*, whom he concluded to have fallen a victim to his desire of recovering a long-lost brother, had put a period to an existence already weakened by a fit of illness. 'Twas some time before *Robert* could recover from the shock this sudden intelligence had given him. However, he no sooner regained his spirits, than he ordered *Amanda* to attend on *Elfrida*, while he sent for *Edwin*, to inform him of the fatal event.

*Edwin* entered the chamber of his brother in a state of sullen despondency; which *Robert* perceiving, broke the circumstance of the earl's death to him by degrees. *Edwin* changed colour, and was about to leave the place; which *Robert* perceiving, pulled him gently back by the sleeve. He sat down, and trembled, overwhelmed with confusion; when *Robert* addressed him as follows:—

“ Though you have been ungrateful hitherto, yet I am resolved to bury the past in oblivion. You are still my brother; and although the death of our father without a will has left me sole heir to his vast possessions, yet, in hopes of your future amendment, I here give up the half of them in your behalf. Go, and sin no more.”

These last words of *Robert* struck him to the heart. He attempted to speak, but his tongue refused its office, and he left the chamber, thunderstruck at the unexpected kindness of his brother.

Several days now passed without any thing occurring to disturb the tranquillity of *Alnwick Castle*, during which period the deceased *Fitzwalter's* remains were deposited in the family vault, whither they were attended by *Robert*, *Amanda*, and *Edwin*; when the grief of the latter seemed to exceed, if possible, that of the afflicted *Robert* and his sister; and indeed the whole of his behaviour for some time after seemed to promise a total reformation. One evening the count, being sufficiently recovered from his wounds, took an airing on horseback with *Robert* in the neighbourhood of the castle; during which excursion, the count informed the latter, that he should not have attacked him so violently, had not the armour he wore led him to imagine 'twas *Jaques*, who, with another ruffian, had attempted before to carry off his sister, when they were so providentially prevented by a strange knight, who had seen her to the castle, and never was heard of after.

*Robert* heard him to the end in silence; and then, with modest confusion in his countenance, not only owned the share he had

in that adventure, but also the impression which the lady *Elfrida* had made on his heart. This confidence was repaid by a similar declaration on the part of the count, in favour of *Amanda*.

They then agreed to break their minds to the fair objects of their affection; in which state of mind they were returning to the castle; when *Robert* found himself attacked by a knight in black armour, who raising his ponderous battle-axe, was about to aim a blow at his head, which, but for the timely interposition of *Edward* (who perceiving his purpose, drew his sword, and sheathed it in his body), would have cleft him in two. The unknown knight fell; and having placed him on one of their horses, they conveyed him, in a state of insensibility, to the castle; where, upon their arrival, they immediately stript him of his armour; when, to their infinite surprise and horror, the sable knight proved to be—*Edwin*. They bound up his wounds, and having conveyed him to his bed, administered a cordial to him; when opening his eyes, in a faint voice he implored his brother's forgiveness, adding, that nothing but death could have prevented his endeavouring to possess a title; which he had determined on obtaining, even at the expence of his future happiness; "but, 'twill not be," exclaimed the perfidious *Edwin*; "and I die convinced that providence ever shields the virtuous from the malicious designs of their enemies." So saying, he uttered a deep groan, and expired, leaving a dreadful example of that vengeance which ever hangs over the heads of those who endeavour to attain their ambitious views by the murder of such as stand between them and their wishes.

The next day, the remains of the misguided *Edwin* were deposited among those of his ancestors; and the time of mourning for the deceased earl was no sooner expired, than the count and *Robert* (who had first gained the consent of their fair mistresses) were married to *Amanda* and *Elfrida*, with whom they led a life of uninterrupted happiness; while their hospitality and benevolence gained them at once both the love and esteem of all around them.



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The first part of the history is a general account of the state of the world at the beginning of the world. It is divided into three parts: the first part is a general account of the world at the beginning of the world; the second part is a general account of the world at the beginning of the world; the third part is a general account of the world at the beginning of the world.