



THE
SOLITARY CASTLE,

A ROMANCE

OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

By the Author of
THE VILLAGE OF MARTINDALE.

Si quisquam offendatur et sibi vindicet,
non habet quod exposulet cum eo qui scrip-
sit: Ipse, si volet, secum agat injuriam, ut
potè sui proditor, qui declaravit hoc ad se
propriè pertinere.

ERASMUS,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

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P R E F A C E.

THE characters, in the following narrative, though highly coloured, are taken from the life. Those who may think the principal figure has been touched with too free a pencil, are desired to recollect that it is the portrait of Superstition,—a subject which even Fuseli, with all his creative genius, could not have treated too extravagantly:—nor could Bunbury himself have stretched it into caricature. It

Has been said that men are capable of any extravagancy, when once their shackled reason is led in triumph by fancy and prejudice. Yet such men, with all their absurdities, generally pass unnoticed;—so true is it, that we read every day with astonishment things which we see every day without surprise.

T H E

SOLITARY CASTLE.

C H A P T E R I

THE RETREAT.

“**O**F all earthly things a ring is the most dangerous: It is pregnant with incantations, magic, forceries, and every other species of diabolical

art and invention. By what was the mistress of the great Charlemagne enchanted, but by a gold ring? And is it not upon record that the Emperor himself was equally bewitched by this fatal machine of mischief, 'till, at length, he caused it to be thrown into a pond, around which however he continued to wander with a pleasing sort of melancholy, even to the last hour of his existence. Therefore beware—I conjure thee, Andrew, if thou hast any regard

to thy future welfare, touch it not."

Such was the solemn admonition of Captain Gunthorpe to his faithful domestic; who, while he was stubbing up the last lingering roots of two magnificent rows of oaks, hoary with age and shattered by lightening, that from time immemorial had adorned the court-yard of the Captain's solitary mansion, discovered among the twisted fibres a ring, which, to trace its origin

by its rust-eaten surface and extraordinary size, had probably been formed for the Herculean finger of some hero, or rather giant of antiquity.

As an exclamation so singular as that of Captain Gunthorpe has, perhaps, excited some little curiosity in the reader, it may not be improper, ere we proceed further in our narrative, to sketch a few of the leading features of his character.

It

It has been observed that Fortune often delights to dignify what Nature has neglected, and that that renown which cannot be claimed by intrinsic excellence or greatness, is sometimes derived from the most unexpected accidents. The story of Captain Guithorpe will evince, that this remark is not founded in error. In his youth, far from discovering any eminent abilities, or superiority of genius, he had barely his share of those common endowments, which ge-

nerally fall to the lot of human nature. Destitute also of fortune and friends, nor possessing sufficient spirit to attempt the acquisition of either, he was, to all appearance, destined to pass through life, unnoticed and unknown. But by one lucky accident a total change was produced in his situation and circumstances: and he was raised, on a sudden, from indigence and obscurity to distinguished affluence and splendor. His father had been a merchant of
some

some eminence in the city of London, but being induced, through the example of other rash adventurers, to embark in the famous South Sea scheme, he had the misfortune to see himself, at once, bereaved of a considerable property, that he had gained from long experience, and indefatigable industry. The remorse that followed this act of imprudence, added to so heavy a loss, entirely deprived him of his reason: and,

on the verge of bankruptcy, he died a lunatic.

The death of an affectionate parent, and the loss of an immense fortune, which he had always been taught to expect, considerably depressed the spirits of young Gunthorpe: but the idea of being (as it is called) his own master, and of emerging from a counting house, a situation which he had always held in the utmost abhorrence, soon banished every

every

every painful sensation from his mind. He had always expressed a strong desire for a sea life, and he had now an opportunity of following his inclinations. Without hesitation, therefore, he set off instantly for Portsmouth, and entered as a volunteer, on board a ship of war lying at Spithead. He passed the usual time as a midshipman of the navy, distinguished only by his peculiarities; among which was a belief he professed to entertain, of the exist-

TO SOLITARY CASTLE.

ence of enchanted islands: and a constant habit that he had contracted of walking the quarter deck every moonlight evening, with a night-glass in his hand, in order to keep, as he said, “a good look out for mermaids.”

Fortunately for him, his first commission was that of a lieutenant of the *Centurion*, in which ship Lord Anson was then about to sail on a secret expedition: and though, during his tour round the
world,

world, Mr. Gunthorpe displayed no singular marks of courage or address, he had the satisfaction, on his return, to find himself entitled to a very large allotment of the treasure arising from the capture of the Acapulco galleon: his share of prize money amounting, at least, to an hundred thousand dollars.

He was soon afterwards appointed a post captain, when he quitted the service and married.

But it was his misfortune to marry, according to Sir Harry Wildair's definition, a ~~true~~ born English woman of fashion with a true French education. The priest made them both one flesh, but their blood it was beyond his power to unite. He was still a disbanded officer, and she still a woman of quality. In short, after he had been, several years, *entangled*, rather than gently bound, in the Hymenæal knot, Death, in pity to his sufferings,

cut

cut the thread of Lady *Bonne-grace* Gunthorpe's existence, and once more set him at liberty. His subsequent sufferings, however, in consequence of the abandoned conduct of a favourite son, who, after having dissipated nearly half his fortune in scenes of riot and debauchery, had privately embarked, as a cadet, for the East Indies, drove the captain to utter despondency: 'till at length, disgusted with the world, and insensible to all its enjoyments, he

deter-

determined to renounce, for ever, the society of mankind. For this purpose, he purchased an old castle, situated on the borders of a wild uncultivated forest in the north of England: carrying with him an only daughter, about ten years old, whom he resolved to bring up in perfect innocence, by depriving her of all intercourse with her fellow creatures, excepting his own family, which consisted only of one elderly female, and one male domestic. In order

der

der, moreover, to preclude all possibility of a discovery, he changed his name from Gunthorpe to that of Vernon, the name of his favourite admiral. And by this last name he will be known in the course of the following narrative. He had lived but a few years in this solitude, when his mind, naturally tinged with superstition, became a prey to those visionary scruples, and idle fancies, which a melancholy habit, when nourished by solitude

and

and inactivity, seldom fails to produce. In this desponding state, he was continually reading the Pilgrim's Progress, and Swedenbourg's History of Spirits: and these were the only books that he put into the hands of his daughter. Nor indeed was the beautiful Margaret, of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter, less a prey than her father, to the impulses of superstition. A continual recurrence to the same subjects soon realized in her

bewild-

bewildered imagination, the visions of Bunyan, and the still more wonderful dreams of the honorable and learned Swede.

The gloominess of the situation he had chosen, was indeed sufficient to have created the deepest melancholy in minds less exposed to its influence. The house, which was placed in a deep valley, was surrounded and entirely hidden by a large grove of elm trees, from which the eternal chatter-

ing of jays and magpies, and the croaking of crows and ravens, that returned in clouds every evening, from their incursions into the forest, in search of food, formed altogether a clamour more harsh and dissonant than can be easily imagined. Beneath the elms was a thick plantation of yews, hollies, cypresses, and other evergreens: through which were cut gloomy serpentine paths: nor was there any relief for the eye amidst this dismal scene, except
from

from a profusion of frightful sphynxes, griffins, and hyænas, that appeared to have been carved from the over-hanging rocks, by some self-taught Praxitiles, at least a dozen centuries ago. These being placed as a kind of guardians of the walks, grinned most horrible smiles at the traveller, as he passed through each inter-twisted path, and solitary turning. Over the front door of the castle was a large portico supported by mutilated pillars,

almost entirely covered with horse shoes which had been placed there as infallible preventives against witchcraft. Nor was the inside of the building less remarkable. In the midst of a large hall, paved with thick blocks of black marble, was a piece of Mosaic work, formed of an assemblage of different coloured stones, cemented together, and disposed in broad lights and shadows, in imitation of painting. This piece was intended to represent the passage of

the Israelites through the Red Sea, and in its place was substituted another, consisting of square pieces of red brick, intersected with squares of white Portland stone, of the same dimensions; which were designed for the last retiring waves. These, however, being regularly intermixed, had the appearance of an enormous draft-board, and the Israelites, instead of pursuing their journey, appeared at the first glance, bu-

sily employed in playing at the game of chess.

Seven niches were scooped in the walls round the hall, in which seven Kings of England, who reigned during the heptarchy, frowned in marble : and to render the appearance of these statues perfectly terrible, the Captain had dressed them all in suits of real and complete armour, which, excepting a universal rust that overspread them, had been
little

little injured by time, although they had outlived at least three generations.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH IS DISPLAYED MUCH
ERUDITION.

“**W**HAT danger can there be in such a trifle?” cried Andrew, beating with his spade the incrustations of blue mould that adhered to the ring—“if your honour will give me leave, I will venture to pick it up.”

Not

“Not for the world,” exclaimed Captain Vernon, hastily laying hold of his hand,—“I tell you again you are ignorant of its evil properties.”

“True, but I guess its good ones,” interrupted Andrew, stooping down, to examine it more closely,—“It is certainly gold,—gold, your honour, as I am a seaman and a finner.”

“So much the worse. Read

the history of dæmonology, and you will find that nothing has proved more destructive to mankind than gold rings in the hands of black magicians."

"Your honour means in the way of matrimony," said Andrew, flily, "for as to the black magicians we read of, I suppose they were nothing more or less than persons who spliced honest folks together in couples."

"A truce

“ A truce with trifling,” cried the captain peevishly,” ever since thy keen reply to the admiral, at St. Fernando, thou has been, upon every occasion, attempting to shew thy sorry wit.”

“ By the Royal George, I had rather be *keel-hauled* than be told of that Island,” said Andrew,—“ The mention of it brings so many unwelcome thoughts to my remembrance. But enough of that—Many a
talk

salt wave have we floated over together; many a hot-blooded Spaniard have we sent hissing to the bottom of the sea, in order to cool himself: and many a town have we set fire to in the night, that we might rob the peaceable citizens of their gold, by the light of its flames; force away their wives and daughters, and in case of resistance——But enough of that, as I said before. We were told that they were all our enemies: and what right has a seaman

man

man to think for himself? He has only to obey the orders of his commanders, and let them look to the mischief they occasion. It is a little strange, however, that, after sailing round the whole world together, attacking and conquering our real enemies the Spaniards, we should at length cast anchor in this lonesome corner of it, for no other purpose, but to fight with foes of our own making. For, in my humble opinion, the whole race
of

of apparitions, witches, and fyrens, are as harmless a set of *cruizers* as ever *turned to windward* on this, or the other side of the north pole. Why then should we be continually trying them by courts martial, when, after all, we shall never be able to punish till we can catch them."

"They have been often caught," cried the Captain, somewhat hastily, "and often punished: else why have laws been
enacted

enacted against them? Even in the time of the Romans the *Decemviri* caused a law to be engraved on the twelve tables against witchcraft. It is true, thou hast never read history, and therefore art incapable of judging of these matters: but thou hast read thy bible, Andrew, and surely thou canst not have forgotten the witch of Endor. With respect to Syrens, I can quote you the *Odyfsey* of Homer to prove that Ulysses, the wisest of men, was
 attacked

attacked and subdued by them in Ithaca."

"No need of that," interrupted Andrew, darting a quid of tobacco, with some violence, on the ground. "Ulysses, I suppose, was no wiser than the rest of the crew, and as for the Island of Ithaca, why need we go so far for proofs, since I have been in the same situation a score of times, on *Portsmouth-point*."

"Thou

“ Thou art still pleasant, Andrew : but I find, thou wilt place no faith in these things. Otherwise I could recount to thee a thousand attested miracles, as evidences in favour of my argument.”

“ Possible enough. It is true I have no great knowledge of miracles : but, if they are what I take them for, I should think that they would never *pass muster*, at least, as *evidence*. But that I may be able to steer clear of *rocks* and

breakers, will your honour first bring me acquainted with the *ship's company*?"

"You wish for a definition?"

"Without doubt," replied Andrew, looking wisely, although he was unable to understand the meaning of the word.

"A miracle," continued Captain Vernon, "is an effect above human, or natural power, performed in attestation of some truth, and therefore performed by some supernatural power."

"All

“ All that is above my comprehension,” replied Andrew.

“ I have, here, quite lost my longitude, and unless we descend to *plain sailing* I shall never be able to make up for *lee way*. Suppose your honour were to give me a spice of your attested miracles, as you are pleased to call them.”

“ With all my heart. What less than a miracle was that famous affair of the enormous egg that we read of in the Talmud,

which, falling from the skies, overspread the tops of four hundred tall cedars, and, breaking against their trunks, deluged with the liquid substance that flowed from its shell, at least forty surrounding villages? And yet this story, wonderful as it is, cannot be compared with that of the bull, which we also read of in the Talmud, who, every day, devoured the produce of ten thousand mountains.”

“ This is *plain sailing* with a

vengeance," cried Andrew, attempting to snap afunder, a roll of twisted tobacco which he drew from his side pocket. But if your honour will be pleased to *take in a reef*, I shall be glad to be informed what you mean by this said Talmud."

"It is a book," replied the Captain, "that contains the most sacred writings of the Jewish doctors."

"Split my topfails," exclaimed the indignant seaman, "if there

be a Jew, or a *Jew doctor* in christian land, ~~that~~ has faith enough to believe in such vagaries."

"Thou art much mistaken, friend. The celebrated *Misna* is fraught with facts still more wonderful. I need only mention the serpent that eat a frog larger than a whole village, and was afterwards seized by a crow, that instantly flew into the next tree, and there devoured his prey. The story, though to thee it may appear

pear

pear incredible, is, at this very hour, believ'd by every tribe of Hebrews, from Duke's place to Jerusalem."

The only answer that Andrew made to this bold assertion, was a loud whistle: and the Captain proceeded to finish his catalogue of wonders. "Thou seemest confounded, Andrew," said he, "but thy surprise is merely the effect of thy ignorance. In the writings of antiquity we meet with stories infinitely more aston-

nishing than the truths which I have related: and yet, I must own, that there are some even of those, which I cannot bring myself to regard as mere fables. Perhaps thou hast never heard of the nymph Alcyone, who was drowned by shipwreck, and afterwards turned into a kingfisher?"

"Never, your honour."

"Nor of the three sisters, *Medusa*, *Stheno* and *Eurayle*, whose heads were covered with snakes instead of hair."

"Never!"

“Never!” cried Andrew, grinning most frightfully.

“Nor of the giant *Orion*,” continued the captain, “who was so tall that he could walk across the Atlantic ocean, with his head above water.”

“Never!” repeated Andrew.

“Nor of *Cenæus*, the famous dwarf, whose height, at thirty years of age, did not exceed half the length of the right arm of Alexander’s statue.”

“I never heard of this *Cenæus*,”

said Andrew, enraged at his master's credulity, and determined to revenge himself, by advancing, in his turn, some fiction still more extravagant,—“ I never heard, I say, of this dwarf: but I recollect having seen with my own eyes, a French gentleman, much smaller than *Monfieur Ceneus*:—’Zounds, Sir, they were no more to be compared than a three decked man of war to a Gosport wherry.”

“ Is it possible?” cried the captain.—

captain.—“ Perhaps, then, he was as diminutive as *Madian* of *Halicarnassus*, who was barely half a cubit in height.”

“ Much smaller,” answered Andrew, assuming a look of gravity.

“ He was, then, as puny as *Phæraulus*, the Persian orator.”

“ Smaller still.”

“ Or as *Tytyrus* of Alexandria: or the two Roman brothers, *Thyrſis* and *Idmon*.”

“ A million times less than

the least of them all," replied Andrew. "I know of nothing, in nature, small enough to compare him with: but your honour will have some notion of his size, when I assure, on the faith of a seaman, that he once undertook a journey across a *Queen-Anne's* farthing, and was a whole day performing it."

"Thou liest, insolent varlet!" exclaimed the irritated captain, feeling the whole force of the seaman's *retort courtois*. "Thou
liest

liest from thy soul. It is not possible, in the order of things, that such a being should live."

"He lived, it is true, but a short time," continued Andrew, "for scarce had he got half way on his return, when, passing over the right shoulder of Britannia, he fell into an unlucky scratch that chanced to be in the copper, and unfortunately broke his neck!"

This sarcastic reply proved a *coup mortel* to the captain's cause; who

who, after darting a look of ineffable contempt at his opponent, quitted the field of battle, leaving the son of Neptune to enjoy the honour of the victory, and the possession of the ring; which, however, after all, was found to have adorned, not the finger of a hero, or a demigod, as we at first conjectured, but the *nose* of a *Westphalian* hog, that had formerly been deprived of this cankered badge, whilst he was grubbing up the earth, in search of fallen Acorns.

C H A P T E R III.

WHICH, THOUGH SHORT, CONTAINS
SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY.

SINCE the days of the facetious Fielding, it seems to have been an almost invariable custom for the writer of fictitious history to present his readers with a portrait of his heroine, who, indeed, has always a just claim to their admiration ;

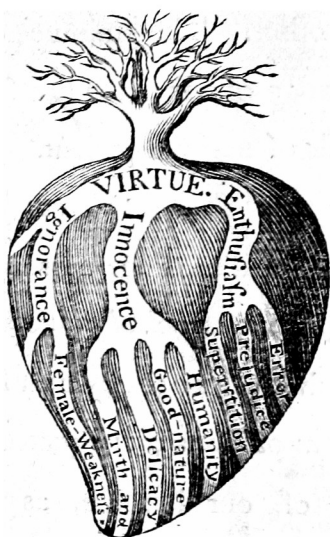
admiration: being of course “the most beautiful of all beautiful women in the universe.” But the present historian, having once heard it observed, that no man was ever great by imitation, has determined to leave the road so often trodden by his predecessors, and to strike out a new path for himself. Let not the reader, however, too hastily imagine that Miss Gunthorpe, or, as we must now call her, Miss Vernon, has no pretensions to beauty, and there-
fore

fore shrinks from a comparison with those enchanting creatures whom we have just mentioned. No!—To expand the human face to its full perfection, says the solid Johnson, it seems necessary that the *heart* should co-operate by placidness of content or consciousness of superiority. In order, therefore, to shew (however strange it may seem) that the lovely Margaret had a face exquisitely beautiful, we shall here take the liberty to dissect

her heart. But before we take up the incision knife, we will caution a few of the fair readers of romances to pass on to the following chapter, lest an exhibition so uncommon, instead of adding to their stock of pleasant ideas, should fill them with sensations of horror and disgust. To the more serious and less timorous of the sex, no apology will be offered, because she who dares to examine her own heart, need not be afraid of viewing that
of

of another. The minute contemplation of a skeleton has saved the life of many a patient.

But why should we carry on the comparison, since ours is not a frightful *anatomical* dissection; but rather a PROSPECTUS of the different passions that agitated the mind of our heroine, as they sprung one out of another, and *all*, as the spectator will observe, from the principal root—VIR-TUE.



Should the reader, in the course of the following narrative, be at a loss to account-for the unexampled conduct of the beautiful Margaret, let him turn back, and

once more examine her heart. He will there find the spring of all her actions.

C H A P.

CHAPTER IV.

A PHÆNOMENON.

ON the north side of the grove that surrounded the castle, there was a pair of massy iron gates, leading to the forest, near which Captain Vernon had erected a sort of gothic temple under a clump of cedars. During summer, he frequently

frequently passed the afternoon in this retreat, with his daughter, who generally read to him the Pilgrim's Progress, while he smoked his pipe, and surveyed the surrounding solitary landscape, consisting, simply of a wide extent of brakes, furzes, and briars, with a few white rocks scattered on the back ground: above which a long chain of black and barren mountains reared their lofty heads, and terminated the view.

On a fine summer evening, about the middle of July, as he was sitting in the manner just described, he was not a little surprised, on casting his eyes across the forest, at the sight of a large obicular body, which appeared to sail through the atmosphere in various directions, till, at length, it mounted perpendicularly to an immense height, and appeared for some time to hover over the distant mountains.

Warmed by the enthusiasm of
the

the pages which Margaret had been reading, and thinking this appearance no less than a miracle, the Captain instantly ran into the house, to summon the servants to the spot, particularly the house-keeper, for whose person he had the highest veneration, although he did not entertain quite so good an opinion of her judgment: the physiological disputes which were frequent between them, being sometimes carried to an extent that far exceeded the bounds of modera-

moderation. Mr. Vernon's hypothesis respecting supernatural beings had always been rejected, and vigorously opposed by Mrs. *Dejolinie*, for that was the name of this favourite domestic, who was the widow of a French officer, and whose constitutional frame of mind was so diametrically opposite to the gloomy disposition of the Captain, that she partook of all the characteristic levity of her nation. Nothing could equal the Captain's surprise when, on his

return to the temple, on the skirts of the forest, where he had left his daughter, he found that the orb had approached so near during his absence, that he could now distinguish a phantom, suspended to it, which appeared to have painted wings, waving in one hand a flag of various colours, and with the other, majestically pointing to the skies. His joy at so surprising and unexpected a sight was so excessive that he was deprived of all utterance, and

able

absolutely rivetted to the spot where he stood. The colour instantly mounted into his cheeks: he cast his eyes, first on his daughter, and then with more steadfastness on Mrs. Dejolimie, at the same time pointing towards the phænomenon, as if he had said “ I have conquered!——This is the moment of conviction and of triumph.”

This profound silence was soon interrupted by the arrival of Andrew, who came running full
speed

speed through the grove, towards the temple, with a large telescope on his shoulder, which he presented to the Captain with the following curious address.

“ When we were at sea your honour discovered many an enemy by means of this instrument. As to the strange sail that has just *hove in sight*, we shall soon be able to *bring her to*, if you will keep a good look out, while I just step into [the hall for arms and ammunition. It is true we

much expect a hot action, for if the commander of yonder vessel, who hangs to the shrouds like a *Kampschatka* cat, be not either a Frenchman or a devil, why then I do not know how to distinguish the *jib-boom* from the *main hal-liards*."

"Le Frenchman or *le diable*," repeated Mrs. Dejolimie, somewhat hurt by the comparison, "*ma foi*, Monsieur *le Capitaine*, notwithstanding you have so much of *de liberté* in England, your
meaner

meaner servants take more *dan deir* share of *de commoditè*. *Mais en meme temps*, vat you call *dat* live *ting* to *de* sky : for I am some little *effrayèe*."

"It is impossible for me, at present, to judge of its species, or properties," answered the Captain, eagerly looking through the glass, "but as nearly as I am able to guess, it is what the great *Swedenbourg* calls a spirit of the first state. These are a sort of beings that exist spiritually in
form

form and in substance. He acknowledges that he has seen and conversed with them at various times: nor did he ever remark in them any thing that differed from the human form: and, that this might not be suspected of being a deception, or vision of the imagination, he has seen them when quite awake, and in all the clearness of sensible perception."

"I have read the passage a thousand times," cried Margaret, who

who had listened to her father's rhapsody with the greatest attention,—“and I believe it to be true to a syllable.”

“*Mon dieu, quelle extravagance!*” was the only answer that the indignant housekeeper deigned to give to the ridiculous assertions. Meanwhile the ærial sphere descended still nearer to the earth, and a most embarrassing conversation took place between the Captain, and the supposed supernatural being. It

was, however, in the highest degree, pleasant, capricious, and ludicrous.

CHAP.

CHAPTER V.

AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

“**F**EAR ever argues a degenerate mind: I will speak to it, therefore, be the consequences ever so fatal,” cried Captain Vernon. He immediately seized his daughter and Mrs. Dejolimie by the arm, and ran with them out

of the temple, towards that part of the forest where the orb appeared to descend with great rapidity. No sooner had he arrived at the spot, than he applied to his mouth a speaking trumpet which he had brought with him from the temple, and deliberately bending on one knee, repeated something like the following words from Shakespeare, with great solemnity.—“ Be’st thou a spirit of health or goblin damn’d ; be thy intents wicked or charitable, thou
comest

comest in such a questionable shape, that I will speak to thee. Oh answer me,—Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell from whence thou cam'st, and what thou art?"

“ We shall have time enough for jesting hereafter, Sir, cried the phantom. For the present, I wish to be informed where I am: for that black thunder-cloud through which I have just taken a flight, has hidden the earth from my view, exactly seventeen minutes

and three quarters, by my stop watch."

"Heaven and earth! exclaimed Captain Vernon, turning to Mrs. Dejolimie, and his daughter, is it possible that immortal beings should make use of stop-watches?"

"Why not, my dear papa? cried Margaret, with all imaginable simplicity: we have read, you know, that they have beautiful habitations, replete with magnificent rooms, chambers, and apartments, all most elegantly furnished:

nished: and I do not see why they should not wear gold watches as ornaments to their dress."

"Tell me, I conjure you, where I am, repeated the phantom, for I can descend in this place, with much facility. The levity of the machiné will prevent my falling with any great violence: and I shall take care to discharge some of my ballast." So saying, he threw down a quantity of bags, boxes, and baskets, and the affrighted captain, and his compa-

nions were presently covered with a shower of biscuits, fruit, and confectionaries that fell from them.

“ This is all enchantment, exclaimed Margaret, creeping close to her father, and laying her trembling hand on his shoulder.

“ It be so *fort extraordinaire*, said Mrs. Dejolimie, *dat* I cannot believe my senses.”

The Captain who, for a moment, had stood speechless with astonishment, took fresh courage, and

and seizing his speaking trumpet, again addressed his discourse to the phantom,—“ It is plain that I have hitherto studied to little purpose, said he, for in the course of my reading, I never remember to have seen it asserted that apparitions had the power of eating. Yet by the relics which you have now hurled to the earth, it is certain that your highness is possessed of such a privilege. I shall be glad to be informed, whether you have also the peculiar
advan-

advantage of drinking strong liquors?"

“ You are pleased, Sir, to be merry with my *highness*, cried the supposed phantom, with a voice of thunder, but it is now time that you should put an end to this ill-timed mockery, and prepare seriously to facilitate my descension. As to drinking, I have finished during my flight, two bottles of claret, two of hock, three of champagne, a tankard of porter, and a half pint rummer of brandy,

and

and all within the space of five hours and fifteen minutes, in which time I have performed a journey of more than a hundred leagues, at the height of at least seven miles above the clouds, where the air was so extremely rarified that it has prevented the liquor from taking any more effect upon my senses than if it had been so much cold water."

"By the seven wonders of the world, replied the captain, thou hast made a most perfidious assertion.

fertion. I am now convinced
 that you are not what I, at first,
 imagined you to be, but rather
 a demon of darknefs: for I have
 always understood that it is not
 poffible for good fpirits to utter a
 falfehood, there being but one
 fimple language ufed among them,
 nor is that language learnt, but
 natural to every one, flowing
 fpontaneoufly from their affections
 and thoughts, whilft the found of
 the voice corresponds to the affec-
 tion, and the articulations of that

Scen.

found, or the words, to the ideas or thoughts proceeding from that affection: and as their language corresponds thereto, it is also spiritual, and may be called a sounding affection, and a speaking thought."

The ærial voyager had, at first, entertained no other idea but that Mr. Vernon's extravagant actions were intended as mere pleasant-ries: but this last harangue, which had been delivered with much gravity, and with the most earnest attention,

attention, had induced him to conclude without hesitation that the Captain was more of a madman than a humourist.

During this conversation he perceived that his car had descended too briskly. In order, therefore, to check its course, and to prevent his falling into a deep marshy swamp, then directly beneath him, he judged it necessary to throw out all his remaining ballast, consisting of a strange and fantastical mixture of sand-bags, dial-

dial-plates, flannel waistcoats, and brass compasses. The machine instantly towered aloft.

Amidst the numerous articles that were showered from the car, Captain Vernon observed a note book, that had fallen among some withered brakes on the edge of the morass. He immediately ran to pick it up: and his surprise was increased beyond all bounds when he had read the following unintelligible and disjointed memorandums, which he, at once, concluded

concluded to have been penned by an inhabitant of some other world: and, indeed, to judge merely from appearances, the conjecture was not at all unreasonable.

——“ Detached air thermo-
 “ meter 54—The thickness of the
 “ stratum of clouds not to be dis-
 “ covered. Iris most beautifully
 “ painted.—The brilliant goddess
 “ appears to shower transparent
 “ drops into Lord Rockingham’s
 “ canal.—The equatorial hoop
 “ by

“ by no means to be touched—
 “ At ten minutes past four turned
 “ out the pigeon; barometer $28\frac{3}{4}$
 “ —Successive falls of snow glit-
 “ tering in the sun beams. Wool-
 “ len waistcoats not sufficient
 “ proofs against the intense cold
 “ —N.B. Threw out an empty
 “ brandy bottle.—From nine
 “ A. M. to three quarters past ten,
 “ my flight at least seven miles
 “ above the highest clouds.—
 “ NB. I was particularly careful to
 “ observe the *vis inertiae*. At one

“ P. M. the car at its highest alti-
 “ tude. The ancient hypothesis
 “ that the flight of birds is omi-
 “ nous not altogether impossible.
 “ ☞ *The pigeon in its descent fell*
 “ *in with a company of rooks, and*
 “ *at length alighted on the magnifi-*
 “ *cent villa of the Duke of Bedford.*
 “ At two P. M. I caught the first
 “ glance of the earth, and saw
 “ three human figures running
 “ across a wide forest. The
 “ obliqueness of the sun’s rays
 “ dyed them the colour of blood.

“ —The

“ * * The first man who approaches
 “ near me, on my descension,
 “ shall be compelled to rise in
 “ the car, in order to try what
 “ effect a ride of a few miles
 “ above the clouds will produce
 “ upon a person entirely unac-
 “ quainted with ærial navigation.
 “ N. B. It will certainly make
 “ him *air sick*.”

“ Thank you for the hint, ex-
 claimed the captain, throwing
 away the note book with all pos-
 sible indignation. It is true, I

have made the tour of this globe, in company with a good old English admiral; but I have no sort of inclination to undertake a voyage round the other world with a foreign commander in chief,—an apparition in regimentals, who, for any thing I know, may pour a broad side of his cælestial shot into the vessel, and sink me before I have well weighed anchor.”

“ For heaven’s sake, my dear Sir, cried Margaret, let us fly
from

from the impending danger. If this should prove one of those malevolent spirits that I have read of, in the Pilgrim's Progress, we shall be lost inevitably."

"You are in *de* right, *ma chere*, said Mrs. Dejolmie, next to conquering an adversary *dere* is no *ting* in *de* *varld* so glorious as to take to *de* heel, and run away."

"Am I not a British seaman?" cried the Captain, with some little impetuosity.

“*Sans doute,*” replied Mrs. De-jolimie.

“How then, he continued, can you suppose me capable of flying from the enemy? Rather than be guilty of such an act of cowardice, I will be hung alive, at the mast head, till I become food for sea-gulls.—I am not willing, it is true, to begin the attack, and therefore shall keep at a reasonable distance from the enemy.”

During this conversation, the machine by some means was entangled

tangled among the tops of some tall trees that grew in the hedge row, near the iron gates, leading to the castle. The voyager most vehemently entreated Mr. Vernon to catch hold of the end of a large cable, which he threw down, in order to be liberated from his confinement. But the Captain, with inimitable obstinacy, refused to stir a single step to his assistance; declaring “that if the vessel was in danger the masts ought to be cut away, but for his own

part, as he suspected it was nothing but a *ghostly pirate* that was providentially on the point of being wrecked on his dominions, he would sooner be impaled alive by Scythian Indians than touch a rope of the ship: unless by such means he could accelerate her destruction.

A dispute ensued that would have taken a very serious turn on the part of the voyager, who was now, by the Captain's egregious simplicity, deprived of all patience.

science, had not the return of Andrew terminated the affray in a manner extremely laughable. That honest seaman, as the reader well remembers, on the first appearance of the phœnomenon, had desired his master to keep a strict watch, promising that, in the mean while, he would fetch both arms and ammunition. So zealous had he been in the execution of this promise, that, in spite of difficulties apparently insurmountable, he had removed a

heavily

heavy piece of artillery that had lain in the court yard ever since the conclusion of the *Ansonian Voyage*, and was now actually dragging it up a steep ascent by the grove side, that it might be ready, in case of emergency. The contest, which he overheard, as soon as he arrived at the summit of the hill, and the contemptuous gestures of the Captain, whom he observed waving his hat in the air, at the same time pouring forth whole volleys of *sea-oaths*,

were

were, in the opinion of Andrew, indubitable signals for action. He therefore fixed the cannon behind a thick row of evergreens, where he was unobserved, and having loaded it, and fixed the point, as near as he was able, in a direct line with the body of the æronaut, he pulled out a tinder box which he had purposely brought from the castle, struck a light, and set fire to the priming without farther ceremony. The amazement of the Captain and the ladies, on hearing

hearing the sound of a cannon reverberate through the grove, so extremely near to them, could be equalled only by the confusion of the æronaut, who, in the instant, found himself sprawling in a quickset hedge: for the grape shot from the cannon had shivered the car into ten thousand pieces, and the unfortunate voyager had been sent to the earth by an impulsive motion at least as swift as that which originally whirled him to the skies.

If Captain Vernon had, at first, some difficulty in believing that this extraordinary visitor was a human being, like himself, he was now convinced of his error, by the woeful appearance of the voyager, whose countenance, when he first emerged from the bushes, was stuck over with thorns, as full as a pincushion, and having been scratched into a kind of regular net-work, streamed with blood so copiously that there
needed

needed no other tokens of mortality.

It was not long before a proper explanation took place between the parties: and the stranger was invited into the castle, in order to have his wounds dressed by Mrs. Dejolimie, and to partake of some necessary refreshments.

C H A P.

C H A P T E R VI.

A LOVE SCENE—HIGHLY ROMANTIC

THE charms of the lovely Margaret had made so deep an impression on the stranger's heart, that, from the first moment he saw her, he determined to possess her, at the risque of every thing that was dear and valuable to him on earth.

earth. It is true, however, as we shall find in the course of the narrative, that he did not enjoy the good things of this world in an eminent degree. The venture, therefore, was less than might at first, have been expected. Never, indeed, was an enterprize undertaken with so much probability of success, for, of all women on earth, Miss Vernon was the least qualified to defend herself against the dangerous attacks of her admirer, whose favourite

boast

boast had ever been that he was second to no man in the arts of female seduction.

The characters of Margaret and Mr. Chartres, for that was the stranger's name, formed a contrast singularly striking. The one was a composition of simplicity, ignorance, and generosity; the other was made up of treachery, perfidy, and cunning. She might have exclaimed, with Miranda, in the *Tempest*, that he was the third man she e'er had

looked upon: and he, in the words of some hero of the stage, might have replied that he had seen and conquered half the fine women in Europe.

On the third evening of the stranger's visit at Captain Vernon's, happening to stray through the grove that surrounded the castle, he beheld the beautiful Margaret, sitting under an elm, on a large block of white marble. A honey suckle in full bloom crawled luxuriantly over the spreading branches

branches of the elm, and formed, as it were, a canopy of flowers over her head. The blue violet, and yellow cowslip were promiscuously sprinkled among the high grass that grew around her; a rapid stream, that rushed from the forest, in forcing its passage thro' a quantity of broken stones that had fallen from an adjoining rock, dashed its white froth in the air, and broke into a variety of beautiful cascades: the bees that swarmed among the green bran-

ches of the trees, were humming their vespers in the departing sunshine: the plaintive nightingale had just began her song:—In short the scenery was so extremely wild and fanciful that it would have charmed the most romantic lover in the universe.

Mr. Chartres did not hesitate a moment to throw himself at Margaret's feet, and to declare his passion: which he described in such extravagant terms, that had he spoken in the language of the

Gentles

Gentoo the simple Margaret would have understood him with equal facility.

“ Ah ! divine Miss Vernon, he cried, in this embarrassing situation how shall I prove to you the sincerity of my heart ? It is not enough to tell you that I love —that I adore you—No ! I will be an eternal slave to your charms : and only request that you will make as light as possible, those chains which you have already forged.”

“ In good faith, you are extremely merry, Sir, replied Margaret.”

“ Would that I were, rejoined Mr. Chartres. No, charming girl, my heart is too full of inquietude. You have eternally robbed me of repose.”

“ I am sorry for it. If you did not sleep well last night, I will take care to order that——”

“ Talk not of sleep, thou beautiful insensible. I tell you again that I languish in your absence.

But

But I will no longer exist without you: for I am determined, from this instant to follow you as faithfully as your own lovely shadow."

"You will then pursue me only when the sun shines," replied Margaret.

"A cruel jest, resumed Mr. Chartres. Under the appearance of simplicity you are too ingenious in giving me pain. But it is plain that I am doomed to eternal disgrace and misery. I see too clearly that I have not sufficient merit to attract your atten-

tion. Ah! Margaret, would the forfeit of my life make you happy, I swear by all the host of heaven——”

“ Hold, Sir, interrupted Margaret, before you proceed any further, I have one question to propose to you.”

“ Quickly then, he cried, let it be put: whatever it be, I will answer it with the strictest fidelity.”

“ You will not deceive me.”

“ If I do may indelible shame
be

be my portion in this world, and in the next everlast——”

“Nay—you are not disposed to listen to me.”

“By heaven I am, he replied. Speak, for I can brook no longer delay. I am almost furious with pain.”

“Why then, Sir, I will be brief in my demand.—Did you ever read the Pilgrim’s Progress?”

“The Pilgrim’s Progress, repeated Mr. Chartres, suffocated with rage and disappointment—

The

The Pilgrim's Progress. Good God, what insensibility! Is it really possible, Miss Vernon, that you can be serious in propounding a question so futile and extraneous, in this moment of suspense and agitation?"

"My meaning is clear, Sir. When I prevented the progress of your speech, you were on the point of making a most solemn oath: but had you read the book in question, you would have known——"

"May

“ May I perish, he cried, if this be not too much, infinitely too much to bear. But I understand you : the tendency of your discourse is clear to me as the light of the meridian sun. You mean to trifle with my passion. I read too plainly my destiny, in your downcast eyes. In a word, you do not love, Miss Vernon.”

“ Indeed I do,” cried the artless Margaret.

“ Then am I the happiest of beings, he exclaimed, most eagerly

gerly pressing her hand to his lips. Yet suffer me not to be deceived;—let the delicious sound once more vibrate on my ear.”

“ Once more, then, I regard you with the most unaffected tenderness: for I have always been directed to love my enemies.”

“ And is it thus, after all, that my passion is requited? Yet tell me—tell me, thou cruel fair one, in what particular instance have I been so unfortunate as to incur the reproach of so odious a name as
that

that of an enemy to the most beautiful woman upon earth."

" I really do not know, Sir, replied Margaret, the most beautiful woman on earth can alone answer that question."

" Ah ! cease this specious prevarication, and tell me, without disguise, that your heart has declared in my favour."

" Pardon me, Sir, I dare not utter a direct falsehood."

" Thus then, charming Margaret, let me force the confession from
from

from your rosy lips." With these words, he caught her in his arms, and would have proceeded to the most unwarrantable freedoms, had not her shrieks brought the Captain, who fortunately happened to be walking in the grove, to her assistance."

The waves of the Atlantic ocean, when assailed by the most furious whirlwind, never boiled with greater impetuosity than the passions of the enraged commander, when he beheld his daughter

daughter struggling in the stranger's arms. He ran up to the assailant, and in the most peremptory, but at the same time, comical manner, demanded if he could *swim*.

So strange a question, accompanied with the threatening looks of the Captain, did not a little encrease Mr. Chartres' embarrassment. He, however, summoned all his courage to his aid, and with a well-dissembled look of defiance, answered in the negative.

Then

“ Then you may sink and be d——, rejoined the commander. Look you, young gentleman, you came here by air, and shall as certainly go home by water. So you may prepare for your voyage: for if I do not instantly set you *afloat*, may it be my fate to be brought to a court martial, composed of fresh-water seamen, and hung at the yard arm of a Yarmouth fishing smack.”

Scarcely had the commander pronounced these words, when he
 seized

seized Mr. Chartres, and tripping up his heels, threw him with great violence into the rivulet. The unfortunate culprit was carried with such rapidity down the stream, that he was out of sight in a moment: while the Captain, nearly choaked with laughter, continued cracking his sea-jokes: declaring that, since the structure of the *Royal William*, he had never seen a more promising *launch*.

CHAPTER VII.

A HAIR-BRAINED PROJECT.

THE cruel reprehension, the unexpected defeat, and, above all, the severe drenching which Mr. Chartres had experienced, would have quenched every spark of gallantry in a mind less ardent than that of our hero. But he,
like

like a skilful pilot, who augments his exertions in proportion to the violence of the tempest, determined to resist every impediment, and to pursue his course, in spite of the dangers that surrounded him. He had no inclination, it is true, to provoke the farther resentment of Captain Vernon, who threatened him with all the horrors of naval discipline, unless he instantly quitted the castle. He, therefore, found it necessary to bid a reluctant adieu to the lovely

Margaret. But he left her with a secret resolution to return as soon as possible, in order, by some lucky expedient, to satisfy both his love and revenge.

What this expedient was to be, he had not yet determined: but whilst he measured his solitary steps across the forest, (for he was reduced to the necessity of returning to the nearest market town on foot) he had ample leisure for the formation of his plan. On his arrival at a small alehouse, in the
extremity

extremity of the forest, at which he stopped to take some refreshment, he concluded upon the following stratagem.

During his short residence at the castle, he remembered to have heard Mr. Vernon frequently make mention of a particular friend, who had formerly sailed with him in the Centurion, and who had amassed a considerable fortune: but having been regularly trained to the sea, he had never since been able to live on

shore with any satisfaction to himself. Though much advanced in years, he had lately undertaken a trading voyage to the West Indies.

This gentleman had taken with him a large venture on Captain Vernon's account, and a small one on the part of Andrew: both of whom, therefore, looked forward to his arrival with the greatest degree of impatience and anxiety. Mr. Chartres, then, determined, as soon as he should arrive
in

in town, to dispatch two of his associates to the hedge-row ale-house, in which he now was, and which was situated at the distance of twelve miles from the castle. “ A letter, said he, shall be sent from hence to Captain Vernon, bearing the signature of his friend, which shall announce the safe arrival of the ship at Falmouth, and acquaint the Captain, that, having been so fortunate as to bring home a considerable treasure on his consideration, he has himself under-

taken the charge of it : but that a trifling accident which has just befallen him on the road, has obliged him to request the assistance of the Captain and his servant. In the mean while a chaise shall be in waiting on the forest, at a proper distance from the castle, and, as soon as the two honest seamen have weighed anchor, and set sail on this fruitless cruise, the executors of the stratagem shall drive up to the gates, and deliver to Margaret the most plausible summons

mons they can devise, for her immediate attendance on the Captain, and her supposed Godfather. The moment she steps into the chaise will, of course, be the moment of success. The postillion, through an unaccountable mistake, will turn the horses heads towards London; and thus, in a few hours, I shall have in my arms one of the finest women in England; who, though she will not bring me much cordial affection, will recompense me by a fortune of

six thousand pounds, to which I shall have an undoubted claim, as soon as I have caused her to take a morning lounge with me, at the next parish church.—An object which I shall most certainly accomplish either by force or artifice.”

Having thus formed his hair-brained project, Mr. Chartres journeyed to town, with all possible diligence, in order to put it into execution.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PAIR OF PORTRAITS,

THE character of Mr. Chartres has, no doubt, been shrewdly guessed at: we shall not therefore stop to comment upon it in this place. But a few words respecting the two companions who are to assist him in his enterprize, as they are about to be introduced to

the reader's notice, will not, perhaps, be entirely useless.

Mr. *Le Fleur* was the fruit of an illicit amour, between an Italian opera girl, and an English peer. His mother unfortunately made a false step as she was performing in a celebrated Fingalian dance, which was the occasion of his blundering into the world nearly two months before he was expected by his friends. He drew his first breath behind the scenes of the opera house. This son of

Signora Celestina, being bred in an Italian family, was so well instructed in music, and had so wonderful a taste, that he was a tolerable musician before he could speak. His nurse, instead of *Chevy Chase*, and the *Children of the Wood*, would sing to him nothing but the softest Italian airs: and so accustomed were his little ears to chromatic notes, that it was said he was never heard even to shriek out of tune. Before he was three years old, the barbarous old English jig "The black joke," being acciden-

tally played on a barrel organ under his window, produced such an effect on his nerves that he upset a tea-table, and destroyed a set of porcelain of considerable value. At the age of fourteen he was sent to Rome, where he invented a new species of fiddle strings, examined the picture *frames* in the Vatican, and saw the Pope.

In short, after visiting all the courts in Europe, he returned to his native country, the very oracle of taste: and in the hemisphere of fashion he was allowed to be

the leading star. But, unfortunately for him, soon after his return, his noble parent took so hasty a leave of the world, that he forgot to insert the name of Mr. Le Fleur in his will. He was consequently turned adrift with no estate or possessions, exclusive of his fashionable acquirements. After several revolutions of fortune he became a waiter at *White's*, but at length was advanced to the distinguished post of puffer to one of the winter theatres. Thus, after having run round the whole

circle of fashion ;—after sporting with the *dames d'esprits* of Paris, the brunettes of Venice, and amazons of Amsterdam : after having inhabited the most splendid apartments of *Milan* the rich, *Genoa* the proud, and *Naples* the magnificent, he was now compelled to dwell in a room, six foot square, in a small smoky court, near Charing cross: from whence, however, he made frequent incursions into the regions of taste and dissipation.

The other friend of Mr. Char-

tres, who was known only by the assumed name of *Fletcher*, had the appearance of a young man of quality; for the paleness of the sickly primrose was settled upon his countenance. His mind was not less amiable than his person was engaging; but his person, to speak the truth, was a little warped, and little more than five feet high. He had the comparative merit of being a better courtier, and a still greater libertine, than Mr. Le Fleur, but then, on the other hand,

it was allowed that he was by no means so good a fidler. Mr. Fletcher had, for several years past, resided in the East Indies, but in consequence of a duel he fought at Madras, wherein he had been so dextrous as to send his antagonist to the shades, he found it necessary to return to England with a borrowed title. At present he enjoyed a very lucrative place in one of the public offices. He was reckoned a

mirror

mirror of politeness by all who had the honor of his acquaintance.

In a word, he was possessed of infinite cunning and address, and on that account had been selected by Mr. Chartres as a proper agent in his hazardous undertaking.

CHAPTER IX.

SHEWETH THE SUCCESS OF THE HAIR-
BRAINED PROJECT.

THE two adventurers, judging it improper to take servants with them on their secret expedition, set forward towards the castle in a phaeton, entirely unattended.

It was near sun-set when they arrived at the cottage alehouse on the skirts of the forest. Mr. Fletcher instantly alighted to dispatch the premeditated letter to Captain Vernon. It was agreed that he should afterwards walk slowly across the forest, following the road, through which Mr. Vernon and Andrew were necessarily to pass, that, being a consummate master of finesse, he might enter into conversation with them, and find means to arrest them on their

journey, in order to preclude the discovery of their mistake, and prevent their return until it was too late to pursue Mr. Le Fleur and his fair companion, with any degree of success. This end accomplished, he was to make the best of his way to Nottingham, (not being more than eighteen miles distant) at which place the two companions were to meet.

Mr. Le Fleur, in the meanwhile, drove on, till he came near enough to the castle to fix upon a
proper

proper situation for watching the departure of the Captain and Andrew: and soon after they had made their exit, he paid his respects to Margaret.

The plan that had been agreed upon, had the desired effect. Mr. Le Fleur acted his part with such perfect dissimulation, that he had no sooner delivered to Miss Vernon the fictitious summons from her father, to accompany him to the cottage, to welcome the arrival of her godfather, than she

hastened to the gate, and seated herself by his side in the phaeton, without the smallest hesitation. Even Mrs. Dejolimie, the prudent and cautious Mrs. Dejolimie, was so little suspicious of the deception, that was playing off against the family, that, as soon as she had seen Margaret safe in the chaise, she set herself to work, with all possible diligence, in order to prepare a splendid supper for the expected visitor.

CHAPTER X.

THE BENIGHTED TRAVELLERS.

THE state of the mind oppressed with a sudden calamity, says the solid Johnson, is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. Such

was

was Margaret's despondency, when she began to reflect on the danger of her situation.

At the distance of a few miles from the castle, Mr. Le Fleur, as the best means of baffling pursuit, left the common highway, and struck into a road that led through a thick wood. It was then that Miss Vernon waked, as it were, from her dream of security. She saw the error, which it was too late to remedy. That she was the dupe of her own credulity, precipitance,

pitance, and weakness, was now beyond a doubt. Instead of meeting the fond caresses of the dearest friend of her father, she found herself subject to the hateful insults of an unknown ravisher.

The sun had departed, and the grey twilight began to give place to darkness, when she entered the wood. Every thing around her was gloomy and frightful. The spark of reason, which she still retained, was overpowered by fear. The phantoms of guilt and murder

der

der seemed to glide across her sight: and the most horrid images filled her disordered imagination. Every endeavour for freedom was useless. She had recourse to prayers and tears, and even the most tender endearments: but her violater was more deaf to her complaints than the surrounding trees and rocks, that echoed back her mournful shrieks and lamentations.

At length weakened, and almost exhausted by her violent but unavailing

vailing efforts, she gave herself up to a melancholy silence, and submitted to her fate.

Before they had been an hour in the wood, the night grew so extremely dark, that, not being able any longer to see the road, Mr. Le Fleur was under the necessity of giving up the reins, and trusting entirely to the sagacity of the horses. About this time they perceived an approaching tempest. The distant thunder rumbled in the air; the rain began to

pour down in torrents; and quick flashes of lightning darted through the trees and the bushes. Frightened by the clamour of the storm, the horses ran forward at random. The phaeton was in danger every moment of being overturned; and the faces, both of Mr. Le Fleur and Margaret, were so terribly wounded by the branches of trees that stretched across the road, that they streamed with blood. Soon after the tempest had subsided, Mr. Le Fleur found himself bewildered

wildered in the thickest part of the wood, without the most distant hopes of extrication.

He was in this uncomfortable state, when, looking forward, he observed a light through the bushes, which appeared to be at no great distance. On his nearer approach, peeping through the boughs of a thick tuft of hazels, he beheld a large fire, around which was an assemblage of men and women, who were variously employed: some emptying crusts of bread, and pieces of mouldy cheese

cheefe from their knapsacks; others burning off the feathers of geese, turkies, and other sorts of poultry, with firebrands: others again hanging kettles to large sticks that were transversely placed over the fire. A number of half-naked children were, at the same time, gathering bear branches, and roots of trees, for fuel.

A detachment of scouts, from this ragged army, being on duty, the carriage ~~et~~ was quickly observed by one of the advanced guard,
 who

who gave a private signal, and, in the instant, the whole wood resounded with a clamorous shout that was given by the party, who all immediately hastened to the spot. Mr. Le Fleur and Margaret were, with little ceremony, dislodged from the phaeton; the latter trembling, fainting, and almost dying with the apprehension of danger: and the former, owing to his extreme cowardice, in a state not less pitiable. Their fears, however, began to abate,

when, with a kind of savage civility, they were invited to partake of the splendid repast; which, they were informed, was preparing for the celebration of the nuptials of a young couple, who, as soon as supper was ended, were to be united in wedlock.

Mr. Le Fleur and Miss Vernon were introduced to the king and queen of this Egyptian band: and had the honour to be seated near them, on the grass. His majesty, who was placed by the side of
 who

his royal consort, on the trunk of a fallen oak, was much advanced in years, and in person above the common size of mortals. As a politician he had, among his subjects, no superior: as a general, no equal. For more than half a century he had instructed a chosen troop in the noble science of plunder and pilfery: and he had, himself, led them on to victory. All the inhabitants of the country, from the 'Squire down to the meanest farmer, trembled

at his name. Nor was there a road, a green lane, a heath, or a meadow, in the district, that had not witnessed the havock he had made among their flocks and their poultry. But, although a man of infinite courage, he could never be said to stare danger in the face, or to look straight forward to the object he pursued: for his neck had such an unlucky twist, that his face was invariably fixed in a direct line with his left shoulder. The accident had befallen him

some

some years before, whilst he was on a *swinging* party, in the vicinity of Oxford-street, where, thro' great good fortune, he eluded the horrors of sudden death, by dextrously fixing a row of steel hooks under his shirt-collar.

With respect to the queen, she was, at least, as handsome as the generality of her subjects. Her complexion was of the darker species of olive: she had an aquiline nose: her teeth were beautifully white; her eye (for she had but

one) was bright and piercing, and her mouth round and small, —but it was somewhat fullied by the stains of leaf tobacco, which her majesty chewed in enormous quantities.

During supper the monarch paid much attention to Miss Vernon, and was particularly officious in helping her to dainties. She did not, it is true, much relish the Egyptian cookery, but she supported the semblance of eating, with great propriety. Mr.

Le Fleur,

Le Fleur, who dreaded the ill effects of noncompliance, eagerly devoured every thing that was set before him. He bestowed the warmest encomiums on the entertainment, and particularly praised the *goose broth*, which, he said, far excelled the finest *bouillon* he had ever tasted at Paris. This inimitable decoction was made by boiling a couple of geese in a gallon of water, till the flesh was nearly reduced to pulp. After which a pint of train oil was

added to the liquor; and a few leeks, and pickled herrings, with a sufficient quantity of salt thrown in, by way of seasoning.

Mr. Le Fleur's politeness carried him beyond the bounds of discretion. No one swallowed the liquid with greater avidity. His stomach, however, which, from the first, had obstinately resisted the emetical qualities of the train oil, made a grand effort for liberty.—The consequence
was

was a loud and universal peal of laughter at his expence.

Supper was barely ended when the company were agreeably interrupted by the appearance of a man, who bore a large cask on his shoulder. This personage was one of their associates, who, being an adept in the art of legerdemain, had been dispatched in the latter part of the day to the nearest village, with strict injunctions not to return without booty. Having now declared, to the great joy
of

of his companions, that the liquor he brought was Barbadoes rum, he took his seat in the circle, and an order was issued for broaching the cask without delay.

The overflowing noggin circulated briskly: meanwhile the stranger was desired to give a circumstantial account of his adventure. He began to relate his story with much gravity. The language in which he chose to convey his sentiments was the classical *slang*, or vulgar tongue. Mr. Le Fleur, whose

whose refined ear had always been accustomed to the sweeter and more melodious articulations of the *French*, and *Italian*, was immensely shocked by his philological barbarisms. He interrupted the orator, every instant, requesting explanations, or making such absurd comments, that his *ignorance* was a subject of merriment to the whole sabbath assembly.

C H A P.

CHAPTER XI.

A CLASSICAL ORATION,

“**Y**OU all know, my friends, said the orator, (taking a quid of tobacco from his mouth, and dashing it disdainfully on the grass) you all know, that when I first enlisted, into this noble troop, I had ne’er a *marvedi* in my pouch.

But

But what then?—Why I'll tell you.—Though I was poor at first, as the man says in the Play, I have done your state some service, and ye know it. But no more of that.—My notions are these. I am for liberty, property, and no excise: I hate steel ruffles, and collars, and iron-grates: I love the ladies of the troop; I wish long corns and short shoes to our enemies; and according to the Scottish proverb, I hope he that made old Nick will take us all."

"A most

“ A most singular exordium!”
exclaimed Mr. Le Fleur.

“ As to the affair of *making* the rum, continued the orator, why, to be sure for that matter, and the matter of that, it was no great *hetchment*. As soon as I came to the village, I stopped at the sign of the *queer mower and his journeyman*.”

“ I never heard of so strange a sign, interrupted Mr. Le Fleur, —may I take the liberty of requesting

questing you to explain your meaning?"

"The queer mower, replied the orator, is Death: and I suppose you know who does all his work."

"I understand you, rejoined Mr. Le Fleur, you mean the sign of Death and the *doctor*."

"You have exactly hit the mark. But as I should have said, or was going to say, scarce had I taken my seat in the *boozing-ken*, when a stage waggon stopped at
the

the door: and presently the wagoner lugged in three *London divers*."

"London divers, I suppose, said Mr. Le Fleur, are a species of wild ducks."

This simple observation had nearly sent the king of the gipsies to his eternal home. He burst into such a violent fit of laughter that he turned black in the face: and was in danger of instant suffocation. A happy effect, however, was produced by
this

this sudden disorder. His violent struggles to regain his breath restored his majesty's neck almost to its pristine state: and he immediately received the congratulations of his people, who testified the joy they felt at this miraculous cure, by three loud and loyal cheers. Mr. Le Fleur was afterwards informed that a *diver* was a more elegant name for a *searcher* of pockets, and the orator was desired to proceed in his narrative.

“ As soon, f id he, as we had buried a few *stoups* of *gurgle*, we began to *square the broads*.”

“ There again I am at a loss,” cried Mr. Le Fleur.

“ To square the broads, replied the orator, is to read the history of the four kings.”

“ You meàn, I imagine, *Charles* of *Sweden*, *Louis* of *France*, and—”

“ You are much mistaken, interrupted the man of eloquence. I mean no other than the four kings of hearts, spades, clubs, and diamonds.

diamonds. But to proceed,—while we were at play, happening to look through the window, I spied the cask on the waggon. So, I left the *divers* as soon as possible: and whilst the waggoner was making merry with the landlady's daughter, I *takes* it into custody. You are all sure that I did not trouble my head about the reckoning; but away I trudged with the booty. I was lucky enough to meet nobody that dared to tell me black was the

white of my eye, till I came into the church yard, where, while I was resting my burthen on a tomb-stone, I was not a little alarmed on seeing a *Tom-pat* hard by the row of yew trees."

"You were not really frightened by a bird!" cried Mr. Le Fleur, with amazement.

"As to that matter, you may call a *Tom-pat* a *black* bird if you please, said the orator, laughing heartily, but I think him more like a wood-pecker; for you may

see

see him every Sunday, up to his ears in oak, just thrusting his head out of his nest, and whistling a few dull notes, till he falls asleep on the roost.—You understand me?”

“ Indeed I do not. I am still in the dark,” replied Mr. LeFleur.

“ Possible enough.—But as I was going to tell you, I took to my heels, and scampered over the stile like a young lapwing. So here was an end to my misery : for before

fore he had time to turn himself round, I was safe in the woods."

The Egyptian orator received the thanks of the whole assembly for his fluent, chaste, and elegant harangue !

CHAPTER XII.

THE GIPSIES' WEDDING.

BEFORE the animating cask was nearly drained to the bottom, the greater part of the company, particularly the ladies, were so intoxicated, that every kind of reserve was banished, by general consent: and nothing but uproar, and unbounded hilarity reigned in
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the high-spirited circle. This was the auspicious moment for the performance of the nuptials. The young couple were led forth, and every thing was in preparation, when the bride, who had sipped her share of the exhilarating liquor, conceived an extravagant whim:—It was no other than that of being married in Miss Vernon's clothes. This odd request was received with loud shouts of applause by the greater part of the assembly. The bridegroom taking courage from the success of his

his

his enchantress, insisted upon being equipped in Mr. Le Fleur's laced suit.

The king of the Gipsies, as well as his privy council, strongly reprobated so unwarrantable a proceeding. He declared that it had ever been his boast, and also the boast of his ancestors, to observe strictly the laws of hospitality. To filch the goods of an enemy, he declared was no crime, because every man ought to have wit enough to take care of his property. To take a purse on the

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highway, in open daylight, was a proof of superior courage: and courage was a quality that no man ought to be ashamed of possessing. But to rob a couple of defenceless strangers, in the very moment when he had taken them under his protection, was an act that would fix an indelible stain on a profession which, he said, they all would allow was an honourable one: and could be exercised only by a true genius, who possessed a mind of universal powers.

These

These arguments unfortunately had no weight.—The best modelled governments are subject to sudden seditious torrents, which no barrier of reasoning can oppose with success. It requires an uncommon share of political sagacity to be able, at all times, to suppress the riotous, and to satisfy the ambitious..

The trembling Margaret, whose eyes streamed with tears, had waited the event of the debate, with the utmost suspense, and agitation. When she found that
 she

she was actually to be stripped in the presence of such barbarians, the flush of modesty mounted into her cheeks, and her tender heart shrunk back with horror. With a dreadful shriek, that would have pierced the hearts, even of the savages, had not the liquor deprived them of their natural perception, she started from her seat, ran towards Mr. Le Fleur, and throwing her white arms around him, sorrowfully entreated him to shield her from the cruel operation.

