

THE
LORD OF HARDIVYLE,
AN
HISTORICAL LEGEND
OF THE
FOURTEENTH CENTURY

—Quis Talia fando
Temperet à Lachrymis?

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THE
LORD OF HARDIVYLE.

CHAP. I.

Now the winds blow till they have weaken'd death,
And now the lab'ring bark climbs hills of seas
Olympus high; and ducks again as low
As hell's from heaven.

ALREADY had the Coast of Northumberland been lost to the sight, when the sun, sinking into the ocean, foretold a storm by its sanguine appearance. The night came on apace terrible and gloomy; the lightning flashed and the roar of distant thunder was heard; portentous meteors shot athwart the gloom, and each mountainous billow threatened them with immediate destruction.

By the sudden shock of a wave the rudder was dashed to atoms, and the vessel left to the mercy of the winds and the raging sea; for some time she was drove back by the storm, when they perceived the land directly before them; unable to govern the ship, they foresaw their destruction was inevitable.

Dismal was the scene before them, terror and dismay were painted on every countenance; no voice was heard but prayers and ejaculations, mingled with the curses and ravings of the seamen. In vain did the Captain endeavour to raise their drooping spirits, his voice was too weak to be heard among the general confusion.

Egbert alone was undismayed, and almost wished for the death he thought unavoidable.

The ship soon struck, and at the same instant a most tremendous crash of thunder was heard; all nature seemed dissolved, and the universe returned to its original chaos. A billow lifted the vessel from the strand, but alas! it only deferred her destruction for a moment, for with redoubled fury she dashed against the shore. The boat was hoisted out, but no intreaty could persuade Egbert to enter it; at length the Captain, with the assistance of his men, forced him down the ship's side;—scarce had they left the vessel, ere a wave of a tremendous height overwhelmed them, and sunk their last resource.

None save Egbert escaped; whom a wave carried to shore:—he arose from the beach weary and fatigued; at a small distance he perceived a light, and immediately made towards it, hoping at least to gain shelter for the remainder of the night.

By a flash of lightning he perceived that the light issued from a Castle at some distance; full of melancholy reflections on his forlorn state, he reached it; he hesitated a

moment whether he should disturb the inhabitants at so unseasonable an hour, but thinking his situation would excuse his intrusion, he seized the massy knocker; thrice he knocked; so fast locked in the arms of sleep were they, notwithstanding the storm.

The porter at last appeared, and in a surly tone demanded what he wanted at that time of night?—"Suffer an unfortunate stranger." said Egbert, "who is wrecked on this coast, to pass the night within this mansion."

"Hark," replied the porter, "here comes the Baron, whom doubtless your knocking has disturbed." The porter went to meet him, and in a few minutes the Baron appeared, who reproved the porter for suffering a stranger to wait outside the gate; after welcoming Egbert to the Castle, he conducted him to a chamber, where he left him.

In vain he endeavoured to repose himself, the anxiety of his mind scarce suffered him to close an eye; he passed over in his mind the happy days of his infancy, and contrasted them with his present wretched situation.—The sun had begun to gild the horizon, when overcome by the fatigue of his body, and anxiety of his mind, he sunk into a disturbed slumber.

He arose, weary and unrefreshed, and was sitting at a window that faced the sea, contemplating the remains of the vessel which still lay scattered about, when Montmorris entered, and conducted him to the breakfast chamber, where the Baroness waited for them.

When the repast was finished, and Montmorris left alone with Egbert, he condoled with him on the unfortunate event that had brought him to the Castle, and offered him an asylum till he could inform his friends of his situation. At the word "Friends" Egbert sighed, and a tear, in spite of his endeavouring to hide it, was observed by the Baron. "Young man," said he, taking his hand, "do not give way to grief, for as long as you chuse to make this your habitation, you shall want for nothing."

The manner in which this was spoken excited the confidence of Egbert; who answered, "My sorrows, my Lord, will admit of no alleviation:—torn from all I held dear by the cruelty of a patron, I once thought endowed with the greatest humanity, and whose name, notwithstanding his unkindness, I shall ever revere for his generous care of a forlorn orphan."

"Confidence in a friend," said Montmorris, "will blunt the sharpest grief. If you think proper to intrust me with the cause of your sorrow, you may depend upon having all the assistance in my power."

The Baron now paused for an answer; and Egbert, after appearing lost for some minutes, replied, "After your generous offer to a stranger, it would be ungrateful in me to refuse the small satisfaction you desire."

“To the humanity of Lord Hardivyle I am indebted for my life. As he was returning from a visit with only one attendant, named Edrio (to whom I am indebted for these particulars), he arrived within a few miles of his Castle in Northumberland, and perceiving a bundle neatly tied up in white linen, he ordered his man to dismount, and take it up; when, to their great surprise, on opening it, they perceived an infant to all appearance about a month old. He ordered Edrio to carry me home before him, and immediately procured a nurse.

“About six months before I was received into the family of Lord Hardivyle, his brother (from whom he inherited the title), as he was hunting in a wood, a few miles from the Castle, was supposed to have been murdered by banditti who infested that place, having never been heard of since. He had lost his attendants in the heat of the chase, but notwithstanding the strictest search, his body was never found; they discovered his horse and sword, which last was broken; there was much blood spilt on the ground, which they traced to some distance, and then lost it.

“As soon as I was capable of instruction, I was educated under the same matters as his own son, who was about my age.

“My infancy was one uninterrupted scene of tranquillity till I attained my seventeenth year, when Lord Hardivyle began to treat me with unusual harshness and severity; nor was it to me alone he behaved in this manner, every domestic in his family felt this alteration in his temper, in a greater or less degree.

“I had formed a strict friendship with Lord Robert, the only son of Hardivyle, with whom I used frequently to hunt; even this amusement was now denied me; I was never suffered to stir without the Castle walls. Robert contributed every thing in his power to console me, but I was determined to quit the place the first opportunity.

“The plan I had formed was to enlist under the banner of king Edward, who, with his son, was preparing to invade France.

“Robert had formed an hunting party, and entreated his father to permit me to accompany him; he consented with great reluctance, and after giving me a strict charge to be home early in the evening, set out for a small estate, where he frequently spent two or three days every month.

“The chase was a very good one, and lasted till the evening, when, as we were returning, a very large boar was started by the dogs, which following with too much ardor, I lost my companions, and found myself so entangled in the intricacies of the forest, that I in vain sought to release myself. It was now nearly dark, and a storm seemed to be gathering in the air. Soon after the rain came down in torrents, and the winds howled through the trees; in vain I looked around for shelter, there was none to be seen;—I at length perceived a peasant returning from cutting wood, I accosted him, and asked if there was any shelter near?”

“My cottage, your Honour, is about two miles, there is none nearer; but if your Honour will go with me, you shall be welcome.”

“I gladly accepted this offer, and we proceeded onward together; we had not gone far when the rain came down with redoubled fury; the lightning flashed with a most awful brightness; a large oak at a few yards distance was by it shivered to atoms; by another flash I caught the glimpse of a building among the trees—it appeared to be a Monastery in ruins. I mentioned it to my conductor, and asked him if we could not gain shelter there from the fury of the storm.”

“O Lord, your Honour, (he answered) I would not go into that *there* place, no, not for the King’s Crown.” “No! what are your reasons for that, friend?” “Why, your Honour, the Devil keeps his Court there, and all the ghosts and —” “Ridiculous fears! (interrupted I, impatient to shelter myself from the storm) are these your only reasons for not entering? Farewell.” “Nay, as to the matter of that (replied he), I has as much courage as another man, but it isn’t in my way to fight with Devils.”

“So saying, he walked away, while I retired to the ruin. I went under a broken arch, which led me to a Courtyard; from thence I entered a spacious Hall.

“It was now quite dark, and I had not been long there when I thought I heard a footstep behind me: I turned round—a ray of light darted against the wall at the other end of the place where I sat, and instantly disappeared; I watched awhile, and perceiving nothing more, attributed it to fancy.

“In about half an hour the light appeared in its former place. I plainly perceived at one corner of the room a human countenance; unable to move, I gazed on it with silent horror—I was awakened from my stupefaction by a most dreadful crash—I started up, and went into the Court, thinking part of the building had fallen down. After a few minutes, finding all silent, I returned.

“As I entered the door I was struck with the sight of a figure with a lamp in its hand, in the place where I had been sitting, attentively surveying a curious boarspear, which I had taken from the armoury.

“I instantly recollected the discourse of the countryman, and inspired by a desperate frenzy, rushed forward: it retreated with slow and measured steps, apparently without perceiving me. Before I could overtake it, it reached the end of the chamber, and turned round—it started on perceiving me, and instantly vanished with a most horrible noise, which was succeeded by a yell, such as only fiends could utter. Unable to support such a complication of terrors, I sunk upon my knees, and began fervently to address myself to the Almighty Power. In the middle of my prayer I was interrupted by a peal of laughter, which seemed to proceed from the mouth of a giant; for surely no common man could have equalled it.

“This circumstance entirely dissipated the small remains of fortitude I then possessed:—a cold sweat came over me, and I fell senseless to the ground. I recovered not till late the next morning, when mounting my horse (which I had secured in the Court) I hastily rode away.

“On my arrival at the Castle, I was desired to attend Lord Hardivyle, from whom I was determined to keep secret my adventure in the forest.

“Lord Hardivyle met me at the door of his chamber, and looking full in my face, demanded, with his usual severity, and a tone of great authority, how I dared to disobey his commands.

“I replied I had lost myself in the forest, and the storm obliged me to stay all night.”

“Such paltry excuses will not pass with me (he replied), and as a punishment retire to your chamber, and henceforth let that be your prison.” I was retiring full of indignation at this cruel treatment, when he called me back. Hoping he intended to dismiss me from the Castle, I returned with alacrity.

“He paused for some minutes; then turning round, and perceiving me, he started, and asked, why I did not obey him, and retire to my chamber.

“I wondered at this inconsistent behaviour; but perceiving that in his present state of mind further arguments would only exasperate him, him, I left him without reply.—I retired to my chamber, and was close confined for some days.

“I had a small collection of books in my prison, with which I used to amuse myself. One evening I opened one of them, a very interesting subject, and continued reading till the Castle clock struck twelve, and was preparing to go to rest, when I thought I heard a noise against the wall on the opposite side of the room; I fixed my eyes on the place whence it proceeded, and perceived the tapestry moving to and fro with a rattling noise. I went towards it, when suddenly a door opened, and Robert entered.

“I flew to embrace him; but he motioned me to make no noise, and beckoned me to follow him. We proceeded through a long vaulted apartment and several rooms (which I had not leisure to examine) till we came to the door of the chapel. On a sudden we heard a footstep on one side of us, and the next minute Lord Hardivyle appeared from behind an angle of the wall.

“Robert immediately extinguished his light, and stepped into the Chapel, the door of which was half open; in his haste he slipped down the steps on the inside; I shut the door with as little noise as possible, and watched Hardivyle through a crevice.

“At the noise Robert made his father turned round; he paused awhile, and then advanced towards the door we had entered. I bolted it very gently, and the next minute he endeavoured to open it, but finding it fast, he retired.

“His countenance never struck me with so much dread as at that time; I could perceive depicted on it in the plainest characters an unbounded ferocity, and the most savage resolution.

“As soon as Lord Hardivyle was out of sight, we went out of the Chapel, and without any further interruption arrived at the Court before the Castle. I here found a horse ready bridled and saddled. Robert put a small parcel into my hands, and letting me out of the gate, he quickly returned into the Castle.

“I was surprised at his silence, and much wished to see the contents of the parcel; but as this was no time for delay, I mounted the horse, and rode towards the Metropolis, intending to keep my first resolution of joining the army.

“The morning had just began to dawn, when I heard at a distance the clattering of horses; the winding of the road prevented me from seeing what they were. I had rode at full speed all night, and my horse was tired; continually in dread, I doubted not but that they were in pursuit of me. My conjectures were confirmed when they came up to me, by their ordering me to surrender:—to resist would have been madness, as in my haste I neglected to bring any weapon with me, I therefore submitted.

“I perceived by the time we were in returning, I had taken a very round-about-road.

“When we arrived at the Castle, I was left to the care of two of them, while the remainder went in. In about a quarter of an hour they returned, and searching took away the parcel I had received from Robert, and re-entered the Castle.

“In a short time they returned, and procuring fresh horses, they carried me to the sea-shore, and entered with me on board a vessel they found there, and obliged the Captain to weigh anchor immediately. We had not been long at sea, when the storm arose which cast me on this Coast.”

CHAP. II.

A man may smile, and smile, and be a villain.

—————He the army fought,
Bent upon peril, in the range of death
Resolv'd to hunt for fame, and with his sword
To gain distinction which his birth denied.

MONTMORRIS (after returning thanks for his narrative,) told Egbert, that as he seemed so much inclined to follow the fortune of the King, he should accompany his son, who was to set out in about a fortnight to join the Sovereign in London. Egbert endeavoured to express his gratitude, but his emotions overcame him; he retired abruptly to a window, and the Baron left the apartment.

The Castle of the Lord Montmorris was situate on the coast of Norfolk, on a wide and well cultivated domain; the happiness of his vassals, after his own family, formed his principal care; in no part of his extensive estates was to be seen the face of a peasant clouded with care, or oppressed by the iron hand of famine; twice each week, he attended in the hall of his Castle to settle their disputes. No lawyer here grew rich by the ruin of his fellow-creatures; the word of Montmorris was a law, not obeyed through fear, or forced by authority, but acquiesced in from a love of virtue, and a sense of the justice of his decrees.

Upon further conversation with the Baron, he found that his son Oswald, together with his daughter, the Lady Isabella, were upon a visit in Brecknock to their uncle, the Duke of Fauconberg.

In about a week Lord Oswald returned, but without his sister; for his uncle, who was now old, would not consent to part with them both at once.

The bounty of Lord Montmorris furnished Egbert with the same equipage as his own son; indeed their affection for him was not less, for during the short space he had been at the Castle, his behaviour was such as to procure him the approbation of all who saw him, which, joined to a most expressive countenance, and a form in which envy itself could not find a blemish, rendered him an object of admiration to all beholders.

The day for their departure being arrived, they proceeded towards London. Egbert was accompanied by Albert, a youth whose father having been a Priest, had given him a good education, and made him thoroughly acquainted with the antient languages; but being unable to provide for him, Montmorris had employed him as an Under Steward, and at his own request, was appointed an attendant on Egbert.

On their arrival at the Metropolis, they were graciously received by Edward, who was to set forward with his army the ensuing week. In the mean time a tournament was

held for the amusement of the Nobility and Gentry who attended on the King. On the third day Egbert carried the prize from all competitors, which induced Oswald on the ensuing morning to enter the lists against him; but unwilling even to carry the appearance of animosity towards the son of his benefactor, he would gladly have declined opposing him; but seeing no method of coming off with honour, he was forced to comply.

The charge was as furious as could be expected between combatants of equal age and strength. In the first career Egbert's lance was shivered to atoms, and at the same moment he received so rude a shock, as to force him from the pommel of the saddle, and it required his utmost exertion to save himself; but quickly recovering, another lance was delivered to him, with which he again returned to the charge.

The combat remained a long time doubtful; several advantages were gained on both sides; Oswald was at length thrown; Egbert at the same time dismounting, attacked him sword in hand, according to the law of the Tournament. Oswald was again defeated, and the judges of the field delivered the prize to Egbert, who received it not as his due, but as a favour for which he was indebted to the goodness of his Majesty, and turning with the most becoming grace to Oswald, he presented it to him, attributing to accident alone the advantage he had gained over him.

The behaviour of these youthful combatants so highly pleased Edward, that he appointed them to an equal rank in the Body Guard of the Prince.

At the time appointed they proceeded towards France, where they arrived without encountering any difficulties. Oswald and Egbert never having seen service before, were frequently sent to reconnoitre, and protect the foraging parties, to inure them to the hardship of the field: being upon one of the latter expeditions, they were surprised by a detachment of the enemy, nearly double their own force. The Commander of the British troops posted them as advantageously as the time would admit. The French began the attack with great vigour, which was received by the English with the utmost firmness. It was the first action Egbert had been in, but his behaviour surprised the oldest veteran; he shot like lightning through the ranks, and laid many a gallic crest in the dust; but in vain was valour when opposed by so superior a force, and Egbert had the mortification to see the English begin to give way. At the same moment Lord Somerset (the Commander of the party) was brought to the ground by a blow from a falchion. —Egbert rushed to the spot, and arrived when the sword of the French General was suspended over the head of the gallant Somerset: —regardless of his own safety, where the life of his Commander was concerned, he covered the fallen hero with his shield, and on his own shoulder received the blow destined to shorten the days of the English Earl—enraged at the smart, he darted at his opponent, and by a well-aimed blow laid him breathless at his feet.

By this time Lord Somerset (who was only stunned by the blow) had recovered, and seeing Egbert lying fainting from loss of blood, he committed him to the care of a party who had just come up, and proceeded to rally his men. The French being now without a leader, were soon put into confusion, and a total defeat ensued.

His next care was to carry off his wounded, which he effected without difficulty; and from an officer who had been disabled at a few yards from the place where the Earl had been overpowered, he learned the particulars of his deliverance by Egbert.

During his confinement, Lord Somerset attended him with a parental kindness, and placed his conduct in so good a light to Edward, that on his recovery he presented him with the command of a corps of Cavalry.

Oswald, since his defeat at the Tournament, had conceived a dislike to his adversary, which, by imperceptible degrees, ripened into hatred.

Oswald had a head capable of planning any villainy, and a hand for executing it; these he artfully contrived to cover with a mark of hypocrisy, and while under the guise of friendship he insinuated himself into the confidence of Egbert, he was endeavouring to ruin him in the opinion of the Prince, with whom he was a great favourite; but the modest deportment, and respectful esteem so obvious in his carriage towards young Edward, for some time frustrated his endeavour.

The Prince, though endowed with every virtue that graces the true hero, had still his foibles. He was severe in his notions of high birth, which was a great recommendation to him; this Oswald perceived, and to lessen Egbert in his esteem, he related the first part of his story to Edward—not without some additions of his own.

“It is true (said he, as soon as he had finished) nothing appears to prove *positively* that he may not be well born, but why exposed in that manner? Does not every circumstance concur to make us suppose he is the offspring of guilt? most likely of the lowest degree, who could not afford to support him; if he belonged to any person of any consequence they would never cruelly desert a child in that manner, though illegitimate.”

By such artful insinuations did Oswald endeavour to injure Egbert in the esteem of the Prince; he even went further—he related several little incidents to the prejudice of his rival, which had no other foundation than in his own fertile imagination.

The campaign was one continued scene of success, without the enemy being able to make any stand; till in the neighbourhood of Cressey they were overtaken by the French King, at the head of an army of one hundred and twenty thousand men. The English forces could only muster thirty thousand, but not withstanding so vast a superiority the men were by no means daunted.

It would be needless to recount the incredible acts of valour atchieved on this memorable day; suffice it to say, that the French were defeated with vast slaughter.

While Edward was prosecuting his victories in France, the King of Scotland, taking advantage of his absence, invaded England with a powerful army. Montmorris, though too far advanced in life to attend his Sovereign abroad, raised a considerable body of men to join the Queen, who was marching in person to repel the invaders. Several

Nobility on the borders, tempted by the large offers of the Scottish Monarch, had joined him: —among these was Lord Hardivyle. After a tedious march the Queen came up with the enemy, and a severe battle was fought, in which the Scotch King was taken, and his army completely routed. Several of the English Nobility who had joined him were also taken, amongst whom was Hardivyle.

Soon after the battle of Cressey Egbert's party was ordered to assist in dislodging a detachment of the enemy from a post in which they greatly annoyed the English, by cutting off their provisions. They came within view of the post just as it grew dark.

A counsel was called, in which it was resolved not to begin the attack till midnight. In the meantime Egbert, Oswald, and a few others, were sent out to reconnoitre. Venturing too far, they fell in with a body of the enemy, much superior to themselves in force. On the first appearance of danger, Oswald and his comrades fled; but Egbert, who was a short distance before them, was surrounded and taken prisoner. A messenger was immediately dispatched to the English Commander, declaring, that if he would draw off his troops, Egbert should be released; but that the moment they were attacked, he should be put to the sword.

A counsel was held, and Oswald, who was present, used all his eloquence to persuade them that the life of one man was nothing when compared to the advantage that would accrue to the whole army by dislodging the enemy from that post, while he affected pathetically to lament that his friend must fall a sacrifice to his advice.

It was therefore determined to send back the messenger without any answer, under pretence of longer time being required for deliberation, and to begin the attack immediately. Every thing turned out as was expected; the French were drove from their intrenchments, and Oswald triumphed in having so easily got rid of his rival.

The son of Montmorris was dispatched to the camp with an account of their success, and the death of Egbert. Oswald was appointed to command his Company, and immediately proceeded to join it.

In a few days the French came down in much greater numbers, and attacked the same station. In the first onset Oswald was wounded, and the Commander in Chief slain. The troops, being without a leader, gave way on all sides, and the French were upon the point of gaining a complete victory; when a horseman in French armour burst through the ranks, and rallying the flying English, led them on again to the charge. The French who were pursuing without any order, were surprised at this unexpected check; and as their ranks were so much broken, became an easy conquest, and were defeated without slaughter. Every heart beat high with expectation to know who the valiant stranger was, who had so bravely rescued them from their slaughtering foe; when, to their utter astonishment, on casting off his helmet, the perceived —Egbert!

Although the French Commander had sent so severe a message, it was far from his intention to put Egbert to death; as soon therefore as he perceived the English troops

approaching, he sent Egbert, under a guard of six men, to a place of greater security, where, after his defeat, he joined him; and soon after receiving a strong reinforcement, he set out to endeavour to regain the possession of the post he had been driven from. By the connivance of two centinels, who were placed over him, he found means to procure a suit of French armour, and a horse; he passed without suspicion through the French troops, and arrived just in time to save the English from a defeat.

A peace was shortly after concluded, and Edward returned home in triumph.

CHAP. III.

This is a horrid place, I scarce dare crawl
Thro' its low grates and narrow passages:
And the winds gust that whistles in the caverns,
Is as the groan of some one near his end.

SOON after the arrival of Edward the trial of Hardivyle came on, when he was formally condemned, and his estates confiscated; part of his possessions were bestowed on Montmorris, and a small estate on Egbert, who in vain used his utmost interest to get his sentence remitted. Egbert was under the most painful apprehensions on account of his friend Robert, of whom, notwithstanding the strictest enquiries, no news could be heard; and no one being permitted to see Lord Hardivyle, he could gain no information there.

The day of execution arrived, and the King, with his whole Court, attended. Egbert was particularly desired to be present; he appeared in deep mourning, and a countenance which plainly betokened the distress of his mind; but when he perceived a croud advancing at a distance, his emotions nearly overcame him, and he was obliged to lean on the person next to him for support; this happened to be Oswald, who was standing behind Prince Edward.

A horseman was seen at a distance riding full speed towards the Royal pavillion; he had a letter in his hand, which on his arrival he delivered to the King, during the perusal of which he appeared much agitated. When he had finished, he enquired of the messenger, why the Governor of the Tower did not come himself? the messenger replied, he was confined to his bed by indisposition.

Edward appeared greatly displeased, and rising, he ordered a Lord in waiting to read the letter aloud.

It contained intelligence, that on entering the apartment of Lord Hardivyle to prepare him for execution, it was found empty; that he was supposed to have made his escape through the window, by forcing the iron bars from their places; this he was thought to have effected by the assistance of some person on the outside, to confirm which conjecture, a ladder was found standing against the window; he was supposed to have made his escape by water, which appeared the more probable, as the sentinel who did duty on the platform next the river had fled also.

Egbert still loved Lord Hardivyle, notwithstanding his cruel or *capricious* treatment of him in the latter part of his residence at the Castle. As soon as the letter was read, he could not restrain himself from an exclamation of joy at the escape of the rebel Lord; his mourning had before attracted universal notice, but this behaviour drew the eyes of the whole Court upon him.

Prince Edward appeared particularly displeased; and Oswald smiling maliciously, secretly determined to make his conduct appear accessory to his destruction.

Montmorris shortly after went down to take possession of his estate; Oswald declined attending him, on account of an engagement he had made to spend a few days at the country seat of an acquaintance. Egbert accompanied him, intending at the same time to examine the part which had been granted to him from the estates of Hardivyle, which was about 20 miles distant from the Castle in which Lord Hardivyle used to reside, and which was a part of the land which was granted to Montmorris. When they arrived in Northumberland, Egbert was welcomed with sincere affection by the domestics. Edric, for whom he had a great liking, had been absent for some time, and nobody could give any account of him.

The principal cause which induced Egbert to visit the Castle, in preference to proceeding to his own estate, was a hope to find his friend Lord Robert in some of the secret recesses of the Castle, where he was fearful the cruelty of his father had confined him for assisting him in his escape.

As it was very late when they arrived, Egbert deferred his search till the following morning. The anxiety of his mind kept him waking the whole night; upon the first appearance of light he arose, his heart beating with anxious expectation; as he passed through the different chambers he found none of the domestics were yet risen.

Lord Hardivyle had kept the entrance, and the existence of these subterraneous caverns a profound secret from every one except his son, who had once in confidence mentioned them to him; but the entrance into them he never revealed.

Although it was very improbable that this Castle should ever be restored to Hardivyle, it was not impossible; Egbert therefore thought it a duty he owed him to keep the entrance of these caverns (if he should discover it) a secret from all but its present owner. He first proceeded to examine the south towers, which he thought the most probable part to find it in, on account of its having been uninhabited for upwards of a century: Lord Robert, in his discourse, had also inadvertently let drop something concerning a staircase in the fourth tower. He had prosecuted his search with unremitting assiduity for an hour, but finding his labour fruitless, he thought of returning, when he saw a door half open, he had not perceived before; his hopes instantly revived, and he entered it.

By the disposition of its antique furniture, and the shelves, which still remained fixed to the walls, he conjectured it had been the library; he closely examined every part of it, but could discover nothing like a door of any sort, except that at which he entered.

He then began to sound the walls with the hilt of his sword, thinking the door might be so nicely concealed as not to be perceptible; near the window he thought the wall sounded hollow, he struck again, and a pannel of the wainscot flew open; overjoyed

at the discovery, he entered, but on perceiving, from the condition of the place, that no human being could have been in it for at least a century, his hopes were greatly damped. Determined at all events to explore it, he entered; it was a kind of closet, formed between the wainscot of the library and the outer wall of the tower; it was about three feet in width, and in length about thirteen. The dust upon the floor was near two inches thick, without the mark of any footstep but his own. Part of the ceiling had fallen down, and from every concurring circumstance it could not have been entered for a great number of years.

From these appearances it was evident this could not be the passage by which Lord Hardivyle used to enter the dungeon. Vexed to find all his endeavours frustrated, he proceeded back to the library; he had not gone many steps when he stumbled over something in the pavement, Egbert stooped to discover what it was; he perceived an iron ring fixed to a stone, which the darkness of the place and the thickness of the dust, had prevented him from seeing before, he closely examined the stone all round, and on the side opposite to the ring he perceived a pair of iron hinges; it was evident (as it was upon the ground floor) this must be an entrance into some of the subterraneous passages of the castle; he endeavoured to lift the stone, but it resisted his utmost efforts: judging that by this time the servants would be risen, he deferred forcing open the door till night.

He deliberated with himself whether he should reveal the secret of the closet to the Baron; but not being certain where it might lead to, if indeed there was any passage at all, he determined first to examine it himself; but again thinking that it looked like want of confidence in his benefactor to conceal any thing from him, he quickly altered his resolution.

During the time of breakfast, he related his adventure to Lord and Lady Monmorris, who perfectly agreed with him as to the propriety of concealing the secret recesses from the servants. Eleven o'clock at night, when the servants were retired to bed, was the time fixed upon for the prosecution of the discovery.

Toward the evening the Baron found himself unwell from a cold he got the preceding day; Egbert joined with Lady Montmorris in persuading him not to venture (in his present state of health) into the damp apartments of the fourth tower; to their united entreaties he yielded, and as it was proper that some person should accompany Egbert, Albert was fixed upon as the most proper.

The appointed hour at length arrived, and every thing being quiet in the castle, Egbert accompanied by Albert, repaired to the library (where he related to his companion the intent of his search) with proper tools for bursting open the door, which being effected, they perceived a flight of steps which they descended; for near a quarter of an hour they proceeded along a very narrow passage, so low in some places as not to admit a person to stand upright, by degrees it grew more spacious, and going a little farther they found it divided into several avenues; Egbert stopped to deliberate which passage they should take; during the conference a low and hollow groan reached his ear, apparently proceeding from a cavern on the left side; this determined him, and he went towards it,

hearing nothing more they stopped to listen, again it was repeated, and seemed to come from the wall on one side of them, where Egbert perceived an appearance as of a door lately walled up; seeing no entrance they were obliged to return to the trap door for the iron crow and axe, to force down the wall, within which he hoped to find his friend Lord Robert.

CHAP. IV.

———Ere the bat hath flown
His cloyster'd flight, ere back to Hecates summons
The shard born beetle, with his drowsy hum,
Hath rung night's yarning peal, *there shall be done*
A deed of dreadful note.

GREATLY were they astonished at their arrival at the trap door to see Lord Montmorris entering from the Library, he accosted them in haste and asked what had happened, "Your messenger," continued he, "appeared under great terror—for the love of God inform me why I am sent for." With a look of the utmost surprise, Egbert replied he had sent no message.

"This moment," said the Baron, "I parted from a man who informed me he came from you, and that my preference was immediately necessary." It was evident their proceedings had been watched, but for what purpose no one could conjecture.

Egbert apprehensive of some deep laid plot, would have had Lord Montmorris retire immediately with Albert to conduct him to his chamber, while by himself he should explore the dungeon in search of the son of Hardivyle.

To this proposal the Baron refused his assent, and declared his resolution to share whatever danger Egbert should encounter: with their swords drawn they descended the steps and proceeded towards the place they had heard the groans.

Lord Montmorris felt a secret apprehension, for which he could not account, he cautioned Egbert to be on his guard, and declared his suspicion of some treachery.

Albert who was first, on a sudden caught hold of Egbert and pointed up one of the avenues, where by the light of a torch they carried, he could plainly distinguish five armed men; Lord Montmorris was of opinion that they ought to return immediately and not unnecessarily expose themselves to danger by continuing there any longer.

Egbert, to whom the life of the Baron was of far more value than his own, immediately acquiesced in the prudence of the proposal, but secretly resolved to return when he had conducted the Baron to his apartment; and endeavour to penetrate into this mystery, which he feared concerned the welfare of his benefactor; the groans he had heard was another strong inducement; the thought of his friend and earliest companion perishing for want of assistance was dreadful, his generous soul could not endure it, and he determined to risk his life in the hope of succouring him.

On their arrival at the closet they found every thing as it had been left; Albert stepped into the Library to see if all there was safe, perceiving nothing, he beckoned them

to follow; but scarce had Montmorris stepped from the closet when a blow from a battle axe brought him to the ground.

Not appearing at his usual hour, Lady Montmorris sent a servant to call him, the man returned with intelligence that he was not to be found, the next sent for Egbert or Albert, neither of them could be heard of. The Baroness summoned her servants to attend her, and they proceeded in a body to the fourth tower, gracious God! on entering the Library what a dreadful sight struck their eyes—their master weltering in his blood, with a sword broken and stained with blood, which the Baroness immediately knew to be Egbert's; the pannel was closed, and not the smallest marks could be observed by the entrance as described by Egbert, the most horrid ideas rushed into her mind—was it possible that he whom they had cherished as a son could be guilty of the murder of his benefactor! Her heart revolted at the idea, and she sunk lifeless in the arms of her attendants.

A surgeon who had been sent for arrived, he examined the body of Lord Montmorris, and in some measure revived the spirits of the family by declaring him not yet dead, but in the most eminent danger, more from the great loss of blood he had sustained than the mortality of the wound.

A messenger was immediately dispatched to London for Oswald, who arrived in a few days and seemed greatly affected at the condition in which he found his father.

He uttered the most dreadful execrations against Egbert, who in all companies he mentioned as the murderer of his parent. He held frequent conferences with Walter, a favorite servant of a mind congenial with his own, and the principal assistant in all his designs; coming suddenly out of the rooms in which he had locked himself up with this man, he found a servant to whom his father had an attachment, just leaving the door, he changed countenance and started back in manifest confusion; the same night this servant disappeared and was no more heard of.

To the joy of every one Lord Montmorris continued to mend daily, but Lady Montmorris had undergone so severe a shock that she still continued confined to her bed.

Oswald's counsels were still continued, but the utmost caution was observed that they should not be discovered; in vain did he endeavour to hide them from the prying eyes of the domestics, but their discourse was carried on in so low a voice that not a word could be understood. The disappearance of the Baron's man had excited a great degree of mistrust amongst his fellow servants since which time strange and mysterious whispers were heard through the castle, and so greatly excited the curiosity of the family as to cause them to take the most unjustifiable means to satisfy themselves: certain it is that James (so was the man called) had overheard something of dreadful import, some dire mischance seemed to hang over the castle, but of what nature no probable conjecture could be formed.

Several days passed, and the Baron was so well recovered as to leave his chamber, when to the utter dismay of his whole family, Oswald on entering his chamber one morning to accompany him on a ride, found the wound on his head had broke out a new, and that he had expired during the night from the vast effusions of blood; he appointed two persons to take care of the body of his deceased parent, and retired to give vent to his grief in private. The Steward undertook to reveal the disaster to the Baroness, but notwithstanding his utmost caution, it proved fatal, she languished three days and on the fourth expired.

An express had been sent to the Lady Isabella when first her parent received his wound, but the messenger having been thrown from his horse arrived not at the castle of Fauconberg till the day on which Lord Montmorris died: labouring under the utmost anxiety for the fate of her reverend Father, she left Brecknock and arrived in Northumberland the morning following the decease of her mother.

When informed of her great and irreparable loss, she uttered no complaint, no tears of regret started from her eyes, she regarded not the weeping domestics who surrounded her—her brother entered, he spoke to her, still was she silent, she smiled, but it was a smile of horror, her hands were clasped and her eyes fixed on the ground—a heavy sigh burst from her heart, and she sunk lifeless in the arms of her brother.

The remains of the Baron and his Lady were laid in the vault of the chapel, with all possible magnificence, attended by Oswald, now Baron Montmorris, Lady Isabella, and the tears and lamentations of his numerous vassals; the Duke of Fauconberg had arrived the preceding day, but the fatigue of his journey prevented his attendance on the obsequies of his regreted relatives.

A month passed, during which time no tidings could be heard of Egbert, the reputed murderer, he had been declared an outlaw, and his property confiscated. A strange alteration had taken place in the castle; after dark not a servant could be found who would venture to pass through the apartments alone, wonderful reports were circulated of lights seen in the south tower, and noises heard after the family had retired to rest; Lord Oswald appeared uncommonly gloomy, he would shut himself up whole days in his chamber, and suffer no one to approach him, oft when in conversation with his sister and the Duke, would he pause, rest his head upon his hand, and appear lost in thought for some minutes.

His friends attributed his melancholy to the disastrous events which had lately happened. His uncle and the Lady Isabella exerted themselves to sooth him but in vain, something uncommon seemed to prey upon his spirits, at the bare mention of his father he would relapse into his gloom; many of the oldest servants left his service, and the few who remained obeyed his orders with a sullenness which evinced their reluctance; these circumstances could not fail to excite the curiosity of Isabella, she mentioned them to the Duke, who endeavoured to discover the cause, but his enquiries were answered only by a silent shake of the head, and a kind of *half-answer* which he could not comprehend.

CHAP. V.

Shut from the light of Heaven in cavern'd cells,
Chain'd to the grunsel edge, and left to pine
In bitterness of soul.

AS soon as the traiterous Lord of Hardivyle was informed of the sentence passed upon him, the deepest despair pervaded his guilty soul; his temper, once active and resolute, was now changed into the utmost despondence, for whole nights would he pace his chamber with his arms folded and eyes fixed upon the ground; but he had still one faithful adherent left, who resolved to risk his own life to preserve that of his master; this was Edric, who no sooner heard that his Lord was condemned, than he resolved to make one desperate effort to release him.

He came to the metropolis and entered himself in one of the regiments then on duty in the tower; this step being accomplished, his next was to find in what part of the fortress Lord Hardivyle was confined, and to inform him of his being there; fortunately an opportunity soon offered, three days before the day appointed for the execution, Edric was ordered to carry his dinner into his apartment.

He had contrived to convey a note which he had previously prepared, into the dish, when he entered the room in which his Lord was confined, he involuntarily started at the wretched figure which presented itself; in one corner of the chamber sat Lord Hardivyle, his face was entirely covered by his hands, which he rested upon his knees, he appeared not to perceive that any one was near him, nor once lifted up his head while Edric remained there.

On his return to clear the table he had the satisfaction to find his note had been taken; Lord Hardivyle looked earnestly at him, but the centinel having entered with him prevented any conversation. Edric was still at as great a loss as ever for the means of accomplishing his scheme: Thursday was the day fixed for the execution of the sentence; Wednesday arrived, still he had fixed upon no place, and had given up all thoughts of the practicability of his design, when chance procured him the means.

Edric was pensively sitting in the corner of the guard room alone, when a soldier entered, and threw himself upon a bench; not perceiving Edric, he cursed the hard duty of a soldier, which for two nights had deprived him of his rest.

The servant of Lord Hardivyle thinking he could turn the discontent of this man to his own advantage, entered into discourse with him, and found that by the malice of his commanding officer, this soldier had been obliged to perform duty on the platform facing the river, the two preceding nights, and had received orders to be there again that night. Edric instantly recollected that the window of his Lord's apartments fronted this place; his first thought was to endeavour to bring this man to be an accomplice in his plot—but could he trust him? Might he not make a merit in betraying him to the Governor?

He entered into conversation with a view of sounding his fidelity, but found that notwithstanding the cause he had to complain, he professed the strictest loyalty towards his Sovereign.

The crafty Edric pretended to commiserate with him, and offered for a trifling consideration, (that he might not be suspected) to relieve him at midnight, this was instantly agreed to, and Edric exulted in the hope of being able to accomplish his design; his next care was to find out the centinels who were to do duty under the window of the apartment, and those by whom he must pass; in this he succeeded, and learned that eleven at night was the hour they were to mount guard.

Under pretence of its being his birth-day, he, at different times, treated several of the soldiers with wine; when ten o'clock arrived he invited those who would have been in his way, and kept them drinking till near eleven, and they expected every minute to be called out; he then opened a fresh bottle, in which had been infused a large quantity of opium, and presenting a bumper to each, desired them to drink it off; they had scarce finished and put away the glasses, before they were called out to relieve the guard.

Edric, punctual to his promise, at the appointed hour repaired to the platform; he waited there about an hour, and then proceeded to see if the drug had taken effect; he came to the draw-bridge but found it was up, a circumstance he had forgot to provide against; he recollected some loose planks lying on the platform, and by raising one against the bridge, easily got over: the guards were all fast asleep, and he arrived under the window of Lord Hardivyle's apartment without meeting with any obstruction.

The sagacity of Edric had again failed him, for till now he had not thought of the necessity of a ladder, without which it was impossible to accomplish his design, his Lord's chamber being in the second story. Edric gave up all for lost, and was returning, when he recollected having seen some workmen repairing the wall near the draw-bridge; he thought it not improbable that they might have left their ladder behind them, fortunately it was so, but there was a soldier asleep on it, he hesitated not a moment, but removed him as gently as possible, the inebriating effects of the liquor prevented his waking; the ladder was reared against the window, the bars with some difficulty were forced out, and the prisoner escaped by means of a boat which Edric had prepared.

CHAP. VI.

—Eminence of Virtue draws more foes
Then eminence of Vice. Virtue is oft
Unhappy, therefore friendless; Vice holds Fortune,
And Fortune, when 'tis hers', has friends.

THE lady Isabella was in her eighteenth year, possessed of charms both of body and mind, that could not fail to strike the most inanimate observer with admiration; on her countenance beamed the most interesting sensibility, which from the late concurrent circumstances, had contracted a soft cast of melancholy which rendered her beauty, if possible, more striking; her temper was the direct contrary to Lord Oswald's; ever tender and compassionate, her heart was trembling alive to the miseries of her fellow creatures, wherever she went she was followed by the blessings of the peasants, whose wants she never failed to relieve.

The reports in the castle continued to increase, the south tower was particularly mentioned as being haunted by the spirit of the deceased Baron; several of the servants declared they had seen flashes of light in the windows, and heard noises like the groans of persons in distress. Lord Oswald endeavoured to laugh them out of these ideas, but they were too firmly fixed to be easily overcome; he tried harsher methods, but they were ineffectual, even *his own* behaviour served to strengthen their fears. It was evident to every one that he laboured under some secret uneasiness. Reports so generally believed could not fail to make some impression on the susceptible mind of Isabella.

The windows of her chamber looked across a terrace in the front of the castle, which was terminated by the south tower. Many a wistful look had she cast towards it, after she had retired from the company, but hitherto had observed nothing to justify her fears.

It was in the month of September, on a very bleak and stormy night, when Lord Oswald and the Duke were engaged in earnest discourse, they were suddenly startled by a violent ringing at the bell; soon after a confused murmur of voices was heard below, Lord Oswald rose to enquire the cause, but before he could reach the door it burst open, a youth entered in the utmost disorder, he looked eagerly round the apartment and struck his breast with violence, he exclaimed,—“Montmorris!—Oh God!!” and sunk lifeless to the ground; Oswald flew to support him, but started back beholding the countenance of—Egbert. He was conveyed to bed and proper restoratives administered.

“His appearance betokens not guilt,” exclaimed the Duke, “nevertheless let him be strictly watched; he shall want for nothing his present situation requires. The blood of our kinsman calls aloud for revenge, but let the sword of justice fall upon the head of the guilty. Tomorrow we shall hear his account, in the mean time let us suspend our judgement.”

Early in the morning the Duke accompanied by Oswald, repaired to the apartment of Egbert, who was up and anxiously expecting them; he arose at their entrance, but overcome by his emotion he was obliged to resume his seat.

The Duke addressed him, and declared the purport of his visit was to seek an explanation of the mystery attending the death of the late Baron Montmorris: "Your sword," said he, "was found near the Baron; it was broken, it was stained with blood, in the morning you could not be found; the inference was natural, *you* was spoke of as the *murderer*, your sudden appearance seems to contradict this assertion; and I do but justice when I declare it my sincere wish you may be able to clear yourself from this dishonourable accusation which has been brought against you.

The agitation of Egbert during this speech was excessive, his blood boiled with indignation, twice he arose and laid his hand upon his sword; he observed the venerable locks of the speaker, and his anger was subdued; he replied with the energy of conscious innocence, "That I am innocent, God is my witness; that I would have laid down my own life to preserve that of my ever to be lamented benefactor;" his voice faltered, the big tear trembled in his eye, and for some minutes he was unable to proceed; the Duke covered his face with his hands, and even Oswald was affected.

He explained the transactions of that night as already recounted, and continued, "I was going to step from the recess into the library, when I found myself suddenly seized from behind by three men, at the same moment a blow was levelled at the unfortunate Baron, which brought him to the ground; in vain I struggled to get free, my sword was taken from me, a handkerchief was tied across my eyes and mouth; in this manner I was conducted the remainder of the night and during part of the next day without stopping; we at length arrived at the gate of a monastery, where my bandages were taken off, and I was delivered into the custody of three men, who led me to a cell, after carefully securing the entrance, they retired; I threw myself upon the wretched pallet it contained, but not to rest; the distraction of my mind caused a fever, several days I laid insensible: when first I recollected my resolution, the past appeared like a horrid dream, I endeavoured to forget it, but the bleeding body of the Baron still was present to my sight; I looked around and beheld the naked walls and grated windows, a reverend monk was sitting near me. The whole extent of my misery burst upon me at once, it was too much for my enfeebled frame, animation was for some minutes suspended; on my recovery I beheld the same monk leaning over me, I thought his looks betokened compassion, but I was too weak to speak, my health continued slowly to return; I was not suffered to leave the cell in which I was confined, but the attention paid me by father Reginald in a small degree compensated for the loss of my liberty. The uncertainty of the fate of Lord Montmorris preyed greatly upon my spirits, and embittered every moment of my existence; many were the means employed to persuade me to embrace a monastic life, had I known the irreparable loss we have all sustained, they might not have been ineffectual! Father Reginald appeared to pity me, I ventured to solicit his assistance in making my escape, he yielded to my entreaties; at midnight he entered the cell, and after giving his directions how to proceed, he conducted me safely to the gate, there he delivered into my hands this

packet (delivering one to Lord Oswald) which he requested might be delivered to Lord Oswald, with whom he had been once acquainted.

Lord Oswald took the packet, he read a part of it, folded it up in haste, and declaring himself perfectly satisfied with Egbert's innocence, promised to get the sentence of outlawry reversed, and his property returned; in the mean time he invited him to reside in the castle, in which request he was joined by the Duke of Fauconberg.

To do away the odium these reports had fixed on the character of Egbert, the Duke proposed to invite a party of the neighbouring gentry the following day, and without entering into particulars, declare their entire confidence in the innocence of Egbert; this was agreed to, and the remainder of the day was spent in making preparations.

The gates were according to the custom of the times, thrown open to all comers, and the tenants forgot in the munificence of the present, the loss of their late Lord.

The company in the great parlour was numerous, and of the first class; Lord Oswald explained to them the cause of the present invitation, and taking Egbert by the hand presented him to them severally.

The Lady Isabella did the honours of the table with a modest grace that led captive many a youthful heart; the young Lord of Hubayne was very particular in his attention to her.

The day was passed in mirth and festivity, and supper time had arrived, when a most tremendous clap of thunder, which appeared to burst immediately over the castle, caused a universal silence of some minutes; the rain beat with unusual violence against the windows, and the dismal howling of the wind through the vast and dreary apartments of the mansion, portended a storm of some continuance; Egbert ever fond of the sublime, retired to a window to behold the awful devastation of the tempest; a vivid flash of lightning presented him with a sight that made his compassionate soul shudder with horror; a horsman riding towards the castle, was by his horse stumbling, thrown with violence against a tree which at the same instant the lightning set fire to; he rushed from the apartment, and ordering a man he met with to follow him, proceeded to the spot, to which the tree still in flames, served as a guide.

CHAP. VII.

The slave of Fate, can man his fate controul?

Doubt not they will appear.

THE stranger was speechless, and to all appearance dead, the blood which streamed copiously from a large wound on his head, disguised not his features so much but that Egbert knew him, and recognised Edric the servant of Lord Hardivyle; by the time he was conveyed to the castle his recollection returned, Egbert ordered every possible care to be taken of him, and returned to the company in the parlour, where his abrupt departure had occasioned no small degree of surprise: he related his adventure but did not think it prudent to declare who the man was before so many. The sweet tear of sensibility stole gently down the cheek of the lovely Isabella, a tribute to the sufferings of the unfortunate stranger.

The tempest was hushed, and an awful calm succeeded, the guests were departed, and silence reigned throughout the castle; Isabella, attended by Bertha her maid, had retired to her apartment, a portrait of the late Baron hung opposite to her; her busy fancy called back the remembrance of the former happy days she had spent in his company, days never more to return! An exclamation of terror from Bertha interrupted her melancholy meditation. "God and his holy saints protect us," (she exclaimed) "did you see it my Lady? There, there, again, the south tower." Isabella cast a fearful glance towards the south wing, where a spectacle appeared which would have appalled the stoutest heart; in a moment the whole ground apartment appeared illuminated: a coffin appeared conspicuous at one of the windows, the lid flew open—the figure of a skeleton arose—thrice it lifted its hands, in a supplicating posture, to Heaven, and gradually sunk into the coffin; the sound of a bell, in deep and solemn undulations, reverberated through the castle, the lid closed, and not a vestige remained.

In speechless horror the Lady Isabella gazed upon this most dreadful sight; Bertha, though equally terrified, retained sufficient presence of mind to assist her Lady, who had sunk insensible on a sofa.

The assiduities of her attendant restored Isabella; too much terrified to think of retiring, Bertha solicited her Lady's permission to pass the remainder of the night in her chamber. "For the love of Heaven, my dear Lady, (exclaimed Bertha) leave this hideous place; Oh Lord! I would sooner turn nun at once, than be so terrified again."

With a countenance, still strongly expressive of the terror of the preceding night, the Lady Isabella entered the breakfast chamber in the morning; Egbert, observing her pale and dejected appearance, expressed the most anxious solicitude for her health: unwilling, in his presence, to reveal the real cause, she pleaded a slight head-ach.

The repast finished, Egbert proposed to the Baron a visit to the sick man's chamber.

Isabella, left alone with her uncle, related to him the events of the preceding night, and in the most moving manner, intreated him to use his interest with Lord Oswald, to procure a speedy removal from the castle. The Duke appeared greatly shocked, but not surprized, at this narration; he had observed himself some uncommon appearances in that part of the building, which induced him more readily to comply with the request of his niece.

Edric was greatly agitated at the sight of Egbert: he made several efforts to speak, but was unable; the surgeon requested Egbert and the Baron to retire, as it was necessary to keep him as quiet as possible, though he gave it as his opinion that that day would terminate his existence.

On their return to the parlor, the Duke of Fauconberg repeated the discourse of the Lady Isabella to her brother, who affected to laugh at it, as the phantom of an over-heated imagination. "Do you suppose, Sir, (replied the Duke, with an austerity of which he seemed incapable) that my amiable niece is capable of deceit; let me know if it is still your determination to remain here?"

Lord Oswald coolly answered, that it did not at present suit his convenience to leave the castle; "Then tomorrow, Sir, I will; your sister also shall return to Brecknock with me; her tender nature is incapable of enduring the constant dread of again beholding a scene so horrid, and which, by experience, I know not to be merely ideal."

The Duke arose to quit the room, Egbert followed him, and respectfully taking his hand, thus addressed him; "Let me intreat you, my honoured Sir, to be calm, particular business may, perhaps, detain Lord Oswald longer."—Lord Oswald here appeared to recollect himself, and interrupting Egbert, declared that was the case; but if the Duke would consent to defer his departure a few days, he would, with pleasure, accompany him.

The anger of the Duke, ever short in its duration, was entirely subdued by the conciliating words of his nephew, he held out his hand in token of his reconciliation, and it was agreed that on the fourth day from that, that they should leave the castle.

"This very extraordinary affair, (said Egbert) in my opinion, requires a further investigation; under those terrifying appearances which have been witnessed in the south wing of this mansion, I much suspect some deep laid villany lurks, perhaps the counter part of that which deprived our revered friend of his existence; (Oswald shuddered) to ascertain this be my care, with your permission, I will pass this night in those apartments reputed to be haunted."

This plan was opposed with vehemence by Lord Oswald: "why, (said he) should the life of a friend be risked in so hazardous an attempt? our early departure from the

castle must frustrate any attempt to injure its inhabitants; you will pardon me, Sir, but, to a design of this nature, I never can give my consent." A message from Edric, requesting the immediate presence of Egbert and the Baron, interrupted the discourse; when they entered the chamber in which he lay, they found he had just recovered his speech; at the sight of Egbert he exclaimed, "Blessed be God, that he hath allowed me to do one act of justice before my departure from this world; nineteen months of the most bitter remorse have not atoned for that most inhuman deed, by night and by day I am tormented by all the horrors of a guilty conscience, his bleeding wounds cry aloud for vengeance, the hour of retaliation is come, a few hours and I shall cease to exist; can you, my Lord, (addressing himself to Egbert) forgive a wretch who was the *murderer* of YOUR FATHER? I am too much exhausted to enter into a detail of that horrid event; examine the lining of my doublet, there you will find papers which will explain the mystery which hangs over your birth, and enable you to regain possession of the domains and title of your ancestors. Oh Lord, Oswald! LET MY FATE BE A WARNING TO YOU; if ever you wish to escape the inexpressible torments I suffer, if ever you wish, by one approving act, to soften the thorny bed of sickness, and atone for an ill spent life, put this much injured youth in a way to regain his rightful inheritance. Oh! pardon! pardon!"—The last words died away in a faint murmur, a convulsion seized him, and the wretched Edric was no more.

Confounded with astonishment, Egbert continued with his eyes fixed upon the breathless remains of the servant of Hardivyle. "Murderer of my father, (he exclaimed) great God! *who was that father?*" His attention had been so earnestly fixed upon Edric, that the extreme agitation of Oswald had escaped his observation, and he had sufficient time to recover his usual command of features, when Egbert intreated an explanation of the mysterious hints thrown out by the deceased.

Lord Oswald smiled, "who, (said he) can explain the discourse of a madman? for such his incoherent ravings evidently prove him; is it possible that you can, for a moment, suppose there is any foundation in the absurd discourse we have been listening to?"

"Let us at least, (said Egbert) search for the papers he mentions."—In vain was every corner of the apartment examined, the doublet was not to be found—their inquiries were attended with equal success—no one could be found who could give any account of it.

In the utmost perplexity Egbert retired to his chamber:- he revolved in his mind the mysterious words of Edric, to him they had not the appearance of being uttered under the influence of delirium, the whole of his discourse appeared connected, the papers he mentioned as being concealed in the lining of his doublet, (which, by some means, must have been conveyed away, as Egbert perfectly recollected having seen it in the chamber when he first entered it that morning); his appeal to Oswald, and oblique hints at his guilt, were circumstances which the more he thought of, the more wonderful and inexplicable did they appear.

CHAP. VIII.

In Desperation's madness, to her heart
Drove the destructive steel.

THE day arrived on which the family were to leave the Castle of Hardivyle, and repair to that of the Baron in Norfolk; Lord Oswald had required the attendance of Isabella, the Duke, and Egbert in the library, where he declared he had something of importance to relate before the journey; —when they were seated, Lord Oswald addressed his uncle—“I am grieved, Sir, to inform you, that I cannot at present leave this estate; neither” —the Duke arose, his countenance was expressive of the most marked contempt, he took the hand of Isabella, “Come, my love, (said he) we will proceed to Brecknock; a man who has once broke his word is no longer to be relied on.” Lord Oswald reddened with passion—“Isabella (said he, in a voice of thunder), move not.” —“By what authority, Sir, (replied the Duke) do you detain her?” —“By that of a guardian, my Lord, (taking from the table a paper, which he delivered to his uncle) read that, Sir, it will convince you of my authority; by it you will perceive, that till the age of twenty-five, Isabella is placed under my protection.”

“Is it possible? (resumed the Duke, after a pause) is it possible that my brother could have done this? must my Isabella be continually exposed to the horrors of this place? I once hoped, blessed by thy endearing presence, to pass smoothly down the vale of life—vain delusive idea!”

The tear trembled in his eye; he took the hand of Isabella—“Farewell, my beloved niece—perhaps for ever! —Oswald! oh, be careful of her happiness—abuse not the trust reposed in you! —Isabella arose, she flung herself upon her knees before the Baron—“Suffer me! suffer me! oh! my brother!” —She could no more—sobs choaked her utterance, far more expressive than the most eloquent language! but the heart of Oswald was hardened to her entreaties. “Isabella, (replied he) arise, foolish girl, arise! retire to your chamber.” The Duke of Fauconberg had quitted the apartment with Egbert—when seated in the carriage, he thus addressed him.

“Egbert, I ask you not to go with me; in you I deposit a trust the most precious. Oswald, I fear, has some sinister design in detaining his sister; should she, Egbert, be treated with severity, inform me; your presence at the Castle will be a check upon him, and prevent his proceeding to such extremities as his malign temper might otherwise incite him to commit. Confiding in your integrity, and rectitude of principle, to you I commit the trust of watching over the welfare of Isabella, and in so doing I find myself in part eased of a load which hangs heavy on my mind; but should your residence here become irksome, I ask you not to remain in it; in me you shall ever find a friend—

Farewell.” ——The carriage drove from the gate, and in a few minutes was lost to the view.

Egbert continued for some time musing upon the strange conduct of Oswald, his treatment of his sister, his rude, and even brutal behaviour to the Duke, the discourse of Edric again recurred to his mind, and his uncle’s mention of “his malign” temper, contributed with the rest to place the character of the Baron in a light different to that in which he had hitherto beheld it; he could not upon presumption pronounce him guilty, but so many concomittant circumstances could not fail to excite suspicion in a breast less credulous than even Egbert’s; he endeavoured to persuade himself, that the injunctions of the Duke alone could hinder him from leaving the Castle; but there was another reason; Egbert had a heart endowed with an acute sensibility, he was not sufficiently a stoic to withstand the many amiable qualities of the beautiful Isabella; he had insensibly become interested in her destiny, and could he think of leaving her at the mercy of a brother, who, as the Duke intimated, he feared had some sinister design. Be his situation ever so disagreeable, he resolved not to leave the Castle till he had reason to believe his suspicions ill-grounded.

Shortly after the departure of the Duke of Fauconberg, the Baron of Hubayne arrived; he had a long conference with Lord Oswald, and departed immediately after dinner. Oswald explained the purpose of his visit to Egbert and the lady Isabella in the following terms:—“The visit which I received from the Lord of Hubayne must, Isabella, be placed to your account. His fortune is large, his person unexceptionable, and his birth is equal to your own; he this morning offered himself a candidate for your hand, an offer which no *prudent* woman in your situation would refuse; answer me, Isabella, does this proposal meet your approbation?” These words were spoke in a tone which seemed to indicate that he would not be denied. The Lady Isabella appeared greatly surprised at this proposal from her brother, who she had frequently heard speak of the Baron of Hubayne as a young man of a most profligate and depraved character; but it appearing that he had altered his opinion, she resolved to take no notice of it, but by a simple negative refuse her consent.

Her reply appeared to rouse the anger of Lord Oswald. “Perhaps (said he) when you are acquainted with the conditions on which you are entrusted to my care, you may retract this foolish answer; know that you are entirely dependent upon me, and upon your future behaviour does it rest in what manner I shall act. *Hear me Egbert, when I swear, that if Isabella weds not the Baron of Hubayne—*.” He abruptly broke off, and rushed out of the chamber.

The next morning Lord Hubayne repeated his visit, and notwithstanding a positive refusal from Isabella, he continued daily to persecute her with his assiduities. The behaviour of Oswald to Egbert grew daily more cold and reserved; he treated him with the distant civility and haughty demeanour of a superior; in all his actions there was an air of condescension which could not fail to prove, in the utmost degree, mortifying to Egbert; his resolution failed him, and he resolved in a short time to leave the Castle. With respect to his affection for Isabella, he could no longer deceive himself; but could he, an

out-cast, a wretched dependent upon her family, and whose birth was unknown, could he aspire to the hand of the sister of Montmorris;—this reflection served further to convict him of the prudence of departing without delay; he intended to proceed to Brecknock, to solicit the interest of the Duke of Fauconberg in procuring him a commission in the army, for during his confinement in the Monastery he had been superseded. As no opportunity was likely to be found of seeing Isabella, Egbert had prepared a letter, in which he informed her of his intended journey, and offered to be the bearer of any letter or message with which she would entrust him; this he took an opportunity to convey to her: he also informed Lord Montmorris of his intention to leave the Castle on the following day, who coldly answered him he was sorry it did not suit his convenience to stay any longer.

Egbert was greatly surprised during the whole of that day at receiving no answer from the Lady Isabella; he arose early the next morning to take a last view of those scenes, to which, from his infancy, he had been accustomed; he entered the library to replace some books which he had taken from thence, but was surprised to see it already occupied by Isabella; he would have retired, but she requested him to be seated; traces of tears were visible on her countenance; on a table lay a letter open, which Egbert perceived to be his own.

“And have you resolved, Egbert, to leave us?” (she exclaimed, while the tears glistened in her eyes)—“I have informed the Baron, Madam, of my intention, and this morning I depart.”—He endeavoured as much as possible to conceal his emotion as he spake these words, but the effect they had upon Isabella entirely threw him off his guard.

“And to what extremities (she replied) may not my brother proceed when there is no witness to his actions?” She covered her face with her handkerchief, and sobbed audibly. Shocked at her distress, Egbert arose, and flung himself on his knees before her—“O my adored Isabella, rack not my soul thus! Escape from the tyranny of your brother—let me conduct you to your uncle; or, if you desire it, I will still remain at the Castle—what would I not sacrifice for your happiness! —Oh, Isabella! I have long adored you! —but whither does my unfortunate passion lead me? Pardon me, Madam! —say but you pardon my presumption, and never more shall my presence offend you?” The Lady Isabella held out her hand, and sweetly smiling through her tears, in faltering accents owned their love was mutual.

At that instant the door burst open, and Oswald entered; a sword was drawn in his hand—his guant and ferocious features were distorted with rage—he rushed forward at Egbert, exclaiming, “Consummate villain! receive the reward of thy treachery.” He aimed a blow at Egbert—Isabella flew between them; she received the point of his sword in her breast—the unfortunate maiden fell—fell by the hand of her brother! —Egbert flew to support her—

“Remorseless ruffian!” (he exclaimed) —He looked upon Oswald, his countenance was pale with terror, the weapon dropped from his hand, and he leaned against the wall for support. The anger of Egbert was changed into compassion. “For the

love of heaven, my Lord, (said he) summon some assistance.” He attempted to move, but was unable. —Egbert rung the bell with violence; the attendants of Isabella at length appeared; he committed her to their care, and retired—he seized the first horse he met with, and with the swiftness of the wind went in search of medical assistance.

The surgeon was from home, and in less than fifteen miles there was no other. Tortured with apprehension, he rode on, notwithstanding a very heavy fall of snow, and procured one, who promised to follow him as soon as possible.

On his return to the Castle, he was refused admittance. “Excuse me, Sir, (said the porter) but Lord Oswald ordered me to tell you, that your presence will be dispensed with.” —“Almighty God! (exclaimed Egbert) must I then depart without seeing her? must I leave her in this state of danger? —By Heavens I will not—no force shall tear me hence—on this spot will I remain till released from this torturing uncertainty.”

He threw himself on a rugged stone near the draw-bridge, and remained absorbed in his own reflections till the arrival of the surgeon.

He staid not long, and on his return informed Egbert the wound was mortal. “There wanted but this (said he), there wanted but this—the measure of my woe is full. — Almighty Power! thy will be done.”—He endeavoured to appear calm, but the effort was useless; his eyes rolled in wild contortions; distraction had seized his brain; he rushed with the rapidity of an arrow from the Castle—A precipice lay before him, he heeded it not, but darted headlong down.

CHAP. IX.

Shall worth lie hid in Sorrow's baleful shade?
And no reward shall suff'ring goodness find;
While Vice triumphant lifts her pamper'd head,
Nor hears the step of Vengeance close behind.

SCOTT

ON the following morning a sable banner was observed to wave ominous from the turrets of the Castle. In the course of the day the Baron left it, to deposit the remains of his sister in the family-vault in Norfolk; the servants were all dismissed, except Walter, to whom the care of the Castle was committed.

The snow had drifted in great quantities among the rocks at the time when Egbert fell; this fortunate circumstance saved his life, but nevertheless the shock he had sustained was so violent, as to render him unable to move; the remainder of that day, and the whole of the ensuing night, he remained in a state of happy insensibility.

In this situation he was discovered in the morning by a peasant, who had known him from his infancy; he conveyed him to his cottage, and procured him proper assistance. The mind of Egbert was once more awakened to the horrors of his destiny.

The first use he made of his reason was to enquire the fate of Isabella; when informed she was no more, a profound melancholy seized him; for whole days would he wander round the walls of the Castle, insensible alike to the calls of hunger, or the piercing severity of the weather; when the shades of night hid the turrets from his view, he would heave a sigh to the memory of his Isabella, and turn silently away. —It was on a clear moonlight night he had delayed his return longer than usual, the draw-bridge was down, unconsciously he passed it, and again found himself in the place where the happiest days of his infancy had passed; but how changed the scene—those walls, once the abode of peace and hospitality, were now deserted, and defiled with blood. He entered the great hall, the moon beamed faintly through the Gothic casements; this was the spot in which he took most delight; but how different from what he had hitherto beheld it! It no longer blazed with innumerable lights—the cheerful sounds of merriment were no more—the martial trophies hung neglected on the walls—the emblazoned shield, the ponderous cuirass, and crested helm, rusted in promiscuous heaps: the scene was congenial to the feelings of Egbert, he seated himself on a step near the chair of state. For the first time since his recovery he suffered his reflections to wander from the fate of Isabella—he reflected on the instability of human grandeur, who once so powerful, or possessed such extensive domains, and numerous vassals, as the Earls of Hardivyle! Their glory was now crumbed to the dust, their title was forfeited, and their descendent convicted of crimes against the State.

The hour of midnight was passed, when the sound of a footstep, echoing through the vaulted passages, roused him from his reverie; he turned his eyes towards the door,

where Walter appeared; in one hand he carried a basket of provision, and a jug; in the other a lamp and a large key. Surprised at his appearance at so uncommon an hour, Egbert followed him in silence; he proceeded by the outside of the Castle till he arrived at the fourth tower; he entered it, but carefully closed the door after him; finding it impossible to enter, Egbert thought it prudent to retire; he concealed himself behind an angle of the wall; in about a quarter of an hour he observed the door open, and Walter return; the basket was empty, and the jug he had left behind; in his hand he still retained the key. From these circumstances it was evident some person was confined in that part of the Castle—he resolved to return on the following night, and endeavour to penetrate this mystery. He returned, but in vain! Walter was no more seen.

For three nights he met with no better success; but on the fourth he had again the satisfaction to behold him with the same articles as before, enter the south tower. Fortunately, he neglected to close the door after him; Egbert followed unperceived; — Walter entered a room on the ground-floor; he drew back the tapestry, and applied his key to a door in the wall; it opened, and discovered a flight of steps, down which he descended—Egbert hesitated not a moment, but drawing his sword, with soft and cautious steps he followed him.

At the bottom of the stairs was a door, secured by a massy chain, and bolts of an uncommon magnitude; with some difficulty it was opened, and Walter entered—but what words can express, or imagination conceive, the astonishment of Egbert, on recognizing the features of the Baron Montmorris, whom he had long lamented as no more. With the velocity of a tyger he flew upon Walter, he dragged him to the ground. Courage and guilt are incompatible! In the most submissive accents he implored his life. —“On one condition only shall it be granted,” said the Baron, “you know the parentage of this youth; you are in possession of the means of reinstating him in his rights; —employ these means, and make a full confession of your own guilt, and that of your employers, and your life is safe.”

“I accept your conditions, my Lord.” (said he hastily, rising.) With difficulty could Lord Montmorris restrain his transports for his deliverance till they got clear from the dungeon—he then fell upon his knees, and in a short, but pathetic address, returned thanks to the Almighty for his release. With the warmest ardor he embraced Egbert; but his joy at his freedom was in a great measure damped, when he reflected on the guilt of his son, whom avarice had induced to commit the most flagitious crimes.

Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, Egbert, with the consent of the Baron, insisted upon Walter immediately fulfilling his promise—this he complied with in the following manner: —

“In the history of my life, you will perceive the several slow, but sure gradations, by which a man proceeds from folly to vice, and from vice to crimes of the blackest die.

“At the age of twenty-three, my father left me possessed of a small, but independent fortune: previous to his death I had contracted an inclination for gaming; no

sooner did I find myself in possession of this property, than I gave full scope to it, and, in a very short time, my fortune was entirely ruined; not yet sufficiently hardened in the paths of vice, I rejected, with disdain, several offers which were made me, of becoming an accomplice in the designs of a set of wretches who procure a precarious existence by preying upon the fortunes of rich and unexperienced young men; but, not to tire your attention with particulars of no importance, suffice it to say, that I was recommended in capacity of a valet to Lord Oswald; from that day I date the epoch of my guilt; every farthing I could scrape together was expended in the vain hope of regaining what I had lost; one evening I returned home with a very considerable sum which I had won, but the following evening, not a penny remained; urged on by despair, I returned home, with a firm resolution of putting a period to my existence; I recollected that Lord Oswald's sword hung over the chimney-piece in his dressing-room, thither I went, in my agitation I knocked a small cabinet from the chimney-piece, the lid flew open and several pieces of money rolled about the floor; the temptation was too great to be withstood, I seized them with avidity, and eagerly searched the cabinet for more, I found a large sum, part of which only I took, determining to replace it the first opportunity: the money was still in my hand and the cabinet before me, when Lord Oswald suddenly entered the room, he shut the door and put the key in his pocket; "Walter, (said he) your life is in my hand, I have witnessed the whole of this transaction." Though the moment before I could have died by my own hands, the idea of suffering an ignominious death upon a scaffold, detested and abhorred by my former acquaintance, was not to be borne; on my knees I intreated his forgiveness, I promised the strictest fidelity, and the most scrupulous obedience to his orders. "Walter, (said he) can I trust you? —I have business of importance to execute, it requires secrecy and courage." —I interrupted him by desiring him to put me to the test, I promised that nothing on my part should be wanting to compleat the undertaking: he took a book from the table and put it into my hands, "SWEAR by the holy precepts which this book inculcates, (said he) that you will never reveal what I am now going to relate; and SWEAR also that you will to the utmost of your power, execute my purpose." Seeing me hesitate, he took the remaining gold from the cabinet and put it into my hand: "Be firm, Walter, and this is yours also." I will not attempt to describe the agitation I suffered, the fear of death prevailed, and I took the oath required; from that moment I became the confident of Lord Oswald: the same error which had proved so fatal to me, was the source of all his atrocious crimes; he informed me, that he had the night preceding, lost an immense sum, for which he had given a bond, the interest of which the very liberal stipend which you, my Lord, allowed him, was barely sufficient to pay; he then proceeded to inform me that he had been obliged to give his word of honour to raise the money in a month; "unless, (continued he) this is done, I shall be branded with infamy; I shall be banished from society, the affair will come to the ears of my father, and my ruin will be compleat; those who call themselves my friends have refused to assist me, there is but one method left, which I will now disclose to you; near the castle of Hardivyle in Northumberland, the remains of an ancient building, situated in the bosom of a forest, far from any human habitation, save a few scattered cottages of the wood men; from their intrusion, it is secure, a tradition being told among them that it is the abode of evil spirits, which is so firmly believed, that not one will ever approach it; the account of this place I received from the Earl of Hardivyle; it is irrelevant and

needless to relate by what means we became acquainted since his escape from confinement; suffice it to say, he is not unacquainted with my designs.

“He then, my Lord, proceeded to inform me, that in this ruin you were to be confined, but your disappearance was to be attended with such circumstances, that your death would be universally credited. I shuddered at the abyss of guilt in which I was about to plunge myself, but was so deeply entangled in the snares of Lord Oswald, that I found it impossible to recede. I engaged myself to forward to the utmost of my power, the scheme which he had planned; the following day I was introduced to the Lord of Hardivyle, and two other accomplices in the same design; Lord Oswald informed us of your departure for Northumberland, which was to take place in a few days: and also that he had declined to accompany you; our intention was to have seized you on the road, but this was prevented by your being attended by Egbert, with whom, and the attendants, we judged ourselves unable to encounter. Lord Hardivyle proposed that we should push on to the castle before you, in the caverns of which we might conceal ourselves till an opportunity offered to accomplish our design; and by taking a sufficient quantity of provision with us, we might, for any length of time, remain undiscovered; this was adopted, and leaving our horses at a post town near the castle, we took advantage of the dusk of the evening to enter the park; the Earl conducted us to a grove, in the bosom of which he shewed us a cavern, apparently natural, from a particular part thereof he removed the earth with his sword, which discovered an iron ring, fixed to a large stone; we raised it and perceived a flight of steps by which we descended into the subterraneous apartments of the castle; Edric, the servant of Lord Hardivyle, was appointed to remain behind, to replace the earth; he also undertook to give us information: this he punctually performed, by remaining in the south tower, concealed in the recesses of whose walls, are several entrances into the caverns beneath; as this part of the building was uninhabited, it was resolved that Edric should remain concealed there, to give, from time to time, such information as he could procure. It is needless to say, that your motions, my Lord Egbert, were closely watched that morning you so narrowly searched it, your discovery of an entrance was immediately made known to us; this was thought a fortunate circumstance, as we doubted not but curiosity would induce the Baron to visit the subterraneous apartments, which would be the best opportunity of accomplishing our design; your return at night, accompanied only by Egbert, appeared to have frustrated our design for the present; in the hope of gaining, from your discourse, some information of your design, Edric concealed himself within hearing, while you was employed in forcing the trap-door. By your conversation, he learned that the Baron was not unacquainted with your visit: he also heard you relate to Albert, the suspicion you entertained of Lord Robert’s being confined there; a plan immediately presented itself to his imagination of procuring your attendance, my Lord; being thoroughly acquainted with all the intricacies of the castle, he found little difficulty in discovering that chamber which you occupied; you may recollect his informing you, as from Egbert, that your immediate presence was required; this accomplished, he returned with the utmost haste, to give us information of his success; we immediately repaired to that part of the cavern; at a distance we observed you had joined Egbert, on a sudden you stopped and turned back; no time was to be lost: by another avenue we gained the steps before you, the Earl of Hardivyle ascended and concealed himself behind the pannel which was open; he had ordered us to keep

ourselves concealed till you passed, and then to follow immediately after; the Lord of Hardivyle wounded you, my Lord Montmorris, Lord Oswald, Edric, and myself seized you, Lord Egbert; Hardivyle and his other accomplice secured Albert; Oswald took the sword from Egbert, and staining it with the blood of his parent, he broke it and threw it down with the hellish intent of making you suspected of the murder; we carefully reclosed the pannels, that our retreat might not be known.

“The superior of the monastery to which you was conveyed, was influenced by a large bribe to keep you confined there; but I must do him the justice to say he was totally unacquainted with the plot. Of Albert I can give no account.”

“With the utmost speed Oswald returned to London, where he arrived just in time to receive the messenger sent with an account of your danger my Lord Montmorris, and the flight of Egbert.

“The Lord of Hardivyle and his two associates returned to the cavern; I followed Lord Oswald to the metropolis, and accompanied him here. I will not wound your feelings by repeating the execrations he made use of when he found you still living, and likely to recover. As he did not chuse to venture any chance of a discovery, he forbore consulting his accomplice in person, I was made the bearer of all their messages, the result of which was, that in the middle of the night Oswald should introduce him and Edric into your chamber, and convey you hence to a dungeon, which Edric had discovered in the South tower, and which was thought a more secure place of concealment than the ruin. In order to impress the family with an idea of your death, a waxen image was procured, but the time which this took up retarded the execution of our design so much, that your recovery was far advanced before every thing was in readiness; our preparations being at length completed, you was conveyed to the dungeon, and the image deposited in your place. Lord Oswald appointed me to perform the last offices to the supposed corps, and to avoid suspicion he ordered me to choose any other of the servants to assist me; I fixed upon a man whose superstition and cowardice rendered us secure from any fear of discovery. No sooner was his design accomplished, than with a baseness unparalleled, Lord Oswald refused to pay the Earl of Hardivyle the sum for which he had stipulated, and upon the receipt of which the Earl was to leave the kingdom.

“Exasperated at this treachery, Hardivyle rose to depart. “Perdition seize me (said he), but I will be revenged; with pleasure will I meet my fate when it will be the means of bringing so treacherous a villain to justice. When plunged in the horrors of a dungeon, how will your malicious soul be tortured at finding the persecuted Egbert in possession of these domains.” “Egbert—!! (exclaimed Oswald). “Yes, Egbert, no longer the wretched outcast you despised, and with such unrelenting malice persecuted but **THE RIGHTFUL LORD OF HARDIVYLE.**

“Oswald arose, and led the Earl to his seat—“My Lord (said he) we will accommodate this difference.” He motioned us to retire. What passed between them I know not, but in about a quarter of an hour we were recalled; the Earl declared, that what he had uttered concerning Egbert was void of foundation. In order to deter any of the

servants, whose curiosity might induce them to inspect the southern wing of the Castle, I caused a report to be propagated that it was haunted; to make this the more implicitly believed, we had recourse to various contrivances, invented and conducted with so much art, that even the Duke of Fauconberg was deceived by them.

“A fit of sickness, under which Edric laboured, obliged the Earl still to remain in the caverns; during his confinement, his mind was torn by the most bitter remorse; his ravings confirmed what his Lord had before declared, with the addition that he had caused his elder brother to be murdered for the purpose of enjoying his estates. Three weeks had elapsed, and Edric had nearly recovered from the effects of his disorders, but his frame of his mind had undergone a material change; the resolution and courageous daring which once inspired, had now totally forsaken him; in their place appeared remorse, and a fixed despondency, which our utmost endeavours could not eradicate: impatient at this delay, the Earl determined to defer his departure no longer; he informed Edric of his intention to quit the cavern that night, and desired his attendance; his answer was astonishing, though at the time not remarked, —“To-night! ——yes, my Lord, to-night——prepare! the hour is at hand.” —Horses, and every other necessary being ready at the appointed hour—after waiting a considerable time, and Edric not appearing, we went in search of him, but notwithstanding the strictest scrutiny, he was not to be found; a small trunk, on which the Earl set a particular value, was also missing. Alarmed at this incident, which threatened a discovery of our whole proceedings, we consulted upon the steps most proper to be taken upon this emergency; the Earl was for saving himself by flight, but Oswald objected to this, as it would convey to the world an idea of his guilt, before he was certain he was even suspected; this and other arguments prevailed, and the Earl agreed to remain concealed in the recesses in the castle. Till your arrival, my Lord Egbert, nothing material occurred; the letter you brought was from a Monk, who was partly informed of our guilt; in it he threatened to make the affair public, unless your innocence was declared; the arrival of Edric shortly after caused the most torturing suspicions; but the state in which he was conveyed to the Castle, made us hope that his death would relieve us from any further uneasiness. I repaired to his chamber in the night, in hopes of recovering the papers, which the Earl informed us he had taken with him; by accident I discovered them, concealed in the lining of his doublet, but a servant then entering, and remaining in the room the remainder of the night, prevented me from conveying them away till the morning, which I accomplished soon after the departure of the surgeon. —One thing more, and I have done—the Lady Isabella lives.” —“Gracious God! (exclaimed Egbert) is it possible?” —“Be calm, my Lord, I will briefly inform you of the cause of the deception which has been practised upon you.

“In the former part of my narrative I mentioned a considerable debt which Lord Oswald had contracted by gambling; the Baron of Hubayne is the person to whom it was owing; the whole of the estates, and the Castle of Hardivyle, with its domains, had been put into his hands till the rents should have discharged the demand; at the entertainment given on your return, Egbert, the Baron was so struck with the person of Isabella, that he determined to spare no pains to acquire the possession of so much beauty. In pursuance of this resolution, he the following morning waited on her brother; the terms he offered were too advantageous to be refused, the restoration of all his estates, and a release from

every obligation. Oswald well knew that if he suffered the Lady Isabella to accompany the Duke his uncle, his negotiation with the Lord of Hubayne would be to no effect; and from the strong aversion she constantly expressed against that young Nobleman, he doubted not but she would lay hold of the first opportunity to escape from his power—to prevent this, he drew up a paper, purporting to be the will of his supposed deceased parent.

“In consequence of which you, Lord Egbert, well know the Duke was obliged to depart without her. I will pass over every thing till that morning when the Lady Isabella received the blow destined for you; the wound was but slight; little difficulty was found to persuade the surgeon to inform you that it was mortal: the following morning she was sufficiently recovered to be moved to the Castle in Norfolk, which had been restored by Lord Hubayne. To prevent enquiries, and to propagate the idea of his sister being dead, Lord Oswald ordered me to expose a banner upon the walls, expressive of the event he wished to be believed had taken place.”

“There is one thing (said Egbert) you have still left unexplained—the groans we heard when in the cavern.” —“Were used to draw you farther on (replied Walter). Pardon me, my Lord Montmorris, but may I presume to enquire by what means you became possessed of a secret I thought secure within my own breast.” —“A paper you accidentally dropped, and which I suppose to be one of those you mention as belonging to Lord Hardivyle, (replied the Baron Montmorris) gave me the first suspicion that you was acquainted with this business, so fortunately discovered.”

CHAP. X.

And didst thou think Heaven would conceal the deed?
Tho' mountains cover you, they could not hide you!
Dreams would disclose it; or if Night wants eyes,
Lightnings would flash, and point you out to Justice.

The anxiety and distress of mind under which the Baron laboured at this discovery of the consummate wickedness of his son, prevented all desire to rest; the remainder of the night was therefore spent in deliberation upon the best method to proceed in recovering the estates and title of Egbert; the papers delivered to them by Walter had furnished them with a clear insight into the justness of his claims; several of them were letters written from Lord Hardivyle to Edric, by which it appeared, that the late Lord of Hardivyle had been imprisoned for a long time in a ruined monastery, situated at a small distance from the residence of the Usurper; that fearful of a discovery, he had, some time since, caused him to be murdered by Edric; the reason he offered for this inhuman act was, that he had lately discovered Egbert in the very ruin, in whose caverns his parent was confined; he said he had tried several methods to terrify him during his continuance there; but dreading lest, by any unforeseen circumstance, he might again visit that place, and discover that his father was there concealed, he expressed a wish that he might be prevented from any further fears on that account by his immediate death: —It appeared by the answer of Edric, that this bloody design was but too fatally accomplished.

After some deliberation upon the most eligible method to proceed, it was resolved, that the Duke of Fauconberg should be first made acquainted with the several particulars; and if the plan met with his approbation, he should, accompanied by Egbert, proceed to Norfolk, and in a conference with Oswald, require him peaceably to resign possession of the estates he so unlawfully enjoyed; upon his compliance with these conditions, he was to be informed he was at liberty to leave the kingdom; and if he would bind himself to return to it no more, he was to receive a stipulated yearly allowance from his father.

Accompanied by Walter, Egbert and the Baron immediately began their journey to the castle of the Duke in Brecknock; the first night they took up their lodgings at a monastery, the superior invited them to partake of his supper with a politeness that seldom graced the walls of a convent; at table they found a few select monks, whose conversation proved them to be men of sense, and possessed of a sufficient knowledge of the world to render their discourse at once instructive and entertaining; one, in the dress of a novice, particularly attracted the attention of Lord Montmorris, the cowl, which was partly drawn over his face, gave an additional gloom to his features, on which the most transient observer might perceive the most dignified grief, it vented not itself in peevish complaints and impious murmurings against the Dispensations of the Divine Power, but the resignation with which he endeavoured to conceal, served but to render the anguish of his soul the more visible; during the whole of the repast, he seemed

absorbed within himself, and spoke not but in reply to the discourse of the superior, who treated him with the most profound attention; the agreeable hilarity and pleasing conversation of the monks, so different from the disgusting solemnity and chilling glooms, the usual attendant upon a monastic life, so entirely engrossed the attention of Egbert, that the noviciate, so interesting to the Baron, had hitherto, and most likely would have passed, wholly unperceived, had not a question, addressed to him by Lord Montmorris (who used every endeavour consistent with politeness, to draw him out of the abyss of grief into which he appeared to be plunged) in a manner extorted an answer; the well known sound of his voice immediately drew the attention of Egbert, but who can describe the tumultuous emotion that filled his soul, when he recognized Robert? He embraced him with an adour of true friendship, which was as sincerely returned; Egbert enquired by what means he had so long escaped his inquiries; Robert briefly related that the blasted reputation of his parent, rendering it impossible for him again to appear in the world with any degree of credit, he had, immediately upon the knowledge of his father's guilt, resolved to embrace a monastic life; he added, the uncertainty which enveloped the fate of his parent tortured him with the most anxious grief; notwithstanding the earnest intreaties of his friend, Egbert evaded any account of the various circumstances which had befallen him since their separation; the accumulated crimes of his father, he was conscious, would be felt with redoubled violence by a spirit so noble as that of his son.

Egbert employed himself in the night in drawing up a narrative of the most material incidents, which, in the morning, he delivered to the superior, intrusting it to his discretion to reveal what he thought proper to Robert.

The following day they arrived at the Duke's castle; his joy and surprise at knowledge of his brother's being alive, were only equalled by the happiness he felt at the restoration of Egbert to his title and estates; he immediately acquiesced in the prudence of the plan before agreed on; accordingly, after a few days, they set forward on their journey into Norfolk; on account of the great age of the Duke, they proceeded by slow and easy stages; the evident uneasiness and unusual peevishness of Lord Egbert could not escape the observation of Lord Montmorris: with the anxious solicitude of a parent, he enquired into the cause: ashamed of concealment to a friend to whom he was so greatly indebted, he, without hesitation, declared his passion for Isabella; the persecutions she had undergone, and his dread lest on his arrival, he should find her united to Lord Hubayne, his noble companions sympathised in his fears, and resolved to make no delay till they arrived at Norfolk.

The sun had just set when the turrets of the castle appeared in view; the Baron ordered the carriage to stop at the cottage of a peasant close by, where he intended to remain till every thing was prepared for his reception; a few minutes brought them to the gate—the old steward appeared—a gleam of joy brightened his countenance—at the sight of the Duke, accompanied by Egbert, he led them into an apartment, and said he would inform Lord Oswald of their arrival. “It is unnecessary (replied the Duke) we will wait upon him.”

Preceded by the steward, they arrived at his closet, the steward bowed and would have retired: "Remain, Benjamin (said the Duke) our business requires no secrecy." Alarmed at the behaviour and abrupt appearance of his his uncle, Oswald faintly stammered out a welcome.

"My presence here, Sir, is occasioned by an affair of a very extraordinary nature; in the first place, inform me by what authority you have possessed yourself of the title and estates of your father?" With the most unparalleled effrontery he replied: "Your question, my Lord, is indeed extraordinary; you surely need not be informed of what you so well know—his decease." "His DECEASE——his IMPRISONMENT you mean; Providence, by means of Egbert, now the acknowledged Lord of Hardivyle, has liberated him: in his name I demand restitution of his estates; and, in the name of Egbert, Earl of Hardivyle, I make the like demand, together with all the papers in your possession, which assist to confirm him in his right: on your compliance with these acts of justice, and on these alone, you will be at liberty to quit this kingdom; moreover, you will be allowed a yearly sum sufficient to maintain you in an honourable privacy; I leave you till the morning to determine your answer; in the mean time I request that we may be admitted to the Lady Isabella."

The heart of Oswald was not naturally depraved, till led astray by an injudicious choice of acquaintance; he was ever conspicuous for his benevolence, nor was he yet so hardened as not to feel its full force, the generosity of a father he had so deeply injured; it awakened in him a more sincere repentance than the greatest severity, however deserved, could have done; he had already resolved to accept the proposals offered by his uncle; when he would have retired, Oswald stopped him, and replied in the following words: "Fully sensible how little I merit the lenient offer you have made me, with the utmost gratitude I accept it; I will not pretend to offer any thing in extenuation of my guilt, that is impossible; in this escrutoire, my Lord Egbert, you will find proofs which will satisfy the most unbelieving, of the just claim you have to the title and estates of Hardivyle. — Isabella still lives, and lives for you alone; farewell; in the morning I depart; immured in the gloom of a convent, I will endeavour, by a life of penitence and prayer, to atone for the atrocious crimes I have committed. Benjamin will conduct you to my sister, intreat her forgiveness; —I cannot see her." Perceiving Egbert about to reply (he exclaimed) "leave me, I have need of reflection."

What pen, however able, can delineate the meeting of the two lovers, who parted under circumstances which threatened an eternal separation, but who meet now to part no more.

Description would but weaken the idea that could be formed of it, I therefore pass it over.

Early the next morning, Oswald left the Castle, and the Baron entered it, amidst the acclamations of his numerous vassals, to whom the affair, with its particulars, was already known.

Lord Egbert was soon afterwards confirmed in the possession of his title and estates, and was made completely happy, when he received the hand of the lovely Isabella; the good old Duke lived but to see this; in a few days after he resigned his breath cheerfully into the hands of him who gave it; by will, his vast possessions devolved to Egbert, and who by the death of Oswald, a year after his retreat, became heir to the Baron Montmorris.

Beloving and beloved by all around, the days of the Earl and Countess of Hardivyle glided on with happiness uninterrupted, save by the death of their reverend father, who, at a good old age, sunk serenely into the grave of his ancestors; the acquisition of wealth which they received, served only to render their benevolence more general; a numerous progeny sprung up around them, who inherited the virtues of their sire; such was the reward of virtue, unshaken amid the severest temptations.

Wandering and disguised, in the most wretched habiliments, the usurper of Hardivyle escaped not long the hands of justice; he died (pursuant to his sentence) unpitied, as he lived unpitying.

FINIS.

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