

CHAPTER III

----These are the Villains

Whom all the Travellers do fear so much.

-----Some of them are Gentlemen

Such as the fury of ungoverned Youth

Thrust from the company of awful Men.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

The Marquis and Lorenzo proceeded to the Hotel in silence. The Former employed himself in calling every circumstance to his mind, which related might give Lorenzo's the most favourable idea of his connexion with Agnes. The Latter, justly alarmed for the honour of his family, felt embarrassed by the presence of the Marquis: The adventure which He had just witnessed forbad his treating him as a Friend; and Antonia's interests being entrusted to his mediation, He saw the impolicy of treating him as a Foe. He concluded from these reflections, that profound silence would be the wisest plan, and waited with impatience for Don Raymond's explanation.

They arrived at the Hotel de las Cisternas. The Marquis immediately conducted him to his apartment, and began to express

his satisfaction at finding him at Madrid. Lorenzo interrupted him.

'Excuse me, my Lord,' said He with a distant air, 'if I reply somewhat coldly to your expressions of regard. A Sister's honour is involved in this affair: Till that is established, and the purport of your correspondence with Agnes cleared up, I cannot consider you as my Friend. I am anxious to hear the meaning of your conduct, and hope that you will not delay the promised explanation.'

'First give me your word, that you will listen with patience and indulgence.'

'I love my Sister too well to judge her harshly; and till this moment I possessed no Friend so dear to me as yourself. I will also confess, that your having it in your power to oblige me in a business which I have much at heart, makes me very anxious to find you still deserving my esteem.'

'Lorenzo, you transport me! No greater pleasure can be given me, than an opportunity of serving the Brother of Agnes.'

'Convince me that I can accept your favours without dishonour, and there is no Man in the world to whom I am more willing to be obliged.'

'Probably, you have already heard your Sister mention the name of Alphonso d'Alvarada?'

'Never. Though I feel for Agnes an affection truly fraternal, circumstances have prevented us from being much together. While yet a Child She was consigned to the care of her Aunt, who had married a German Nobleman. At his Castle She remained till two years since, when She returned to Spain, determined upon secluding herself from the world.'

'Good God! Lorenzo, you knew of her intention, and yet strove not to make her change it?'

'Marquis, you wrong me. The intelligence, which I received at Naples, shocked me extremely, and I hastened my return to Madrid for the express purpose of preventing the sacrifice. The moment that I arrived, I flew to the Convent of St. Clare, in which Agnes had chosen to perform her Noviciate. I requested to see my Sister. Conceive my surprise when She sent me a refusal; She

declared positively, that apprehending my influence over her mind, She would not trust herself in my society till the day before that on which She was to receive the Veil. I supplicated the Nuns; I insisted upon seeing Agnes, and hesitated not to avow my suspicions that her being kept from me was against her own inclinations. To free herself from the imputation of violence, the Prioress brought me a few lines written in my Sister's well-known hand, repeating the message already delivered. All future attempts to obtain a moment's conversation with her were as fruitless as the first. She was inflexible, and I was not permitted to see her till the day preceding that on which She entered the Cloister never to quit it more. This interview took place in the presence of our principal Relations. It was for the first time since her childhood that I saw her, and the scene was most affecting. She threw herself upon my bosom, kissed me, and wept bitterly. By every possible argument, by tears, by prayers, by kneeling, I strove to make her abandon her intention. I represented to her all the hardships of a religious life; I painted to her imagination all the pleasures which She was going to quit, and besought her to disclose to me, what occasioned her disgust to the world. At this last question She turned pale, and her tears flowed yet faster. She entreated me not to press her on that subject; That it sufficed me to know that her resolution

was taken, and that a Convent was the only place where She could now hope for tranquillity. She persevered in her design, and made her profession. I visited her frequently at the Grate, and every moment that I passed with her, made me feel more affliction at her loss. I was shortly after obliged to quit Madrid; I returned but yesterday evening, and since then have not had time to call at St. Clare's Convent.'

'Then till I mentioned it, you never heard the name of Alphonso d'Alvarada?'

'Pardon me: my Aunt wrote me word that an Adventurer so called had found means to get introduced into the Castle of Lindenberg; That He had insinuated himself into my Sister's good graces, and that She had even consented to elope with him. However, before the plan could be executed, the Cavalier discovered that the estates which He believed Agnes to possess in Hispaniola, in reality belonged to me. This intelligence made him change his intention; He disappeared on the day that the elopement was to have taken place, and Agnes, in despair at his perfidy and meanness, had resolved upon seclusion in a Convent. She added, that as this adventurer had given himself out to be a Friend of mine, She wished to know whether I had any knowledge of him. I

replied in the negative. I had then very little idea, that Alphonso d'Alvarada and the Marquis de las Cisternas were one and the same person: The description given me of the first by no means tallied with what I knew of the latter.'

'In this I easily recognize Donna Rodolpha's perfidious character. Every word of this account is stamped with marks of her malice, of her falsehood, of her talents for misrepresenting those whom She wishes to injure. Forgive me, Medina, for speaking so freely of your Relation. The mischief which She has done me authorises my resentment, and when you have heard my story, you will be convinced that my expressions have not been too severe.'

He then began his narrative in the following manner.

HISTORY OF DON RAYMOND, MARQUIS DE LAS CISTERNAS

Long experience, my dear Lorenzo, has convinced me how generous is your nature: I waited not for your declaration of ignorance respecting your Sister's adventures to suppose that they had been purposely concealed from you. Had they reached your knowledge, from what misfortunes should both Agnes and myself

have escaped! Fate had ordained it otherwise! You were on your Travels when I first became acquainted with your Sister; and as our Enemies took care to conceal from her your direction, it was impossible for her to implore by letter your protection and advice.

On leaving Salamanca, at which University as I have since heard, you remained a year after I quitted it, I immediately set out upon my Travels. My Father supplied me liberally with money; But He insisted upon my concealing my rank, and presenting myself as no more than a private Gentleman. This command was issued by the counsels of his Friend, the Duke of Villa Hermosa, a Nobleman for whose abilities and knowledge of the world I have ever entertained the most profound veneration.

'Believe me,' said He, 'my dear Raymond, you will hereafter feel the benefits of this temporary degradation. 'Tis true, that as the Conde de las Cisternas you would have been received with open arms; and your youthful vanity might have felt gratified by the attentions showered upon you from all sides. At present, much will depend upon yourself: You have excellent recommendations, but it must be your own business to make them of use to you. You must lay yourself out to please; You must labour to gain the

approbation of those, to whom you are presented: They who would have courted the friendship of the Conde de las Cisternas will have no interest in finding out the merits, or bearing patiently with the faults, of Alphonso d'Alvarada. Consequently, when you find yourself really liked, you may safely ascribe it to your good qualities, not your rank, and the distinction shown you will be infinitely more flattering. Besides, your exalted birth would not permit your mixing with the lower classes of society, which will now be in your power, and from which, in my opinion, you will derive considerable benefit. Do not confine yourself to the Illustrious of those Countries through which you pass. Examine the manners and customs of the multitude: Enter into the Cottages; and by observing how the Vassals of Foreigners are treated, learn to diminish the burthens and augment the comforts of your own. According to my ideas, of those advantages which a Youth destined to the possession of power and wealth may reap from travel, He should not consider as the least essential, the opportunity of mixing with the classes below him, and becoming an eyewitness of the sufferings of the People.'

Forgive me, Lorenzo, if I seem tedious in my narration. The close connexion which now exists between us, makes me anxious that you should know every particular respecting me; and in my fear of

omitting the least circumstance which may induce you to think favourably of your Sister and myself, I may possibly relate many which you may think uninteresting.

I followed the Duke's advice; I was soon convinced of its wisdom.

I quitted Spain, calling myself by the assumed title of Don Alphonso d'Alvarada, and attended by a single Domestic of approved fidelity. Paris was my first station. For some time I was enchanted with it, as indeed must be every Man who is young, rich, and fond of pleasure. Yet among all its gaities, I felt that something was wanting to my heart. I grew sick of dissipation: I discovered, that the People among whom I lived, and whose exterior was so polished and seducing, were at bottom frivolous, unfeeling and insincere. I turned from the Inhabitants of Paris with disgust, and quitted that Theatre of Luxury without heaving one sigh of regret.

I now bent my course towards Germany, intending to visit most of the principal courts: Prior to this expedition, I meant to make some little stay at Strasbourg. On quitting my Chaise at Luneville to take some refreshment, I observed a splendid Equipage, attended by four Domestics in rich liveries, waiting at

the door of the Silver Lion. Soon after as I looked out of the window, I saw a Lady of noble presence, followed by two female Attendants, step into the Carriage, which drove off immediately.

I enquired of the Host, who the Lady was, that had just departed.

'A German Baroness, Monsieur, of great rank and fortune. She has been upon a visit to the Duchess of Longueville, as her Servants informed me; She is going to Strasbourg, where She will find her Husband, and then both return to their Castle in Germany.'

I resumed my journey, intending to reach Strasbourg that night. My hopes, however were frustrated by the breaking down of my Chaise. The accident happened in the middle of a thick Forest, and I was not a little embarrassed as to the means of proceeding.

It was the depth of winter: The night was already closing round us; and Strasbourg, which was the nearest Town, was still distant from us several leagues. It seemed to me that my only alternative to passing the night in the Forest, was to take my Servant's Horse and ride on to Strasbourg, an undertaking at that season very far from agreeable. However, seeing no other resource, I was obliged to make up my mind to it. Accordingly I

communicated my design to the Postillion, telling him that I would send People to assist him as soon as I reached Strasbourg. I had not much confidence in his honesty; But Stephano being well-armed, and the Driver to all appearance considerably advanced in years, I believed I ran no danger of losing my Baggage.

Luckily, as I then thought, an opportunity presented itself of passing the night more agreeably than I expected. On mentioning my design of proceeding by myself to Strasbourg, the Postillion shook his head in disapprobation.

'It is a long way,' said He; 'You will find it a difficult matter to arrive there without a Guide. Besides, Monsieur seems unaccustomed to the season's severity, and 'tis possible that unable to sustain the excessive cold. . . .'

'What use is there to present me with all these objections?' said I, impatiently interrupting him; 'I have no other resource: I run still greater risque of perishing with cold by passing the night in the Forest.'

'Passing the night in the Forest?' He replied; 'Oh! by St. Denis!

We are not in quite so bad a plight as that comes to yet. If I am not mistaken, we are scarcely five minutes walk from the Cottage of my old Friend, Baptiste. He is a Wood-cutter, and a very honest Fellow. I doubt not but He will shelter you for the night with pleasure. In the meantime I can take the saddle-Horse, ride to Strasbourg, and be back with proper people to mend your Carriage by break of day.'

'And in the name of God,' said I, 'How could you leave me so long in suspense? Why did you not tell me of this Cottage sooner? What excessive stupidity!'

'I thought that perhaps Monsieur would not deign to accept. . .
.'

'Absurd! Come, come! Say no more, but conduct us without delay to the Wood-man's Cottage.'

He obeyed, and we moved onwards: The Horses contrived with some difficulty to drag the shattered vehicle after us. My Servant was become almost speechless, and I began to feel the effects of the cold myself, before we reached the wished-for Cottage. It was a small but neat Building: As we drew near it, I rejoiced at

observing through the window the blaze of a comfortable fire.

Our Conductor knocked at the door: It was some time before any one answered; The People within seemed in doubt whether we should be admitted.

'Come! Come, Friend Baptiste!' cried the Driver with impatience; 'What are you about? Are you asleep? Or will you refuse a night's lodging to a Gentleman, whose Chaise has just broken down in the Forest?'

'Ah! is it you, honest Claude?' replied a Man's voice from within; 'Wait a moment, and the door shall be opened.'

Soon after the bolts were drawn back. The door was unclosed, and a Man presented himself to us with a Lamp in his hand. He gave the Guide an hearty reception, and then addressed himself to me.

'Walk in, Monsieur; Walk in, and welcome! Excuse me for not admitting you at first: But there are so many Rogues about this place, that saving your presence, I suspected you to be one.'

Thus saying, He ushered me into the room, where I had observed the fire: I was immediately placed in an Easy Chair, which stood

close to the Hearth. A Female, whom I supposed to be the Wife of my Host, rose from her seat upon my entrance, and received me with a slight and distant reverence. She made no answer to my compliment, but immediately re-seating herself, continued the work on which She had been employed. Her Husband's manners were as friendly as hers were harsh and repulsive.

'I wish, I could lodge you more conveniently, Monsieur,' said He; 'But we cannot boast of much spare room in this hovel. However, a chamber for yourself, and another for your Servant, I think, we can make shift to supply. You must content yourself with sorry fare; But to what we have, believe me, you are heartily welcome.'

----Then turning to his wife--'Why, how you sit there, Marguerite, with as much tranquillity as if you had nothing better to do! Stir about, Dame! Stir about! Get some supper; Look out some sheets; Here, here; throw some logs upon the fire, for the Gentleman seems perished with cold.'

The Wife threw her work hastily upon the Table, and proceeded to execute his commands with every mark of unwillingness. Her countenance had displeased me on the first moment of my examining it. Yet upon the whole her features were handsome unquestionably; But her skin was sallow, and her person thin and

meagre; A louring gloom over-spread her countenance; and it bore such visible marks of rancour and ill-will, as could not escape being noticed by the most inattentive Observer. Her every look and action expressed discontent and impatience, and the answers which She gave Baptiste, when He reproached her good-humouredly for her dissatisfied air, were tart, short, and cutting. In fine, I conceived at first sight equal disgust for her, and prepossession in favour of her Husband, whose appearance was calculated to inspire esteem and confidence. His countenance was open, sincere, and friendly; his manners had all the Peasant's honesty unaccompanied by his rudeness; His cheeks were broad, full, and ruddy; and in the solidity of his person He seemed to offer an ample apology for the leanness of his Wife's. From the wrinkles on his brow I judged him to be turned of sixty; But He bore his years well, and seemed still hearty and strong: The Wife could not be more than thirty, but in spirits and vivacity She was infinitely older than the Husband.

However, in spite of her unwillingness, Marguerite began to prepare the supper, while the Wood-man conversed gaily on different subjects. The Postillion, who had been furnished with a bottle of spirits, was now ready to set out for Strasbourg, and enquired, whether I had any further commands.

'For Strasbourg?' interrupted Baptiste; 'You are not going thither tonight?'

'I beg your pardon: If I do not fetch Workmen to mend the Chaise, How is Monsieur to proceed tomorrow?'

'That is true, as you say; I had forgotten the Chaise. Well, but Claude; You may at least eat your supper here? That can make you lose very little time, and Monsieur looks too kind-hearted to send you out with an empty stomach on such a bitter cold night as this is.'

To this I readily assented, telling the Postillion that my reaching Strasbourg the next day an hour or two later would be perfectly immaterial. He thanked me, and then leaving the Cottage with Stephano, put up his Horses in the Wood-man's Stable. Baptiste followed them to the door, and looked out with anxiety.

' 'Tis a sharp biting wind!' said He; 'I wonder, what detains my Boys so long! Monsieur, I shall show you two of the finest Lads, that ever step in shoe of leather. The eldest is three and

twenty, the second a year younger: Their Equals for sense, courage, and activity, are not to be found within fifty miles of Strasbourg. Would They were back again! I begin to feel uneasy about them.'

Marguerite was at this time employed in laying the cloth.

'And are you equally anxious for the return of your Sons?' said I to her.

'Not I!' She replied peevishly; 'They are no children of mine.'

'Come! Come, Marguerite!' said the Husband; 'Do not be out of humour with the Gentleman for asking a simple question. Had you not looked so cross, He would never have thought you old enough to have a Son of three and twenty: But you see how many years ill-temper adds to you!--Excuse my Wife's rudeness, Monsieur. A little thing puts her out, and She is somewhat displeas'd at your not thinking her to be under thirty. That is the truth, is it not, Marguerite? You know, Monsieur, that Age is always a ticklish subject with a Woman. Come! come! Marguerite, clear up a little. If you have not Sons as old, you will some twenty years hence, and I hope, that we shall live to see them just such

Lads as Jacques and Robert.'

Marguerite clasped her hands together passionately.

'God forbid!' said She; 'God forbid! If I thought it, I would strangle them with my own hands!'

She quitted the room hastily, and went up stairs.

I could not help expressing to the Wood-man how much I pitied him for being chained for life to a Partner of such ill-humour.

'Ah! Lord! Monsieur, Every one has his share of grievances, and Marguerite has fallen to mine. Besides, after all She is only cross, and not malicious. The worst is, that her affection for two children by a former Husband makes her play the Step-mother with my two Sons. She cannot bear the sight of them, and by her good-will they would never set a foot within my door. But on this point I always stand firm, and never will consent to abandon the poor Lads to the world's mercy, as She has often solicited me to do. In every thing else I let her have her own way; and truly She manages a family rarely, that I must say for her.'

We were conversing in this manner, when our discourse was interrupted by a loud halloo, which rang through the Forest.

'My Sons, I hope!' exclaimed the Wood-man, and ran to open the door.

The halloo was repeated: We now distinguished the trampling of Horses, and soon after a Carriage, attended by several Cavaliers stopped at the Cottage door. One of the Horsemen enquired how far they were still from Strasbourg. As He addressed himself to me, I answered in the number of miles which Claude had told me; Upon which a volley of curses was vented against the Drivers for having lost their way. The Persons in the Coach were now informed of the distance of Strasbourg, and also that the Horses were so fatigued as to be incapable of proceeding further. A Lady, who appeared to be the principal, expressed much chagrin at this intelligence; But as there was no remedy, one of the Attendants asked the Wood-man, whether He could furnish them with lodging for the night.

He seemed much embarrassed, and replied in the negative; Adding that a Spanish Gentleman and his Servant were already in possession of the only spare apartments in his House. On hearing

this, the gallantry of my nation would not permit me to retain those accommodations, of which a Female was in want. I instantly signified to the Wood-man, that I transferred my right to the Lady; He made some objections; But I overruled them, and hastening to the Carriage, opened the door, and assisted the Lady to descend. I immediately recognized her for the same person whom I had seen at the Inn at Luneville. I took an opportunity of asking one of her Attendants, what was her name?

'The Baroness Lindenberg,' was the answer.

I could not but remark how different a reception our Host had given these newcomers and myself. His reluctance to admit them was visibly expressed on his countenance, and He prevailed on himself with difficulty to tell the Lady that She was welcome.

I conducted her into the House, and placed her in the armed-chair, which I had just quitted. She thanked me very graciously; and made a thousand apologies for putting me to an inconvenience. Suddenly the Wood-man's countenance cleared up.

'At last I have arranged it!' said He, interrupting her excuses; 'I can lodge you and your suite, Madam, and you will not be under the necessity of making this Gentleman suffer for his politeness.'

We have two spare chambers, one for the Lady, the other, Monsieur, for you: My Wife shall give up hers to the two Waiting-women; As for the Men-servants, they must content themselves with passing the night in a large Barn, which stands at a few yards distance from the House. There they shall have a blazing fire, and as good a supper as we can make shift to give them.'

After several expressions of gratitude on the Lady's part, and opposition on mine to Marguerite's giving up her bed, this arrangement was agreed to. As the Room was small, the Baroness immediately dismissed her Male Domestics: Baptiste was on the point of conducting them to the Barn which He had mentioned when two young Men appeared at the door of the Cottage.

'Hell and Furies!' exclaimed the first starting back; 'Robert, the House is filled with Strangers!'

'Ha! There are my Sons!' cried our Host. 'Why, Jacques! Robert! whither are you running, Boys? There is room enough still for you.'

Upon this assurance the Youths returned. The Father presented them to the Baroness and myself: After which He withdrew with our Domestic, while at the request of the two Waiting-women, Marguerite conducted them to the room designed for their Mistress.

The two new-comers were tall, stout, well-made young Men, hard-featured, and very much sun-burnt. They paid their compliments to us in few words, and acknowledged Claude, who now entered the room, as an old acquaintance. They then threw aside their cloaks in which they were wrapped up, took off a leathern belt to which a large Cutlass was suspended, and each drawing a brace of pistols from his girdle laid them upon a shelf.

'You travel well-armed,' said I.

'True, Monsieur;' replied Robert. 'We left Strasbourg late this Evening, and 'tis necessary to take precautions at passing through this Forest after dark. It does not bear a good repute, I promise you.'

'How?' said the Baroness; 'Are there Robbers hereabout?'

'So it is said, Madame; For my own part, I have travelled through the wood at all hours, and never met with one of them.'

Here Marguerite returned. Her Stepsons drew her to the other end of the room, and whispered her for some minutes. By the looks which they cast towards us at intervals, I conjectured them to be enquiring our business in the Cottage.

In the meanwhile the Baroness expressed her apprehensions, that her Husband would be suffering much anxiety upon her account. She had intended to send on one of her Servants to inform the Baron of her delay; But the account which the young Men gave of the Forest rendered this plan impracticable. Claude relieved her from her embarrassment. He informed her that He was under the necessity of reaching Strasbourg that night, and that would She trust him with a letter, She might depend upon its being safely delivered.

'And how comes it,' said I, 'that you are under no apprehension of meeting these Robbers?'

'Alas! Monsieur, a poor Man with a large family must not lose certain profit because 'tis attended with a little danger, and

perhaps my Lord the Baron may give me a trifle for my pains. Besides, I have nothing to lose except my life, and that will not be worth the Robbers taking.'

I thought his arguments bad, and advised his waiting till the Morning; But as the Baroness did not second me, I was obliged to give up the point. The Baroness Lindenberg, as I found afterwards, had long been accustomed to sacrifice the interests of others to her own, and her wish to send Claude to Strasbourg blinded her to the danger of the undertaking. Accordingly, it was resolved that He should set out without delay. The Baroness wrote her letter to her Husband, and I sent a few lines to my Banker, apprising him that I should not be at Strasbourg till the next day. Claude took our letters, and left the Cottage.

The Lady declared herself much fatigued by her journey: Besides having come from some distance, the Drivers had contrived to lose their way in the Forest. She now addressed herself to Marguerite, desiring to be shown to her chamber, and permitted to take half an hour's repose. One of the Waiting-women was immediately summoned; She appeared with a light, and the Baroness followed her up stairs. The cloth was spreading in the chamber where I was, and Marguerite soon gave me to understand that I

was in her way. Her hints were too broad to be easily mistaken; I therefore desired one of the young Men to conduct me to the chamber where I was to sleep, and where I could remain till supper was ready.

'Which chamber is it, Mother?' said Robert.

'The One with green hangings,' She replied; 'I have just been at the trouble of getting it ready, and have put fresh sheets upon the Bed; If the Gentleman chooses to lollop and lounge upon it, He may make it again himself for me.'

'You are out of humour, Mother, but that is no novelty. Have the goodness to follow me, Monsieur.'

He opened the door, and advanced towards a narrow staircase.

'You have got no light!' said Marguerite; 'Is it your own neck or the Gentleman's that you have a mind to break?'

She crossed by me, and put a candle into Robert's hand, having received which, He began to ascend the staircase. Jacques was employed in laying the cloth, and his back was turned towards me.

Marguerite seized the moment, when we were unobserved. She caught my hand, and pressed it strongly.

'Look at the Sheets!' said She as She passed me, and immediately resumed her former occupation.

Startled by the abruptness of her action, I remained as if petrified. Robert's voice, desiring me to follow him, recalled me to myself. I ascended the staircase. My conductor ushered me into a chamber, where an excellent wood-fire was blazing upon the hearth. He placed the light upon the Table, enquired whether I had any further commands, and on my replying in the negative, He left me to myself. You may be certain that the moment when I found myself alone was that on which I complied with Marguerite's injunction. I took the candle, hastily approached the Bed, and turned down the Coverture. What was my astonishment, my horror, at finding the sheets crimsoned with blood!

At that moment a thousand confused ideas passed before my imagination. The Robbers who infested the Wood, Marguerite's exclamation respecting her Children, the arms and appearance of the two young Men, and the various Anecdotes which I had heard

related, respecting the secret correspondence which frequently exists between Banditti and Postillions, all these circumstances flashed upon my mind, and inspired me with doubt and apprehension. I ruminated on the most probable means of ascertaining the truth of my conjectures. Suddenly I was aware of Someone below pacing hastily backwards and forwards. Every thing now appeared to me an object of suspicion. With precaution I drew near the window, which, as the room had been long shut up, was left open in spite of the cold. I ventured to look out. The beams of the Moon permitted me to distinguish a Man, whom I had no difficulty to recognize for my Host. I watched his movements.

He walked swiftly, then stopped, and seemed to listen: He stamped upon the ground, and beat his stomach with his arms as if to guard himself from the inclemency of the season. At the least noise, if a voice was heard in the lower part of the House, if a Bat flitted past him, or the wind rattled amidst the leafless boughs, He started, and looked round with anxiety.

'Plague take him!' said He at length with impatience; 'What can He be about!'

He spoke in a low voice; but as He was just below my window, I

had no difficulty to distinguish his words.

I now heard the steps of one approaching. Baptiste went towards the sound; He joined a man, whom his low stature and the Horn suspended from his neck, declared to be no other than my faithful Claude, whom I had supposed to be already on his way to Strasbourg. Expecting their discourse to throw some light upon my situation, I hastened to put myself in a condition to hear it with safety. For this purpose I extinguished the candle, which stood upon a table near the Bed: The flame of the fire was not strong enough to betray me, and I immediately resumed my place at the window.

The objects of my curiosity had stationed themselves directly under it. I suppose that during my momentary absence the Wood-man had been blaming Claude for tardiness, since when I returned to the window, the latter was endeavouring to excuse his fault.

'However,' added He, 'my diligence at present shall make up for my past delay.'

'On that condition,' answered Baptiste, 'I shall readily forgive

you. But in truth as you share equally with us in our prizes,
your own interest will make you use all possible diligence.

'Twould be a shame to let such a noble booty escape us! You say,
that this Spaniard is rich?'

'His Servant boasted at the Inn, that the effects in his Chaise
were worth above two thousand Pistoles.'

Oh! how I cursed Stephano's imprudent vanity!

'And I have been told,' continued the Postillion, 'that this
Baroness carries about her a casket of jewels of immense value.'

'May be so, but I had rather She had stayed away. The Spaniard
was a secure prey. The Boys and myself could easily have
mastered him and his Servant, and then the two thousand Pistoles
would have been shared between us four. Now we must let in the
Band for a share, and perhaps the whole Covey may escape us.
Should our Friends have betaken themselves to their different
posts before you reach the Cavern, all will be lost. The Lady's
Attendants are too numerous for us to overpower them: Unless
our Associates arrive in time, we must needs let these Travellers
set out tomorrow without damage or hurt.'

' 'Tis plaguy unlucky that my Comrades who drove the Coach should be those unacquainted with our Confederacy! But never fear, Friend Baptiste. An hour will bring me to the Cavern; It is now but ten o'clock, and by twelve you may expect the arrival of the Band. By the bye, take care of your Wife: You know how strong is her repugnance to our mode of life, and She may find means to give information to the Lady's Servants of our design.'

'Oh! I am secure of her silence; She is too much afraid of me, and fond of her children, to dare to betray my secret. Besides, Jacques and Robert keep a strict eye over her, and She is not permitted to set a foot out of the Cottage. The Servants are safely lodged in the Barn; I shall endeavour to keep all quiet till the arrival of our Friends. Were I assured of your finding them, the Strangers should be dispatched this instant; But as it is possible for you to miss the Banditti, I am fearful of being summoned to produce them by their Domestics in the Morning.'

'And suppose either of the Travellers should discover your design?'

'Then we must poignard those in our power, and take our chance

about mastering the rest. However, to avoid running such a risque, hasten to the Cavern: The Banditti never leave it before eleven, and if you use diligence, you may reach it in time to stop them.'

'Tell Robert that I have taken his Horse: My own has broken his bridle, and escaped into the Wood. What is the watch-word?'

'The reward of Courage.'

' 'Tis sufficient. I hasten to the Cavern.'

'And I to rejoin my Guests, lest my absence should create suspicion. Farewell, and be diligent.'

These worthy Associates now separated: The One bent his course towards the Stable, while the Other returned to the House.

You may judge, what must have been my feelings during this conversation, of which I lost not a single syllable. I dared not trust myself to my reflections, nor did any means present itself to escape the dangers which threatened me. Resistance, I knew to be vain; I was unarmed, and a single Man against Three: However,

I resolved at least to sell my life as dearly as I could.

Dreading lest Baptiste should perceive my absence, and suspect me to have overheard the message with which Claude was dispatched, I hastily relighted my candle and quitted the chamber. On descending, I found the Table spread for six Persons. The Baroness sat by the fireside: Marguerite was employed in dressing a sallad, and her Step-sons were whispering together at the further end of the room. Baptiste having the round of the Garden to make, ere He could reach the Cottage door, was not yet arrived. I seated myself quietly opposite to the Baroness.

A glance upon Marguerite told her that her hint had not been thrown away upon me. How different did She now appear to me! What before seemed gloom and sullenness, I now found to be disgust at her Associates, and compassion for my danger. I looked up to her as to my only resource; Yet knowing her to be watched by her Husband with a suspicious eye, I could place but little reliance on the exertions of her good-will.

In spite of all my endeavours to conceal it, my agitation was but too visibly expressed upon my countenance. I was pale, and both my words and actions were disordered and embarrassed. The young Men observed this, and enquired the cause. I attributed it to

excess of fatigue, and the violent effect produced on me by the severity of the season. Whether they believed me or not, I will not pretend to say: They at least ceased to embarrass me with their questions. I strove to divert my attention from the perils which surrounded me, by conversing on different subjects with the Baroness. I talked of Germany, declaring my intention of visiting it immediately: God knows, that I little thought at that moment of ever seeing it! She replied to me with great ease and politeness, professed that the pleasure of making my acquaintance amply compensated for the delay in her journey, and gave me a pressing invitation to make some stay at the Castle of Lindenberg. As She spoke thus, the Youths exchanged a malicious smile, which declared that She would be fortunate if She ever reached that Castle herself. This action did not escape me; But I concealed the emotion which it excited in my breast. I continued to converse with the Lady; But my discourse was so frequently incoherent, that as She has since informed me, She began to doubt whether I was in my right senses. The fact was, that while my conversation turned upon one subject, my thoughts were entirely occupied by another. I meditated upon the means of quitting the Cottage, finding my way to the Barn, and giving the Domestics information of our Host's designs. I was soon convinced, how impracticable was the attempt. Jacques and Robert

watched my every movement with an attentive eye, and I was obliged to abandon the idea. All my hopes now rested upon Claude's not finding the Banditti: In that case, according to what I had overheard, we should be permitted to depart unhurt.

I shuddered involuntarily as Baptiste entered the room. He made many apologies for his long absence, but 'He had been detained by affairs impossible to be delayed.' He then entreated permission for his family to sup at the same table with us, without which, respect would not authorize his taking such a liberty. Oh! how in my heart I cursed the Hypocrite! How I loathed his presence, who was on the point of depriving me of an existence, at that time infinitely dear! I had every reason to be satisfied with life; I had youth, wealth, rank, and education; and the fairest prospects presented themselves before me. I saw those prospects on the point of closing in the most horrible manner: Yet was I obliged to dissimulate, and to receive with a semblance of gratitude the false civilities of him who held the dagger to my bosom.

The permission which our Host demanded, was easily obtained. We seated ourselves at the Table. The Baroness and myself occupied one side: The Sons were opposite to us with their backs to the

door. Baptiste took his seat by the Baroness at the upper end, and the place next to him was left for his Wife. She soon entered the room, and placed before us a plain but comfortable Peasant's repast. Our Host thought it necessary to apologize for the poorness of the supper: 'He had not been apprized of our coming; He could only offer us such fare as had been intended for his own family:'

'But,' added He, 'should any accident detain my noble Guests longer than they at present intend, I hope to give them a better treatment.'

The Villain! I well knew the accident to which He alluded; I shuddered at the treatment which He taught us to expect!

My Companion in danger seemed entirely to have got rid of her chagrin at being delayed. She laughed, and conversed with the family with infinite gaiety. I strove but in vain to follow her example. My spirits were evidently forced, and the constraint which I put upon myself escaped not Baptiste's observation.

'Come, come, Monsieur, cheer up!' said He; 'You seem not quite recovered from your fatigue. To raise your spirits, what say you

to a glass of excellent old wine which was left me by my Father?
God rest his soul, He is in a better world! I seldom produce
this wine; But as I am not honoured with such Guests every day,
this is an occasion which deserves a Bottle.'

He then gave his Wife a Key, and instructed her where to find the
wine of which He spoke. She seemed by no means pleased with the
commission; She took the Key with an embarrassed air, and
hesitated to quit the Table.

'Did you hear me?' said Baptiste in an angry tone.

Marguerite darted upon him a look of mingled anger and fear, and
left the chamber. His eyes followed her suspiciously, till She
had closed the door.

She soon returned with a bottle sealed with yellow wax. She
placed it upon the table, and gave the Key back to her Husband.
I suspected that this liquor was not presented to us without
design, and I watched Marguerite's movements with inquietude.
She was employed in rinsing some small horn Goblets. As She
placed them before Baptiste, She saw that my eye was fixed upon
her; and at the moment when She thought herself unobserved by the

Banditti, She motioned to me with her head not to taste the liquor, She then resumed her place.

In the mean while our Host had drawn the Cork, and filling two of the Goblets, offered them to the Lady and myself. She at first made some objections, but the instances of Baptiste were so urgent, that She was obliged to comply. Fearing to excite suspicion, I hesitated not to take the Goblet presented to me. By its smell and colour I guessed it to be Champagne; But some grains of powder floating upon the top convinced me that it was not unadulterated. However, I dared not to express my repugnance to drinking it; I lifted it to my lips, and seemed to be swallowing it: Suddenly starting from my chair, I made the best of my way towards a Vase of water at some distance, in which Marguerite had been rinsing the Goblets. I pretended to spit out the wine with disgust, and took an opportunity unperceived of emptying the liquor into the Vase.

The Banditti seemed alarmed at my action. Jacques half rose from his chair, put his hand into his bosom, and I discovered the haft of a dagger. I returned to my seat with tranquillity, and affected not to have observed their confusion.

'You have not suited my taste, honest Friend,' said I, addressing myself to Baptiste. 'I never can drink Champagne without its producing a violent illness. I swallowed a few mouthfuls ere I was aware of its quality, and fear that I shall suffer for my imprudence.'

Baptiste and Jacques exchanged looks of distrust.

'Perhaps,' said Robert, 'the smell may be disagreeable to you.'

He quitted his chair, and removed the Goblet. I observed, that He examined, whether it was nearly empty.

'He must have drank sufficient,' said He to his Brother in a low voice, while He reseated himself.

Marguerite looked apprehensive, that I had tasted the liquor: A glance from my eye reassured her.

I waited with anxiety for the effects which the Beverage would produce upon the Lady. I doubted not but the grains which I had observed were poisonous, and lamented that it had been impossible for me to warn her of the danger. But a few minutes

had elapsed before I perceived her eyes grow heavy; Her head sank upon her shoulder, and She fell into a deep sleep. I affected not to attend to this circumstance, and continued my conversation with Baptiste, with all the outward gaiety in my power to assume. But He no longer answered me without constraint. He eyed me with distrust and astonishment, and I saw that the Banditti were frequently whispering among themselves. My situation became every moment more painful; I sustained the character of confidence with a worse grace than ever. Equally afraid of the arrival of their Accomplices and of their suspecting my knowledge of their designs, I knew not how to dissipate the distrust which the Banditti evidently entertained for me. In this new dilemma the friendly Marguerite again assisted me. She passed behind the Chairs of her Stepsons, stopped for a moment opposite to me, closed her eyes, and reclined her head upon her shoulder. This hint immediately dispelled my incertitude. It told me, that I ought to imitate the Baroness, and pretend that the liquor had taken its full effect upon me. I did so, and in a few minutes seemed perfectly overcome with slumber.

'So!' cried Baptiste, as I fell back in my chair; 'At last He sleeps! I began to think that He had scented our design, and

that we should have been forced to dispatch him at all events.'

'And why not dispatch him at all events?' enquired the ferocious Jacques. 'Why leave him the possibility of betraying our secret? Marguerite, give me one of my Pistols: A single touch of the trigger will finish him at once.'

'And supposing,' rejoined the Father, 'Supposing that our Friends should not arrive tonight, a pretty figure we should make when the Servants enquire for him in the Morning! No, no, Jacques; We must wait for our Associates. If they join us, we are strong enough to dispatch the Domestics as well as their Masters, and the booty is our own; If Claude does not find the Troop, we must take patience, and suffer the prey to slip through our fingers. Ah! Boys, Boys, had you arrived but five minutes sooner, the Spaniard would have been done for, and two thousand Pistoles our own. But you are always out of the way when you are most wanted.

You are the most unlucky Rogues!'

'Well, well, Father!' answered Jacques; 'Had you been of my mind, all would have been over by this time. You, Robert, Claude, and myself, why the Strangers were but double the number, and I

warrant you we might have mastered them. However, Claude is gone; 'Tis too late to think of it now. We must wait patiently for the arrival of the Gang; and if the Travellers escape us tonight, we must take care to waylay them tomorrow.'

'True! True!' said Baptiste; 'Marguerite, have you given the sleeping-draught to the Waiting-women?'

She replied in the affirmative.

'All then is safe. Come, come, Boys; Whatever falls out, we have no reason to complain of this adventure. We run no danger, may gain much, and can lose nothing.'

At this moment I heard a trampling of Horses. Oh! how dreadful was the sound to my ears. A cold sweat flowed down my forehead, and I felt all the terrors of impending death. I was by no means reassured by hearing the compassionate Marguerite exclaim in the accents of despair,

'Almighty God! They are lost!'

Luckily the Wood-man and his Sons were too much occupied by the

arrival of their Associates to attend to me, or the violence of my agitation would have convinced them that my sleep was feigned.

'Open! Open!' exclaimed several voices on the outside of the Cottage.

'Yes! Yes!' cried Baptiste joyfully; 'They are our Friends sure enough! Now then our booty is certain. Away! Lads, Away! Lead them to the Barn; You know what is to be done there.'

Robert hastened to open the door of the Cottage.

'But first,' said Jacques, taking up his arms; 'first let me dispatch these Sleepers.'

'No, no, no!' replied his Father; 'Go you to the Barn, where your presence is wanted. Leave me to take care of these and the Women above.'

Jacques obeyed, and followed his Brother. They seemed to converse with the New-Comers for a few minutes: After which I heard the Robbers dismount, and as I conjectured, bend their

course towards the Barn.

'So! That is wisely done!' muttered Baptiste; 'They have quitted their Horses, that They may fall upon the Strangers by surprise. Good! Good! and now to business.'

I heard him approach a small Cupboard which was fixed up in a distant part of the room, and unlock it. At this moment I felt myself shaken gently.

'Now! Now!' whispered Marguerite.

I opened my eyes. Baptiste stood with his back towards me. No one else was in the room save Marguerite and the sleeping Lady. The Villain had taken a dagger from the Cupboard and seemed examining whether it was sufficiently sharp. I had neglected to furnish myself with arms; But I perceived this to be my only chance of escaping, and resolved not to lose the opportunity. I sprang from my seat, darted suddenly upon Baptiste, and clasping my hands round his throat, pressed it so forcibly as to prevent his uttering a single cry. You may remember that I was remarkable at Salamanca for the power of my arm: It now rendered me an essential service. Surprised, terrified, and breathless,

the Villain was by no means an equal Antagonist. I threw him upon the ground; I grasped him still tighter; and while I fixed him without motion upon the floor, Marguerite, wresting the dagger from his hand, plunged it repeatedly in his heart till He expired.

No sooner was this horrible but necessary act perpetrated than Marguerite called on me to follow her.

'Flight is our only refuge!' said She; 'Quick! Quick! Away!'

I hesitated not to obey her: but unwilling to leave the Baroness a victim to the vengeance of the Robbers, I raised her in my arms still sleeping, and hastened after Marguerite. The Horses of the Banditti were fastened near the door: My Conductress sprang upon one of them. I followed her example, placed the Baroness before me, and spurred on my Horse. Our only hope was to reach Strasbourg, which was much nearer than the perfidious Claude had assured me. Marguerite was well acquainted with the road, and galloped on before me. We were obliged to pass by the Barn, where the Robbers were slaughtering our Domestics. The door was open: We distinguished the shrieks of the dying and imprecations of the Murderers! What I felt at that moment language is unable

to describe!

Jacques heard the trampling of our Horses as we rushed by the Barn. He flew to the Door with a burning Torch in his hand, and easily recognised the Fugitives.

'Betrayed! Betrayed!' He shouted to his Companions.

Instantly they left their bloody work, and hastened to regain their Horses. We heard no more. I buried my spurs in the sides of my Courser, and Marguerite goaded on hers with the poignard, which had already rendered us such good service. We flew like lightning, and gained the open plains. Already was Strasbourg's Steeple in sight, when we heard the Robbers pursuing us.

Marguerite looked back, and distinguished our followers descending a small Hill at no great distance. It was in vain that we urged on our Horses; The noise approached nearer with every moment.

'We are lost!' She exclaimed; 'The Villains gain upon us!'

'On! On!' replied I; 'I hear the trampling of Horses coming from the Town.'

We redoubled our exertions, and were soon aware of a numerous band of Cavaliers, who came towards us at full speed. They were on the point of passing us.

'Stay! Stay!' shrieked Marguerite; 'Save us! For God's sake, save us!'

The Foremost, who seemed to act as Guide, immediately reined in his Steed.

' 'Tis She! 'Tis She!' exclaimed He, springing upon the ground; 'Stop, my Lord, stop! They are safe! 'Tis my Mother!'

At the same moment Marguerite threw herself from her Horse, clasped him in her arms, and covered him with Kisses. The other Cavaliers stopped at the exclamation.

'The Baroness Lindenberg?' cried another of the Strangers eagerly; 'Where is She? Is She not with you?'

He stopped on beholding her lying senseless in my arms. Hastily He caught her from me. The profound sleep in which She was

plunged made him at first tremble for her life; but the beating of her heart soon reassured him.

'God be thanked!' said He; 'She has escaped unhurt.'

I interrupted his joy by pointing out the Brigands, who continued to approach. No sooner had I mentioned them than the greatest part of the Company, which appeared to be chiefly composed of soldiers, hastened forward to meet them. The Villains stayed not to receive their attack: Perceiving their danger they turned the heads of their Horses, and fled into the wood, whither they were followed by our Preservers. In the mean while the Stranger, whom I guessed to be the Baron Lindenberg, after thanking me for my care of his Lady, proposed our returning with all speed to the Town. The Baroness, on whom the effects of the opiate had not ceased to operate, was placed before him; Marguerite and her Son remounted their Horses; the Baron's Domestics followed, and we soon arrived at the Inn, where He had taken his apartments.

This was at the Austrian Eagle, where my Banker, whom before my quitting Paris I had apprised of my intention to visit Strasbourg, had prepared Lodgings for me. I rejoiced at this circumstance. It gave me an opportunity of cultivating the

Baron's acquaintance, which I foresaw would be of use to me in Germany. Immediately upon our arrival the Lady was conveyed to bed; A Physician was sent for, who prescribed a medicine likely to counteract the effects of the sleepy potion, and after it had been poured down her throat, She was committed to the care of the Hostess. The Baron then addressed himself to me, and entreated me to recount the particulars of this adventure. I complied with his request instantaneously; for in pain respecting Stephano's fate, whom I had been compelled to abandon to the cruelty of the Banditti, I found it impossible for me to repose, till I had some news of him. I received but too soon the intelligence, that my trusty Servant had perished. The Soldiers who had pursued the Brigands returned while I was employed in relating my adventure to the Baron. By their account I found that the Robbers had been overtaken: Guilt and true courage are incompatible; They had thrown themselves at the feet of their Pursuers, had surrendered themselves without striking a blow, had discovered their secret retreat, made known their signals by which the rest of the Gang might be seized, and in short had betrayed every mark of cowardice and baseness. By this means the whole of the Band, consisting of near sixty persons, had been made Prisoners, bound, and conducted to Strasbourg. Some of the Soldiers hastened to the Cottage, One of the Banditti serving them as Guide. Their first visit was to

the fatal Barn, where they were fortunate enough to find two of the Baron's Servants still alive, though desperately wounded. The rest had expired beneath the swords of the Robbers, and of these my unhappy Stephano was one.

Alarmed at our escape, the Robbers in their haste to overtake us, had neglected to visit the Cottage. In consequence, the Soldiers found the two Waiting-women unhurt, and buried in the same death-like slumber which had overpowered their Mistress. There was nobody else found in the Cottage, except a child not above four years old, which the Soldiers brought away with them. We were busying ourselves with conjectures respecting the birth of this little unfortunate, when Marguerite rushed into the room with the Baby in her arms. She fell at the feet of the Officer who was making us this report, and blessed him a thousand times for the preservation of her Child.

When the first burst of maternal tenderness was over, I besought her to declare, by what means She had been united to a Man whose principles seemed so totally discordant with her own. She bent her eyes downwards, and wiped a few tears from her cheek.

'Gentlemen,' said She after a silence of some minutes, 'I would

request a favour of you: You have a right to know on whom you confer an obligation. I will not therefore stifle a confession which covers me with shame; But permit me to comprise it in as few words as possible.

I was born in Strasbourg of respectable Parents; Their names I must at present conceal: My Father still lives, and deserves not to be involved in my infamy; If you grant my request, you shall be informed of my family name. A Villain made himself Master of my affections, and to follow him I quitted my Father's House.

Yet though my passions overpowered my virtue, I sank not into that degeneracy of vice, but too commonly the lot of Women who make the first false step. I loved my Seducer; dearly loved him! I was true to his Bed; this Baby, and the Youth who warned you, my Lord Baron, of your Lady's danger, are the pledges of our affection. Even at this moment I lament his loss, though 'tis to him that I owe all the miseries of my existence.

He was of noble birth, but He had squandered away his paternal inheritance. His Relations considered him as a disgrace to their name, and utterly discarded him. His excesses drew upon him the indignation of the Police. He was obliged to fly from Strasbourg, and saw no other resource from beggary than an union

with the Banditti who infested the neighbouring Forest, and whose Troop was chiefly composed of Young Men of family in the same predicament with himself. I was determined not to forsake him. I followed him to the Cavern of the Brigands, and shared with him the misery inseparable from a life of pillage. But though I was aware that our existence was supported by plunder, I knew not all the horrible circumstances attached to my Lover's profession. These He concealed from me with the utmost care; He was conscious that my sentiments were not sufficiently depraved to look without horror upon assassination: He supposed, and with justice, that I should fly with detestation from the embraces of a Murderer. Eight years of possession had not abated his love for me; and He cautiously removed from my knowledge every circumstance, which might lead me to suspect the crimes in which He but too often participated. He succeeded perfectly: It was not till after my Seducer's death, that I discovered his hands to have been stained with the blood of innocence.

'One fatal night He was brought back to the Cavern covered with wounds: He received them in attacking an English Traveller, whom his Companions immediately sacrificed to their resentment. He had only time to entreat my pardon for all the sorrows which He had caused me: He pressed my hand to his lips, and expired. My

grief was inexpressible. As soon as its violence abated, I resolved to return to Strasbourg, to throw myself with my two Children at my Father's feet, and implore his forgiveness, though I little hoped to obtain it. What was my consternation when informed that no one entrusted with the secret of their retreat was ever permitted to quit the troop of the Banditti; That I must give up all hopes of ever rejoining society, and consent instantly to accepting one of their Band for my Husband! My prayers and remonstrances were vain. They cast lots to decide to whose possession I should fall; I became the property of the infamous Baptiste. A Robber, who had once been a Monk, pronounced over us a burlesque rather than a religious Ceremony: I and my Children were delivered into the hands of my new Husband, and He conveyed us immediately to his home.

He assured me that He had long entertained for me the most ardent regard; But that Friendship for my deceased Lover had obliged him to stifle his desires. He endeavoured to reconcile me to my fate, and for some time treated me with respect and gentleness: At length finding that my aversion rather increased than diminished, He obtained those favours by violence, which I persisted to refuse him. No resource remained for me but to bear my sorrows with patience; I was conscious that I deserved them

but too well. Flight was forbidden: My Children were in the power of Baptiste, and He had sworn that if I attempted to escape, their lives should pay for it. I had had too many opportunities of witnessing the barbarity of his nature to doubt his fulfilling his oath to the very letter. Sad experience had convinced me of the horrors of my situation: My first Lover had carefully concealed them from me; Baptiste rather rejoiced in opening my eyes to the cruelties of his profession, and strove to familiarise me with blood and slaughter.

'My nature was licentious and warm, but not cruel: My conduct had been imprudent, but my heart was not unprincipled. Judge then what I must have felt at being a continual witness of crimes the most horrible and revolting! Judge how I must have grieved at being united to a Man who received the unsuspecting Guest with an air of openness and hospitality, at the very moment that He meditated his destruction. Chagrin and discontent preyed upon my constitution: The few charms bestowed on me by nature withered away, and the dejection of my countenance denoted the sufferings of my heart. I was tempted a thousand times to put an end to my existence; But the remembrance of my Children held my hand. I trembled to leave my dear Boys in my Tyrant's power, and trembled yet more for their virtue than their lives. The Second was still

too young to benefit by my instructions; But in the heart of my Eldest I laboured unceasingly to plant those principles, which might enable him to avoid the crimes of his Parents. He listened to me with docility, or rather with eagerness. Even at his early age, He showed that He was not calculated for the society of Villains; and the only comfort which I enjoyed among my sorrows, was to witness the dawning virtues of my Theodore.

'Such was my situation, when the perfidy of Don Alphonso's postillion conducted him to the Cottage. His youth, air, and manners interested me most forcibly in his behalf. The absence of my Husband's Sons gave me an opportunity which I had long wished to find, and I resolved to risque every thing to preserve the Stranger. The vigilance of Baptiste prevented me from warning Don Alphonso of his danger: I knew that my betraying the secret would be immediately punished with death; and however embittered was my life by calamities, I wanted courage to sacrifice it for the sake of preserving that of another Person. My only hope rested upon procuring succour from Strasbourg: At this I resolved to try; and should an opportunity offer of warning Don Alphonso of his danger unobserved, I was determined to seize it with avidity. By Baptiste's orders I went upstairs to make the Stranger's Bed: I spread upon it Sheets in which a

Traveller had been murdered but a few nights before, and which still were stained with blood. I hoped that these marks would not escape the vigilance of our Guest, and that He would collect from them the designs of my perfidious Husband. Neither was this the only step which I took to preserve the Stranger. Theodore was confined to his bed by illness. I stole into his room unobserved by my Tyrant, communicated to him my project, and He entered into it with eagerness. He rose in spite of his malady, and dressed himself with all speed. I fastened one of the Sheets round his arms, and lowered him from the Window. He flew to the Stable, took Claude's Horse, and hastened to Strasbourg. Had He been accosted by the Banditti, He was to have declared himself sent upon a message by Baptiste, but fortunately He reached the Town without meeting any obstacle. Immediately upon his arrival at Strasbourg, He entreated assistance from the Magistrature: His Story passed from mouth to mouth, and at length came to the knowledge of my Lord the Baron. Anxious for the safety of his Lady, whom He knew would be upon the road that Evening, it struck him that She might have fallen into the power of the Robbers. He accompanied Theodore who guided the Soldiers towards the Cottage, and arrived just in time to save us from falling once more into the hands of our Enemies.'

Here I interrupted Marguerite to enquire why the sleepy potion had been presented to me. She said that Baptiste supposed me to have arms about me, and wished to incapacitate me from making resistance: It was a precaution which He always took, since as the Travellers had no hopes of escaping, Despair would have incited them to sell their lives dearly.

The Baron then desired Marguerite to inform him, what were her present plans. I joined him in declaring my readiness to show my gratitude to her for the preservation of my life.

'Disgusted with a world,' She replied, 'in which I have met with nothing but misfortunes, my only wish is to retire into a Convent. But first I must provide for my Children. I find that my Mother is no more, probably driven to an untimely grave by my desertion! My Father is still living; He is not an hard Man; Perhaps, Gentlemen, in spite of my ingratitude and imprudence, your intercessions may induce him to forgive me, and to take charge of his unfortunate Grand-sons. If you obtain this boon for me, you will repay my services a thousand-fold!'

Both the Baron and myself assured Marguerite, that we would spare no pains to obtain her pardon: and that even should her Father be

inflexible, She need be under no apprehensions respecting the fate of her Children. I engaged myself to provide for Theodore, and the Baron promised to take the youngest under his protection.

The grateful Mother thanked us with tears for what She called generosity, but which in fact was no more than a proper sense of our obligations to her. She then left the room to put her little Boy to bed, whom fatigue and sleep had compleatly overpowered.

The Baroness, on recovering and being informed from what dangers I had rescued her, set no bounds to the expressions of her gratitude. She was joined so warmly by her Husband in pressing me to accompany them to their Castle in Bavaria, that I found it impossible to resist their entreaties. During a week which we passed at Strasbourg, the interests of Marguerite were not forgotten: In our application to her Father we succeeded as amply as we could wish. The good old Man had lost his Wife: He had no Children but this unfortunate Daughter, of whom He had received no news for almost fourteen years. He was surrounded by distant Relations, who waited with impatience for his decease in order to get possession of his money. When therefore Marguerite appeared again so unexpectedly, He considered her as a gift from heaven: He received her and her Children with open arms, and insisted

upon their establishing themselves in his House without delay. The disappointed Cousins were obliged to give place. The old Man would not hear of his Daughter's retiring into a Convent: He said that She was too necessary to his happiness, and She was easily persuaded to relinquish her design. But no persuasions could induce Theodore to give up the plan which I had at first marked out for him. He had attached himself to me most sincerely during my stay at Strasbourg; and when I was on the point of leaving it, He besought me with tears to take him into my service: He set forth all his little talents in the most favourable colours, and tried to convince me that I should find him of infinite use to me upon the road. I was unwilling to charge myself with a Lad but scarcely turned of thirteen, whom I knew could only be a burthen to me: However, I could not resist the entreaties of this affectionate Youth, who in fact possessed a thousand estimable qualities. With some difficulty He persuaded his relations to let him follow me, and that permission once obtained, He was dubbed with the title of my Page. Having passed a week at Strasbourg, Theodore and myself set out for Bavaria in company with the Baron and his Lady. These Latter as well as myself had forced Marguerite to accept several presents of value, both for herself, and her youngest Son: On leaving her, I promised his Mother faithfully that I would restore

Theodore to her within the year.

I have related this adventure at length, Lorenzo, that you might understand the means by which 'The Adventurer, Alphonso d'Alvarada got introduced into the Castle of Lindenberg.' Judge from this specimen how much faith should be given to your Aunt's assertions!