The Castle of Wolfenbach

by Eliza Parsons

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The Castle of Wolfenbach

Eliza Parsons

Volume 1

' CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH;

A GERMAN STORY,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH ;

GERMAN STORY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By Mrs. PARS S ONS, 5 Auro or oy

' yRRORS or EDUCATION, MISS MEREDITH, WOMAN | As

SHE SHOULD BE, AND INTRIGUES oF A MORNING.

VOL. N 1.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE, AT THE

Winerva Press, LEADENHALL-STREBT, 5 AND $0LD BY E. HARLOW, PALL-MALL.

M. DCC. XIII.

ORR

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

A GERMAN STORY. _.

WIE clock from the old castle had "ast gone eight when the peaceful inhabi- tants of a neighbouring cottage, on the skirts

of the wood, were about to seek that repose -- -

which labour had rendered neceflary, and

minds blest with innocence and tranquillity as-

sured them the enjoyment of. The evening vas cold and tempestuous, the rain poured in torrents, and the distant thunders rolled with tremendous noise round the adjacent moun- _ tains, whilst the pale lightning added horrors. to the scene.

VOL, I, — Pierre

Pierre was already in bed, and Jaqueline preparing to follow, when the trampling of

| horses was heard, and immediately a loud knocking at the door; they were both alarm- ed; Pierre listened, Jaqueline trembled ; the

knocking was repeated with more violence; the peasant threw on his humble earment,

and, advancing to the door, demanded who was there? © Two travellers, (answered a gentle voice) overtaken by the storm; pray, friend, afford us shelter.” «O! (cried Ja- queline) perhaps they may be robbers, and we shall be murdered.” © Pho! fimple-

ton, (said Pierre) what can they expect to

rob us of,” He opened the door, and disco- vered a man supporting a lady who appeared almost fainting. © Pray, friend, (said the

man) permit this lady to enter your cottage,] fear she has suffered much from the storm.” Poor soul, I am sorry for her; enter and welcome, (cried Pierre.) Jaqueline placed her wooden arm-chair by the chimney, ran

for some wood, and kindled a blaze in a mo- ment, whilst Pierre put the horse into a

little

Out-

CASTLE OF wor TEN BACH. 3

out-house which held their firing and his working implements, and returned with a portmantua to the lady. They had only some bread and milk to offer, but they made it warm, and prevailed on their guest to take some. The man, who appeared an attendant, did the same. The lady soon got her clothes dry, but she wanted rest, and they had no bed to offer. One single room answered all their : purposes of life; their humble bed was on the floor, in a corner of it, but though mean it was whole and clean. Jaqueline entreated the lady to lie down ; she refused for some time, but growing faint from exhausted spirits and fatigue, she was compelled to accept the offer; the others sat silently round the fire: but, alas ! horror and affliction precluded sleep, and the fair traveller, after laying about two hours, re- turned again to the fire-side, weary and un- | refreshed. © Is there any house near this?“ (demanded she.) © No, madam, 3 5 Jaqueline) there is no house, but there is a fine old castle just by, where there is room enough, for only one old man and his wise live 32 | in

5 CASTLE OF WCLFENBACH. -

in it, ard, Lord help us, I would not be in

their place for all the fine things there.”

« Why fo?” (Cd the lady.) © O! dear

madam, why it is haunted ; there are bloody

fioors, prison rooms, and scriptions, they say, on the windows, to make a body's hair stand an end.” © And how far from your cottage

is this cattle?” © A little flep, madam, far-

ther up the wood.” © And do you think ve could obtain entrance there? © O, Lord!

yes, m dam, and thank you too: Why the poor old souls rejoice to see a body call

there now and then; I go sumetimes in the middle

of the day, but I take good care to keep from the fine rooms and never to be out after dark. I with, (seil the lady) it was pos- sible to get there." Pierre instantly offered hi. service to conduc her as soon as it was ligat,

and notwitlistanding sorne very horrible stories recounted by Jaqueline, she determined to vijfit this proscribed place.

When the morning came, the inhabitants

of the cottage set out for the calle, The

lady

CASTLE OF WOLFEXBACH, 5

lady wes fo much enteebled, from fatigue and want of rest, that he was obliged to be placed on the horse, and they "ey Ic very difficult to lead him through the thickets. They at length espied a fine old building, with two wings, and a turret on the top, where a large clock stocd, a high wall surrounded the house, a pair of great gates gave entrance into a spa- cious ccurt, furrcunded with flowering shrubs, which lay broken and neglected on tle ground, intermixed with the weeds which were above a foot high in every part.

Whilst the lady's attendant lifted her from the horse, Pierre repaired to the kitchen door where the old couple lived, which stood in one of the wings, and knocking pretty loud-

ly, the old woman opened it, and, with a

look of astonishment, fixed her eyes on the

lady and her servant. Good neighbour, (said Pierre) here is a great gentlewoman cruel ill; she wants food and sleep, we have brought her here, she is not afeared of your ghosts, 2 and so therefore you can give her a B3 os good

good bed, I suppose." « To be sure I can, (answered Bertha, which was the woman's

name:) to be sure I can make a bed fit for the emperor, Wien the linen is aired : walk in, madam ; you lock very weak.“ Indeed the want of rest the preceding night had fo much added to her former feeble since; that it was with difficulty they conveyed her into the kitchen. Bertha warmed a little wine, toast- ed a bit of bread, and leaving Jaqueline to at- tend the lady, sne made a fire in a handsome bed-room that was in that wing, took some fine linen out of a chest and brought it down to air. © Dear, my lady, (cried she) make _ yourself easy, I'll take care of you, and if you ar'nt afeared, you will have rooms for a prin- cess.” Pierre and Jaqueline being about to return to their daily labour, found their kind- ness amply rewarded by the generosity of the stranger, who gave them money enough, they said, to serve them for six months. With a thousand blessings they retired, promising | however to call daily on the lady whilst she staid at the castle, though their hearts misgave „

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 8 them that they should never see her more, from their apprehensions of the ghosts that inhabited the rooms above stairs. When the apartment was arranged, the lady was assisted by Bertha and laid comfortably to rest; | | she gave her forme money to procure food and necessaries, and defired her servant might bave a bed also. This the good woman pro- mised, and, wishing her a good sleep, return-

ed to che kitchen.

M0 God ble the poor lady, (faid she) why she is as weak as a child; sure you must have come a great way from home.” © Yes, (an- swered Albert, the servant's name, we have indeed, and my poor lady is worn down by sorrow annd fatigue ; I fear she must rest. some time before she can pursue her journey.“ Well, (faid Bertha) she may stay as long as she likes here, no body will disturb her in the day time, I am sure.” «© And what will disturb her at night?” (asked Albert.) O, my good friend, (answered she) no body will fleep i in the rooms up stairs ; the gentlefolks | B 4 Who

S ASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

who were in it last cculd not rest, such strange NOUEE, © and groans, and screams, and such like terrible hangs are heard; then at t'other end of the house the "On. are never opened; they fay bloody work has been carried on

there.“ „II/ comes it, then, (lud Albert)

that you and your husband have courage to live here?“ * Dear me, (replicd she) why the ghosts never come down stairs, and I

take care never to go up o'nights ; fo that if madam stays here I fear she must sleep by day, or else have a ground room, for they

never comes down ; they were some of your high gentry, I warrant, who never went into

kicchens.” Albert smiled at the idea, but, resuming his discourse, asked the woman to whom the castle belonged? © To a great

Baron, (said the) but J forget his name,”

And how long have you lived here?” « Many a long year, friend; we have a small

matter allowed us to live upon, a good gar-

den that gives us plenty of vegetables, for

my hufband, you mult know, 1s a bit of a u.

dener, and works in it when he is able.“

cc And

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«= And where is he now?” (said Albert) & Gone to the village fix leagues off to get a little meat, bread and wine.” What! does he walk?“ „ Lord help him, poor soul, he walk! no, bless your heart, he rides upon our faithful little ass, and takes care never to overload her, as we don't want much me at, thank God. But where will you like to cep? (added she;) will you go up stairs, or shall I bring some bedding in the next room ! py Alberr "hesirared, bur, ashamed to have les courage than his mistress,

asked if there was any room near tae lady's ? * Aye, sure, (an- swered Bertha) close to her there in one as good as hers." © Then I will sicep there (rid he.) Tis good nostess now nunbly as she could, bestired kerself to put his room in order, and was very careful not to disturb the laly. Albert was soon accommodated and retired to rest.

In the evening the lady came down into tlie kitchen, much whelhed and expressed her thanks to the good woman for her kindne . E Heavens.

Heavens bless your sweet face, (cries Ber-

tha) I am glad to my heart you be so well.

Ah! as I live, here's my Joseph and the ass." She run out into the court to acquaint her good man with what had befallen her in his | absence. © As sure as you be alive, Joseph,

she is some great lady under trouble, poor soul, for she does sigh fo piteously ; but she has given me plenty of money to get things

for her, so you know it's nothing to us, if she likes to stay here, so much the better." „1 hope, (said tlie old man) she is no bad body."

" No, that she an't, I'll swear (cries Bertha;) she looks as mild as the flowers in May." They had now unloaded their faithful afs, and

entered the kitchen with their provender.

Joseph was confounded at the appearance of 5 the lady; he made his humble bow, but was very silent. Bertha prepared some eggs and

fruit for her supper; she cat but little, and that

little was to oblige the old couple; she then asked for a candle, and said the would retire

to her room. Joseph and Bertha looked at each other with terror, both were silent; at length

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length Joseph, with much hesitation of voice and manner, said, © I fear, madam, you will not be quiet there, 1t will be better, to my thinking, if a fire was made in one of the par- lours and the bedding brought down. There is no occasion for fire, (answered the lady) but merely to air the room; however I am not in any apprehension of sleeping in the room above, at leaft I will try it this night. It was with great reluctance the honest couple permitted her to retire ; Bertha had not even the courage to accompany her, but Albert and Joleph offering to go, she ventured up to make the bed, and her work finished, flew down like one escaped from great danger.

The men having withdrawn, the lady seated | herself at the dressing table, and having open- ed her portmantua to take out some linen for the ensuing day, she burst into tears on view- ing the small quantity of necessaries she pos- sessed; she cast a retrospection on her past calamities, they made her shudder; she look- ed forward to the future, all was dark and Fe B 6 gloomy;

12 CASTLE OF wol rEN NACE.

gloomy ; she wrung her hands, „What wilt become of me, unhappy as I am, where can I fly? who will receive a poor unfortunate, without family or friends? The little money I have will be soon exhausted, and what is to be the fate of poor Albert, who has left all o follow me!” Overcome with sorrow, she wept aloud. When, turning her eyes to the window, ste saw a light glide by from the opposite wing, which her room fronted, and which Bertha had informed her was particu- _ larly haunted. At first the thought it was imagination ; she arose and placed ker can- dle in the chimney ; curiosity suipended sor- row—she returned and icated herself at the window, and very soon after she saw a faint glimmering light pass a second time; ex- _ ceedingly surprised, but not terrified, {he con- tinued in her situation : she saw nothing fur- ther. She at length determined to go to rest, but with an intention to visit every part

of the | house the following day. She got into bed, but could not lep. About twelve o'clock she heard plainly a clanking of chains, which was

CASTLE OF WOLFENB ech. 13 was followed by. two or three heavy g groans; she started up and listened, it was presently repeated, and seemed to die away by gentle degrees; soon after sne heard a violent noise, like two or three doors clapping to with great force. Though unaccustomed to fear, she could not help trembling. She felt some in- clination to call up Joseph, she then recollect- ed Albert was in the next room ; she knock- ed at the wainscot and called Albert! No an- swer was made. She got out of bed, and throwing on a loose gown, took her candle, and, opening the door of the next apartment, went up to the bed; she saw he was buried under the clothes. © Albert, (faid she) do not be afraid, 'tis your mistress with a light; he then ventured to raise himself, and though but little 12clined to mirth, she could not re- frain from smiling at the fright he was in; the drops of perspiration run down his face, his eyes were starring, and he was incapable of

| speaking for some time. “ Pray, Albert, (id his lady) have you heard any particular noise ?” © Noise, (repeated he) O Lord! all 3 3

the ghosts have been here together to frighten me.“ Here where, (asked she) in this room ?” „I believe so, (he replied ;) in this

or the next I am sure they were; there was

a score or two in chains, then there was groans and cries : but pray, madam, leave the candle a minute at the door, I will throw on my clothes and get down into the kitchen and

never come up stairs again.“ Well, but, Albert, (faid she) I must stay in my room, have you more cause for fear than I have? ec No, madam, thank God, I never did harm

to man, woman or child.“ © Then take courage, Albert, I will light your candle, and, as I shall be in the next apartment, and will leave my door open, you may either call

tome or go down stairs, if you are a second time |

alarmed." It was with reluctance he obey- ed, and repeatedly desired the doors might remain open.

The lady retired to her room, for some

time hesitgting whether she should dress her-

self or go into bed, she at length threw her- sell

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self down in her night gown, but could not sleep. Strange and various were her con-

jectures respecting the lights she had seen, and

the unaccountable noises she had heard; she was not surprised that the weak minds of the old people should be terrified, or that Albert,

who was likewise far advanced in years, above

sixty, should shrink from alarms which had given her a momentary terror ; but as she did

not suffer her mind to dwell on the causes be-

ing supernatural, she conceived there must be some mystery which, on the following day, if her health permitted, she resolved, if pos- sible, to explore. Towards morning she fell into a profound sleep, undisturbed by groans 7 or noises of any bert. 5

Alkert, who, is 8 apprehen- sions of seeing those ghosts that had so great- ly frightened him, was prevented from sleep- ing, got up the moment day appeared and crept down stairs, where he was soon after joined by Joseph. © How have you slept, my good friend? (asked he.) © Slept! (re-

N VCößl Oo - wad.

plied the other;) why, who could sleep, d'ye think, when chains were rattling, ghosts roar- ing and groaning, doors banging with vio- lence enough to shake the

foundation of the walls? Lord help me, I would not live in such a place no, not to be matter of the whole estate.” © Aye, I knew how it would be, (said Joseph ;) it's always the fame bu- siness when any body comes here to fleep ; we never hear any noise else.“ „ Why, then your ghosts are very rude unsociable folks, (answered Albert) for strangers can do them no hurt, and there's room enough, me- thinks, in this great house for them to have their merriments, without coming to frighten honest travellers, that never desire to interrupt them. „ don't know how it is, (replied Joscph) but as to merriment, fure there can be none in groans and cries, and they do say that cruel wicked deeds have been done in this castle, and I suppoie the poor suuls can't bby quitt.“ Dear me, (cries Albert) I wish my mistress may be well enough to go farther, though, poor soul, she does n't know ET 1 Where

CASTLE OF WOLFFNBACH. 17

where to go to, that's true.“ „ Poor lady,

that's bad indeed; has she no parents, nor

husband, nor uncles, nor aunts, nor— Tes, yes, (said Albert, interrupting him) she has me relations, but what of that, bet- ter she had none, I believe, for her O, here comes Bertha.” On her entrance the

good morrows and enquiries were repeated; Bertha expressed her sorrow for the lady, and immediately ascended the stairs to see if she

was not frightened out of her wits by such 4

Cruel disturbance,

She soon returned with the lady, and break- fast being quickly fer before her, she endea-

voured to eat, but her appetite was so indif- ferent as to cause great pan to the friendly

Bertha.

Joseph mounted his favorite beast and re-

paired to the town, that he might procure ne- cessaries for his family, superior to what he

had bought the day before. After his depar-

ture, and that Albert was gene to look after

his

his horse, the fair stranger demanded of Ber-

tha if she could give her any account of the owners of the castle. «© Why, madam, (an- swered she) the present lord of this estate i aye, his name is Count Wolfenbach; he mar- ried a very handsome lady at Vienna, and brought her here; it was then a beautiful place, very unlike such as it be now; but how- | somever they say he was very jealous, and be-

| haved very ill to the poor lady, and locked her up, and there she was brought to bed, and

the child was taken from her, and so she died, and 'twas said the child died, and fo every body believes tis their ghosts that make such dismal noises in the castle, for soon after my Lord the Count went away, and Joseph, who worked under the gardener, was ordered to take care of the house; and I lived then under the cook, so we married : all the other servants were discharged, and so we have lived here ever since. My Lord came here once or twice, but the ghosts made such a noise he could not stay. Several gentry have slept here at times, but no body would stay a se- cond

cond night, and so we have all to ourselves by day, and the ghosts, or what they be, have got all the rooms by night, and then they be quiet enough." © Pray, (interrogated the lady) can I walk through the rooms and ex- amine the opposite wing?" „To be sure, madam, you can, if you be so bold, but nei- ther I nor Joseph

ever goes there, because that's the part where the poor Countess died." « How many years ago was it? « Near _ eighteen, my Lady; for next Christmas we

have been married so many years, and I was

fifty-three and Joseph fifty- two when we came together; not very young, to be sure, what of that, we live very comfortable, only a little lonely or fo." © Well, (said her guest) 1 shall be glad to walk through all the apart- ments. I will attend you, madam, ex- cept to the other side, there I never goes."

Aeer breakfast was over, the lady and Bertha walked up stairs; they went through several fine apartments, the furniture rich though old fashioned ; one hung with family

EE 5 portraits

IS CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

portraits she was particularly pleased with ; two attracted her attention greatly, which Bertha told her, she had keard fa y were the present Count and his late lad V.

After going through the body of the house

they came to the doors that led to the other

wing: © Now, for goodness fake, dear ma-

dam, don't go no farther, for as sure as you are alive, here the ghosts live, for Joseph *

he often sces lights and hears strange things."

« My good friend, (replied the lady) you

may return, but I certainly will look into | those rooms." © O, pray good, your lady- | ship, don't go now." She persisted however

in her determination, and on Bertha's leaving

her she opened the door which led to a gal-

lery, and a handsome stair-case, on the right

hand she saw a suite of four rooms, all well

furnished, two as bed rooms, one handsome

| fitting room, the other a library, well filled with books, in handsome cases; these two _ last rooms, she observed, exactly fronted the one on the opposice fide, where she had slept.

Having

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Having examined those apartmente, she saw, on the other side of the gallery, two other doors; these, on trial, she found locked. She then returned and went down the stair-case; after the first landing place the windows were shut, and when she came to the bottom she entered a hall, in which were three doors; one she attempted to open, immediately a murmuring noise was heard, and the instant she opened the door, another at the end of the room was shut to with great violence. The lady for a moment stood suspended; she trembled, and deliberated whether she should return or not; but recovering reso-

lution, she entered; a candle was burning on a table, the windows were closed up, there were books and implements for drawing on the table; this convinced her the inhabitants were alive, however, and going to the door, she faid aloud, © Whoever resides in this apartment need not be under any apprehen- sions from the intrusion of an unfortunate woman, whom distress has driven to this castle, and only a melancholy kind of curiosity

1 has

22 Ds CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

has induced her to explore a part of 1 it pro- | scribed by Fony one,”

She had scarcely uttered these words when the door opened, and a lady, attended by

an elderly woman, appeared. Both started ; but the visitor, in a confused manner, apologized for her intrusion. The other taking her hand, placed her in a chair. Perhaps, madam,

| (faid she) this may prove the happiest day of

my life, and I may rejoice that your curiosity and courage is superior to those terrors by which _ Others have been intimidated." At leaft, | madam, you will do me the justice to believe (answered the lady) that I would not have been guilty of this intrusion, had I known these apartments were really inhabited, but be assured, madam, your secret is perfectly safe with me." I do not doubt it, (replied the other;) your countenance is a letter of recom- mendation to every heart." She then order- ed her attendant to bring some refreshments, which consisted of biscuits and fruits,

I The

23 The woman being withdrawn, the lady of

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

the house said, © However, madam, I may

| rejoice in seeing a female of your appearance, I cannot help lamenting that one so young | should know sorrow, or be driven to seek an

asylum in such a melancholy place as this

castle. © I am indeed, madam, an object of pity, (replied the other) without friends, a home, or one acquaintance to sooth my sor- rows. I have fled from oppression and in- famy, unknowing where to direct my steps, or what will become of me.. Surely, (said the former lady) heaven directed your steps here, that we might communicate comfort to each other: griefs, when divided become less

poignant; I have known years of sorrow, yet I |

still support life in a feeble hope of one day being restored to happiness." plied the other) not one shadow of hope can

I derive from either past or future prospects;

and as I have intruded thus upon you, ma- dam, it is but fit you should know who and

what I am. I was born, as I have been told,

at F ROS: and loft both my parents in my

Infancy,

« Alas! (re-

24 CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

infancy. My birth was noble, but my for- tune very trifing. The first thing I can re- member was a gentleman who I was taught to call uncle, an elderly woman his house- Keeper, and a young girl attendant on me; we lived in the country, about three miles from any town or village. As I grew up masters were hired to attend me, and by their 1kill and my own attention, having nothing to divert my mind from my studies, I became tolerably accomplished at twelve years of age, when my masters were discharged. We re- ceived no company ; a few gentlemen called now and then, but those I never law. My uncle was exccedingly fond of me; his name was Mr. Weimar, mine Matilda Weimar. Our ancestors, he said, had been Counts, and persons of high rank and fortunes, but by war and prodigality, they had been reduced to comparative poverty; therefore it was for- tunate for me he had never been married. I think I am naturally affectionate and grateful, yet I never felt any degree of either for my

uncle; and, Young as 1 was, have frequently taken

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taken myself to task when I found a repug- nance to return his caresses. I devoted my whole time to my studies ; my uncle, when I. was about fifteen, having some property in France, was compelled, by the failure of a | house, to go there in person ;

at first he talked of taking me with him, but changed his mind, and gave me in charge to his housckeeper and. an old servant called Albert, with strict or- ders I should never go beyond the waiks be. longing to his castle. Nothing could exceed the tenderness of his behaviour at parting, and for the first time in my life I was affected; I. returned his embraces and shed some tears. « Ah! Matilda, (laid he) are you indeed sor- ry I should leave you? © I am, indeed," (I | replied.) „Then you shall go with me, | (cried he, eagerly ; but striking his forehead, he exclaimed, & No! that will not do; dear Matilda, my sweet niece, keep yourself re- tired, apply to your studies, I shall soon re- turn, 1 I hope, make you the happiest of women." I felt at that moment real grati- tude and affection; 1 promice strictiy to obey vor. I. ©: his

26 © CASTLE OF wol TEN BACH.

his commands, and by my endeavours to im- prove my mind, deserve his love and esteem. He quitted me with extreme reluctance, and for several days I found the want of his com- pany and conversation, but by degrees I grew reconciled, and as Agatha and Albert were _ respectable and intelligent persons, for their stations in life ; I made them both my friends and companions. This was really the hap- piest period of my life; I was capable of amusing myself with music and drawing, in the _ evenings I walked in the garden and adjoin- ing wood with Agatha, returned with a good _ appetite, and slept quietly. My uncle remain- ed in France near nine months, he constantly | wrote to me, and I was punctual in my an- swers; at the end of that period he returned; I was overjoyed to see him, but the pleasure I felt and expressed fell very short of the rap- ture and transport with which he embraced and praised me; he dwelt on the improve- ment in my person with such delight, that I

felt confused and uneasy; the attention which

used to give me pleasure now was painful, and TW oe I re.

CASTLE OF WOLFENSACH, 27 I repulsed his caresses involuntarily, He told me he had brought me a present of some books and drawings, both of which he knew _

would be acceptable to me; I acknowledged his kindness with an apparent gratitude, yet I was in reality but little thankful, though 1 could not account for the increasing coldness of my behaviour. After a hasty supper I re- tired to bed, notwithstanding his wishes to de- tain me, and after I was alone I began to re- flect on my conduct, so cold and thankless, to-

wards fo kind an uncle, whose affection for

mee seemed greatly increased. I was displeased with my own reflections, and resolved to be- have better to him the following day.

c The next morning rose early; my un- cle was not up, Agatha met me going into the garden. My dear Miss, (said she) you were very shy and unkind to your uncle last night; the good man loves you dearly, and 'tis not your business to be shewing him such flights, I can tell you." Though conscious I. was | wrong I was amazed at the freedom of her ob- 1 5 Ca servations,

28 carts OF WOLFENBACH.

servations, as she was not much in the room with us; I therefore made some trifling an-

swer and pursued my walk.

2M It was plain my uncle had taken notice of my coldness, and complained to her: I was mortified and vexed ; after taking two or three turns I went into the house, and met my uncle in the breakfast room; I assumed the

© kindest manner possible in my salutations. to

him, and I saw he was highly gratified by it. He produced his books and drawings, the latter were very beautiful, but the attitudes and want of decent drapery confused and hurt me, for although I had never received any particular lessons on delicacy or modesty, yet

there is that innate virtuous principle within

us, that shrinks involuntarily from any thing _ tending to violate that sense of decency we are all, I believe, born with; I therefore could nct examine them with the accuracy I wished, much less praise them, as I saw he ex- pected. © Are they not exquisite pieces?“ | (demanded he.) © They are very fine

dra win g

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 29

drawings, I believe, Sir, but I think the sub- ects of them are exceptionable.” * My dear girl, (he replied, laughing,) you know nothingof tne world; whoever excepts against the subjects of drawings, or the attitudes of | ftatues? 'tis the execution and proportions that attract our notice, and I assure you, my | little prude, there is nothing objectionable in any point of view, 1n those drawings be- fore you, nor in the books, which are now most in repute among the fashionable. circles in France.” Though my reason was not convinced I made no further scruples, but thanked him for his attention to my amusement, and, break fast over, retired to my own apartment, hav- ing my presents carried there, that I might ex- amine them at my leisure.

« From this time my uncle's behaviour was to me unaccountable, ke was for ever seeking. opportunities to caress me, his language was expressive. of the utmost fondnels, he Je. * 3 my

my person in such glowing colours as some- times filled me with confusion. In short, ma- dam, not to tire you, within three months af- ter his return I began to be extreniely uneasy at freedoms I scarce knew how to repulle. One morning after dressing] went into the

garden, a thing unusual with me at that hour,

and going round a serpentine walk, which led

to a summer-house, I thought I heard voices there; I stopt at the back of it, which, as

well as the front, had a door that opened into

the garden, and W heard Agatha's voice, faying, © I tell yov, Sir, incre is no other pay, fend Albert off for a few days, or turn him off at once, for he loves Mifs Matilda as if she were his own child, and therefore we must get rid of him; but you are so long set-

ling your mind—get into her room at night

when she's asleep, I'll take care nobody comes there, or tell her roundly at once you are not an uncle to her- would not longer stand up- on ceremony.” © Well, Agatha, I'll take your advice, and dispatch Albert to-morrow, and the next mon 3 will be happy" ” You may

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 37

may suppose, madam, I was scarccly able to support myself. Having heard thus far I tottered from the summer house, and got into the shrubbery, where I threw myself on the

ground, and preserved myself rom 8 by @ copious flood ol tears.

1 oOvervhelmedby my own refiections, with

out a friend or habitation to fly to for protec-

tion, uncertain whetherfhis man was really my

uncle or not, yet convinced he had the most diabolical designs against me, and thut in his

house I could not be safe: it is impossible to describe my feelings and distress ; at length I

arose and recollected what the horrid woman

| had said of Albert, it was my only resource. | I walked from the garden towards the stables; most fortunately I met him coming from them. © Albert, (said I, hastily) I wish to | speak with you, follow me into the park. The man looked surprised— Me, Miss—T follow you?” „ Yes, immediately,” (I re- plied.) I walked quickly to the

park, he came after me ; when out of sight of the house C4: I turn

32 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

tur ned to him — * Albert, do you love me? are you willing to ferve me?“ « Aye, that

Twill, dear Miß, to the last drop of my blood.“ I then, without losing time, told

him the plot designed against me, and what

was determined with respect to himself. The good creature was struck dumb with surprise, but recovering himself, «By my soul, (cried he) I will fave and serve you whilst I have breath, from such devils. My dear young lady be easy, I have a sister who lives at Lu- cerne, she will be proud to serve you; 233 long journey, but never fear, you can ride be- hind me, as you have often done in sport: I'll manage the business to- night, never fear — get up a little early in the morning and meet me here.“ We then concerted our whole plan, and I returned to the house with a lighter heart, and got to my apartment unobserved. I was foon aster summoned to dinner; when 1 faw my uncle I turned faint, he flew to me

with tenderness— My dear Matilda, are you

ill?” « Only a sick hezd-ach,” (I replied, discngaging mysclf from him, and sitting

down.)

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, | 23--- down.) © I fear you have been reading too much.” „ Very likely, Sir; I shall be bet- ter by and bye,” was my aniwer. I could eat but little, yet I tried to do it, and also to rally

my spirits to avoid suspicion. When Albert

was removing the cloth, © I have a great fa- vour to alk your Honour.“ What is it Albert?” (faid my uncle.) © Why, Sir, I have got a lifter married at a village near

Lausanne, and the poor soul does so long to see me, that if you could spare me for a week, I

should be mightily obliged to you?" * For a weck! (replied his master, pleasure dancing in his eyes) you may set off to-morrow and stay a fortnight, it cannot be less time, to give you any comfort with your friends." The poor fellow bowed his thanks and with- drew. .

I now exulted in our prospect of success in my deliverance : I grew more cheerful, my uncle was tender and affectionate; I bore his caressts without any repulses, but left the room soon as possible. I employed myself in - C4: pack

34 | CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.,

packing up a few neceffaries in a small port- mantua, with what little valuables I had, and was tolerably supplied with money, as I thought, knowing little of the expences of a Journey. I did not go to bed, and about four in the morning, when the whole house was buried in fleep, I took my portmantua, and with some difficulty carried it down stairs, opened the doors with the greatest precau- tion, and, to my no small joy, found Albert walking upon the green; he took my load from me, and, without speaking, led the way to the stables, fastened on the portmantua, and wetting me behind him, we rode off as fast as possible. Previous to my quitting the room the preceding evening, I desired my uncle not to wait breakfast for me, as I believed 1 | should scarcely rise sooner than ten, as I had not slept well the night before; I therefore thought we should have some hours start of

any pursuit, and we proceeded on to Lucerne,

the very opposite road from Lausanne, » here Albert had asked permission to go to. After a tedious and painful journey we got safe to „ „„ Uueme

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. Sc

Lucerne. Alas! how great was our disap- poiatment ; this sister, on whose protection I _ relied, had been dead three weeks, and her little shop and stock given to a young woman who lived with her, and only a small legacy left to Albert. What now was to be done? The mistress of the house humanely offered me a bed for a night or two;

vexation and fatigue compelled me to accept the offer: my poor fellow traveller was more affected than myself. We consulted what was next to be done; he then recollected he had a rela- tion at Zurich, and proposed my going on there. He said it was a good city, and some way or other, doubtless, I might procure a living by my talents. Small as this hope was I had no alternative but to embrace it, and the next morning we pursued our journey; the day before yesterday was the second day of our travelling from Zurich. The storm came on just before our entrance into the

wood, we took shelter for some time, but the

trees getting thoroughly wet, and the night letting in, we rode through it, in the hope of

C6 meeting

1 meeting some friendly cottage ; we were for- tunate to our wishes, and by the inhabitants of that cottage we were conducted to this caslle."

She then proceeded to relate the conver- sation she had heard, relative to its being haunted, with her terror of the JOG

2 ar tment in the castle.

6. 1 hope, madam, (added Matilda) the re- lation I have given, tough tedious and little interefting to you, will apologize for my ab- rupt intrusion here." © Dearest madam, (answered the Lady of the Castle) can you think it pofsible I fhould be uninterested for a situation like yours? Young, new to the world, with uncommon attractions, without $1ends or prote ctors, surely misfortunes have taken an early hold in your deftiny ; but do not despair, my good young lady, Providence never forsakes the virtuous, but in its own good time will relieve us from every difficulty; an

CASTLE OF WOLFEN BACH. 37

an assurance of that truth has supported me under the bitterest calamities, and

though Iam at present dead to the world, I flatter myself I may be of some service to you, but do not

think of quitting this castle yet; happy should _

I think myself if I could enjoy your society always, but 'tis a selfish with and shall not be indulged, however our confidence ought to be reciprocal, and you shall know, in part, the _ peculiar distresses which have driven me to this asylum, though my confidence must be limit- ed from restrictions Idare not break through." 4 fear, madam, (answered Matilda) how- ever eager my curiosity and anxiety may be _ awakened by your uncommon fituation, I must for the present postpone the gratifica- tion of it; my long absence will, I am sure, cause much trouble to my hospitable enter- tainers, and therefore tis time I should re- turn." « Well then, (faid the lady) when may I hope to see you again?" © After dinner, madam, I will attend you." « 1 shall think every minute an hour till then, (re- plied the lady," They parted with mutual , . tegret.

38 : CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

regret. Matilda carefully shut the doors, ad returned to Bertha's apartments, with a lighter heart and a dawn of *

On her entrance into the kitchen the good creature clasped her hands and shouted for joy; © O good God be thanked, (said she) that I see you once again; my dear lady, where have you been and what have you seen?" ©« An excellent library of books, {replied Matilda.) " And did you fee no ghosts, nor hear no noises?" © I saw no | ghosts, but I certainly did hear noises." Lord have mercy upon us! and fo, had you courage to stay?" © Yes, I stayed to view the apartments, but I was a little fright- ed, I must confess." *© O, * heart, but 1 hope you won't go again." © Indeed I shall, (said Matilda) I intend to fit there very often, and shall borrow some books to bring home with me." O, madam, don't be so hardy, who knows what mischief may come of it one day," I have no fears, good Bertha; if we perform our duties towards God

and man,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 39 man, Providence will always preserve us from evil.“ © Ah! Lord, madam, you talk so good ; I am fure I never did hurt to any body, nor Joseph neither, and when no company comes here we be as quiet as lambs, and yet methinks 1 do with for folks sometimes, be- cause you know tis very lonely but will you have your bed made below stairs to night?“

« No, (replied Matilda) I will sleep in the | fame room, I have no apprehensions at all now.“ Bertha wondered at the lady” ene,

: but said nothing.

Albert had before this requested to leep below, for as they were ghosts of quality, who never condefcended to visit kitchens, he

thought himself perfectly safe, on the n - floor.

When an was over, Matilda faid she | should go to the library and fetch some books. Bertha looked quite woe begone, but was fi- | lent: not fo Albert, who had been informed of the perilous adventure his young mistress 5 rd N

had undergone inthe morning; he besought her, with tears in his eyes, not to trust herself again

in the haunted rooms. © If any harm betides you, madam, I shall be a poor miserable fel-

low for the short remnantof my days.” © Be

not uneasy, my friend Albert, no ghosts can hurt me; tis the living only 1 fear, not the

. dead]; assure yourself I shall return in perfect safety. „

Saying this she went up stairs, leaving Ber-

tha and Albert under great consternation. « Well, the Lord love her, (said the former) | the must be a pure good creature to have so

much courage—I hope no harm will come

on't.“ © I hope fo too, (cried Albert, wip- ing his eyes.) She is the best sweerest tempered young lady that ever lived; —ah! I little 1 to have seen such a day as this for her.“

Whilst these two worthy creatures were

| expatiating upon her praise, Matilda pursued ber voy to the LF. of the Caltle, who was ex-

Fecting

casrTE OF WOLFENBACH. 47

pecking her with impatience, and FORTY em- braced her upon her entrance. How mortifying the reflection, (sail the lady, lead- ing her visitant to a chair) that the unexpect- ed happiness I enjoy must be purchased fo dearly as by your peace of mind; what de- light should I feel in your society, if distress and misfortune had not driven you here!“ e Believe me, madam, (answered Matilda) your presence and conversation has greatly alleviated those sorrows which oppress my heart; and if my company shuuld be produ- tive of pleasure to you, I shall feel much less regret for the causes which compelled me to seek this castle as an asylum for an unhappy orphan, though but a temporary one only.” « Ah! my dear young lady (replied the other) you are but young in the school of affliction ; you can look forward with hope, you can feel only for yourself, and, God for- bid, you should ever know the sorrows of a wise and mother, who knows not but that she is childless and cut off for ever from those en- dcaring nes.” «© ©, mam, (cred | Matil- da,

da, interrupting her) forgive me that I have

revived such terrible images to your mind;

let not my curiosity occasion such painful ideas, at least we will enjoy the present hour

with mutual satisfaction, and defer your pain- ful recital 'till another day.” Charming girl, (said the lady) I accept the delay you of- | fer me, and am happy that I can affure you of an asylum whenever you grow tired of this _ castle. I have a sister in France, married to the Marquis de Melfort, she is one of the best of women; fir is no stranger to my situation and has repeatedly wished me to come into the world and reside with her, but I have power- ful reasons for refusing, though she is the uieearest friend I have on earth, and I am cer- tain will rejoice to offer you an accommoda- tion in her house, and a place in her heart, as | she has no children to engage her attention.“

Matilda made the warmest acknowledgements for this kind offer, but said, unaccustomed as she was to the busy world, she was apprehen- five Paris would be the last place she ought to reside in, particularly as her uncle might go there,

there, having property and friends in that city, and she might run the hazard of being discovered.

Whilst she was speaking the lady's atten- dant entered with a letter, Joseph has just brought this, my lady.” © Joseph ! (repeated Matilda, involuntarily.) „ Yes, (faid the lady, smiling) your friend Joseph is my friend also; this letter is from my sister - but bid our old friend step in.” Jofeph entered, but | started back with surprise when he beheld Matilda seated quietly in the room, “ Good Lord! (cried he) how came young madam here?” „ This lady's courage, you fee, has penetrated through our secret, and now we

have no occasion for any reserve before her, she will as carefully guard it from your.wife as | you do." „ Lord! I am sure (answered Joseph) it goes to my heart to keep any thing from poor Bertha, she is such a good creature, but women's tongues will blab sometimes, to be sure, and as I have sworn to your ladyship, God forbid 1 should break my oath, though CE often

often and often I have longed to tell my wife. « However, Joseph (said the lady, gravely} I depend upon your honesty and oath." * You have nothing to fear, my lady, eighteen

years practice has learnt me to hold my

tongue ; have you any further commands?" The lady replying 1 in the negative, he made

his bow and retired,

N That man is a faithful good creature, *

owe my life to him; I know nothing of his

wife, though I am told she is a worthy wo- man; but as a secret should never, if possible, be trusted to chance or accident, I made him swear not to reveal mine, without permission from me." Matilda exprest her satisfaction that the lady had such a faithful servant, and

taking a book from the table, requested sne

would open her letter.

This being complied with, she presently

_ exclaimed, « Alas! my brother and sister are going within a month to England, per- haps to stay lome time ; yet why should I

grie ve

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH, 45 | grieve at that, they cannot come to me." Then reading on, she again cried out, My dear Mifs Weimer, if you will accept of my

sister's protection, it is now at your service: hear what she says, after expressing her regret that I cannot be of her party, I wish I could meet with some amiable female com- panion, to take the tour of England with me, there are so few of one's acquaintance that are desirable as intimate friends, that nothing can be more difficult than to obtain such a one as I am anxious to have: young ones we cannot meet with, and I cannot bear the idea of being plagued with the ridiculous fopperies of an old coquet; for I am not yet fo much of a French woman as to think there is no difference in ages, and that a fine dressed and high coloured lady, though near to her grand climacteric, shall be indulged in all che expec- tations of youth and beauty.

2 Now, my dear Mig, you are exactly the lady that will suit my sister; it is not proper, at your age, that you should be buried here, bother

46 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

_ otherwise it would be the greatest felicity in

the world for me to enjoy your conversation." I certainly, madam, (answered Matilda)

| should think myself most fortunate in attend-

ing the Marchioness, but indeed my finances

are so slender, and the necessaries I have are fo trifling that I am unable to take a journey of consequence. When I left my uncle's house I was fo entirely ignorant of travelling

expences, that I conceived I had plenty of money to last a considerable time, but I find myself much mistaken; my little stock is con-

siderably diminished, and I must try, by my | industry, soon to support poor Albert as well as myself." © I am happy, (returned the lady) that I can obviate some of your objec- tions. I have a large store of linen I never can wear in this place; I have a good deal of money by me, for I do not spend half the in- come allowed me; you

must—you shall do me the favour to accept my little assistance, as from a mother to her child, I will not be denied.” © Your goodness, madam, (said

Matilda) overpowers me, but, alas! poor

CASTLE OF WoL FEN BAH. 47

Albert, I cannot forsake him.“ „Nor shall you, my dear young lady; a faithful servant like him is an acquisition to any family: my

sister, I am persuaded, will rejoice to receive

him; tell me, therefore, you accept of my proposal, and I will write instantly: we shall

then know when it will be absolutely neces- fary you should join her, that I may not be

too soon deprived of the pleafure I now en-

joy. I shall leave it to yourself to acquaint _ her, or not, as you please, with your story, tis sufficient I recommend you as a friend of mine.“ Matilda could form no objection to

this kind offer in her desperate circum-

stances ; and whilst she amused herself with a book, the lady wrote her letter, and having

read it previous to its delivery to Joseph, her

Young friend exprest her warmest acknow-

ledgments for the favourable mannerin which

the was mentioned in it. This business set-

tled, the lady took her into the next apart- ment, the windows of which were also closed. « This room (said the) opens into the garden,

where I walk occasionally of an evening,

when

6. ' CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

when not liable ro observation. In these

drawers, my dear Miss, there are plenty of

necessaries, all at your service ; to-morrow we will examine them.“ „I cannot find lan-

guage, madam, to express my gratitude.“

Do not attempt it, be assured your accept-

tance of my little assistance is a sufficient re- turn for what you consider as an obligation. But pray tell me how you came to venture

visiting these apartments, which are generally

believed to be haunted?” As I never had my mind occupied by any ideas of ghosts, (an- swered Matilda) and could not conceive any actions of my life had subjected me to the terror of supernatural visitations, I believed there must be some other cause for the ap-

pearance of lights which I traced in the win-

dows above, and for the noise 1 heard in the night, though I confess the latter did territy me; I resolved therefore to visit these rooms,

although I was told in one of them there

was blood on rhe floor and horrid inscriptions. on the windows.” Tour information was due, (answered the lady, with a figh she.

could

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 49

could not suppress) it is the room above which answers the description you have

heard; another day, when TI have related my melancholy story, you shall see it. I am

much pleased with your courage, which pro-

ceeded from a right principle : when the

mind is conscious of no evil actions, nor any deviations from rectitude, there is no cause for fear or apprehensions in a thinking sensible

_ person, and I hope, my dear Miss Weimar, you will never want resolution on similar oc- casions; judge always for yourself, and never be guided by the opinions of weak minds." Tou are very good, madam, (replied Ma-

tilda) in favouring me with your approbation;

I shall think myself particularly fortunate if you will condescend to instruct me, for it is

with shame I confess, more attention has been

paid to external accomplishments than to the cultivation of my mind, or any information

respecting those principles of virtue a young

woman ought early to be acquainted with." © You are truly good and amiable, (said the lady ;) born with sentiments of virtue, and

30 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. -

natural understanding pointed out the right path to happiness, pursue it through life, ever remember it 1s better to suffer from the follies

or vices of others than to feel self-condemna-

tion from a sense of your own: the one, time and patience may subdue, or at least blunt the

sharpedge that wounds you; but, for the other

there is no consolation, self-reproach admits

no healing balm, that can enable us to stem

the torrent of oppression, or the evils which arise from our own misconduct. You will

= pardon the freedom you have invited, my good i young lady 3 when you know my story 5

you will find J am qualified to speak on the subject from very painful lessons, which I pray

heaven you may ever be a stranger to." She now took her hand and led her to the other

room, where refreshments and pleasing con-

versation made the two hours Matilda passed

there the most pleasing she had ever known.

When she took leave they parted with regret,

and proposed meeting at an early hour the

following day; when the lady promifed to relate the events that had compelled her to a „„ „„ seclusion

CASTLE OF wor FEN BACH. 51

seclusion from the world, and the motives which induced her to alarm every stranger that came to the Castle.

Matilda stept into the library, and selecting two or three books, returned to her friendly hostess, whose surprise and pleasure seemed equally gratified by seeing her in safety. Jo- seph came in soon after; he looked with in-

creased respect and kindness, but was entirely silent as to their meeting in the lady's apart- ment.

W * the hour of retiring came, Matilda repaired to her room with great cheerfulness, and when Albert, with tears, entreated her to sleep below, she replied, « You may, my good Albert, if you chuse ; but I shall sleep perfectly quiet above stairs ; be

under no ap- prehensions for me (added she, smiling) I am no longer a stranger, and have not the small- est apprehensions of being molested this night. She took up her candle and left them, % ond wn,

5 oY cc Well,

Well, (cried Bertha) the Lord be good

unto her, for sure she is the best and most |

courageous lady Jever saw i in my life; I be- lieve 1t would kill me if any harm was to hap- pen to such a sweet creature,”

All now retited to rest, and Albert thought himself quite safe on the Pom: floor from the — ghosts.

In the morning they met with great satis- faction; every one eagerly demanded of Ma- tilda if she had slept undisturbed ; she afsured them she had, and was greatly refreshed. This account pleased them all. Albert went out to assist Joseph in the garden; and his mistress was preparing to visit her friend, when Jaqueline made her appearance from the kitchen with Bertha. Matilda was ex- tremely glad to see the good woman, en-

quired after Pierre, and thanked her for the *

good accommodations she had procured for her in the Castle. Dear me, (aid Jaque- ”

„F

CASTLE OF WorrENBAc hl. 53 line) you cannot think how glad I am to see you, my lady; I was a-coming yesterday, but I was busy washing, and, Lord help me, this morning before day I was a-frightened out of my wits, for I heard some horses galloping by the door, and I thought I heard this lady

screaming most piteously; fo, says I, dear

heart, Pierre, I am afraid some mischief has

happened to young madam, fo I'll be fure to go to the Castle when I have hung out

my clothes; fo Pierre he went to fell wood, and

I made all haste here, and glad to > my heart | oe am to lee you all sase. 85 5 88 5

Matilda thanked the friendly woman for her attention, and after a little chat left the two gossips together, and hastened to the lady, telling them she was going to fit in the li- brary. She crofsed the apartment and de- scended the stairs, saw the lady's room open, and walked in; no one was there, but a great appearance of disorder in the room, one of the stools thrown down, a candle on the floor, | another burning on the table, and several

23 . things

things scattered about : she was surprised — she knocked, she called, she had no answer. Terrified beyond expression, she ventured in- to the other room, where the bed was; it was empty, but had the appearance of being laid on; a little cabinet, which stood on the draw- ers, was open and emptied of its contents. She returned; she went through the several rooms that were open, all were desolate; she once more went back to the ground floor. The candle was nearly extinguished, she took, up and lighted the other, and, on looking round, she saw the door that opened from the bed room into the garden was a jar, and on trial it opened; she then readily conceived the lady must have been carried away through

the garden, but by whom it was impossible

to guess; robbers would never have incom- moded themselves with females. She came in and was about to shut the garden door, when she thought the sound of footsteps reached her ears—she trembled and stopt, presently a door, the opposite side of the bed, opened, and oseph pred: she was over»

CASTLE OF wol FEN BACH. 55

joyed—he looked surprised ; « O, Joseph, (cried she) what is become of your lady?“ Astonished at the question, the poor fellow repeated her words, and added, «© Good Lord, madam, has not your ladyship seen her ?” « No, (replied she ;) I have searched

every room in vain, and found this garden door open." „O, she is carried off then (cried

hae) and we are all undone—O, my dear, dear

lady, you are betrayed at last." Tears burst from his aged eyes; Matilda sunk into a chair, overcome with sorrow, © But, (said the, when able to speak) how could any one enter, there is no door forced?" © Yes, madam, there is, (answered Joseph) 1 found the kitchen door burst off its hinges, and

came in trembling for fear of what had hap-

pened." From whence could any one come into the kitchen?" © Why, madam, there is a private passage underground, from the garden to the under apartments, which is unknown to every body, as I thought, but to the lady and myself; but it must be discover- ed by somebody, and we are all undone.

D 4 Haste n,

Jon

36 CASTLE OT WOLFENBACH, ' *

Hasten, madam, out of this place, 1 will fasten up the doors and follow you." © Joseph (said Matilda) can you meet me in the garden by and bye, I wish to speak with will wait upon your ladyship; I will look about a little, I think no one will come here

in the open day." Matilda retired, with trembling limbs and a beating heart, to her own apartment; here she ruminated on what had happened to her friend so recently gain- ed, and fo irrecoverably lost Alas! poor lady (faid she) who knows what evils she may have to encounter with; astranger as I am to her story, I have no clue to guide me who may have carried her off, or by whom the cruel action was committed; doubtless it must have been her cries that alarmed Jaque- line—What will become of me? How are all my flattering prospects vanished ?" With

_ these bitter reflections she passed the hours

till dinner time came; she then went down, but with a countenance so altered, that hertha started back and cried out, © O, for a cer-

c Directly after dinner, madam, 1

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 57.

a certain young madam has seen something and been frightened !" Albert looked with anxious curiosity, „Be not uneasy, my

good friends, (said she ;) 1 assure you neither.

| ghosts nor noises have terrified me, but I am not very well; after dinner perhaps I may be | better." © Heaven sendit" (cried Bertha.) Albert joined in the wish ; and Matilda, af fected by their kindness, went into the par- lour, where her dinner was served up, not in

state or profusion indeed, but good wild

fowls, eggs, sallads, and fruit. She waited impatiently until she thought Joseph had nearly dined, and then walked towards the. garden; in a little time Joseph joined her, and walking before, conducted her to a distant part of it, where a small arbour i in a shrub- bery appeared almost choaked with weeds; he led her into it, she fat down" Now, Joseph, for heaven's sake, tell me every thing about the dear lady." That I cannot do, (replied Joseph, shaking his head ;) my oath | will not permit me; but underneath this stone. (aid he, stamping his foot) is an underground = * | Passage,

58 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

passage, one end of which goes to that part of the castle, and opens into a private place behind the kitchen; the other end goes through to the end ot the wood, I believe, for I never had courage to go lo far on, but this morning, when I went down the passage, and came round, I found both doors forced off their hinges below, and was much afraid to come up, where I found you, madam : who it is that has been so wicked, I can only guess, and Lord have mercy on the poor lady, I tear

no good will come to her.” © But how

come the garden door open; could thev con- vey her through that into the road ?” „ Yes,

(replied Joseph) that was the way, for after you went up stairs I went into the garden, and the great gate, at the end, was unbolted just at the end of the wood, and I do suppose they

5 had horses waiting there, or a carriage. The

few jewels my poor lady had is taken from her little chest, but there are no locks broke on the drawers, and her pockets are left behind, on a stool, with every thing in them ; 'twas no robbers, my lady, I fear.” *« fear so Sy ED __ too

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 59

[too, (answered Matilda, with a deep sigh;) I | dread that she is fallen into worse hands—” ec Into worse than I fear has got her, (faid Joseph) she cannot be fallen Lord how I rejoiced she had got your ladyship with her.” cc Aye, Joseph (resumed Matilda) I grieve for her and feel my own loss ;—Do you know her sister the Marchioness? „ I saw her once after my lady was married; they fay she is very happy—God help us, 'twas n't so | here.” „ Your lady has wrote to the Mar- chioness relative to me; did not you take a letter yesterday ?” © Yes, my lady, and if there be any answer to it I shall be sure to have it, and you may open it, you know, be- cause the good lady never wrote to any one _ else.” Poor Matilda knew not what to do; she was desirous of staying 'til] this answer arrived. She was anxious to explore those apartments that were locked, and after some hesitation asked Joseph if he would meet her there, to-morrow morning. Aye, sure, that I will (returned he) and as I left the lamps . in the passage, if you like, 1 D 6 -- — —_

will go down this way with you now.” (No, (faid she) not now; I will meet you to-mor-

cow in the library, and we may return this

way, for I own should like to see it, though tis plain the passage must be known." FE

They now separated, and Matilda found no possibility of gratifying her curiosity, Joseph's

doath being against her, and she too much re-

spected her friend to urge a violation of 1 it on any grounds.

She returned to her apartment and amused | herself for a sliort time with a book; but the agitation of her mind would not admit of entertainment; she threw it aside and called for Albert; he instantly attended her. My good friend, (faid she) I propose remaining | here a week or ten days, perhaps not so long, to refresh myself ; how far are we from Zurich?" © About a 7 and a half's x journey, not much more." © Well then, Albert, we will wait a few days until I am more in health, unless you are very anxious to

get

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 61

get there." „ Me, my dear young lady, Lord bless you, 1 want to go only on your account, its all one to me where I am, if you are safe." Matilda was pleased at his answer and

exprest her gratitude for his kindness in such terms as brought tears into his eyes. * God bless you, madam, I'll go with you all the world over." He bowed and retired. © Good

creature (exclaimed Matilda) heaven has

blest you with an honest feeling heart; how much superior are thy sentiments to those of better understanding and cultivated talents, when tbeir minds are depraved by the indul- gence of nt passions!"

She sought to compose her spirits, and wait with patience for the expected letter, which sne thought must determine her future destiny. She had recommended to

Albert not to stir from the house, lest he might be seen by any one that knew him in passing the road, which caution she observed herself.

The following morning after breakfast she

repaired to the library; ah! thought she, what transport, if I should find the dear lady

returned! but no such happiness awaited her; she entered the apartments with a beating

heart, and remained near ten minutes in the

library before Joseph made his appearance.

« Well, Joseph, (faid she, hastily, on his en-

tering the room) how are things below stairs?" „ All the fame as they were yester-

day, madam ; the doors were fast, and every thing as | left them." © have a very great desire, (said she) to fee that room where the

inscriptions are, and which I find is locked up, can you open it?" „ es, I can; the | key is below, but if I may en my mind, 1 think you had better not go." © Why so, | (demanded she.) © Why, because, to my

thinking, its a dismal] place, and will put me in mind of 12d doings." © You make me

more curious - pray indulge me, Joseph * | « Well, madam, I'll go with you, but 'tis

fore against my mind." He went down, and | soon returned with two keys, but with evident reluctance

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 63

reluctance in his countenance ; © I believe

one of these is the key (said he ;) there use 1 | to hang three upon the peg, the other is gone,

or left in the closet door perhaps yet: I don't think my lady ever came up to open

these

rooms." Whilst he was talking he was try- ing the keys; neither of them would open the first door, the second he unlocked pre-

sently ; they entered; it was a dressing room, handsomely farnished ; they tried the door which opened into the other room, it was

fastened on the inside. © This is very strange, (faid Joseph ;) I will go down again and see if I can find the other key, if you are

not afraid to stay alone." © Not in the

leaft," (faid Matilda, who was examining

the room very carefully.) The win- dows were very high and grated with bars of iron, the hangings were dark green damask, every thing was handsome, yet the grated windows made it appear gloomy.

Joseph now returned with a countenance of

horror anddismay—* O, my lady, Ican find no z 3 | | | ©

64 CASTLE OF wol rEN BACH.

key, but looking about the kitchen, behind the- door I found a large knife, all over blood." „ Gracious heaven! (cried Matilda) what is it you tell me; I tremble with apprehension ; let us force that door, at all events."

1 intend it, (answered Joseph) and have

brought a bar with me for the purpose." The door in the dressing- room being the llightest, after a good deal of labour, the old man burst it open. What a scene presented itself ! a woman on the bed weltring in blood! Both uttered a cry of horror, and ran to the | bed; it was the elderly attendant of the lady

85 4 dead. by a wound in her throat.

The fight was too much for poor Matilda, she sunk fainting into a chair: Joseph was |

frightened out of his wits; he flew down as fast as possible, and returned with water, he bathed her face and hands, and she re-

vived.

0, Joseph! (cried she) the lady—the dear lady ! what is become of her in such e deln

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 65

bloody hands?“ © The Lord only knows, | (answered he, looking with terror towards the closet.) Directed by his eye, Matilda arose and walked to the door; the key was in it; she unlocked it, and was about to enter, when casting her eyes on the floor, she saw it was all over stained with blood, dried into the floor she started, and involuntarily retreat- ed, but Joseph, who had looked round, said, « You may enter, madam, nothing is here.” With trembling steps she entered the closet, her heart beating with terror; it was a large light closet, with a very high window, grated like the other, hung with dark green stuff; two stools covered with the fame, and a large wardrobe in it. On the floor was plainly mark d the shape of a hand and fingers traced in blood, which seemed to have flowed in great quantities. Good heavens ! (cried she) some person was doubtless murdered here too.” © Intended to have been murdered, (answered Joseph, wiping his eyes) © but thank God she escaped then.” He faid no more. Matilda, extremely terrified, hastened Our

out of the closet, when the poor creature on

the bed met her eyes, O, Joseph! (ex-

claimed she, turning with horror from the

scene) what is to be done with this unfortu-

nate woman ?” © Dear, my lady, I can't

tell; I have neither strength to dig a grave, nor can I carry her down.” © It is plain,

| (faid Matilda) the wretches who have carried off the lady, murdered the servant to prevent discovery.” © I fear, (cried Joseph) my turn will be next my mouth will be

stopt from the same fear.” God forbid, (said | Matilda;) but as I have now no hopes of finding the lady, and it will be dangerous to entrust another person with the secret, 1 think, Joseph, if we can find a small trunk or _ chest, to fill it with the linen and necessaries

your lady offered me, and convey it to one

of the rooms in the other wing; I will write

a line and lave on the table: yet, on second

_ thought, it will be useless, should she escape,

| she can never think of coming here again: we will therefore lock and bolt up every door; you can take the keys of the places be-

low

| CASTLE or WOLFENBACH 67 low to your own kitchen, and now and then come through the passage to see if all is safe.” Poor Joseph, with a heavy heart, agreed to

They had now stayed some time, and thought it best to separate and meet again after dinner : they gladly left these horrid rooms, and returned by different ways to their own | habitation. |

When Matilda came to her apartment, the terror of her mind was unspeakable; all she

| had seen, all she had heard crowded upon her

remembrance, and gave her the most horrible ideas. She could not think Joseph's fears un- reasonable : if he was supposed to be in the secret, his life was not safe, and in his fate the whole family might be involved: What can

. I—what ought I to do? (cried she, shedding a a torrent of tears) no friend to advise me, no certainty of a place to receive me, if I go from hence, and a probability, that, if I stay,

I may be murdered ; —what a dreadful alter. -

native

native is mine!“ After giving free vent to

her tears, she endeavoured to compose her mind, by addressing the Almighty Power to protect her.

Sweet are the consolations which religion

_ affords ! In all our difficulties and distresses,

when supplicating the Supreme Being with

fervor and a perfect reliance on his goodness,

we feel a refignation and confidence, that en-

able us to support present evils, and look for- ward with hope to happier days. Such were

the feelings of Matilda: she rose from her

knees with serenity ; she recovered resolu-

tion and firmness ; © I will not despair, (faid

1 sne) the Almighty will preserve a friendless

orphan, unconscious of guilt, that relies on his

protection. She dried up her tears, and met

the family as usual.

When dinner was over, she returned to the

library ; Joseph soon joined her; they went down to the deserted parlour, Matilda could not help shuddering : Joleph found a trunk,

the

CASTLE OF WOLFEN BACH. 1

the drawers were opened, and she took out such necessaries of every kind as she thought she must want, yet left plenty behind. In one drawer the found a purse, with

a good deal of money in it; here she hesitated ; the lady had told her she would supply her, yet she knew not to what amount: Joseph per- suaded her to take the whole, © Be assured, | madam, my dear lady will never return, cried | he. After much hesitation and reluctance, she at length divided it, and then taking a pen and ink, she took an inventory of the clothes and money, with an acknowledgement to re-

pay it when able, and locked it in the drawer with the purse.

Having packed up those few things she had selected, and requested Joseph would take it, by and bye, to a room near hers, she said, «]

cannot be easy under the idea, that the poor woman above should lie there to decay; is there no way to place her in a decent manner? Afer some pause Joseph said, ” there 1 is a large chest in the back- -

kitchen, | 3

kitchen, with old trumpery in it, if I take

them out, perhaps we might get the body there, but I fear I have not strength to bring it down.” © Let us see the chest first, (re-

| plied Matilda) and then we will consider of

the other.” She followed him into the back- kitchen, saw the chest, and its contents were soon tumbled into one corner. Now, Jo- seph (faid she) I will assist you to bring the

body down.” © You, my lady!“ (cried he,

staring at her.) « Yes, (rejoined she ;) let us go up.” She led the way and he follow-

ed; having unlocked and entered the room

she could not help shuddering; yet took more observation of the gloomy apartment

than she had been enabled to do in the morn- |

ing; and recollecting what she had heard

about inscriptions ; she got upon a chair, and from thence to a kind of window seat very

high from the ground : standing on this she examined the window ; it looked out towards

a sort of battlement, which surrounded the back part of the castle, the north wind blew full upon it, the only prospects were the

walls

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 1

walls and distant mountains. On the win- dow she saw several lines apparently cut with a diamond; in one place she read,

] am dumb, as folemn sorrow ought to be;

« Could my griefs speak, my tale I'd tell to thee.”

In another place these lines were written; 855 A wife, a mother ret endearing ties !

«© Torn from my arms, and heedless of my cries ;

* Here 1 am doomed to waste my wretched life,

Nu more a mother—a discarded wife,” And again, in another place,

« Would you be happy, fly this hated room, For here the lost Victoria meets her doom, |

O (ect oblivion calm my tortur'.l mind,

e To grief, to sorrow, to despair consigned.

« Let gentle fleep my heavy eye- lids close, Or friendly death, the cure for ail our woes,

„By one kind stroke, give latting sure repose. , | Several

72 CASTLE OF WOLFEN BACH.

Several other lines, expressive of misery,

though not of poetical talents, were written

in different places, that proved the unhappy

writer sought to amuse her painful ideas by her melancholy employment.

Poor Matilda, conclated the wretched victim to some merciless man was sacrificed in that closet where the hand was deeply im- printed in blood on the floor ; she viewed it with horror, and getting down from the win- dow; as Joseph had wrapt the body in the counterpane which lay on one side; he tried

to lift it, and found the weight less than he

5 expected, ce 1 can carry it ney if my lady," ,

and crept out of the room with it. Matilda, shutting the door hastily, followed him. They deposited the unfortunate woman in the chest, which was fastened down, and

without speaking a single word returned to the _ parlour : here Matilda burst into tears, her resolution and spirits began to fail; the scenes she had witnessed, added to her own dis- | tresses, were indeed sufficient to wound and

terrisy

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 73

terrify a stouter heart than this young crea- ture's; little acquainted with the calamities of life, she had flown from approaching dan- ger, Without the least idea of the miseries she might encounter in her journey ! Joseph sympathized in her sorrow, and waited with- out speaking till she grew more composed ; « Come, dear lady, let us leave this forrow-

ul place; I will take some oil and trim the

lamps, for I shall come here every day, though, God knows, with very little hops: of ever seeing my dear mistress again." Ma- tilda, opprest and languid, rose Gees her chair; he followed her with the box to the apartment next her's, and having deposited it, returned to lock up the doors and trim the lamps in the passage, assuring her he

would call daily at the post to seek for letters, as all came directed to him.

She threw herself on the bed after his de- parture, and gave her mind up to the most melancholy reflections; © Good heavens!

(cried she) what scenes of murder and atroci- VOL. 1. T ous

ous crimes mult have been perpetrated in this castle ; how great is my curiosity to know more of the unhappy Victoria so recently the cause of joy and sorrow, and her un- fortunate attendant, but their fate is en- veloped in mystery and horror, what mine may be, heaven only knows.” —

Whenitgrew near dark she went up stairs, but so altered by the agitations of her mind, that Bertha scarted and exclaimed, “ Dear, my lady, are yeu ill.” ©« I am not very well, (replied Matiida;) I shall take an early sup- per, and retire to bed.” The poor women, with great nimbleness prepared her supper, of which her guest eat but sparingly, and after

sending for Albert, who appeared very sorrow- ful for her indisposition; she comforted him

by an asturance of its being very trifling, and that she should be better aster a night's rest; which was indeed verified; for having com- ' mended herself to the protection of the Fa- ther to the fatherless, she droped into a

folk

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 75

soft lumber, and arose the tollowing morning

quite resresned and composed. |

For several days nothing particular occur-

red; her friends at the cottage called often

to see her; Joseph visited the deserted apart-

ments every day, all remained quiet; the uncertainty of the lady's fate gave them great disquietude, but there was no hope of

obtaining any information of an event which seemed buried in obscurity.

One day when Joseph returned from town,

he whispered the lady to go into the garden;

she walked chither it directly, he soon follow-

ed, and delivered to her the expected letter

from the Marchioness ; sne made no scruple of opening it. After lamenting the unhappy

situation of her sister, and expressing her withes that she would quit ker gloomy abode,

she thanks her most cordiaily for her recom-

mendation of the young l:dy, whose com- pany will be higity acceptable to her, and as- sures her lilecr she will encavour, by every

T2: kind-

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kindness and attention in her power, to make

the young lady's situation agreeable, and shall _ esteem her acceptance of their protection as a

very particular favor. She admires her reso- lution in visiting the apartments 1n the castle,

andi is only sorry her sister cannot participate

in the pleasures of society. She concludes

with requesting the young lady may join them at Paris, soon as possible, within a fortnight ; and assure herself that her old and faithful ser- vant will be received and

retained in the family with kindness and ease to himself,

This letter, so gratifying to the wishes of

Matilda, was read with transport ; she deter- | mined to set forwards on her Journey within two or three days. Joseph undertook to pro- cure her a carriage from the next town, and

she intended leaving the horse for his use, and take Albert in the chaise with her. The

next consideration was in what manner to ac-

count to the latter for her sudden intention

of going to Paris, and his reception in the fa- mily of the Marquis: after some deliberation,

she

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she returned to the kitchen, and calling Al- bert aside, told him, by the most fortunate and unexpected intelligence she had heard of an asylum for herself and him, at Paris, in the | house of a worthy family, where she hoped they should both meet rest and happiness ; and that it was her design to proceed on her journey the third day from that. Albert stared with wonder, but never interrupted her till she stopt speaking, then, in a hesitat- ing manner, Paris is a long journey—1 have no friends there; are you sure, madam ?" « Yes, Albert, (said she) I am very sure we shall find friends there to receive us; I cannot explain every thing to you now, some time hence perhaps you shall be informed of every thing." © God bless you, my dear young lady! (cried he) if you are satisfied I am sure I ought to be so, and will go with you when and wherever you please." She was affected by his love and confidence; she assured him, she never should forget the obli- gations she owed to him, and that his ease and py would ever be her first care. The — 3 - old

78 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.,

old man hurried from her with tears in his eyes. Bertha wes next informed of her intended departure, and was truly sorry, be-

cause, as she skid, *rwas con fortable to have some kind body in that lonely place, and be-

cause the lady having plenty ct money, they had very good living now, which, to say truth, she was sorry to lose.

The day previous to her departure she sent

for Pierre and Jaqueline : the honest couple |

were vexed to hear she'was about to leave them. She gave them some money, and assured both

families, whenever she had it in her power, she would remember their kindnefs, and re- ward it ina more ample manner than she now : could do. They bestowed a thousand bles-

sings cn her, and declared she had made them rich for life.

Aer they had left her Joseph acquainted Bertha, that a chaise would be there early the

next morning, and desired sne might have : breakfast ready for the lady.

Matilda

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Matilda had but little rest; her journey, the circumstance of such an awkward situation, as a self- introduction amongst entire strangers, to one so little accustomed to company as she was, gave her much pain; yet on the other hand, she ought to consider that in her uniriended, unprotected state, an 2Flum, such as was now offered to her, must be desirable andadvantageous ; and that as in this life we seldom meet with pleasure or happi- ness, without some alloy, she ought to be thank ful for

the good, and submit to tempo- rary inconveniences without murmuring. She arose early; her heart was depressed when she reflected on the uncertain fate of the lady to whose kindness she was indebted for her pre- sent hopes and expectations: Ah! (cried she) heaven bless you, dearest lady, wherever you are, and may Providence one day restore you to felicity and your friends." She quitted the apartment with a flood of tears, and, coming, found the breakfast ready, and soon after a chaise at the gate; Joseph con- veyed her portmantua and box to the car- TE 74

$0 --. CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

riage ; Albert stared a little at the latter, but said nothing.

She shook hands with the worthy couple, tears running down their cheeks at parting with so gentle a lady, she having liberally re- warded their kindness, and previously concert- ed a correspondence with Joseph, if any thing new occurred at the castle, and receiving ad- vice from him how to manage at the post- houses about carriages and horscs.

A few days after her departure, Joseph

vent to the neighbouring town, to procure a a

went upon the horse, instead of his old friend

the ass. Whilst he was there, a gentleman came up to him, and, viewing the beast very attentively, asked him if the horse was his. Joseph answered in the affirmative. © Will

you sell it?" (demanded he.) © No, Sir,

(replied the other) I cannot sell it." Ho] long have you had it?" * Some time, (said

J oscph, roughly, and rode off, not liking the _ Ranger 8

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firanger s curiosity.) He was however fol- lowed at a distance, and had scarcely put the | horse into the stable, and entered the kitchen, before a knocking at the door was

heard, and Joseph saw the same gentleman who was so inquisitive, with another, who had the appear- ance of a servant, enter the room. © Do not be alarmed, (faid the stranger) I want to afle you a few questions, which, if you answer truly, no harm shall happen to you, else you must lock to the consequence ; tell me from whom. you had the horse I saw you ride, and how lng it has been in your possession ? At your peril answer me with truth." Before Joseph could recolle& himself to answer this demand Bertha fell on her knees, O, Sir, do not hurt my poor husband, and J will tell you all." « Be quiet, wife, (said Jaseph) I will. answer for myself, I had the horse from a

man, a friend of mine." © What was his

ame ?"" ©< So,] 3 think that is no concern of your's. „ Villain! (cried the gentleman) tell me this instant, or I will. send you and Four wife to N for the horse was E 8 = stolen

stolen from me. O, the Lord be gracious

unto us, (exclaimed Bertha) 'the man's name was Albert, Sir; we are innocent, indeed we

are." I believe it, (said the other, very

mildly ;) you look like an honest woman, and J will reward you handsomely, if you speak

truth. William, take care of the man, I

will go into another room with this good-

woman." Bertha!" (cried Joseph, the stranger led her away into the par-

lour, she crying and begging no harm might

happen to Joseph.) He quieted her fears on that head, and then asked if Albert was in the house. © No, indeed, Sir, (answered the;) he went away four days ago, in a chaise with the young lady." © Ah! (ered he)

that is the very thing I wished to know ; and where are they gone, my friend ” «KAlck, Sir, I believe they be gone to Parish, or some place like that.” © The devil! (exclaimed

he) to Paris. Well, and are they to retura

here?” © O, no, Sir, (returned Bertha;) no such good luck to us, for to be sure she was as generous as an empress.”

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le then returned to the kitchen, where Jo- seph sat very sullen; „I tell you what, friend, I believe you may be innocent ; but the lady you have had here is my niece, who has eloped from my care, and seduced my ser- vant to steal the horse you rode to day, and go off with her; I am now in search of her, and if I can find her, and she will return, I shall receive her with kindness and joy, and forgive every thing; therefore, if you can tell me where she is, you will do her a great piece of

service, I assure you; some wicked person has

persuaded her to run away.” © Sir, (faid Joseph, firmly) I heard the lady say she was going to travel, it was not my business to be impertinent and ask questions.” © But you | know where she is.” 1 do not, Sir, (an- fwered he) I cannot tell where she is, nor the places she is going to travel through.” Tou know she is gone to Paris?” © Yes, Sir; but I heard her fay she should not stay there, but travel further; and this is all 1 know. As to the horse, if you can prove it yours, give me a receipt, and you may take G 5

it.“ „No, my friend, (replied the gentle- man) keep it for your use, but if you should ever hear from, or see Albert or the lady, and will let me know, I will give you a hundred crowns.” O, the goodness (cried Bertha) | blefs your honour, you shall surely know.” «© What fay you,” (said he, turning to Jo- seph. I say, Sir, money would not tempt mee to do a wrong thing, but as you say it will be for the young lady's e to do her Toon I will obey you.” e

The genes and faiafied, 5

N writing his address, whilst he desired Joseph to get a little wine and water for him, he whispered Bertha, © Get every thing you can out of your husband, and I will make your fortune; my man shall call again to- morrow.

Having drank his wine, lie t ok a bi

leave, and, giving Bertha two cruwns, rode off, .

«Lord!

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« Lord! (cried she, when he was gone} what luck attends us! what a kind gentleman ; how sorry I am he didn't come before the poor lady went away.” So am not I (answered Joseph ;) I don't like him at all; he has a smooth speech to be sure, but if he was good, neither madam nor Albert would have run away I dare say: however I shan't ride the horse any more, 'till I know to whom be does belong.” Bertha tried every way to find if he knew where the lady was gone, but he evaded all her questions, and though he

loved his old woman dearly, yet he knew she

could not be entrusted with a secret ; not that | she would discover from ill-nature, but from a garrulity natural to old age, and a desire of _ obliging any one who wanted information:

from her.

Joseph, in the early part of his life, had obtained a tolerable education, and had better expectations, but the wars had. carried off his friends and little possessions ; he was glad therefore, in a humble ftate, to earn his bread,,

and: yy

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be contented with the situation Providence had ordained for him ; but his fentiments

were above his condition, and he prized his word, and kept it when pledged with much

more exactness than a fine gentleman does his

| honour, when given to a favourite lady, or a humble tradesman : Joseph therefore perse- vered in his integrity, but thought there would be no harm in writing what had passed |

that day to the young lady, and take her di-

rections how to conduct himself; for he had a perfect rehance on her truth, and thought

only ill treatment could have induced her to quit an uncle's house, without a friend to MP :

her.

The following day the gentleman's servant

made his appearance, but to little purpose, for though Joseph was in the garden, Bertha

had gained no information; but she told all she did know of the lady's coming there, the ghosts disturbing her the first night, her subse-

quent courage, her kindness and sudden reso- lution to leave them, and that she heard hes

lay

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say something about going to travel to Paris5, but she knew no more, and she was sure Joseph knew no more than sne how should he? he never spoke twenty words to the lady.” He asked who was the owner of the castle, she told his name, and with a present of another crown he took leave. Bertha looked at the money, «© Ah! (faid she) what a pity now I can't tell where she is; a hundred of these would make one

happy tor life.”

A very few days akier this, the old couple were at dinner, when they heard the trampling of horses; they haftily opened the door, and

| beheld, to their great astonishment, a carriage

with three attendants, and inthe carriage Joscph saw his master, Count Wolfenbach: struck with wonder, he forgot to tender his services, but stood staring at him until he alighted.

Being conducted into the parlour, one of the horsemen with him, © Friend Joseph (said

he) I have sold this estate, and next month

another family will take possession of it.“

We Good Lord! 5 Joseph) what will be-

come

come of me and Bertha? „ Don't be un- easy, friend Joseph, I shall take care of you; 1 have another estate in Suabia, a fine house and gardens, in perfect order; Bertha and you shall have the care of it, with a servant under her to keep it clean, and a man under you to work in the gardens—what say you to that? * I am much obliged to your Lordship (an- swered the honest man ;) 'tis rather late in life for me to travel, but I must obey your plea- sure, and if you have not already got a man and woman there, I know a very in- dustrious couple hard by, the only friends we have, who will be glad to go with us.” „By all means, (said the Count, eagerly) but pray are you pretty quiet now; do the ghosts trouble you, as has been foolishly talked of?“ A am seldom disturbed, my Lord, (answer- ed Joseph;) Inever saw nor heard any ghosts.” AI believe not, (said the Count;) the silly imagination of some people conjure up frightful fancies, and endeavor to impose them upon others as realities; but pray Joseph how soon can you leave this house? my man Peter 5 „ Will

CASTLE OF wol TEN BACH. 8

will go with you to the other; you will find a much better n and can take your friends with you." © In about a week, my Lord, I shall be dy: „Not fooner?" « I must speak to my friends; we must get our little domestic business put in order, and then we shall be fit ro go comfortably, though tis a long journey for old folks, my Lord." Nothing at all—nothing all, (faid his Lordship z) Peter will see you safe. We shall be with you next week—use all the dis- patch you can, for I have * to o make 5 in che house, before I give it up."

| The Count ad bis mounted their horses and rode off, leaving Joseph in great perplexity. Bertha, ignorant of the events which caused his uncasiness, was well | pleased to change her abode for a better one, and was in a violent hurry to call on Pierre and Jaqueline, but Joseph requested | she would wait another day, till he had con- | sidered the matter. He well knew, that if the Count visited the other wing, he must be sensible

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sensible that it had been lately inhabited. If

he was innocent of his conjectures, and uncon-

cerned in the late transactions, he would judge unfavourably of Joseph ; if, on the contrary, he had any hand in Corry ie cit the lady and _ murdering her atten. ant, the removal of the body would convince him some person must have been there; his suspicions would natu- rally fall on himself; and perhaps he might be facrificed also. These considerations greatly

distressed Joseph; every way he saw per-

plexity and vexation, and was afraid to throw himself into the Count's power, though he saw no chance of avoiding it. Ile had been every day to the other apartments, ex- cept the preceding one, and found every thing

tranquil ; but now that the Count was in the

neighbourhood, he was afraid to go : yet he thought the only way to avoid suspicion, or

impending evils, would be to panes the body

on the bed, at all events.

Endeavouring to derive courage from ne-

cessity, he trembling ventured to the private

pallage,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH 9I

passige, but, to his surprise and horror, the lamps were all extinguished ; he knew they must have been put out, otherwise they would have lasted that day; he therefore hastily turned back, and regained the house. Aster a little deliberation he went up the stair- case, and opening every apartment very softly till he came to the door which led to the gal- lery of the other wing, he found it fastened on the other side. This circumstance confirmed his fears: he listened some time, and plainly heard voices, but could distinguish nothing; he then retreated with the same care, locking up all the doors on the outside, for whether it was the Count and his servant, or a set of ban- ditti, he thought his situation l dan- * |

Poor Joseph could not communicate his fears to Bertha, and therefore his uneasiness

passed off for indisposition, but he had a lleepless night.

| The

The next morning he went to the post town, and, to his great joy, received a letter

from Matilda. She was safe at Paris; and

the Marquis and his Lady, under the greatest apprehensions for their sister ; convinced sne

would never return to the Castle, should she

be alive, and grateful to their old friend Jo- seph, offered him and his wife an asylum at

their house, thinking they might one day or : other be facrificed to the Count' s revenge.

Scareely had he read this letter, when he saw Peter, the Count's servant, coming to-

wards him; he had the paper still in his

hand, © So, Joseph, you have been at the poi, I see." © Yes, (answered he, with as | much ease as he could assume;) I hear nox

and then from a sister of mine, who is in ser-

vice at Paris: but is my Lord here in this, town, Peter?" „ Yes, (replied he) his Lordship is settling some business with his te- nants. " Well, (faid Joseph) next week we shall be ready to o, Peter, D well,

CASTLE oF WOLFENBACH, 93

well, (cried the _ with a smile) and they parted.

On Joseph's return to his house, he began to consider of his removal; he was sure he could not depend on the Count, but how to get away without his knowledge was the diffi- culty ; after much deliberation, he took his re- solution, and going to Bertha, told her the Lady Matilda was in Paris, and had sent for them to live with her. She was out of her

wits with Joy : « O, (cried she) that well be a thousand times better than living in the Count's house ; yes, yes, let's go, the sooner the better, say I." „ Bur, (said Joseph) you

must not say a word to the Count, or any

body, for the world." She promised secresy,

and they began to contrive about taking away their little matters, and setting off in a

day or

That night Joseph thought to get fome rest, though his fears still remained, and kept him waking for some hours: about midnight

94 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. he dropped asleep, but was soonawakened by a | great {moke and a terrible {mell of fire. He | hastily got up, and opening the door, the flames burst in upon hirn; he ran to the bed and called Bertha to follow him; she jumped / out, as he thought, for that purpose: he got into the court, and saw the other wing also on fire, and presently the building he | came out cf fell in. He called Bertha; alas! she was smothered in the ruins. The whole building was now in flames. He ran to tie stable, got the horse, and riding through the wood as fast as possible, a con- trary way from the town, he stopt not till he came to the foot of a mountain; with difficul- | ty he crept off his horse, and threw himself on the : ground. c Bertha ! my dear Ber- 7 tha, | have loft thee for ever; I am nowa | poor forlorn creature, without a friend in the world: why did I fly,—why did I not perith | in the fire with my wise? What a coward 1 am! O, that cursed Count, this is all his do- Y ings ; I expected he would seek my death, but poor Bertha, slie was unconscious of offence | to |

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 95

to the barbarian, vet she is gone, and I am left desolate who ought to have been the sufferer." Exhausted by grief and lassitude the wretched old man lay almost motionless for some hours, when Providence conducted a carriage that way, with a lady and gentleman in it, and two attendants on horseback. Seeing the horse grasing and an elderly man lying on the ground, the gentleman stopt the carriage, and sent a servant to him: he explained his situation in a brief manner, which when the _ domestic informed his master of, he ordered he | should be brought and put into the carriage, and the horse led on by the servant to their feat.

We will now return to Matilda, who with

her faithful Albert, arrived at Paris without

meeting any accident. They soon found the

* Hotel de Melfont, and Matilda writing a short

| billet to the Marchioness, reposed herself a little after the fatigue of her journey.

95 | CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. In lefs than three hours the Marchionese arrived in her carriage, and entered the room with that delight in her countenance which _ plainly testified the pleasure she expected to receive in the company of her young friend ; | she flew towards her, and embraced her with a warmth that affected the grateful heart of Matilda to tears. Welcome, a thousand times welcome, my dear Miss Weimar; the friend of my poor sister must be the friend of my heart! Charming girl! (said she, gazing on her) that countenance needs no recom-

mendation; what do I not owe my _

Victoria. Matilda, in returning her caresses, involuntarily started and repeated Victoria!

Tes, my love, that is my sister's name;

you know her only as the unhappy Countess of Wolfenbach, I suppose : but let me fee your faithful Albert, ro whom I hear you are greatly indebted" © I am indeed madam, (replied Matilda) my whole life at present is and must be a state of obligation." « Dismiss that idea, my dear Miss Weimar, and feel that you have the power of obliging

CHETHS OF WOLFENBACH, 97

in your society those whose study it will be to convince you how grateful they are for the favour you confer on them." Matilda bowed and kissed the hand of the Marchioness, with an expression in her eyes that spoke volumes to the heart. Albert now entered the room; « My good friend, (said the Lady) I hope you are well; I wished to see you, to thank

you for your services to this young lady.”

« I humbly thank your Ladyship, (cried Al- bert) but I have only done my duty, and when you know my mistress you will think

so , for she deserves all the world should serve

her.“ «] doubt it not, (replied the Lady) and after my first care to render your mistress happy, my second shall be to make 15 remainder of your days comfortable. Neither Matilda nor Albert could refrain from tears. Come, come, (said the Marchioness) let us be gone; my car- riage waits; the Marquis is impatient to

see you, and I have a thousand questions to

ask about my dear sifter.” Ah! thought Matilda, how shall I unfold the chimal tale VOL. 1. | = how

98 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

how must I wound a busom fo tender and af- fectionate! This reflection threw her! into a

melancholy reverie, as the carriage drove on. 4 The Marchionefs observed it, and taking her yo hand, « We are not strangers, my dear Miss |. Weimar; I have only been to meet my 1 younger sister and introduce her to my hus- _ band, already prepared to love her.“ Matii- 5 he da, overcome by a reception fo kind, cried _ de out, whilst sobs spoke the genuine feelings of as her heart, Dear madam, you oppress me so with your generosity and goodness: O that! pr. may be found, on further knowledge, to de- "als serve your good opinion.” © Iam persuaded e ol it, (replied the other) and if you please, | on (added she, with a smile) here ends the chap- os ter of favours, obligations, and such kind 1 stuff, as I have an utter avers ion to.“ 5 (8 TT 85 „% en int By this time they were arrived at the ho- foi | tel, and the Marchioness led her young a | friend to the saloon, where the Marquis fatex- no f pecting them. © Here, my Lord, permit is; | me to introduce to you my younger sister; e 1

CASTLE OF wolrrEN Zac. 99

I bespeak your affection for her, and think

vou will find no difficulty in bestowing it.“ « You judge right, my beloved Charlotte: you sister claims a double share of my esteem

from her own merit, legible in her counte- - nance and your introduction. Having saluted and led her to a chair: I am charmed (added

he) that our dear Victoria has procured us sucha delightful companion; she must have sacrificed

| a great deal to give us pleasure, in losing your

society.” Matilda, unable any longer to re-

press her feelings, burst into tears. Both were alarmed; the Marchioness, taking her hand,

« Dear Miss Weimar, you have something

| on your spirits; tell me, pray tell me, did you leave my sister well? you have, I think,

avoided mentioning her.” © Ah! madam,

(she replied) I am very unfortunate that my

introduction to you must occasion pain and

| forrow; yet I trust the dear lady will be the care of Providence, though alas! I know not where she is.” © Not know where she is? (exclaimed the Marchioness) good hea- vens! has she then left the Castle ?? Matilda

then

then entered into a detail of every event that

had happened at the Castle, the death of the

attendant, and the absence of the Countess. Perceiving the agitation and distress of

ker au-

ditors, she added, © I have little doubt of the poor Lady's fafety, from a persuasion that if any ill was intended towards her, they would

-« You judge very properly, my dear Miss

Weimar: be comforted, my Charlotte;

your friend's observaticn, is founded on truth

and reason ; I hope, e'er long we fall hear from the injur ed sufferer, or else (s udhe, raising his voice) by heavens! neither oaths nor promises [hull prevent me from publicly call-

ing on the Count to produce her.“ This chreat a af his Lady, and suspended her grief. Pell me, my frect girl, are you in her confidence — d yer knew my {ers

story 7? © Iniced, madam, I do not; Jo- seph, whom I have mentioned, is the only one

acquainted wich her woes, and he is bound by oath not to revcal them vichout herlcave; unfortunately I pœsponcd a recital v-liich

5 dier

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 101

otherwise might have been a clue to trace her now.” © Dear unhappy sister! (cried the Marchioness) how severe has been your punithment ! Another time, my beloved Mis Weimar, I will acquaint you with all I know relative to her situation: I trust heaven will protect her, and therefore I will not sadden your heart now, nor give you only sighs and tears for your reception, when we with to make you cheerful and bappy.” With a deep sigh, which she endeavoured, though in vain, to repress, the conducted Matilda to the apartments appropriated for her, and em- | bracing her, © You are dearer to me than ever; the child of misfortune, as you just nov styled yourself, and the friend of my sister, bas entire possession of my heart; love me but

half as well as J feel inclined to do you, and I shall be very happy. Matilda replied in the most affectionate and grateful terms. The Marchioness insisted upon her taking a few hours rest, previous to cheir meeting at

supper.

——$: When

102 CASTLE OF wol FEN BAcRH.

When she was alone she began to refle& on her situation ; a recollection of past distresses impeded the satisfaction she must other- wife have felt for the fervent reception she had

met with. An unhappy orphan, thought she, without a single claim on the world, from af- finity or natural affection a dependent on the bounty of friends, even for my daily sub- sistance, and of which I am liable to be de- pri ved by a hundred accidents ; is it possible any one can be more unfortunately circum- stanced than myself * ? Yet, when I left my uncle's house, could I have hoped for such a | protection as Iam now under? O, I will not despair, heaven will preserve me, if I perse- vere in virtue and integrity; if I can acquit myself of wilful error, and dare appeal to the rectitude of my sentiments, when misfortunes and distresses befall me, I will kiss the rod of correction, and submit with resignation to the Almighty will.

Composed a little in her mind, she dropt a

5 fleep tor above three hours, and then rose, re- frelked 7

CASTLE OF wol FEN RAcRH. 103

freshed and with recruited spirits. She was received by her good friends with the greatest and most flattering marks of kindness, and her grateful heart impelled her to return them by every attention in her power. The Marquis said, it was time, from Albert's age, that he should be laid up to rest ; his honesty _ and affection to Miss Weimar delerves reward, 1 shall therefore allow him something above the wages he

has had, and only request he vill superintend my stables, and see that they take proper care of my horses, but on no ac- count to take an active part in the business. Matilda most gratefully acknowledged this | kindness to her old friend, whose wellfare was very near her heart. The Marchioness told her they had intended leaving Paris in about ten days, now, said she, I shall feel great re- luctance to quit France without obtaining some knowledge of my poor sister's destiny ; but as you expect to hear from Joseph, I will still try to flatter myself he will give you some information concerning her. Matilda en- couraged the hope as it appeared to compose 8 F< 5 her,

her, but she thought it a very slender

One.

Two days passed swifcdly away. The Marchioness carried her young friend round

the city, pointed out every place worth obser- vation, or that could afford amusement. Matilda was in a new world: the polite and

| {cnfible conversation she now enjoyed was so different from every thing of the kind to which

tre had been accustomed, that she was morti-

fied at her own deficiencies, and most assidu- __ ouily endeavoured to profit by the good sense

and clegant manners s of her protectoress.

The third day after her arrival the Mar- chioness was to have an assembly. Matilda

requested she might not appear, as the clothes | she had were by no means suitable to such an occasion. © Indeed, my love, I cannot ex-

cuse you; that objection shall soon be done away (faid her friend.) And presently some

. elegant silks, laces, linen, &c. were produced for her acceptance. I hese things are

for

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 105

my younger sister; she must not presume to refuse a small testimony of affection from her elder one.“ Before Matilda could reply several trades people came in, and the Mar- chioness gave orders every thing must be realy that evening; which was promised. When they were alone she kissed the hand of her benefactress, „O, madam, in what a gracious manner do you conter favors, with- out wounding the feelings of the person obliged.” © A truce, if you please, (said her friend) to your—Oh ! and Ah! the favor, it any, 1s conferred on me by your accept- ance ; but once for all, I beg it may be un- derstood, I acknowledge you as my sister by ; adoption; I have no children, therefore, in

the rights of a sister, you have a claim to par-

ticipate with me in every thing; you must only bring yourself to submit to the commands of eldership, and let the words favor and ob- ligation be blotted from your vocabulary.” Saying this, she hastened from her, and left Matilda overwhelmed with grateful emotions. Before ihe had recovered Albert appeared,

Fs A. Pardon

10 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.,

« Pardon me, madam, for coming up, but I

longed to tell you what a blessed Emy we are got into; such kindness as I am treated

with ! such good servants, all doating on

their Lord and Lady! O, it was a happy

day when we entered the gates of Paris! I hope, my dear young lady, you think so too?“

« I do indeed, my iriend; I have a thousand obligations to this noble family;

and *tis not the least of them, that they have provided for you, to whom I shall

always 1 think myself indebted for every good I en- Joy.” Albert, overcome by this acknow-.

ledgement, hurried from her, tears of joy running down his cheeks. _

In the evening Matilda's clothes were

brought home : the servant, who was ordered

particularly to wait on her, dressed her in the

most fashionable style. When the Mar-

cnioness came into the room, she was charm-

ed with her appearance. My love, (faid she) you will cause variety of emotions this evening; I foresee an abundance of admi- 5 | ration

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 107

ration and envy, when I introduce my lovely

relation, for such you are remember; but there are two families I wish you to like ; the Countess De Bouville and her daughter, and Madame De Nancy and her sister Ma- demciselle De Bancre. You will receive a hundred professions of admiration and esteem from every one, but these ladies will speak from their hearts, and T trust they will thank me for the acquisition of a friend for their se- Ic& parties.” © You leave me nothing to say, my dear madam, but a repetition of the same words, and the same feelings for your uncommon goodness; ; I will study to deserve your recommendation, and to render myself agreeable to the ladies, as the only proo: I can give of my nat

The Marchioness conduted her to the sa- loon, and soon after a croud of ladies and gen- tlemen made their appearance; to whom she was scverally introduced, and a buz of ad- miration, with a hundred audible compli- ments circulated through the room: at length

F . two

108 CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

two ladies addressed the Lady of the house with an affectionate freedom that told Matil- da they were the persons she was bid to love; nor was she mistaken. «© My dear Coun- tess, (said the Marchioness) for this young lady I bespeak your friendship ; not only be- cause she is a relation of mine, but because I am persuaded Miss Weimar has merit of her own to recommend her to your eiteem, and that of your charming daughter." „" You could not have paid us a greater compliment,

(answered the Countess, saluting Matilda ;) this young lady's mind is legible in her coun- tenance. Adelaide, (said she, turning to her daughter) 1 present you an amiable compa- nion, whose esteem you must endeavour to merit." She joined their hands. Tou could not, my dear madam, (replied the

young Lady) have given me a command more agceeable to my inclinations." © You do me great honour, ladies, (faid Matilda) in your approbation: it mult be my care to

merit the distinction which I already perceive will be necefliry to roy happiness," The = „ young

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young ladies were indeed mutually struck with each other. Mademoiselle De Bouville was an only daughter, and, contrary to the gene- ral fashion in France, had been educated at home, under the eye of a respectable mother, who, though she submitted to the frivolities, the gaities, and round of trifling amusements which engage the attention of that lively na- tion, yet found time to superintend and direct the education of her child, by which she avoided the fliff monastic air ofa convent, and was equally unacquainted with the follies and vices which too generally prevail in those seminaries of education; for though they do not always incur general censure, yct it is ex- _ tremely difficult to discriminate, as too often it is the punishment of profligacy to be con- fined in a cloyster; and what injury a person

of that description may do amongst a number

of young people, some with weak heads, and.

others with bad hearts, cannot be expres-

| sed nor thought of without horror.

Adelaide

Adelaide De Bouville had a very pleasing person, great sweetness of temper, and a cul- tivated understanding; she was near twenty, and had beenfor some time addressed by Mon- sieur De Clermont, son to the Marquis of that name, an amiable and accomplished young man; and it was expected by their friends the union would take place when the young Count De Bouville returned from his travels: Adelaide being particularly fond of her bro-

ther, niade a point of waiting till she could |

have his presence at an affair on which her hap- pineis must entirely depend. She was charm- ed with the introduction of Miss Weimar to her acquaintance, and fought, by the most po- lite attention, to obtain her esteem. Matil-

da was equaliy delighted with her companion, and they soon after had an additional charm to their party by the arrival of Madame De

Nancy and Mademoiselle De Bancre; the lat- ter was near two and twenty, very handsome, a great share of good humour, and a most

enchanting vivacity ; her sister being sacri- ficed very early 1 in life to an elderly man,

every

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every way unworthy of her, except by his immense fortune; he used her extremely ill, always out of humour and suspicious : she suffered under his tyranny five or six years;

he then died, and left her mistress of a large

independence, the expenditure of which did her great honor. Her sister, who had wit-
|
nessed her bad treatment from an unworthy
husband, determined never to marry ; they
resided together, equally beloved and re- spected.
Matilda was charmed with her new ac-
quaintance ; a swarm of beaus surrounded them, but she thought their conversation, their fopperies, and fulsome compliments
truly disgusting, on a comparison with the sensible and elegant manners of her newly-ac-
one temale friends.
When the company 1 Matilda re-
ceived numerous invitations, every one pro- fessing themselves delighted with the charm- ing Miss Weimar; but those professions were
not
112 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,
note qually sincere. A Mademoiselle De Fon- telle beheld her with envy and dislike : she was a young woman of family and large for- tune, had been taken about two years from a
convent, where she was placed on the death of her mother; and soon aiter that period
her father also died suddenly, and left her sole- ly to the care of an aunt, an old gay coquet, whom every body despised, yet every body
visited, because she had large parties, elegant
entertainments, and high play. Under the care, if it can be fo called, of this ridiculous.

old woman, Mademoitelle De Fontelle had ac-

quired all the follies and vanities incident to youth and beauty, when under no restrictions, no proper precepts or example. She detest-

ed handsome woman, was desirous of engros- | sing universal admiration to herielf, had a

malignant heart, yet as far as a coquet's affec- | tions could be engaged, hers were devoted to

the young Count De Bouviile ; but as her at- tractions were not powerful envugh to detain

him from pursuing his travels, she flirted

with every one that came in her way, to the utmost

ED I A ee Ee eee as —

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 113

utmost extent that. French manners and cus-

toms would allow among young persons,

where there is certainly more reserve than in

any other country (Spain excepted.) There-

fore 'tis no uncommon thing for girls gladly

to marry the man pointed out by the parents, if he is ever so old, ugly, or little known; the _ restraint laid upon them is so strict, and their conduct fo narrowly observed, that to enjoy

liberty they marry; from hence proceeds

that levity for which the married ladies in

France are fo remarkable, and which has

given rise to an almost general censure, which they do not always deserve: for those

who

have studied the characters and manners of

the French ladies frequently declare, there is more the semblance than reality of vice in them; and though many are profligate, like some in their neighbouring kingdom, who apparently carry more modesty and reserve in their outward deportments ; yet there are

very many amiable French women, who, un-

der their national gaiety of heart and freedom _ of manners, are most truly respectable | in every

situation

situation in life. But the old aunt of Ma- demoiselle De Fontelle was not one of these,

nor had she instilled any such sentiments of |

respectability in her neice, consequently the young lady ventured to the utmost bounds custom or courtesy would allow : she no sooner saw Miss Weimar than she dreaded and hated her; being a stranger, beautiful and engaging, she obtained universal admira- tion; but when she observed the decided preference and selection of Mademoiseile De | Bouville for her companion, she was outrage- ous. The Count was soon expected home he would doubtless be attracted by this hateful stranger the idea was dreadful, and from that moment she was the declared enemy of Miss Weimar, though resolved to cultivate the

most violent intimacy with her; consequently 4

when the party broke vp, she advanced and solicited the young lady's acquaintance, in the : * manner possible.

When the company had left the rooms Matilda thanked the Mar chioness for the pleasure

CAZTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 115

pleasure she had procured her, in the intro- duction to such charming young women as Mesdemoiselles De Bouville and De Bancre. There was another lady, (said she) who paid me much attention, and invited my acquaintance.” „ Yes, (answered the Mar- chioness) Mademoiselle de Fontelle ; but be- ware of her, my dear Matilda; she is far from being a desirable intimate—I neither like her nor her aunt, Madame de Roch ; but I know not how it is, one meets with them every where, and cannot avoid seeing them some- times in public, but they are never of my

private parties, therelore let common civility : only you between you.”

The young lady promised to observe her advice, and they ens 2 to their respective : eee,

On Matilda's table lay a letter, which the servant placed there, not to disturb her whilst in company. She hastily broke it open; it

was from Joseph : he related the incident re- specting

specting the horse, mentioned the gentleman's enquiries, and described his person. It was her uncle. She was terrified and shocked beyond measure, she sunk into a chair, and burst into a flood of tears: © Good heavens! | (faid she) if he should trace me here: yet so many days before him, I think I may be fate ; Bertha was not in the secret, and Joseph I can, I know, depend upon not to betray me.” Under the most painful reflections, she retired to rest, but sleep forsook her pillow : the dread of falling again into the power of a man so abandoned gave her the most poignant af- fliction “ O, that we were in England (said the) I should then, I think, be safe from his pursuit.”

She past a restless night, and in the morning met her friends, with a pale counte- nance and uneasy mind.

« My dear child, (exclaimed the Mar- chioness) what is the matter, are you ill?“ Matilda gave her N letter, and ex-

pressed |

CASTLE OF WOLFE NBACH.,

pressed her fears of being found in Paris by her uncle. Her friends requested she would compose her mind. The Marquis assured her ol his protection. You are not well enough, my love, to go out or see company this morn- ing; we will retire to my dressing- room, and to amuse you from thinking of your own trovbles, I will enter upon the story of my unfortunate sister, as far as I know of it, for great part is involved in mystery, and she has taken, she says, the most sacred caths never to divulge the rest, without permission of another person. My father, Buron Sticiberg, inhe- ited from his ancestors, a respectable name, a great share of family pride, and very small possessions, which by wars, and a scruggle to keep up the family consequence, had been di- minished greatly within the last fisty years. He had no fon, a source of eternal regret to him, and two daugh ters, whom he determined should marry advantageously, or not at all. Our mother died when I was about ten, and my sister eight years of age. We were placed ina convent for fix years, at the expiration of which

118 cas TLE OF WOLFENBACH,

which time we were sent for home. Our

father seemed fatisfied with our improve- ments. We had the good fortune to please, and it was the fashion to admire us. In a few months after our return to the world the Marquis De Melfort, who was on his travels, stopt at Vienna; we met at an assembly, and a mutual approbation took place; he was in- troduced to my father; and, in short, not to be tedious, his addresses were allowed, for though my father would have prefered a German nobleman; yet the amiable character of the Marquis, his very large fortune, and

an earnest desire to see me settled in his life

time, prevailed on him to accede to the ad- vantageous proposals made for me, and

in a | short time I became the happy wife of one of

the best of men. We remained near fix

months at Vienna, but the Marquis beginning to express a wish of returning to Paris, having been absent above two years. I requested my father would permit my sister to accom- | pany me; but to this he peremptorily ob- n I took leave of my friends and my country

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH., 119 country with tears and reluctance. The dur Victoria was ready to expire —it was our fill. separation, and we had lived in the most perfect harmony with each other: she was my father's favourite, and therefore he did not feel that grief on my leaving him, which might have been expected. I had a consola-

tion I accompanied a beloved husband, and was received by his friends with the most

flattering attention. My listerapd I constantly

corresponded. In about eight months after my residence at Paris she wrote me, that at an assembly she had met with one of the most amiable men in the world, a Chevalier De

Montreville,a gentleman of a noble family, but

| small fortune, secretary to the French ambas-

sador. The manner in which she described © this young man, convinced me she liked

him: I was forry for it, I knew he never would be countenanced by my father. She also added, that Count Wolfeabach was her very shadow—that she detested him, not- withstanding his immense fortune and prodi- gious stock of love. In my answer, I cau-

tioned |

120 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

tioned her against indulging a partiality for the

Chevalier, as I well knew my father never _ would approve of it. A short time after [

received a very melancholy letter. © Pity

me, my dear sister, for I am miserable—I

cannot deny my attachment to the most de-

serving of men: he has been rejected with contempt by my father, and yesterday I was commanded to receive Count Woltenbach as

my destined husband ! I hate, I detest him— _ 5 he is morose, savage, sneering, revengeful - Alas! what am I saying? this man may be

my husband O, my dear filter, death is far

** N to that lituation.“

12. 6e T hese expressions filled me with ex- treme grief; my generous husband wrote my father immediately ; he besought him not to sacrifice his child, — that if the want of fortune was his only objection to the Chevalier, he

would glady remove that deficiency, and he

had both interest and inclination to procure him a handsome establishment : that from the altection he bore me and my sister, it was his earnest

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earnest desire to see her happy, if at the ex- pence of one-third of his fortune.

To this letter we received no answer

within the expected time. I grew very un-

_ easy, I wrote again to my sister. It was more

than a month before I received any return.

I have it now in my pocket book: the Mar-

chioness took it out, and read as follows.

CounTEss or WOLFENBACH, _ --_

70 „ TRE MARCHION ESS. „ BY . ä 5 e 15 l 22 of

My dearest Sister,

_ « TvsT recovered from the jaws of death, the lost unhappy Victoria acknowledges the receipt of your kind letter: alas! the con- tents have almost broken a heart already ex-

hausted by grief and despair. I have been a

wife five weeks, near a month I was confined

to my bed; but if I can, I will be methodical |

in the relation of what has befallen me. The

letter your generous and respectable husband | wrote, unfortunately was delivered by the servant in the same moment with one from the Chevalier. My father believed you act- ed in concert. Never shall I forget the fury of his countenance. *© This insolent French- man wants to degrade me into a dependence

on him, and marry my daughter to his beg- garly countryman.” Ah! my father, (cried

I) do not judge fo unkindly of my excellent brother, his views are for our general hap- |

piness.” © And that, (said he, interrupting

me furiously) can be accomplished without his interference; the Count has a noble for- tune, high birth, a title, and is a German not another word, (added he) seeing | me about to speak) not a single objection; | on Monday next you become his wife—see that you obey without the least reluctance.” | Saying this, he left the room, and in a few | minutes afterwards I fell senseless from my scar. How long I continued thus, I know | not, but on my recovery I found my self on my LE | „

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bed, and Therese with me; she was bathing me with her tears. Thank heaven, my dear young lady, you are alive till! O, what a dismal day for me to see you thus." 1] thanked the poor creature, her kindness was bol service, — I shed a copious flood of tears. Soon after my father sent to know how I did, | andto tell me [was expected in the library. lo obeyed the summons with trembling steps. | The odious Count, I must call him so, was | with him. My father advanced, and rudely inatching my hand, «© There, my Lord, I give her to you, your day shall be ours." This day, this hour, (cried he, eagerly, kissing my hand,) do not delay my happi- | nefs." A sickness came over my heart—I ; | funk into a chair. © Victoria! (cried my father, in an angry voice.) I endeavoured : to reply, but burst into tears. Foolish

girl, (said he) receive the honor my Lord does

you, in a manner more worthy of yourself and _ J | me." He left the room. The Count ap-

' | proached me vith a malicious air, © Charm-

7 | ing Victoria, am I fo very hateful ; has the

Ga. Chevalier |

Chevalier so many advantages over me, as to engross all your affection?" I started, but in- dignation rouzed my spirits, —< Whatever

are his advantages, my lord, or whether ke

has any real superiority or not, for I :nake no

invidious comparisons; yet if you tup; ɔse he is the object of my affections, surely I am un-

worthy the honour of being your wife; no man of {pirit could bear a divided heart ; but

if he engrosses all, which I neither aFrm nor deny, your Lordship will do well, both for | your own sake and mine, to renounce all | thoughts of me." © No, madam,

(Haid he, in the highest rage) your father hes given me your hand, and you sllall be mine, let the con- sequence be what it may." He flung out of

the room with a look of vengeance. You may conceive, I cannot descrive my situation.

In the evening my fatter told me the Cheva- lier was gone to Switzerland. From the

hour my father rejected him, I gave him up to outward appearance: I wrote and conjured

him, if h e valued my peace, to chink of me no more. His answer almost broke my

heart,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 125

heart, © but my commands were sacred, my peace all the good he sought for in this life," When I heard he had quitted Vienna a nementary pleasure seized hold of my heart; he would not be here when I was sa- crificed to his rival, nor until I had left the city. Not to tire you, my dear sister, the Monday following I became a wife—spare me the repetition of the dreadful circum- stances. The following day I was in a high | fever, and continued ill for a month; I re-

ceived but little attention from the Count —

there was more of resentment than tenderness in his manner when he came into my apart- ment, and'involuntarily I used to shrink from his view. However it pleased heaven to re- store me to health. I am gaining strength daily, but as yet keep my own apartment ;— to-morrow I have engaged to meet our father down stairs to dinner. Pray for me, advise _ me, dearest sister; depend upon my honour,

" hos deserve your love whatever becomes of

5 Heavens bless you and my dear gene- tous s brother. 2 Vic ren 8

« You must suppose; my dear Miss Wei- mar, (said the Marchioness) that this letter made us extremely unhappy ; I wrote how- ever, and, fearful the Count might have

mean- ness enough to insist upon seeing her letters, I took little notice of her complaints, but ' congratulated her on the recovery of her health, defired she would pay attention to it, for the sake of her husband and friends; in

short, it was an equivocal kind of a letter, and |

I thought could give no offence, After this |

I heard from her but seldom, and then there | . was an evident restraint in her style, which hurt me, but which I darednot take notice of. She had been married about eight months, when the Marquis received a letter from the Count, acquainting us that my father was dead, | after only three days illness, giving an ac- | count of his effects, and inviting the Marquis | over to see a proper division of them. I per- | suaded him to comply. He would not go without me, and I was not sorry for the op- porrunity offered me to see my sister. We got safe to Vienna, We met the Count and EC his

2 os TW *

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 127 his lady, who had come from their country seat, about seven leagues from Vienna, for that pui rpose. We flew into each other's arms, with tears of mingled joy and sorrow. Alas! it was but the shadow of the once

| blooming Victoria, I surveyed her with sur- prise and distress : she took no notice, but introduced me to her husband ; the cause of

the alteration I observed was then explained.

Never surely was there a man with a more ferocious countenance; he infpired me with horror the moment I examined him: I felt for my sister, but tried to receive his coid civilities with politeness for her sake. After dinner we were glad to leave the gentlemen to business, and retire to ourselves. © My dearest Victoria, (cried I, embracing her) tell me—tell me all: you are not happy,

your fr agile form too plainly speaks it.

I endeavor to be contented, (she replied:) my dear father thought happiness must be connected with splendour and riches; he sought to aggrandize his children; I respe&t the motive, however he has been deceived."

« The Count, I must own, (faid I) is a dil- agreeable object." My dear Charlotte, (she cried) do not think so meanly of me, as to suppose his want of personal attractions weighs any thing with me—I should defpise myself in that cafe ; neither is it now any pre- ference for another: I have never seen or heard from the Chevalier since my marriage,

I will strictly fulfil every duty I have sworn to observe, perhaps time may do much for me; it will either soften the severity of the Count's disposition, or habit will enable me to bear Voith less feeling, evils I cannot prevent. Ask me noquestions, my dear sister, I am not at li- berty to answer them; but if you regard my peace, meet my husband with good-humour and complaifance: and now tell me, (faid | she) of your comforts, your pleasures and mutual happiness—in your felicity I will find my own." I was drowned in tears, her manner was so solemn, so touching, so resigned, that my heart was wrung with sorrow, and 1 could not speak. « Dear Charlotte, (continued * wiping my ** spare me those tears,

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tears, I cannot bear them: remember what I | have told you, be cheerful when you return to company, or I shall be the sufferer. I met you with tears of jcy, 'tis long since they were shed for griet. Here, (putting her hand to her heart) here my sorrows are buried, too deep for that relief. but I have done, dear sister let me enjoy pleasure now in your so- ciety." She attempted to smile, it was a | smile of woe; I tried however to suppress my emotions, and to divert her attention; asked a few questions relative to our old acquaint- ance, and in about an hour we returned toler-

ably composed. The Count examined my looks; I approached him with smiles, chatted about our journey, and I, observed his features grew relaxed, and he behaved with great civility. We continued at Vienna afortnight; he never asked us to his feat. Victoria con- ducted herself like an angel; she was attentive to every word and wish of his; her deport- ment was grave but perfectly obliging, fo that it appeared more a natural disposition than arising from any particular cause. When all

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our business was finished, the Count one morning took occasion to observe his pre-

| sence was much wanted in the country; that he had lately purghased an estate in Switzer≠ land, and should go there soon, consequently had many affairs which required his inspec-

on. We took the hint, and finding I must

part with my sister, I was very ready to leave Vienna. Theday previovs to our departure an old friend of My father's paid me a visit; after chatting some time, My dear Mar- cChioness, (said he) I sincerely lament the un- happy fate of your charming sister ; she has certainly the worst husband in the world; she | is shut up, denied all society; he is jealous, cruel, and revengeful: I am sorry to grieve you, but I tremble for her life—she cannot long support such wretchedness. The poor | Chevalier, (added he) has been absent from hence ever since her marriage: I am told he is now daily expected; he will hear most af-

flictive news, for her happiness is the chief |

vwish of his heart.” I answeredthis worthy man, . and told him my sister” 8 reserve, as toher hus-

band's

band's treatment of her: he praised her pru- dence, and added, your father had two mo- tives in obliging her to marry the Count; he was disappointed in both, for he

was no stran- ger to her situation before he died. And what, Sir, was his other motive?“ © An in- tention to marry a relation of the Count's, but she absolutely refused him, and married ano- ther two month's ago. Youknow, I suppose, added he, that the Count was a widower ?” « No, Sir, I never heard that circumstance.” e Why, it is a black story, as it is reported: tis faid about three years ago he married a young lady, an orphan, of good family, but small fortune, at Bern, in Switzerland; that he treated her so ill as to cause her death, and | left two children, who were put to nurse, after- | wards taken from thence, without any one's | knowing what became of them; however your father told me the Count informed him they were both dead. Almost every person be- | lieves his wife and children came to an un- timelyend; but he is a man of such rank and. large pose fions, nobody chuses to oy much. : 6860 1 hinted

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I hinted the affair to your father, but fortune

and love was too powerful to be given up,

he affected not to believe it; but after his

own disappointment, he thought more of his daughter, and had he not been so suddenly cut off, I believe would have interfered ; at least,

I am sure, would have made some separate

_ provision for her, independent of chat bad

man her husband. 2

Lou may conceive, my dear Miss Wei-

mar, how much I was shocked at this rela- tion. I trembled for my Victoria, Bo ” the hands of such a monster, but alas! could do nothing. J entreated my A friend to watch the Count narrowly, and to give me information, from time to time, con-

cerning her, who I considered a victim to a

villain.

« The following day we took a heart-

breaking leave. The Marquis entreated the

Count to pay us a visit, © In another year

perhaps he might.” My sister, dear unhappy creature,

| CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 133

creature, never shed a tear. My Charlotte, my beloved sister, think no more of me, (said she, an hour before we parted;) my pilgrimage will be shorr ; the hour which gives birth to an unfortunate being (I had for- got to tell you she was with child) will, in all probability, give me everlasting peace: fortunate if the dear infant accompanies me to the grave, if not, O, my sister, consider it as the only remains of the wretched Victoria, who has, does, and ever will love you to her last hour.” I will not wound your heart, my dear Matilda, by any further recital of our _ conversation. When we parted, in presence _ of her husband, I could have struck a dagger to his heart. She embraced me with fervor, © Heavens bless you, my dear and happy sister! and you, my generous my noble bro- ther, may you both live to enjoy years of un- interrupted happiness.” Doubtless they will, (faid the Count, with a malicious smile ;) surely you forget we are to meet again at Paris next year, and not taking leave for life.” True, (returned the Marquis ;) I thank you

you for the remembrance, Sir,—a few months

hence, my valued friends, I hope to see you at Paris.“ She tore herself from my arms, and J got into the carriage, more dead than alive.

Not to enter into an unnecessary detail, we returned safe to Paris, and in a short time af. ter I received a few lines from my sister, dated from their castle in Switzerland, telling me she was tolerably well, both in health and spirits, but hourly in * of an event which might affect both.

* Near three weeks after this letter we |

received two; one from the Count, inform- ing the Marquis, that, to his inexpressible grief, he had lost both wife and child; the other from the medical gentleman who at-

tended her, informing me of the same event,

and that my sister, in her last moments, re- quested he would write to express her affec-. tion and wishes for my happiness with her

departing breath.

'« Though

cAsTIE OF WOLFENBACH, 135

e Though I had always apprehended this event, yet it caused me inexpressible misery ; and there being no longer any ties to bind us to that detested Count, we never answered

or took any further notice of him.

About fix weeks after the dreadful in- formation we had received, a letter came to me, directed in an unknown hand ; I opened .

it—judge what were my emotions in reading these words, deeply * moon my memory.

85 Your Gister lives, though dead to all the 1 world but you; a solemn vow has passed her ps, never to disclose preceding events with-

out permifsion—ask no questions, and you shall soon hear more, but more than one life depends upon your secresy. |

VICTORIA.“ „I flew to the Marquis with this billet;

he was equally n and overjoyed, but 3 | n

you.

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naturally concluded we might have spies up- on us, and that therefore we had better

con- tinue our mourning the usual time.

« It was upwards of a fortnight before I heard again, and I grew very impatient; at length I had another letter: this informed me she was confined, that she had reason to hope her child (a boy) was alive. Under | that hope she lived, and, notwithstanding, her confinement, was better in health than when I saw her last. IT might write a few lines now and then, under cover to Joseph Kier- man, in a vulgar disguised hand; that she perhaps might never ice me more, and meet certain death if her secret was discovered."

ee This letter, like the former, was in a different hand srom hers. I answered it, and from that time, near eighteen years, we have correspuaded about once in two months, never oftener, till our last epistles concerning

„The

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« The whole affair is certainly very strange : often has the Marquis vowed to ap- ply eicher to the Count or courts of justice; but the letters we received were never writ- ten by her, we cculd adduce no actual proofs of his guilt, and Te continually warned us to take no steps without her permission. Thus, in 2 most unaccountable manner we are pro- hibited from doing her justice, whilst all the world believes her dead: he lives chiefly at Vienna, a diffipated life; though from my friend I hear he is at times gloomy, and ap- parently unhappy: this gentleman however believes my sister and

her child dead, nor

dare I UneleCewwe him.

« Thus, my dear Miss Weimar, you have before you all I know of this melancholy af-

fair; what now is become of this hapless

victim heaven only knows, — I cannot think

ol leaving Paris yet; the Marquis can scarce-

ly be restrained from exerting himself, and, indeed, in a short time, if we gain no further infor-

information, I shall feel disposed to coincide with his wishes." |

Matilda returned the Marchioness thanks

Ver the trouble she had taken in giving this f painful relation: she felt deeply for the poor suffering Countess, and could not help joining in opinion, that some decisive step ought tobe taken, if she was not heard of soon.

They both waited with impatience to have another letter from Joseph, as he promised to

write again about the gentleman and his 5

horst; and the Marquis and Marchioness re- quested Matilda to offer him and Bertha, in their name, an asylum at Paris, if they had any fears of remaining at the Castle.

Three or four days passed, and nothing new | occurred. Mademoiselles De Bouville and De Bancre had frequently called on Miss Wei- mar, also Madame Le Brune and her

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On the fifth morning the first Seeed young lady entered the house, accompanied by a very elegant young man, whom she in- troduced to Matilda as her brother. The

Marquis and his lady were rejoiced to see him and gave him the most cordial welcome.

Matilda was. uncommonly struck by his

appearance; she thought him, (and withjustice) _

the most amiable man she had ever seen. The Count De Bouville was indeed deserv-

ing of approbation: he had all the elegance 5

of French manners, without their frivolities, an excellent understanding, and a desire of improving it induced him to visit England,

| after his tour through Italy and Germany; he had gained knowledge from the different

manners and customs of each nation, and re- turned a truly accomplished young man, with

much good sense and polished manners, a strict integrity of heart, and the highest sense of duty and love for his mother and sister. He had always entertained great respect for

= the Marquis and Marchioness De Melfort, and

. chat

that, added to his liter” s warm eulogiums on

Miss Weimar's perfections, browht him the

morning after his return to make his com- pliments. He had never scen a young wo-

man lite Matilda; she was in truth the child of nature; for, though accomplished and

well informed, having been bred up in ob- scurity, never visiting nor being visited, a stranger to young men, to herery, or even the N of a chamber maid, with a most beau- ful face, an elegant shape, and many natural

if not acquired graces; she was unconscious

of her perfections — sne knew not the art of displying them to advantage —sne had no

vanity to gratify thought but humbly of her-

self, and received every mark of admiration and respect as favors to which she had no pre-

tensions. A character so new to the world,

which was easily understood in a short visit, from the frankness and naivete of her man- ners, could not fail of engaging the attention

and esteem of the Count. Her person was

charming; her conversation and unaffected ; suretness insensibl ”m_ upon the heart,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 141

and rendered it impossible to avoid bestowing that homage to which she made no claims. When the visit was over and an engagement made for the Melfort family to dine the fol- lowing day at the Bouville's. Matilda, with her usual candour, warmly praifed the young Count: her friends smiled, but co-incided with her sentiments, and expatiated on his good qualities with all the warmth of friend- ship and esteem. They were yet on the same subject, when a servant entered and delivered a letter to Matilda. From Joseph, (faid | she, looking at the address.) *. 0 pray open it, 10 the Marchioness. She did so, and perusing it hastily to herself was struck with horror at the contents. He was now at the seat of Baron Wolmar, from whenee he writes an account of all the proceedings at the Castle. He concludes with telling her the Raron and his niece have given him an asylum, but that the Count's story was still unknown; is defirous of receiving her commands, and | bitterly regets the loss of poor Bertha,

When

When she had looked it over, without a single comment she gave it to the Mar-

chioness, but her looks prepared her friend

for some dreadful intelligence, © Good heavens! (cried she) what a villain ! every thing now is past a doubt—most certainly he has destroyed my sister, and by burning the _ castle, sought to make _ with the 88 :

: privy to his transactions.”

When the Marquis had read it, * * By all

means, (faid he) let Joseph be sent for imme-

diately, he will prove a material witness, and I am determined, if no news arrives from her shortly, to enter a process against the Count,

and oblige him to produce her.

A servant was ordered to set off the following

morning to bring Joseph, and the Marquis

wrote to thank the Baron for protecting

Various and melancholy were their con- lectures relative to the Countess, whose *

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 143 strange fate they all deplored. © I shall ne- ver forgive myself, (cried the Marquis) for not interfering in this business years ago. When I knew she was first confined, though ve never understood so clearly the nature of that confinement till she wrote to us of the courage and resolution a young lady, driven by accident to the castle, had shewn, in ex- ploring the way to her gloomy apartments. At the same time she was cautious in with- _ holding any particular information as to the nature of her situation. Maria, her atten- dant, always wrote for her, nor was any name signed on either side.” „

« Every circumstance (returned Matilda) convinces me her life is not in danger, for had that been determined on so many years would never have passed, and left her in possession of it.” © I hope and with your observation may be verified, (said the Marchioness.)

“But pray, mad; :m, (cried Matilda) what became of the poor Chevalier after her mar- riage and the subsequent oper of her death?”

« My friend at Vienna, (replied the Lady) - informed me, he returned there soon after the Count carried my fister into Switzerland, and in a short time quitted the ambassador, and

talked of visiting Asia, and remaining abroad some years; since which we have never

heard of him, whether he 1s living or not.”

Some company now broke in upon them ; | and an engagement in the evening prevented 1

: — particular conversation.

i The following day they were to dine with

the Countess De Bouville. Matilda, for the

| first time in her life, took some pains with

her dress, and felt an anxiety about her ap-

pearance; yet, unconscious of her motives, she

attributed them solely to a desire of pleasing

the Marchioness. When they arrived at their

hotel, the Count was ready to conduct and

introduce them. The Countess received them with pleasure. © I know, (said she) my good friends, you rejoice with me on the re-

turn of my fon. We are a family of love, | | EE DR (added

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(added she, turning to Matilda) therefore you must not be surprised to see us a little intoxi- cated with joy on meeting again after so long an absence.” © Indeed, madam,

such af- fectionate feelings do you great honour.”

Adelaide was all transport, which was soon after rather checked by the introduction of the Marquis de Clermont and his son: the

young men ran into each other's arms. © A

thousand welcomes, my dear De Bouville, 1

impatiently longed to see you.” © I believe

it, (returned the other, with a smile;) you had powerful reasons, and I have shortened my stay in England considerably on your ac- count. * Apropos, (said the Marquis ;) how do you like England, my young friend?“ * So well, Sir, (replied the Count) that 1 : could be contented to pass my lite there in the bosom of my friends. I consider the Eng- lish as the happiest people under the sun : they are naturally brave, friendly, and benevolent ; they enjoy the blessings of a mild and free government; their personal safety is secured ow oo by

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by the laws; no man can be punished for an

Imaginary crime, they have fair trials, con-

front their accusers, can even object to a partial Jury; in snort, as far as human judgment ad-

mits can be deemedinfallible. Very few, ifany, suffer but for actual crimes, adduced from the clearest proofs. Their commerce extends all

cover the known world; their merchants are

rich and re spectable, the first nobility do not

disdain an alliance with them, they are con- | sidered as the supporters of the kingdom: 'tis

incredible to taink of the liberal sums sub- scribed by chese opulent, respectable, generous peop le, on atiy pop ular occasion, or private benelfaction, without

aftonishment. The men

cf fasnion are many of them admirable ora- tors, Zreat j Ollicians, and perfectly acquainted with the goverr.ment of diferent nations, as much as cf their own. The young men, I | believe, are the fame every where—fond of |

picasure, ext ence, and intrigue ; but the rock on which they most generally split is that

0 fpirir of gambling whica pervades through al- mit al "ranks of people, d:;Tpates "en

distresses

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distresses families, hardens the heart, depraves the mind, and renders useless all the good qualities they receive from nature and educa- tion. There are very strict laws against play, but those laws only awe the middling or

poorer kind of people, the great infringe them with 1 N

« But I beg pardon (added the Count)

-- or falling! into the common mode of travel-

lers, engrossing the attention of the company to myself. „ « [defire you will go on, (said the Ma arquis) I am pleased with your obler- vations.” © And the ladies, dear brother, (cried Made moise lle De Bouville) pray tell us something of the ladies.” „ shall puniih your 0 (replied he, smiling) by and bye. What I most admire in the English, is the great encouragement given to all manu- | factories, and to all usesul discoveries; there ought not to be any poor, that is, I mean beggars, in England, such immense sums are

| raised for their support, such resources for in-

dustry, and so many hospitals for the sick and = aged,

aged, that, if proper management was observ- ed, none need complain of cold or

hunger;

yet in my life I never saw so many painful

and disgusting objects as there are in the streets and environs of London. I admire the pub.

lic buildings, the places of entertainment, and the performers at them; but sometimes, as

will ever be the case, liberty degenerates into

U centiousness, and the mob will rudely inte-

rupt the performers, and carry their zpplause or censure in oppolition to every effort of their betters : this certainly is an abuse of their freedom, but 'tis an evil they know not how to remecy in a land of liberty.

« As; for the ladies, my dear sister."

cc Aye, brother, now for it ;—I hate your Ergliih belles, they are such monopolizers when they make their appearance at Paris," « And yer, Adelaide, I assure you, it is not

often you see the most beautiful of them here,

doubtless there are very many charming wo- men among the first circles of tashion, who

may difpure the palm cf beauty with any court

von,

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court in the known world; but generally speaking, the middling ranks of people are by far the handsomest cf both sexes, and I account for it in this manner. In fashionable circles they keep very late hours, play deep, enter into every scheme for amusement and difipation, without regard to their health or complexions; hence they injure one, and de-

stroy the other: no artificial resources can give brilliancy to the eyes, or health and vi-

vacity to the figure; acquired bloom can ne-

ver deceive, and the natural beautiful com- plexions of the English ladies are so delicate

and transparant, that art may disguise, but

never can improve them. Their ill hours, and deforming their lovely faces by the anxiety of avarice, envy, and passion, when at their midnight orgies, adoring and watching the effects of chance in their fav dur, deftruys their beauty many years betore age work!

have lessencd their attractions; for I mutt conicis, (added he, smiling at his sister) the

English women, take them all in all, are more

| fascinating than any other nation Jever saw."

1 e 0 Sad

— YT RTE"

NE. ND CGI TT en EE nn In 7 — : N E RF - 7 —

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* And yct, (fail h-) you are returned heart- whole, brother?" „ That is bejging the question, my cui ious sister; box nere there

are so many charmers, men's eyes involunta-

rily wander, and must consider it almost an

insult upon the rest to selec: one, when there are such equal pretensions."

« The English ladies are much obliged to |

you, Count, (id the Marquis de Melfort)

and we shall soon have an opportunity of

made: 15 1ty0ur picture is over-charged, as we de! sign visicing Engla and within this month.“

This declaration conveyed no pleasure to any of the party. The De Bouville's were al! ready so much prejudiced in favour of Mits

Weimar, that they were hurt at the idea of

parting : the Count particularly felt uneasy,

though he could not capers! it upon fo short | an acquaintance.

Matilda was highly pleased with Monsieur

sen. ible

. De Clermont, her friend” s lover; he was polite,

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sensible and intelligent; the Marquis, his

father, livezy, chatty and attentive to the

laclies

The dinner hours pasted very agrecably, and they regretred that an aslembly in the evening must break in upon their party.

The young folks had an hour to them-

selves : the Count paid Matilda the most

_ marked attention; congratulated his sister on the acquisition of such a friend, and hoped some event, favourable to his wishes, might prevent their tour to England, though he ac- knowledged the hope a selfisn one. After chating on various subjects, the Count acci- dentally enquired of Matilda, if she liked Paris as well as she did Vienna? The ques-

tion confused her, and she replied, with some

hesitation, she had never teen Vienna. © I beg your pardon, madam, (said he) I

under-

stood yuu came from thence.” © No, bro-

ther, Mifs Weimar resided in Switzerland.” e Ar Berne, madam ? (asked he.) © No,

H x Sir,

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Sir, (answered she, still more cenfused) I chiefly resided in the country.” The Count saw by her manner he had been guilty of some impropriety, though he hardly knew of

what nature; he was therefore silent, and she recovered from her embarrassment.

In the evening the company began to as- semble ; amongst the rest that eternal gad-about Madame le Brune, and her niece,

Mademoiselle De Fontelle. The Count was _ obliged to pay his compliments, and receive their congratulations on his return; which

done, he * returned to the fide of Ma- .

The envious De Fontelle coul J not beartllis; ; she made her way to them, took the hand of Martilda, called her her sweet friend, assured her they must be violently intimate, she was quite charmed wich her; with a hundred such

delusive compliments, as meant nothing, and

to which the other only replied with a cold civility. All at Once, turning quickly tc her,

CAGTLE OF WOLFENBACH, — 153

ber, Bless me, Miss Weimar, I forgot to ast if you have a relation of your name now in Paris?” The roses forsook Matilda's cheek, she trembled, and could scarce ftand ; every one observed her confusion : the Count caught her arm. Bless me! (cried Mademoiselle De Fontelle) has my question disordered you; I only afked because I

was in

company yesterday with a gentleman of your name, _ arrived from Gene

This was ; enough for the unhappy girl— down she dropt, and had not the Count been attentive to her motions, and caught her in his arms, she must have fallen to the ground. Every body was alarmed, and crowded round her, the Ma hioness particularly so ; she was carried into another room, the Count still sup- porting her, and followed by his sister. It

was some time before she returned to life. The first objects that struck her, was the Count, holding her in his arms, the Mar- chioness on her knees, applying salts, and Mademoiselle De Bouville pressing her hand. 85 Hs : OO. *,

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O, madam ! (cried the, Try and trem- bling) he is come—he is come." * Com- pole yourself, my love, (aid the Mar- chioness) no one is come that can hurt you." « Yes, yes, (answered she, hardly knowing what she said) 'tis he, 15 will carry me off, 6 will take me from you."

"Her friend nil devel to sooth and calm her spirits. The Count and his sister were surprised ; they saw there was some

mystery, but forebore any enquiries.

It was some time before she was perfectly restored: they urged her to return to the company—ihe feit a repugnance, © I fear that Miss —— © Fear nothing, madam, (interrupted the Count;) you have friends ho will protect you with their lives." She looked at him with an expression of gratitude, but said nothing. She arose, and with feeble Reps attended her friends into the saloon.

Mademoiselle |

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, © 155

Mademoiselle De Fontelle officioully came to congratulate her return, The amiable

De Bancre felt real concern, and expressed it with | feeling, and without exaggeration.

Maude, sensible of the kindness of her friends, and ashamed of the observation sne had attracted, tried to acquire new spirits; but it was an endeavour only; her eyes were incessantly turned towards the door, she dreaded every moment she should see her uncle enter, and nothing could exceed her joy when the evening closed and they were leatedi in the Marquis's Carriage,

« O, madam! O, Sir! 'tis affuredly my uncle—he wil know where I am, and tear me from you." Do not afflict yourself, my dear Miss Weimar, (answered the Marquis ;) ik it should be him, he shall prove his preten- lions before he gets any footing here, much lels take you from our Poeten.

H 6 fi Poor

156 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, Poor Matilda thanked him with a grateful heart, and retired to her bed, but not to slcep: her mind was greatly disturbed, * What a poor creature I am, (cried she ;) no father, brother, or protector, not even the clothes I wear my own property ; if this man, this un- cle claims, who can dare detain me? What are the evils which may befall me?—what- ever becomes of me, I will not embroil my friends. Happy, happy Miss De Bouville ! (said she) you have a mother, a brother to protect you! Such a brother! what an amiable man! O, I never knew my wretchedness till now, that I am humbled to the dust!" Under these melancholy impressions she past the night, and when morning came was in a high - fever. Fp

The servant who came to attend her was alarmed at her indisposition, and flew to in- form the Marchioness, who instantly went to her apartment. She found her very ill. A

physician was sent for, who ordered her to be bled and kept very quict. About noon the „„ 1 Marchioness

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Marchioness left her afleep, and had scarcciy entered the parlour, when she was iniormed a

gentle man requested to speak wh her ; Te ordered his admittance.

A middle a man, of respectable appear- ance, politely entered the room. *I must apolo- gize to your Ladyshipter my intrusion, without | sending in my name, which I now avow to be Weimar, and I am uncle, 1 may ley fa- ther, to a young lady of that name now in your house. I fear madam, you have been strange- ly imposed upon to afford her protection; it is painful to a person so nearly connected as I am to that unhappy girl.“ © I beg your pardon, Sir, for interrupting you, but I have no person under my roof that answers to your description; you are therefore, I presume, in an error as to the lady you allude to.” © I believe not, madam, (answered he, rather havghtily ;) I come here to demand my niece, Matilda Weimar, and through her to discover a servant with whom she wert off, alter

after robbing me.” © Robbing you, Sir! take care what you say; you shall bring previs of your affertions, and then we will answer you: at present Mils Weimar is | safe in our protection, and you will find, Sir, she has powerful friends to guard her, and ecxpose those who are her enemies.” © Tis

well, madam, (replied he) you will hear

from me in another manncr.” He bowed

e the Route. N

l She was glad he did not sce the Marquis, at the ime time she felt they were in an au k- Ward perdicamenrt.

Soon after the Count De Bouville and his sister called on her. My dear madam, | (feid the after) how docs our charming young frien! ? we __ been quite unhappy for her indisposition.“ „ You are very obliging, my dear Adelaide; she well de- serves your solicitude, and I am sorry to say she is really very ill this morning.“ * III! (cried the Count, eagerly;) O, madam, has oF ou * 5

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 159

she any advice—has shea physician ?”” © Yes, (replied the Marchionels ;) I hope there is no danger, —her spirits are hurried and she | is a little feverish.“

The Count walked about the room. His sister said, © Will you pardon me, madam, if I tell you the strange reports we have heard this morning?“ © I shall thank you for the communication, (replied the other.) © This morningearly Mademoiselle De Fontelle called on us, O heavens! (faid she, eagerly) no wonder Miss Weimar fainted Jast night; why she torns out to be an imposter, and a shocking creature. Who, Miss Weimar, (cried my brother) imapc{i;ble, madam ; go and circulate that envious tale some where else, there will be no credit given to it here. You are very realy, Sir, to insult your friends, and take the part of rangers; but I assure you(added she, haughtily) I have no cause to envy Miss V/eirnzr, and should be extremely unhappy to be thought . like her. Sceing my brother sinile contemptuoussy. e Well,

Well, (sad she) 'tis of little consequence to me if ker uncle is come in search of her; if she run away from his house with a servant, and jointly robbed him of his property, and | now haus contrived to impose herself upon the Marchioness for a different person; perhaps she may elope with one of her servants next, the thing is nothing to ine, only people ought to be careful how they introduce im- proper perscns into a circle, though they _ are beauties and objects of enty-envy indeed! 1 shall never forget the pretty idea. She ung out of the room, leaving us almost petri- fied wich astonishment. When my brother recovered, he faid, What I say now, (cried the Count, incerrupting her) that I will stake my life upon the honour and integrity of the young lady—that ingenuous countenance fpcalss a heart which never knew deception. ö ou judge rightly, my dear Count (said the Marchioness:) I have not time to explain things now, but be assured she is truth and virtue itself; the servant, a worthy and very Rs old

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 161

old man, who knew her from her infancy, is now in my house; he fled with her to save her from dishonour, from the wretch who now pursues her." Heaven and earth! | (cried the Count) where is the miscreant, 1 will haunt him through the world for daring to asperse her character." © Softly, my good friend, (returned she, smiling) your interfe- rence will do no good; the Marquis and my- self take upon us to do her justice ; mean time you may pay him a visit, and your sister shall just step up and see my patient, provided she is very filent." © My best respects, Adelaide, (said he.) © O, doubtless, (re- turned the Marchioness) weshall make abun- dance of compliments and fine speeches, but

it will de by dumb show, for J prohibit

talking."

Being let blood, had checked the fever, and Matilda lay tolerably composed when her friends entered; she rejoiced to see them, and held out her hand. Yes, (said

the Marchionels) we can take hands, but you

are

162 CA®TLE OF WOLFENBACH,

are only to tel! us how you are." „ Much better, wy dcarest, bet. © Enough, enough, (said the Lady) that's all we wanted to know, fo now Kits and part—by and bye ' you may mect 2gein. My brother, dear Miss Weimar, sends his beit refpects."". * Very

well that is sufficient." © Heaven bless you, |

my love, go to cep and compose vour mind." 5

"The ladies returned to fs parlour ; the

Marquis and Count were there, and expressed great joy to hear so favourable an account of — Mat Ida's health. The Marquis entered into __ a little detail of her story, and strongly en- gaged the affection and compassion of the Count and his sister. © I tell you this in

Cee, (aud the Marquis) remember i

goes no farther; we have powerful reasons not to extend our confidence, nor withdraw our protection from a friendless orphan re- commended to us by a valued: :tion," 1

admire, I honour you og the Count, with _ earnestness ;) ao not gi e her up to this pre- = rended

CA3TLE OF WOLFENBACH, 1563

tended uncle: but how shall we silence ca- lumny, how stop the tongue of that ma- lignant girl? We must act as cir- cumstances mall require; I will call at Ma- dame Le Brun's mys{clf, and assure them there is a mistake in the affair, and warn them not to speak ill of my protegee, for I will defend her with my lite and fortune." 5

They now separated ; Mademoiselle De Bou- ville promised to return in the evening, and the Marchioness went out to pay a few visits, and see if the scandal was extended among her acquaintance ; to her great mortitication she was told of it every where, some condoled with her on being so greatly imposed upon, others affected to resent such a creature should have the assurance to get herself introduced into company, but all agreed, They saw what she was, nothing but a little pretender, who was a ftranger to good breeding; no body was deceived but the Marchioness, for every one could {ee art and duplicity in her face." Thus,

164 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. Es Thus {he, w'.o che pre ceding evening was the most deitghiful, most engaging, most ele-

gant girl in the world, by one strokc of slander,

was deprived Gi every pertcction, and admi-

ration turned into contempt; so prone is the

world to believe ill, and so little dependence

is there to be placed on the breath of praise.

The Marchioness was exceedingly exaspe-

rated; she defended her young friend with warmth ;—she congratulated the ladies on their ingenuity, in finding every virtue and every vice, every charm and deformity in the

same person, within the space of eight and

forty hours. Their candour and good nature was highly commendable (she said) and the compliments they paid her en : were rm "y flattering.”

is this ironical manner she treated the tit-

tle-rattle of the envious and malicious; but, driving to Madame Le Brun's, she met her _ niece, just arrived before her, from circulating her scandalous tale: a a malignant Joy danced in

CASTLE OF WOLF2NBACH. 159

in her eyes, though she was a little confused when she saw the Marchioness.] beg the _ favour of speaking to you, Mademoiselle, (said the Lady;) and taking her seat, © I find I am to thank you for presuming to propagate reports to the disadvantage of my relation: you would do Well to recollect, Mademoiselle, there is no character so truly despicable as the slanderer and tale bearer ; you should allo be „ well inforined of the facts you relate, and of their origin in truth, before you asperse cha- racers, or subject yourlelt to the mortisication of being disappointed in your views, and of having the calumny retorted on yourself. 4 « What views do ycu mean, madam,—what is it to me whether Miss Weimar is the run- away niece of Mr. Weimar, or not?” “ Your views, (answered the Marchioness,) are pretty evident ; but permit me to observe the Count De Bouville's esteem will never be obtained at the expence of veracity and gene- rosity, and it would have been more becoming a young lady of liberal sentiments, in at least a doubttul cate, to have a Tote her judg-ment,

166 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, ment, and have inclined to the good-natured

side of the question ; but I am now to inform you, the whole tale ou have, with so much avidity, related, is false ; that Miss Weimar is as irreproachable as she is beautiful, and ina short time the Marquis will severely punish and ex- pose those who dare assert any thing to the - prejudice of that young lady: you will do well, Mademoisclle, to profit by the informa- tion.“ Saying this, she arose, with a look of contempt, and returned to her carriage.

When she met the Marquis at dinner she repeated what she had heard, and her beha- viour ia consequence. The Marquis ap-

Plauded her proceedings. | 8 When I left you this morning, (said he) _ crossing the street St. Honore, I met Monheur Du Versac, with an»ther gentleman. * This is the Marquis De Meltort, (said he,) and im-

mediately added, permit me to introduce to your Lordship, Mr. Weimar; we were go— ing to your hotel.” © Has Mr. Weimar

any

CASTLE OF WOLFEKBACH.. 1 any business, Sir, with me.“ „I have, Sir, (he replied, in a veiy calm tone of voice;) I had the pleasure to wait on the Marchioness, but there was a misunderstanding took place.“ « Suppose we step home to my house, (said Du Versac.“ We agreed so to do. When seat- ed, © Now, Sir, (addressing Mr. Weimar) I am prepared to hcor whatever you please to fay.” He then began a long fory of taking Matilda from her iniancy, after the death of her father and mother ; the tenderness he had treated her with, the education he had given her, his design of giving her his moderate for- tune; mentioned a varicty of circumstances to prove his affcctiop, and her subsequent flight with Albert, taking a horse from his stable, and decciving him with false pre- tences. As her uncle, he had a right to claim her: her behaviour to him made her unde- serving protection, but duty to his de- ceased brother called vpn him to protect his child; and he would therefore forgive the er- ror she had been drawn into, and receive her as kindly as ever, When he stopt, I replied,

5 85 . She:

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« Sir, there is much plausibility, also, I be- lieve, great truth in what you have related: you must not be offended if I also state facts exactly as Miss Weimar has related them to us. I repeated her story; when I came tothe _ circumstance of the conversation between him and Agatha in the summer-housc, he started and turned pale, but quickly recovered. I added, that meeting accidentally with a relation of mine, she was recommended to our house as an afy lum, v hich it was my determination to af.

ford her, and I shouid suppose no uncle of |

| her's could object to her fituation with the Marchioness, w ho was desirous of considering her as an adopted daughter.“ © I am no longer at a loss to account for her conduct, (replied he ;) and so far from blaming, I must applaud 1 her adherence to those ideas of virtue and propriety I had always inculcated in her mind; but she ought not to have taken up things lightly, nor have proceeded to such lengths upon hearing imperfectly a desultory conversation, which, if she had heard the

whole, and its true meaning, she would have | formed

CAsTTE OT WOLFENBACH. 169

formed a very different judgment of; there- fore, at the same time I applaud her discre- tion, I blame her precipitant decision : how- ever, my Lord, I beg the favor of seeing my | niece alone for an hour in your house, before I take any steps equally as disagreeable to my-

self as to her and your family, I told him 1 would consult Miss Weimar, without the least interference on my part, and transmit to him this evening her answer.“

e This is indeed a very complex piece of business, (replied the Marchionels) but I really think she ought to see him, and I shall conceive it no breach of honor to be

within hearing of their conversation ; for although not a shadow of a doubt remains with me concerning her truth and innocence, yet I wish to have an investigation of the affair, that I may openly assert both, from athorough conviction of 1 i.” When dinner was over she went to Matil- da's apartment. She was infinitely better, {VO ks on and

170 CASTLE OF WOLFEN sach.

and proposed getting up in the evening. Aster a thousand expressions of kindness and assurances of protection, she mentioned the meeting between Mr. Weimar and the Mar- quis, related the conversation that took place, and his wish to see her.

Matilda clasped her kak. « Oh! I can- | not, cannot see him! I could not be mistaken. | His words,—his actions previous to the scene I overheard in the summer house, leaves no | | doubts upon my mind; yet I ought not, I | cannot involve my benefaftors in trouble: instruct me, tell me, dearest madam, what! - ought to do, and that J will do,—your opi- 8

nion shall decide for me. Why then, m

dear Miss Weimar, I think you had best

hear what he has to fay.” Not alone, madam.” Mr. Weimar is desirous of be- ing alone with you.” © No, my dearest

of your supporting presence.” Since you are so desirous of it, (said the Marchioness) and think you can see him to-morrow, I vii

a Ea "on |

lady, that cannot be; let me entreat the favor

CASTLE OF wor rEN BACH. 171

appoint him to attend you in the library, the closet adjoining having a very thin partition,

I can distinctly hear your conversation, and he will then have no restraint on his

words or behaviour. 2

This plan being 3 a note was ail. 5 patched by the Marquis to Mr. Weimar, signifying that the young lady would be glad to see him the next day, at e if her health | would | perm.

"Page dit deded os hntots ah.

the power he might exert over her, yet it was

a justice due to her character and friends, that

she should confront him; she therefore endeavoured to reconcile herself to the meeting,

though she knew it would be extremely pain- ful to her.

Mademoiselle De Bouville payedhera visit in

dame evening: she was sitting up, and, from the = 3 quantity of blood taken from her in the morn- | ing, and the little hectic which the fever oc-

1 casioned, -

casioned, she looked uncommonly delicate and beautiful. After saluting her in the most _ affectionate manner, she said, © I am charged

with a thousand compliments from my bro-

ther; he has been extremely uneasy, but if he Vas to {ee you this evening, I think he would have but little cause for it ;—without any | flattery, my dear Miss Weimar, you look |

quite enchanting," =

Matilda Gniled, but it was not a smile of

| pleasure. Ah! thought she, if the Count, if | Mademoiselle De Bouville knew me, for what Tam, a poor dependant, without friends or fa- _ should have few Pretensions t to then

Adelaide took notice of her dejection,—

3 ome, my sweet friend, recover your

spirits. | My brother will be anxious for my

return; you must enable me to give a good | report, if you are desirous he should have rest | to- night.. © If I am desirous (replied poor | Matilda 50) is there any thing I more sincerely |

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 173

wish than happiness to you and your amiable brother?“ © Well then, (answered Adelaide) you must make haste to be well.” * You are very obliging, (returned Matilda ; 5 I am much better, and should be very ungrateful to my friends if I did not exert mysclt against | trifling indis positions.“

Adelaide surveyed her with admiration and compassion, her generosity felt an increase of affection from the knowledge of her misfor- tunes, though she was cautious not to drop a word that might give the other any suspicion

that she was acquainted with them.

They parted at night with mutual reluc-

tance, and Matilda endeavoured to compose

her spirits for the dreaded interview that was to take place the following day. |

When the Marchionek entered her apart- ment next morning sne found her dressing, and much better, which gave her great satis- faction : she encouraged and applauded the

13 resolution

174 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. resolution she had assumed; but when the time came, and the name of Mr. Weimar was brought in, she could scarcely keep from

fainting. The Marchioness retired to the closet, and he entered; Matilda rose to re-

ceive him, he hastily advanced and embraced | | her, « My dearest child, I rejoice to see you, cruelly as you have used me, miserable as I have been from apprehensions of your safety, 1 am happy to see you under such respectable Protection.“ He seated her and himself, _ "0 "I's Marquis De Melfort, (faid he) has e- plained to me the cause of your absenting | | yourself from my house, therefore I am nei- ther {urprised nor angry; but surely you act= ed precipitantly, and on very flight grounds, 5 the conversation you only partially heard and üttle understood.” © I heard enough, Sir, | (.iaid Matilda, with some spirit) to inform me | I was not in safety in a house with a woman of Agatha's principles.” © You entirely | mistook the affair, (interrupted he) but before | TI explain myself farther, tell me, Matilda, is there no gratitude, no affection due to the man

wha

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 175

who has supported you from childhood, who took you, a helpless infant, without a : friend to protect you from every evil incident

to deserted infancy ? Did I not treat you, love you, as a blessing sent from heaven?”

Matilda was drowned in tears at this repre- sentation of her forlorn state; with a deep | sigh the answered, Yes, Sir, all this I ac- knowledge, and heaven can witness for me

2” how grateful I was for your kindness, until

my delicacy was alarmed by freedoms I thought improper from our near connexion.”

| « One question more, (said he ;) should

5 you have been offended at those freedoms,

(as you call very innocent attentions,) had they been offered by a man who — to make you his wife m

Matilda started, « His wife ! 'tis a strange

+ | question, but I answer, yes, Sir, I should; for

confined as my knowledge of mankind was,

nature and decency had taught me the i impro-

muy of such behaviour," 14 « Perhaps,

of fight ; she took up the parcel, and found

e Perhaps, (said he) you carried your ideas

of propriety too far ; but doubtless you erred on the right side. But now, Matilda, I am going to disclose a secret, known only to Agatha, and which occasioned the conversation you misun- derstood and miltepresented—T am not your

uncle." © Good God! (cried Matilda) who, or what am I then?" * That, (replied

he) is a question I cannot resolve, I wish for

your ease I could do fo ; but what I do know, :

1 will repeat. One day I was in the garden, when Agatha came running to me with a bundle in her arms, © Lord, Sir, the strang- | est thing; I am sure I am as innocent as the babe itself, where it came from, or to whom it belongs, but Lord, Sir, here is a child sent you from God." © Very much surprised, I

uncovered a cloth, and beheld the most beau

tiful infant I ever saw. I asked her how she | came by it: this was her account; she heard a knocking at the door, and going to open, it, | | fawa man at a distance, running very fast and |

a bundle at the gate; the man was soon out

the

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 77

the child, wrapped ina dimity petticoat, and two or three cambrick handkerchiefs,

but no cloaths, and apparently just born ; a bit of paper was pined to the petticoat, on which was wrote, with a pencil, © Look on this child as committed to your care by the hand of Providence; be careful of it, and you will not repent it.” I was very much struck (con- tinued Mr. Weimar) by such an extraordi- | nary circumstance, but resolved to do my duty: a nurse was provided in the house; 1

had it baptized and named 1 it Matilda. I faid

it was my niece ; having then no other ser= vant but Agatha, and she being faithful to my wishes, as my niece the beloved adopted child was brought up, and had masters of every kind to instrut her. Years rolled away, no enquiry was ever made, and I be- gan to see a thousand graces in this young creature, which insensibly warmed my heart, and taught it what it was to love, a lesson I had never learnt till then. When J returned from France my protegee was improved in

| beauty and ow she Knew little of men,

mh 5 and

| and she was less known by them; I deter- mined to acquaint her with the secret I have

related, and to offer her my hand. I deli-

| berated some time in what manner to dis-

close it, and was consulting with Agatha how

to make the discovery when you overheard

the conversation, mistook the purport of it,

and in consequence of that mistake gave me inexpressible misery. FP

Here Mr. Weimar stopt. Matilda, who

fat almost breathless and stupified, fetched a

deep sigh, « Then I am an outcalt, a for-

saken orphan, without friends or protectors 1 Gracious heaven! the offspring of guilt per haps, for who but guilty wretches would give | up their child to strangers?" A friendly burst

of tears relieved her beating heart.

* Take 3 : my dearest Matilda 'H

permit me to offer you my hand, my heart, 1

will be your protector through life; I con-

sent that you shall consult the Marquis and

Marchionefs ; you shall make your own terms

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 179

terms for Albert, whom I shall . value for his fidelity to you. If I have mentioned you in Paris as my niece, it was to avoid disagree- able questions, and keep your secret. The marriage may be private or public, as you like, no one will dare interfere with my wife. Think of every thing ; I will return to-mor- row for your determination. He arose, he kissed her hand, and left her motionless ; in the chair.

The moment he quitted the room the Marchioness entered, and, embracing the warm statue, as she called her." I have heard all, my dear Matilda, and am equally astonisned with yourself: his tale is plausible, perhaps true. Whoever were your parents, I should suppose them dead, from their not

4 making enquiries during so many years after

their child. Some praise is doubtless due to

Mr. Weimar, for his care of you; his first

motives were certainly benevolent ones ; whether he latterly intended you honourable, es :

Pp OS _ we

180 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH-.

or not, cannot be known ; he offers to marry you now, in the face of your friends; tis _ Possible you might mistake the tenor of the _ conversation you overheard—at any rate he

seems now ready to act with honour. All

this I say for Mr. W. eimar,—justice demands I should be impartial; now, on the other

hand, if your heart is repugnant to his offers; | af you cannot be reconciled in your own | mind to the account he has given you; if the

gratitude due to his care of you in early life | is effaced from your heart by his subsequent =

conduct, and you cannot overcome the dif- | gust it inspired, never think of accepting his hand, to render both wretched. I have adopted you, I love you as a child, and will Protect you; in me you shall find the mother | you have lost: fear not therefore, my dearest

Matilda, to decide as your heart and judg- ment fhall direct; do nothing hastily, take this day and night to reflect and determine with your whole heart to-morrow. I shall, with your permission, inform the Marquis of this extraordinary story, and I am fure his | affection

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 181

affection for you will coincide with mine.“ e

Whilst the Marchioness was speaking Ma- tilda had time to recover herself from the astonishment she had been thrown into, and still more from the humiliating idea, that she vas indeed a friendless orphan, and owed un- bounded obligations to a man she had for some time past looked on with detestation.

When the Marchioness was 1 the un- happy girl took her hand, and kissing it, with a

flood of tears, © My dear, my generous be- nefactress, do you and the Marquis decide for me, I am incapable of judging for myself; I feel what I owe to Mr. Weimar's humanity J honour him for his benevolence and charity to a poor deserted infant; he is a good master, and beloved, as I have heard, by his tenants; I may have erred, I may have con- demned him. wrongfully, yet my heart, my judgment is not on his side. Condescend, | dear madam, to direct me; I will take this

day

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: day and night to reflect on every thing [have heard; have the goodness to inform me in

the morning of your own and the Marquis's opinion, and I hope I shall act so as not to for- feit the friendship you have honoured me

with. of

The Marchioness embraced her with ex-

pressions of tenderness, and repaired to the Marquis, to whom she repeated the preceding conversation, ”

He was very much surprised and puzzled.

We cannot controvert any of the circum- stances he has related, and his behaviour to | her, from the moment she was thrown on his protection, deserves the greatest praise ; one would scarcely believe a mind capable of such good actions could entertain designs so con- trary to honour and the tenor of his former

conduct; his offers now certainly prove his affection, but I own I should be sorry to see

such a lovely young creature compelled to

caAsTTE OF WOLFENBACH. 183

be sacrificed to a man older perhaps than her father: If there is a mystery in her birth,

time yet may bring it to light; however she must determine for herself, but let it be free from the idea of necessity, for on our pro- tection she may rely."

| The Count De Bouville, anxious for Ma- tilda's health, and the result of the expected conference, made the Marchioness an early visit; as he had been informed of the pre- ceding circumstances, they made no scruple to relate every particular that had taken place that morning. The Count was very much shocked; he scarcely knew the nature of the sentiments he entertained for Matilda; tis true, he admired and esteemed her, from the little observations he had found an op- portunity of making on her character, but he possessed roo much good sense to be violently attached on so slender an acquaintance ; yet he could still less bear the idea, that she should marry Mr. Weimar. A man of quality in France to marry an obscure young woman, without

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1 FOR - - ou

without even knowing the authors of her be- ing, would, he knew, incur everlasting con- tempt ; yet, were the Germans less proud? but then Mr. Weimar was an elderly man, accountable to no one, lived in the country, detached from the world, and could do as he pleased. In short, he saw insuperable dif- | ficulties attending an attachment to Matilda from himself, and the certainty of it gave him more pain than in prudence he ought to have indulged. He had forgot himself, his

long reverie surprised his Gems. ; the Mar-

quis interrupted it by asking his sentiments on the story he had heard? He said it was im- possible for him to form an opinion; the ac- | count, with respect to her birth, was uncom- mon, yet nevertheless it might be true, such

things had happened, and were not impos-

sible; but if Mr. Weimar was just in every particular, although he had a claim upon her gratitude, he could not see he had any to her person, contrary to her

mclinations.” The Marquis said, © Your sentiments exatl co- incide with mine, therefore the young lady

must

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 185

must determine for herself ; for my own part have little doubt but her birth is noble; her person, her figure, the extraordinary natural understanding she possesses confirms my opi- nion that so many graces seldom belong to a mean birth or dishonest connexions.” © There may be some truth in your observation, (said the Marchioness) but we have seen and' heard of many instances where a noble soul has been inclosed within a vulgar body, and _ honour, fidelity, integrity and attachment are seen in a thousand examples among people of the lowest class, though I grant not in com- mon to be met with; but then every one has not had the cultivation nor accomplishments of Matilda.” «© Ah! (cried the Count) your remarks are undoubtedly very just; but there are so many natural graces in this

lady, that I think with the Marquis, they never could spring from a mean or improper connexion.” I think so too, (replied she) but be that as it may, she shall always e com- 7 mand our ena and protection.

She

A OW Tp OE TS : 2 2

” * 1 _ 82 — S re Be Paws

She had scarcely faid this before a servant

entered withaletter, she looked with surprise at the post-mark, and withdrew to the window, | the had no sooner opened it and perused two or three lines, than she exclaimed, © Gracious Heaven ! in England, O, my Lord, the | Countess is safe in England? The Count De Bouville instantly took leave, nor did they attempt to detain him, but engaged his return in the evening, with his mother and sister, if they were

disengaged. |

He had no le left the room, than she -

_ eagerly read the contents of her letter as fol- lows : 1

« My dearest sister will, I know, rejoice

ben I cell her I have escaped from the worst 5 of evils, perhaps from death, and am safe in

the protection of a charming English Lady,

| Mrs. Courtney, at her villa about three miles from London. The uncertainty whether you have left France, or on your journey to

| England, prevents me from being more ex-

plicit; 3

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 187

plicit; if you have not left France, write un- der cover to Mrs. Courtney, Harley-ftreet, Cavendish-{quare, If this letter is sent after you, hasten to me, dearest fister,—O, what | happiness I promise myself in embracing my dearest friends. I hope Miss Weimar is with you; the uncertainty has given me great concern. Do not delay an hour to sa-

tisfy your affectionate sister and friend.

Victoria,”

« Good God! I thank thee (cried the |

- Marchioness) this is blessed news indeed.”

« I rejoice with you, my dearest love, (said the Marquis) but pray Seen the news to your lovely protegee.”

She hastened to Matilda; she was reclin- ing on her arms, thrown across the table, and weeping bitterly. ©* My charming girl do not give way to sorrow, heaven, in its

own good time, will send you relief; here is an

|| instanceto prove it, (giving her the letter.) 4 - Poor Matilda raised her drooping head, and

hastily

hastily looked it over, clasped her band with Joy, © O, my dearest madam, this is happi-

ness indeed—let me not be fo selfissi to mourn |

on a day of joy like this.“ « Let this, my dear young friend, be a lesson to yourself,

never despair; to misfortunes and contradic- | tions to our best wishes, we are all liable, and all must expect; none are exempt from the calamities inciderit to human nature; to bear those inevitable evils with patience, to acquire resolution and fortitude under them, and to look forward with hope, that you may one day be delivered from them, will blunt the ar- rows of affliction, and enable you. to 1 |

them with „

> My 3 my churning monte,” ; Fo (cried Matilda) I will try to profit by your advice ; the Countess and yourself shall be |

my great examples—dear lady, how kind to

think of the poor Matilda; I with I could see her, but alas !—" No sighs, (faid the

Me} ou must and shall be cheerful | this St

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 18g

this day; "HOPE, my dear girl and all may be well yet.”

They descended to the parlour, and in the afterroon had the pleasure of hearing Joseph was just arrived with the servant. « Let him come in, (they all cried, as with one breath.) He entered; poor fellow, he fell on his Knees and wept, it was difficult to say whether with joy or sorrow—he felt both; the sight of Miss Weimar remembered him of Bertha's dreadful fate, though he re- joiced to see her safe. The Marchioness

and Matilda ran to raise him. Welcome, my good Joseph, (said the former) you are come on a happy day.” © My dear friend, (said the latter, pressing his hand) do not give way to grief; we have all our sorrows, but we have our pleasures too, and I have news for you, Joseph. Our good lady is alive, and safe from the power of her enemies.” « Heaven be thanked, (faid the old man, wiping his eyes) this is blessed news indeed ; and to lee you safe too, my dear young ma- dam,

dam, makes me happy, though I can't for. get poor Bertha: alas, your ladyship, she | was a good and faithful wife; she knew no- thing about my my —_ soul, she kept no | secrets from me.” He seemed to feel a re

ook for his secresy.

„ ce My honest 1 (said the Marquis) your kindness and fidelity to our dear sister deserves reward; in this house you may rest | free from care the remainder of your days, | and I will settle two hundred Hvres e on you | 2

yearly besides,”

8 3 ofeph again FR on his knees, © God | bless your honour! God bless the dear | ladies!” And he hurried out of the room, tears of thankfulness running down his cheeks. |

Good creature! (cried Matilda, wiping | is eyes) may the rest of your lie be peace-

ful _ F.

They 5

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 191 They now again recurred to the subject of the Countess and her letter. The Mar- chioness expressed her wishes to set off with all possible expedition to England, and within ten days it was fixed they should depart. Matilda heard this determination with a sigh, which did not pass unobserved, though they forbore to notice it; they concluded however ' she should be left to herself until the next morning, that their opinions might not ap- pear to influence her. For herself,

the idea of her obscure birth was a severe mortifica- tion; she considered her friends De Bouville and De Bancre as so much her superiors, that she could no longer treat them with that easy familiarity she had been accustomed, though | the little thought the former was acquainted

1 wich her whole story.

In the evening came the Countess of Bou- ville and her family, with Madame De Nancy and her sister. After the first com-

pliments, Bless me! (cried Mademoiselle - De Bancre) what in the world, ladies, have * 8

you done to Mademoiselle De Fontelle ; I met herthis morning, and pleading an engagement here as a reason for refusing her invitation, she flew into a violent rage, accused the Mar- chioness of treating her with rudeness un-

pardonable; and for Miss Weimar, she la- vished such a torrent of abuse on her, that had I not known her fixed aversion to all

| handsome women, and a small predilection in favor of a certain person, whose attentions she is fearful of losing, I should en been at

1 a loss to account for her acrimony.“

* 1. the lady has any _dislice, or Kar be

specting me, (answered Matilda, with evident | confusion) she does me great injustice ; *tis | imposlible I should ever injure her, or clash with any views she has formed.” © There

is no laying what her views may be, (said the Count) but I will venture to assert, there can be

no divided opinion concerning the merits of

| Miss Weimar and Mademoiselle De Fon- telle; and the jealousy of a mean mind, when

consciows of its deficiencies, is natural |

5 enough.” 6

CASTLE OF wor Ex RAC. 193

enough. 1 Come: come, (said the Mar- chioness) no scandal, my good friends: we cannot be hurt by malice, any more than we can be gratified by undue praises at the ex- pence of others.”

'T he uncommon spirits of the Marquis and 5

| Marchioness attracted observation, as well as ' the dejection of Matilda, which she attributed to ill health. The Count and his sister sym- |

1 pathized with her, and the former was so agi-

ated for the event of the following day, that be did not dare ask himself my he was so

8 much interested.

Matilda rejoiced when the evening con- cluded and she could retire to herself: she

was far from well; her anxiety in what man- ner she should answer Mr. Weimar distract-

cd her mind; she felt the strongest repug- | nance to become his wife—she was sure she. could not be happy with him; if she had | wronged him, he never could, she thought, | cordially forgive, nor should she ever look vol. 1. 3 h

up to him with confidence. She past a rest. less night, and arose ill and unrefreshed. She

entreated her friends to be present ; they at 1

first objected, but she was so extremely un- happy at their refusal, that they at length conserted to come in after his appearance, if

she {ent for them.

= His name was at length announced, and | he absolutely started at the alteration in her countenance. © The solemnity of your air, | my charming Matilda) gives me great un- | easiness ; how great will be my transport to | remove every cause of sorrow from your

heart, and see cheerfulness restored to your features. Have you acquainted your friends here with my communications?" „ I have,

Fir, (replied she, endeavouring to collect some |

firmness) but they decline giving any opi- | nion ; have you any objection to their being | present now? He hesitated; © I see no | | necessity for it—but as you please." She

then rung the bell, and requested the Marquis |

and his lady would do thera the favor of their | ot company

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 195 company. They entered, and after mutual compliments, and they were seated, Matilda

1 _ addressed herself to Mr. Weimar. © At the

time, Sir, when you permitted me to believe I had the honour of being your niece, although sensible of your kindness, and consci- ous of my obligations to you, for the care of my infancy, I have often taken my heart to task, and upbraided its want of gratitude ; what must I accuse myself of now, when I am informed that to your charity alone I am in-

| debtedfor the advantages I possess. O, Sir,

| never, never can I return what I owe you

least of all, by becoming your wife; tis an honour I do not deserve—" Pardon me for interrupting you, my dear Matilda: I dis- claim the name of obligation; you owe me no gratitude but for my affection; consider how many years you have been the delight, the darling of my heart, and now, when my

love is stronger than ever, am I to be thrown

off at once; have you no feeling for the wretchedness you doom me to for the re-

— * of my life? 0 Oh! Sir, vna can :

ka | m7

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_ 1 fay (answered Matilda ;) impressions once

strongly conceived are difficult to eradicate; the conversation I overheard 1s ever present

to my mind, and coull1 I forget that, then my reverence for my uncle would return, and 1

should shudder at the idea of a nearer con-

nexion. When I think of it, and _

Sir, I have endeavoured to think of it, an

unaccountable repugance makes the idea hor- r ble to me; yet after all, if you persist in wishing me to become your wise, I do not | think myself at liberty absolutely to refuse, 4 but I tell you candidly, I never can love you; | that though I Mil obey you, and do my | duty, I know I shall be miscrable, and in that persuasion surely 'tis impossible I can make

you happy. e I am sensible (said he) that

my age is against me, I cannot expect to be

loved like a young fellow, but my unremit- ting attentions to please will make me desery-

ing your esteem.” cc Well, Sir, (said Ma- tilda, hastily) it is fit you stould prefer your |

own happiness to mine, I have no right to re-

fuse, nor any way of discharging the obliga- | 5 „ tions

| CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. | 197

tions I owe you for the care of my early life, but by the sacrifice of the maturer part of it.“

Unable any longer to struggle with the orief and horror that opprest her, she burst into tears. Her friends felt for her, but were | as yet filent. Mr. Weimar took her hand and kissed it, Cruel Matilda, is this the re- turn for all my tenderness; but I do not CE prefer my own happiness to yours ; consider, | pardon me if I say, consider your fituation ; with all the charms you possess, such is the cruel prejudice against those who have neither friends nor family to protect and provide for them, that in France you could not hope or expect any proper establishment.” Hold, Sir, (faid she, with indignation) do not insult me; I know what I am, and since I am un- worthy of an establishment in France, I never will have one in Germany. No, Sir, you have | now convinced me, if I cannot honour you 1 | oughtnot to degrade you. I will retire to a | convent: I will become a lay-sister, tis per- haps the line Providence intended for me; . „„ be

198 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

be that as it may, you have convinced me] ought not, nor I solemnly declare I never | will be your wife.“ She spoke with a force | and spirit as surprised them all. Do not | be rash, Matilda; I offer you a handsome | fortune; you shall no longer be confined in | the country, as my wife, you shall have a | house at Berne, at Lausanne, or where you please ; every pleasure shall attend you ; the Marquis himself shall secure your future for- tune: do not be offended for trifles, and what

never was intended as an insult; trust to my | love to create an interest in your heart.” | « No, Sir, (answered she) the die is cast; a |

little while since I thought, if you defired it, | I ought to be your's; but if you can stoop. to degrade yourself by a connexion with a | friendless deserted orphan, I never

will owe

the obligation to any man, nor have the 3 chance of being upbraided, that I belong to nobody. Pardon me, my good friends, the

trouble [have given you, a few days hence I | will hide myself for ever.” She arose to | leave the room. Stop, madam, (said Mr. |

Weimar) |

GASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, - 199

Weimar ;) since nothing can prevail on you

to accept my hand, at least permit me to tell you, you have no right to dispose of yourself without my permission; you were committed

to my care, doubtless by your parents; you may one day be reclaimed; I am answerable for the trust reposed in me, and with me I shall insist upon your remaining till those to whom you belong appear to claim you.“

Matilda sunk back in her chair, overwhelm- ed with horror; he looked furious with passion; the Marquis and his lady were perplexed and chagrined, at length the former faid, © With- out the smallest intent of contesting your rights, Sir, I have patiently attended to what has passed between this young lady and your- self; the Marchionels and I have been scru- pulously exact not to give our opinion, much less advice on the subject ; but now, since she. has resolutely made up her mind, you certainly have too just a sense of what is owing

; to yourself, to persist in addressing her; taking chat for granted, and that you think it impro-

"* per

200 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

per she should become a Nun, I request it as a favor, that Miss Matilda may be permitted to spend a few months with us ; should any

person appear to claim her, I trust it will be |

no dishonout to have her found. in my pro- | tection ; and I pledge my honor she shall form | no marriage or engagement under our care, but return to you as she now is.“ „ My | Lord, (returned Mr. Weimar) I must con- sider of this request, and she will do well to

_ consider and repent her rash determination; |

it she does, I will receive her with open arms. f

3 trust her to your honor, and shall 3 ü

row wait on you with my decided opinion.“

With a * but * bow, he left the | |

room.

By. The Marchioness was supporting Matil- |

da's head upon her shoulder. © Look up, *

my dear girl, be composed, he is gone.“ Thank heaven! (faid she) but my head is

very bad, and with your leave I will lay down |

an hour or two.” © Do fo, my dear, (re- Plied her friend; 3) and calling the servant to |

attend 1

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 20 |

attend her, she was conducted to her apart- ment.

When she left the room the Marchioness aid, © Mr. Weimar's conduct appears very | strange, and unbecoming a man of his years; I know not what to think; had he not inju- diciously mentioned her birth she would cer- tainly have accepted his hand, though I own it would have given 1 me pain had she done -

« For my part, (answered the Marquis) 1

J | marked him well during the whole {scene ; | | that he is excessively fond of her, 1 believe,

but 1 am not perfectly fatisfied, although 1 know not, what part to blame of his conduct; nevertheless she has now taken her resolution,

| and only force shall compel me to withdraw

my protection from a friendless orphan, whose situation is really deplorable. If the circum-

stances he related of her birth are true, I have

no doubt but one time or other a discovery

Vill take place to her advantage; all I wish at

Ks 0 Present

202 CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

present is, that she may accompany you to

England." Do you not think, (faid the | Marchioness) the Count De Bouville is very | fond of her?"] fear fo, (replied he;) | but you know Mr. Weimar's observations | vith respect to the obscurity of her birth are | founded on truth, I would by no means en- | courage a dangerous intimacy between them, | - which might be productive of misery to |

both; 'tis for that reason I should wish her

to leave Paris whilst the liking which I think +.

. mutual i is in its infancy."

. Doing the conversation of her generous | friends, the unhappy Matilda gave herself up | to extreme sorrow. If Mr. Weimar chose to _ exert his right over her, she saw no one to | whom she could appeal for redress ; but de- | termined as she now was never to become his wife, she was sensible she had little chance | of becoming the wife of any other man; to engage her benefactors in disputes and con- troversies with him

was equally repugnant to her inclinations, and without his consent it would |

fan. ew h! 8

CASTLE OF wolrENBAcn. 203

would be in vain to think of accompanying

her friends, as he might pursue her every

where. She knew she had many obligations

to him, but she could not return them in the way he was desirous of, which must make her

miserable, and of course give no happiness to

him. What then, (cried she, weeping) am! do do? there is no alternative but Mr. Weimar or a convent; the latter is my preferable choice, and if he persists to-morrow 6 | exerting the authority he claims over me, *

by will fly to that for protection.

: Having now ds up her mind, she dropt asleep, but her slumbers were broken and dis- |

turbed; and in about three hours she return-

ed to her friends, very little refreshed, but

was much gratified by their peculiar tender- |

ness and attention, and an increased respect in their manner proved they wished to restore her {clf-consequence, and make her at ease wich herself.

204 CASTLE or WOLFENBACH,

This is true benevolence ; ; 'tis the mode or confering favours that either obligesor wounds a feeling heart. Many people are generous, but they forget how painful it is to ask favors,

and think it quite sufficient if they give, let

the manner of giving be ever so ungracious, and their superiority ever so oftentatiously dis- played. Not fo the Marquis and his lady— they endeavoured to persuade her, they were

the persons obliged by her acceptance of their little civilities, and entered into all her con-

cerns with the affection and anxiety of her nearest relatives.

beni eke heart overloned; fprech indeed was not lent her, but her tears, her ex-

pressive looks forcibly conveyed the . 1

she could not utter,

. the meantime Mademoiselle De Fon- | telle was not idle; scarce a person the Mar-

cChioness was acquainted with, but knew she |

had taken a girl under her protection, who | had robbed and run away from her uncle, wich

CASTLE OF wol FEN BAC RH. 205

with a young handsome footman; and during two days circulation of the story Miss Wei-

mar was detected by her uncle in several low | intrigues, which he kindly forgave, till quite abandoned and incorrigible, she had taxen away all his gold and jewels, and came to

Paris with this fellow, whom the Marchioness herself had taken into the house.

e Ciel, (cries one, shrugging her

shoulders) a pretty story indeed; this is the discreet, the admirable Marchioness De Mel- fort, held up as a pattern to all the women in Paris.“ © Yes, I thought she was a won · der, (said another ;) abundance of art, to be sure she has; for I'll answer for it, this intri- gue with a footman is not the first by many; but, poor woman, her charms

are in their wane now, so the man is a substitute for the master.” © What, (cries a third) has the Mar- chioness herself an intrigue? Lord, didn't you

hear that? why this girl is only a cover to her

own amusements.” © Well, (said a fourth) I saw both the other night at Madame De Bouville's, and I am fure they are both ugly

enough

enough, notwithstanding the men 1 made such a fuss about chem. oo

Tas thus the scandal of Mademoiselle $ fabricating was increased and magnified among their generous and charitable acquaint- ance: like Sir Peter Teazle's wound, it was in all parts of his body, and by a variety of murderous weapons, when the poor man was unconscious of having received any himself, and could scarce obtain credit when he ap- peared in perfect health : fo unwilling is the good-natured world to give up a ftory that

is to the disadvantage of others. It was in

vain the Countess De Bouville, her son and daughter, Madame De Nancy and her sister, attempted to stop the scandalous tales; like lightning it flew from house to houte, and every one who had no character to lose, and others of suspected reputation only rejoiced to level an amiable respectable woman with

themselves. 1 8

The

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 207

The Count De Bouville was distracted; he flew from a set of envious wretches to the Marquis De Meltorts ; when he entered the

room he met the eyes of the lovely dejected Matilda, with such an expression of grief and softness in them, that it pierced his heart: she blushed, and withdrew them, with a sigh she

could not suppress. The Marquis had left

the room, the Marchioness was holding her young friend's hand with an affectionate tender air.

Aster the usual compliments he enquired particularly after Matilda's health; she could not trust, her voice just then to speak, the | Marchioness answered, © She is better, only a dejection on her spirits, which you must assist in removing: I was trying to persuade her to accompany me in a carriage to pay a few visits. The Count, alarmed at the inten- tion, replied, Paying visits might possibly

be too fatiguing, but an airing would surely be of service.” Well then, (said the Mar- | 5 chioness, forgetful of her Lord's caution,) you

40 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. ”

| shall accompany us.” The carnage, which

was in waiting, drawing up, he gladly escort- ed the two ladies to it, and took his feat very

quietly opposite to Matilda, who had hitherto | observed a profound silence. He contrived however to draw her into a little conversa- tion, and was charmed with her good sense

and sweetness of manners. The languor that pervaded her fine features, powerfully engaged the heart, and the Count could not help

thinking how happy that man must be who | was destined to possess fo great a treasure!

bo his reflection caused a fen alteration in his countenance; he grew thoughtful and un-

1 easy, when he was disturbed in his reverie by

an exclamation from the Marchioness, 15 Goodheavens ! what insvlence.” «© What's the matter, madam ?” * Bleks me, didn't you observe the two carriages that

past, in one was Madame Remini and her two daughters, in the other Madame Le Brun, her ' niece, and two others of my acquaintance. As the carriage past, I bowed and kissed my hand; they one and all returned a slight bow, and

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 229

and laughed in each other's faces : upon my word I never saw fuch rudeness." The Count who could too well account forthis behaviour, was however very much vexed. © Dear ma- dam (said he) such impertinent women are

scarce worth your notice, and only deserving .

contempt." That's true, Count, (replied | she) and henceforth I shall treat them as they deserve," |

As neither of the parties were in high spirits, their airing was not a long one, and they returned to the house as the Marquis en- tered it,

_ After they were seated the Marchioness was expressing her wishes to be in England. Does Miss Weimar accompany you? (ask- ed the Count.) © I hope fo, (replied the Marchioness.) The Marquis giving the Count a glance, they retired to the library, where the conversation of the morning, be- tween Mr. Weimar and Matilda, was re- peated, The Count felt indignation, pity, 9 | bY

and resentment ; he was delighted with Ma- tilda's spirit, yet most sincerely felt for her un-

happy situation. Good God, my dear

Marquis, what is to be done for this amiable girl?" „ hope, (he replied) we shall pre-vail on him to leave her with us, —to-mor-

row will determine; but take it how he will, I have this day made several persons ac-

quainted with his being the guardian of Ma-

tilda, and his offers of marriage in my pre-

| sence: the circumstance of a young lady's

flying from her guardian is nothing extraor= | dinary, and will, I hope, do away the scandal =

that has been propagated at her expence."

« You are very good, (returned the Count)

and I am sure she merits the esteem of all the world." He took his leave, under such a

contrariety of sentiments, and fo much real

concern for the unfortunate Matilda, that

when he returned to his fister she was quite alarmed, and asked a thousand questions rela- tive to her friend. When he had explained every thing, the gentle Adelaide felt equal concern, and lamented that her troubles were

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 21t

of a kind that placed it out of the power of their friendship to afford her — consola- tion or relief.

Whilst they were expressing mutual re- get Mademoiselle De Fontelle was an- nounced; she was received with a coldness that would have mortified any other person, but putting on a gay air, © Ah! Count, fo soon returned from your party; I did not ex- pect to find you here," © Perhaps, madam, had I known your intended visit, I might have been elsewhere." Very polite, upon my word, (said she, colouring deeply ;) your bro- ther, my dear Bouville, has acquired the English roughness of manners, by his tour to that country." © I hope, madam, (replied he, significantly) I have acquired the sincerity of that nation, at least, to speak as I think; and as a proof of it, were you not my sisters guest, I should be free enough to say, I so much detest the fabricators of scandal, that | Theartily rejoice when they are mortified by being obliged to hear the object of their envy 18

is as much {superior to them in every amiable quality of the mind, as she is in the

beauty of

| her perton, and that it will be her own fault only if she is not established in a more bril-

ant sicuation than her enemies can boast

With these words he left the room, with 2

look of scorn she could not support, but burst

into tears. © You brother has cruelly insult-

1 ed me, (faid she.) „ I am sorry for it, and for the occasion, (answered Mademoiselle De

Bccuville;) but indeed you have been too unguarded in your reports to the disadvantage of Miss Weimar." Name her not,

| (cried she) I hate her," That may be,

| (returned the other) nevertheless I hold it my duty to do her justice." She then briefly mentioned Mr. Weimar was only her guar- |

dian, and that he was come aster her to soli- cit her hand, the only thing for which she left him. His offers before the Marquis and his

lady, and the very great justice he did her Character, The malicious girl was my to

CASTLE CF WOLFEN BACH. 213

burst with spleen, but carried it off with an air. Upon my: word, (taid she) Mr. Weimar was himself the person who first men- tioned the affair to her disadvantage; and I suppose there is some point to carry, or some mystery in an affair where there are such con- tradlictions, which I do not comprehend, and which, I dare say, will deceive nobody, though I would venture to swear, hardly any person will concern themselves about the | Marchionels's little protogee, or whether the German 1s uncle or not to one whom no body knows." She arose, and deliring her re spects to her cery pclite brother, flounced out of the room.

Neitk er her ne nor absence was a sobject of regret to Adelaide, who only visit- ed her in compliance with the sashion of the ' runes, which is to go every where with the rest of the world, and assist in forming a crowd, without knowing or car ing ; {or three- fourths of the company.

Mean.

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Meantime the remainder of the day was spent at the Marquis's in the most affectionate

endeavours to conicle Matilda, and the

warmest assurances of love and attention to her interests. They all anxiously expected the return of Mr. Weimar next morning, as

the crisis on which her future — appear- 5 ed to depend.

At the appointed hour Mr. Weimar sent i in his name; her friends had persuaded Matilda to receive him alone, and send for them when

me thought it necessary. She had tried all te

morning to reconcile herself to his displeasure, but she was resolved to persevere in the re- solution she had formed of retiring to aconvent, if he made it neceflary.

Sel He entered the room with an air of kind ness and complacency, took her band and kissed it, Let me flatter myself, dearest Matilda, (aid he) that you are in better health and disposition than when J left you

yesterday. I have passed many uneasy hours 5

lately ,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 215

lately, indeed I may fay truly, from the day you was committed to my care, every hour of my life has been spent in anxiety on your account.“ © Do not, Sir, (said she) for hea- ven's sake, do not crush me with the weigh, of obligations I owe you: a poor

forlorn being, without family or friends, as you have justly told me, 1s entitled to no one s conside- ration; I am therefore beyond all possibility | of return at present; indebted to you for every thing, for the life I enjoy, hard is the ' task upon me to refuse any thing you request, but as this meeting 1s to decide once for all, pardon me if I say I cannot marry you, but this deference I owe to your fatherly care of me, I solemnly declare, that unless the authors of my being claim my first reverence, ; Inever will encourage marry man without your : permission ; ; this, Sir, is all I can, or ever will promise in your favour." © Ungrateful] girl! (cricd he, raising Eis voice) and is this all; this all you owe to a man who preserved your life, and bestowed his time and fortune to e 8 what you are?" „ Oh! that I had 3

216 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

I had died, (cried Matilda, in an agony) ra- ther then to live and be thus upbraided for favours I never can return; but my mind tells me you will one day be repaid for all ;— yes, I have a pre-sentiment I am no base- born unworthy offspring; one day, 1 may yet have the power to prove my sense of the obligations you reproach me with, and it ill be che happiest moment of my life." She had spoken with such vehemence as pre- cluded interruption; he was surpriled; « You are warm, Matilda, (said he, very calmly.) *I cannot help it, Sir, you have made me desperate ; ; I will seek peace and quietness in a convent. You will not per- mit me to accompany the Marchioness, (said | she, soitening, and tears running down her checks) and I think I'owe you that respect. not to go without your leave; therefore [have no other asylum but a convent to hope for." © Have I not a house, Matilda?" . Sir; I might have resided in my un- cle 5 house, but J cannot, with propriety, in your 'S,. when I have no such claim to boast

EASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 217

of." She arose and rang the bell; " Defire the Marquis and his lady to favour me with their company." When the servant retired, Lou are then determined, madam?" „ I

am, Sir.” © Thenso am I, and you may

take the coasequence.”

Her fiiends now entered; after they were | seated Matilda spoke, © I took the liberty to | request your presence, that you might be wit- ness to my declaration for the last time, That I never will be the wife of Mr. Weimar, nor without his consent, unless commanded by my parents, (alas! how unlikely at present thar hope) never to marry any other man. I: would be the joy of my heart to have been permitted to accept the honor of the protection you have offered me, but as I fear that cannot be, I will retire into a convent, 'tis the only

place of refuge for a poor unfortunate, friend- less being, without family, friends, or even a

name.“ She wept aloud, pronouncing those last words. The Marchioness sympathized

with her, and addressing Mr. Weimar,

vol. 1. J*

218 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. « Come, Sir, (said she) let me prevail on you to accede to our requelt, we ask it as a favor; permit Miss Matilda to be in our care for fix months; I engage my honor she shall re-

turn by that time free from every engage-

ment.“ He made no answer.

« Shall I entreat the favor of a few words in private, Sir, (said the Marquis.) They arose and left the room. Within a short

time they returned. Mr. Weimar, advancing to Matilda, „I have consented to oblige you, too ungrateful girl; I permit you to re- main with the Marchioness, but conditionally, that you write me constantly every occur- rence, nor presume to enter into any engage- ment without my acquiescence.“ To these. conditions, (cried she,

her eyes sparkling with

Joy) I most cheerfully subscribe. He looked

full of resentment at her, but taking a polite leave, declined an invitation to ftay dinner, and haftily withdrew, Les

The 5

The moment he left the room Matilda arose, and throwing her arms round the Marchioness, her grateful heart overflowing into tears, Oh! my dearest, my generous pro- tectress, how shall I ever return your good- _ ness?" © By loving me, my precious girl, as _ affectionately as I do you, (answered she, em- bracing her.) Observing the Marquis seem- ed musing, May J ask, my Lord, what occupies your thoughts?" * Yes, (replied be z) it is fit you should know; to be plain

then, I don't like Mr. Weimar; suspecthe

means to deceive us." Good God, (cried

Matilda, alarmed) how is that possible?"

Be it as it may, (answered the Marquis)

we will guard against any sinister design ; let

our young friend retire this night to some

place of safety." *© You do not surely ap- prehend he will apply for a lettre de-cachet? | (aid the Marchioness.) © I should not be surprised at it, (returned he.) © Then (faid she) we will set off instantly on our journey; Louison and Antoine can attend us; Marianne _ Hall take care of all our baggage here, and b follow

follow us, with Pierre, in a day or two, or come with you." © Tis a hasty, and rather an inconvenient scheme, (said he) but I have no other to offer at present." * O, what trouble I occasion to my friends," (cried Matilda.) „ Go to your apartment, set about packing, my dear girl; we must take a few necessaries with us, and set off immediate- ly after dinner." She obeyed. The Mar- quis set about the arrangements

for their jour- ney, and promised. to follow in four or five day x

Poor Joseph and Albert deplored their fate, in being too old to accompany the ladies, and were the only domestics left in the

house, who knew to what place they were going.

Every thing wes settled i in a few hours, it was given out in the family, they were go- ing into the country for a short time; even

| Marianne and Pierre knew no more for the | Pretent ; and the ladies, attended by Louison

and

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 121

and Antoine, set off, with all en : fortunately, Antoine had been in England once before, with a former master; he was therefore acquainted with the roads and ac-

commodations, and consequently extremely

useful.

The Mar quis found the following day he

had been right in his conjectures. Two. men carne to his hotel, armed with authority,

to demand a lady commonly known by the

name of Matilda Weimar, with a description _ of her person, then under the protection of the Marquis De Melfort. The Marquis was not at home; the men were informed the young lady was gone, with their mistress, in- to the country. They searched the house,

and being disappointed, waited till the Mar-

duis returned; he gave them the same infor- mation, and drew up a paper, signifying, that having taken the young lady under his pro- tection, by the consent of Mr. Weimar, Who

called himself her guardian, sne had accom-

L panied

222 CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

panied the Marchioness on a visit to some friends; that he pledged his honor for her salety, also to answer any charges that could be brought against her. With this declara- tion the men departed and returned no more;

but a person was observed to watch che house =

for some _ after.

The Manila made ho Secret to the Bou- ville family of the past transactions, and though they felt great regret for the loss of their friends, they acknowledged the event had jullabed their prudence 1 in the Lge. they had taken.

: = Count felt more than he dared ex- press, yet tried to subdue his feelings, from a consciousness of their impropriety to be in-

dauulged. His sister was to be married the

following week to Monsieur De Clermont, and her establishment engrossed much of his time = and attention,

The

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH, 223

** Marquis very soon arranged all his affairs, and within five days after the ladies left Paris, he followed them.

The Marchioness and her friend pursued their route, arrived at Calais, and crossed over to Dover, without meeting a single accident;

here they determined to rest, and wait for the Marquis. They were exceedingly fatigued with the expedition they had used, and were

f glad to fit down comfortably.

The Marchioness understood the English 5

language perfectly well, and spoke enough to make herself comprehended in common mat- ters; Antoine did the same, but as to Matil-

da and Louison, they knew not a single word

'till the Marchioness taught them to name a few necessary articles, and write down com- mon words.

Much sooner than they expected, they had the pleasure of embracing the Marquis, and

then learned che danger Matilda had escaped,

* and

NY: CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

and the duplicity of Mr. Weimar. She smuddered to think how near she had been bw --

misery, and her affection and gratitude to the

worthy pair, who protected her, was 18 tionably increased. _

The flowing 3 they left Dover, and by easy journies arrived at the Royal Hotel in Jermyn- street. A card was instant- ly sent off to Harley- street. The messenger returned, with a line only, from the Countess, that they should follow the bearer with all speed, and within ten minutes after the coach drew up. The Marquis hastened down to receive and conduct the ladies. The Coun- refs was almost breathless with joy; she flew vp stairs, and in a moment was in her sister's arms. Their mutual joy, their tears of af:

fection and transport excited sympathy in

every one. The Countess, recovering, led her sister to Mrs. Courtney, «© The two dearest friends I have on earth, (faid she). love each other for my sake now, you have congenial hearts.” She then warmly em-

braced Matilda. 8 This is the fist day of

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. | | 225

my V life (cried she, putting her hand 'to her heart;) I have all that I love 1n the world

about me, at least, all that I know, (added

she, with a suppressed sigh.)

Matilda, whose grateful heart expanded with delight, to sce all her friends happy, ex-

pressed her feelings with such a warmth of sa-

tisfaction as engaged all their affections. She

was introduced alio to Mrs. Courtney: and

when the first tumults of joy were over, the

Countels, taking that lady's hand, said, «Be- hold, my dear sister and brother, the pre- server of Victoria's life; to her goodness I am indebred for all the happiness I now en- joy, a vast debt of gratitude, never to be re-

paid.“ © You neither do me nor yourself | justice, (answered Mrs. Courtney ;) if you

do not think I am a thousand times overpaid for any little services, I have been so happy

to render you, by the pleasure of your com-

pany, and the honor you have procured me,

of knowing your respectable friends.” They

all gratefully bowed to this compliment, and

Lc then

226 | CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

then began to talk of their future residence, The Marquis wished to have a ready furnish- ed house, in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Courtney. She contended for the

pleasure of

accommodating them in hers; but this, for several reasons, they declined; and after a long

and friendly contest it was decided, a house should be procured for them in her neigh- bourhood, but that they should spend every

other week at Mrs. Courtney's villa, and until a a habitation was fixed on they would remain

at the hotel, where wy all fi upped _ - that —

«1 Aw (faid the Countess) you must all be very anxious to understand by what means I obtained my present happy situation, and I

am equally curious to know how my dear

Miss Weimar conducted herself from the time we last met ; but we will suspend curio- sity for the present, nor cloud our happy meeting with a recital of painful events.“ « You are right, my dear Countess, (said Mrs. Courtney ;) we are now all happily met,

CASTLE OF wol rEN BACH. 227

and tis of little consequence by what means it came about at ET.”

They passed a most delightful evening; and

parted with reluctance, after engaging to spend the following day in Harley-street, and Mrs. Courtney promising to search the neighbour- hood for a house to accommodate them.

„ What a charming woman is Mrs.

Courtney,” (faid the Marchioness.) © Ahl | (cried Matilda) I wish I understood English ;

I should like to speak to that lady in her own | language.” © You shall learn it, my love, when we are settled; but as the lady speaks

French remarkably well, * have no cause

for regret.”

They retired to rest, and the following morning had some trade's people with them, who are always on the watch to attend fo- reigners at the hotels. They purchased a

few rifles, but chose to have Mrs. Courtney's

ant oor Err

judgment before they bought we thing of consequence.

The Marquis, who had letters of credit on the house of Sir Thomas Herries, attended by the master of the hotel, went out to get cash, whilst the ladies attended to the business of the toilet, as they had engaged to be with their friends at a very early hour.

Soon after his return they drove to Har- ley- street, and were received with that affec- tionate cordiality, a thousand times more de- firable than diftant civility and respect: they met like ol triends, with congenial minds, to enjoy the pleasures of society. Mrs. Courtney told them, fac hoped she had already succeeded in her endeavours to procure a residence for them; ©and, fortunately, (faid she) only three doors from HENCE ; if you are inclined, we can now look at it.” The proposal was accepted. The house and furniture, which had been all new within the twelvemonth, and belonged to

Lord G—, who found | it convenient to go abroad

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 22g

abroad for his health ; was now to be let for a year certain, at 400l. per annum. They were extremely well pleased with the house, and readily agreed to the terms. Within two or three days it would be ready for their reception.

This being settled, they returned in high spirits, and spent a most delightful day in a | quiet — party.

The next day was appropriated to shop- ping and excursions round the town; and indeed, except sleeping hours, they passed their time solely together; Mrs. Courtney Having shut her doors to all company, 'till they were settled in their new abode : for the | same reason the Marquis deferred sending all his letters of recommendation, or waiting on the F rench Ambassador. =

The hin day after their arrival in Eng- land they took possession of their house; and having been fortunate enough to obtain a re-

| spectable

spectable woman, who was perfectly conver- fant in the French language, as housekeeper, they agreed to spend the following week in the country, previous to their being — ly announced 1 in town.

Nothing l occured until their ar- rival at Bellvue, Mrs. Courtney's little pa- radise: they were quite delighted with its

sttuation, and charmed with its polite and

friendly owner. The second morning after their residence nere, the Countess entered the Marchioness's dressing- room, (Matilda was with her ;) © Mrs. Courtney has juft got two or three neighbours with her; my presence

not being necessary, I have seized the oppor-

tunity, to make our respective communica- tions: I am sensible you must be very cu-tious, but I wish to hear my dear Miss Wei-

mar's story taken up from the visit she pro-

mised me, and I suppose intended paying me.“ Matilda very readily gave an account of every event at the castle. The Countess shuddered, and heaved a feh to the fate of poor Margarite, but did not interrupt till she ; V

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 231

came to the letter received from Joseph, of the fire in the castle, Bertha's miserable

fate and his escape. © Good. heavens! (cried: she) of what atrocious wickedness is that man capable! Poor wretch, what a long ac- count has he one day to make—God grant him repentance!" Matilda proceeded, and related every circumstance until their safe ar- rival in London. The Countess embraced the lovely girl, who had betrayed a sense of mortification in recounting the particulars of her birth. © I thank, my beloved sister (faid she) for the attention she paid to my request, and I am persuaded your charming society has amply recompensed her for the favor she did me." Lou judge right, my dear Vic- toria ; I am indeed the obliged person: but come, pray begin your narration, and take it up from the time you married that brute whose name you bear——" © But which I do not assume here (answered the Countess;) I pass for a Madame Le Roche, and as we neither go to court nor attend any public

= ** 1 have never been perucularly intro-

232 CASTLE OF wolrEN BAM.

duced, and am known among my dear Mrs. Courtney's friends, as a widow of some fashion, but small fortune, on a visit to her, and not

very desirous of much company; therefore you mult get your lesson by heart against we

return to town, Now, as to your request, you may possible think I am too observant of my

word toward an inhuman monster, when I de- clare that the sacred vows he drew from me full bind me to secresy, as to what occasioned

my being shut up in the Castle, and permit- ting the general belief of my death." ©* Good

God! sister, (cried the Marchioness) 'vows

forced upon you, under such circumstances,

have no power to bind; and you have suf- ficiently proved your truth and honour, by

_ preserving them so many years srom your

_ dearest friends; I am sure our confessor will absolve you.” © May be so, (replied Ma-

dame Le Roche) and on our return to town I will consult him, till when I shall take up my story from the day Matilda left me. Charm- ed that I was likely to procure an asylum for

her, as I doubted not of your acceding to my FE oO © ©

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 233 request, I retired to bed at an early hour, but could not sleep; about midnight I thought I heard an uncommon noise at the outward

doors; I listened, and, convinced it was not fancy, I called on Margarite ; the noise had

alarmed her, she ran to me in the same in-

| Rant that we heard the door in the kitchen | burst open, and the Count appeared with an ill-looking fellow. I was out of bed, and had thrown on a wrapping gown about me; 1 trembled from head to foot; he came up to me furiously; „ Wretch, (cried he) you

have broken your oath with me, and therefore

mine is no longer binding—prepare to die.” Despair had given me courage—I was no

longer the poor weak creature he had entangled some years before; my spirits returned,

Strike, barbarian, and complete your crimes, I fear not death, it will free me from all the | miseries you have heaped upon me; but I will not susser under imputed guilt—I have broke no vows, I have kept the fatal oath you ex-

torted from me in the hour of terror.”

« How dare you persist in falsc hooods, (cried

234 TASTLE OF WOLFENBACH-

he ;) you have had a woman here—you see and converse with Joseph daily; dare youdeny those charges?" © I do not (answered I) but still I have preserved my faith; the woman came here by accident, unawed by the terrors Joseph I endeavoured to in- spire, but she knew not who I was, nor any thing relative to my situation, and goes from hence in a few days: as to Joseph, the poor fellow, when he brings my provisions, enter$ into a little chat with Margarite, and some- times I speak to him, and where is the mighty crime? You must know your diabolical se- cret is too well kept, or I need not be here in your power," He paused a few minutes, then withdrew to the window, and spoke to the man in a low tone; they came again to- _ wards me, and I expected instant death, but they locked the doors, and stopping the mouth of poor Margarite, dragged her out of the room, still locking the door after them. The apprehensions I was under for that poor creature, overcame the courage I assumed, and 5 1 frooned ; how Fe I was as deprived of my senses,

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH. 235 | senses, I know not, but I recovered by cold water they threw in my face. O, what have you done with my poor nurse ?" * She is fafe from betraying secrets, (replied he :) come, madam, put on your clothes, and I shall bestow you safely too." © If you de-

sign my death, (said I) let me die here." « Do as IJ command, (cried he, furiously) or 1 shall carry you off as you are." I threw on my clothes, as well as my terror would per- mit; meantime he broke the locks of my cabinet, although he could have had the keys, took out what valuables belonged to me; and then taking me between them, they led me through a long subterraneous passage, till we came out through a thicket to the {kirts of the wood; it was but faint star light; I faw two horses fastened ; I was immediate

ly put upon one, though I made some resist=

ance, expecting they intended carrying me Into the thick part of the wood, and

murder me there,—and I till think it was so designed. The man held me fast; we passed a small cottage, but all was quiet, and soon after en- Jo N 1

tered another part of the wood, when f udden- ly the Count's horse fell and threw him

over his head; he lay motionless; the man

who held me rode up to him; he did not

move. © 1 must see what hurt he has, (cried he;) and jumping off, left me on the

| horse; at the same instant I gave him a kick,

and the animal set off full speed through the wood. I must inevitably have b en killed, had it pursued its way through the thickets, but providentially he made towards the road, | and being tired, slackened his pace. Unable any longer to support the fatigue ; my head | giddy, and dreadfully galled with the saddle, I slipped off on a small hillock, on one side, and lay quite exhausted, expecting every mo- ment to be overtaken and murdered. I had been there but a few minutes before a car-

riage appeared, with two or three horsemen ;

J uttered a cry; the carriage stopt—a

| servant came up, Who are you —what is

the matter?” (laid he.) 1 replied, feebly,

« An unfortunate woman, _ escaped from :

- being murdered, for God sake save me. „„ The

LEY

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

237 The man went to the carriage, it drew up, the door was opened, and I was put in. The sudden joy added to the terror and fatigue I had gone through overpowered my senses, and I fainted; I was soon restored by the help of the lady's salts ; I was able

to look up, by my side sat the charming Mrs. Courtney, | supporting me; opposite was a middle aged gentleman, and a young one about seventeen or eighteen ; I tried to speak, and kissed her hand. Be compoled, dear lady, (said she) your spirits are already too much exhausted ; ((seeing me look with terror then on one side and then another) you fear being pursued, (she continued;) we shall stop very soon, but as the day appears the blinds shall be drawn up.“ This was accordingly dont: tis needless to tell you our conversation. My heart ex- panded with gratitude to heaven for my de- liverance. I was unable to give a satisfactory account of myself, only fo far as related to muy escape srom the wood; I mentioned you, my sister, and your intended journey to Eng- land, and the uncertainty how toon you might

depart, |

238 | CASTLE OF WOLBENBACRK.

depart, and therefore my wishes to join you. Mrs. Courtney told me she was immediately going there, and as I was apprehensive of be- ing known, it would be much better to ac- company her, and write my sister from Eng- land. Before I could reply to this obliging proposal, we stopt at the post-house, changed horses, and pursued our journey with rapidity till about noon, when we drew up to a very fine old castle, which I found belonged to 2 friend of theirs, and where they proposed | passing the night. I was shocked at my ap- pearance; my clothes thrown on in a hurry, discomposed by the flight of the horse, and

not one article about me calculated for travel-

ling. My amiable preserver requested I would make myself easy; « Fortunately, (aid she) we are nearly of a size; I have

another habit in my trunk, with which I can

accommodate you, and my woman will soon make your appearance decent, and reconcile your feelings, which I see are much oppres- r The moment we alighted, « My : friend has been ill, . she) and is in disha-

bille, 5 E

SAS TLE or WOLFENBACH, 239

bille, will you shew her a an apartment, that she may alter her dress?” The lady's woman

instantly attended me to an elegant room,

whilst Mrs. Courtney 8 got the trunk opened and procured me necessaries. I was soonequip- ped; my charming friend came to conduct me to the company; I was received with kindness and attention by an elderly gentle- man and lady, the owners of the castle, and passed a comfortable night. The next day we pursued our journey, though much pres- sed to stay, and arrived at Lausanne. I found the gentleman with us was uncle to Mrs. Courtney, and was come over to place his son at Lausanne, to fimsh his education; but having formerly resided some years in Switzer- and, he had been paying a few visits to his friends, and was returning from one of them, when I was so fortunate to obtain their pro-

| tection. We stayed a week at Lausanne, L I kept very close in my apartment, in a con-

stant dread of being discovered; I was hearti-

= rejoiced when we pursued our journey,

much 1 more so when we arrived in England. : rs,

__ CASTLE oF WOLFENBACH, |

Mrs. Courtney” s kindness cannot be described;

| she treats me like her dearest sister, and her uncle, who lives not far from us in Cavendish- square, appears to make no difference be- tween us; he is a nobleman, a widower, about forty ; has an only son, and is one of the most amiable men I ever knew. Judge

how much happiness 1s now my lot with such

friends, and blest with the company of my dearest relations. Sometimes, (continued she) I thought it possible the Count might have been killed by his fall; at other times, that he might be only senscless; in short, I had a hundred conjectures about him, but tis plain he was not much hurt, since he could return to the Castle and contrive more mis- chief. Now, in this land of liberty should he ever appear to persecute me again, I shall

make no scruple to open the whole scenes of

wickedness he has been guilty of; — there is one corroding care that hangs about my heart, but of that hereaster.“ She arose in visible emotion, Come let us take a ram-

GASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 241

ble in the garden after my tedious narrative.” They accompanied her.

I think, my dear sister, (faid the Marquis) tis a justice you owe yourself and friends to institute a process against this monster.” « I shall think of it, (faid she) but I have many objections ; at present let us drop the — 4 They acquiesced.

Mrs. Comnney joined them in the gard 5 - « Lord bless me! (said she, laughing) how

: eager and persevering is curiosity ; here!

have had three ladies dying to see the French family with me; asking ten thousand ques-

tions about their dress and their persons, their

fashions, and many other matters equally im- portant. They made a most tedious visit, and as I discovered the motive, | was at length obliged to inform them my Parisian | friends saw no company until they had been introduced in town: this effectually did the business, they rose all togethe Ty made their vor. 1. ä Con-

242 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH«

congeẽs, _ put an end to their tiresome ns ace

A week was spent at Bellvue, in all the delights of love and friendship, in little ex-

cursions round the neighbourhood, and

viewing the delightful Proper the Surry hills afforded them. = Ss

5 Persons of good sense, like the present party were never at a loss for rational amuse- ment when at home, and on their return to the metropolis they separated with reluctance, 5 though f so NEAT to cach other.

'Two days aster their arrival the Marquis received a letter from the Count De Bouville, informing him of his sister's marriage, and that three days subsequent to an event which

had given them so much joy, they had been exceeding'y alarmed by the sudden illness of their respectable mother, who continued in a dangerous way, which was the reason Madame De Clermont had not written to Matilda, whose

| CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 243

whose health they were extremely anxious to hear of: he further said, he had made some secret enquires about Mr. Weimar, and learnt, that after remaining in Paris near a week, he had disappeared, but whether returned to Germany or not, they could not tell; that great prejudice was fill entertained against

Matilda, in consequence of which their fami-

ly had declined seeing Madame Le Brun . and her envious niece. |

The Marquis communicated this letter to

his friends, but as Matilda was ignorant of the

scandal circulated at her expence, what related

to Mademoiselle De Fontelle was omitted. She shuddered at the name of Mr. Weimar, and dreaded left he might have pursued her to England. But this, the Marchioness said) was by no means to be apprehended, as It could answer no purpose. |

"hs Ma and his lady now prepared for their presentation at Court, and had sent 2 M 1

their

their friend's introductory letters to several persons of fashion. |

On Thursday they were at the drawing room with the French Ambassador, and returned bighly gratified with the politeness andaffability of the king and queen, and equally charmed with the princesses. The following day they received abundance of visits from the nobility, both English and foreign, and very readily coincided with the sentiments of the Count De Bowville, as to the attention and charms of the English ladies. |

7 3 were now ebliged to be in public, and both pay and receive a number of visits,

consequently Matilda spent most of her time uith Madame le Roche and Mrs. Ccurtney;

both ladies were extremely fond of her; they sometimes accompanied her to the play, and as she studied the language with care, she | hoped in time to have her ears equally gratl- fied with her eyes.

CASTLE OF worrENRBACR. 245

Lord Delby, Mrs. Courtney's uncle, was always of their parties, and his great partiality and admiration of Madame Le Roche was evident to the whole family; she was some- times rallied about it; the subje& gave her pain. *© Compassion is the only claim I can have to his Lordship's notice, (said she, one day ;) do not, my dear friends, suggest an idea which would make me very miser- able." © I see not, (answered the Marquis) why you are to give up every pleasure in life, and compel yourself to refuse the blessings of love and friendship, through any dread of a villain who deserves the severest punishments; but I will send another person to talk with you to-morrow, for I really will not permit you to live in a situation so unworthy of yourself and friends." ;

The following day Doctor Demouriez, the Ambassador's Chaplain, called at Mrs. | Courtney's, and had above three hours con- versation with her. He returned to the

Marquis. J have heard a tale of horror,

246 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

(faid he;) and having subdued all your sister's scruples respecting her compulsatory vows, she has confessed every thing to me, and will this cvening, she says, repeat each circumstance to you, after which we must consult what steps will be Ay to pow —_

They all anxiously expected the hour of meeting in the evening; and after they had dined, and retired to the drawing-room, the _ Marchionelss eagerly claimed her sister's pro- mise. © I will obey you, my dear sister, though you little think what it colts me to make such a puns relation.

00 You well know the reluctance with 1885 | which I married the Count, my subsequent illness and recovery. When my health was restored I began seriously to consider my situation, and the facrament I had vowed to

observe : I determined to do my duty; and |

if I could not love the Count, at least, to

85 esteem and oblige him. I was then a stran- | | ger

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 247 ger to his real disposition; I thought him severe and stern, but I soon found he was gloomy, suspicious, and revengeful. Whilst my father lived he observed some little de- cency towards me, but after his death, and you had quitted Vienna, my fufferings, from his causeless ill- humour, cannot be described. I was now far advanced in my pregnancy, an event I looked forward to as the end of all my troubles; for I had lost my spirits, my strength, and appetite. One day he went to Vienna, he returned at night in a most horrid temper. *© Prepare yourself, (aid he) for a journey to Switzerland, the

day after to-morrow.” © Good God, to Switzerland, in my fituation ?” © Yes, (he

_ replied;) you can bear the journey very well, and Margarite, who is to be your

nurse, shall attend you.” Indeed I am very unable to travel so far,” (faid I.) „ I know better (he replied ;) but the reasons you have for declining, madam, make me the more anxious for it.” “ Well, Sir, I have no more to say, but to obey you.” © You. 35% 2

248 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. do well, madam; for any thing you could urge will have no eff.& upon me.” I was filent; I withdrew, and passed a wretched | night. The next day poor Margarite and I were employed in packing our clothes and other necessaries, and the following day, soon as it was light, we set off on our journey. We at length arrived at the old Castle which Matilda has described to you. My blood chilled when I entered the gates. I was con- ducted to the right hand wing, which had then a door into the court, though it was af- terwards bricked up. The furniture was handsome, bur antique even then. *© This, | madam, is your apartment, and I think the Chevalier will have good luck to obtain en- trance here.” © Chevalier! what Chevalier, (repeated I?) © Your Chevalier, madam; don't suppose I was ignorant of his return to Vienna, and sauntering about my grounds.“ « J don't know, Sir, what you mean; there is no Chevalier belongs to me, nor do l Kno- of any man sauntering, as you call it, in your grounds. My heart justifies me, that ever 5 since

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 249

since I became your wife, I have strictly ful- filled the duties of that situation.” *© Your conscience, madam, is mighty convenient to your wishes, I don't doubt ; but I am not to be duped by either. This is your habitation; the other parts of the house are not so good, but with them you need have no communi- cations ; they are occupied by the gardener.” My bed room was the horrid one where Miss Weimar saw poor Margarite murdered, and very gloomy it was then, though without iron bars. I wept almost incessantly; my nurse was still more miserable, but she had been brought up from a child in the Count's fami- ly, and was e to his will.

f 1 had hoon in the Castle about three weeks, when, one evening, as I was sitting in

my room, at the close of the day I heard a little noise at the window. I was startled, but re- covering myself, I took a chair and got upon the window seat; I saw the figure of a man, 1 shrunk down; again the window rattled, I recovered and looked up; presently 1 distinct- ; m_ y

ly perceived a man, who, with a diamond, was cutting a imall strip out of a pane of

glass; he accomplished his work, thrust a

letter in, and disappeared behind the battle- | ments in a moment; I secured the letter, with a beating heart, and on opening it, found it came from the Chevalier De Montreville. I was surprised and agitated ; I perused this fatal letter; it was filled with the tenderest ex-

pPlressions of regret at my unhappy fate. His :

own misery he could have borne, he faid, ; had I been happy; but to see the woman he adored treated fo unworthily, was more pain than he had philosophy to support; he en- treated I would write a few lines, to tell him in what manner my hushand behaved to me, and if there was a possibility of his doing me either service or pleasure. I shed floods of tears over this epiitle : I found, though I had | suppressed, I had not subdued my affection for him; yet what would it avail to encourage 4 correspondence I felt was improper : * | hesitated, I considered for some time whe- ther I should write or not; at _ [took

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. - 251

up my pen. 1 acknowledged myself obliged for the interest he took in my happiness, but at the same time assured him any attentions of his never could do me service ; on the con- trary, I had reason to believe the Marquis was very jealous of him, and that possibly all

his motions might be watched; I therefore

besought him to return to Vienna, and leave me to my destiny. The follow- ing day,

nearly at the fame hour, I heard the Noise at th: window repeated; trembling for fear of interruption, I hastily got up, and slid my anfv er chrough, resolved at/the fame time to run no such risques, nor receive any more letters, — happy had it been could I have kept my resolution. The next evening I did not go to my room till accompanied by Marga- rite: I trembled every moment, lest the fignal should be repeated, but I heard no- thing. The next day I was peevish and dis- | satisfied; the Count gloomy and sullen. After dinner, as usual, he went out among the peo- ple he had at work in the wood: involunta- ny I hastened to my run I will own M 6 the

252 CASTLE OT wor TEN BACH.

the truth, I wished, though I dreaded hearing the signal. Towards the close of the day the sounds at the window were repeated : scarce knowing what I did, I got on the window- seat, and secured the letter : fancying I heard | footsteps coming up stairs, I too hastily stept back on the chair, which gave way, and I came with violence to the ground; at the fame instant my door opened: I had received a dreadful blow on the fide of my head, though it did not altogether deprive me of

life, yet 1 was unable to speak. The :--

Count ran to me, he snatched the fatal

paper from my hand, and then rang for assis- tance; Margarite came up. With his help 5 I was placed on the bed; she bathed my

head, gave me drops and water, and I was foon

| restored to sense and misery. He ordered the nurse out of the room, and then coming up to me, Wretch! (cried he, furiously) behold a proof of thy guilt and falsehood: I could facrifice thee to my vengeance, but 1 will have more exquisite satisfaction, and . ete revenge, such as shall strike thee With

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 253.

with remorse and endless forrow.” I be- sought him to hear me; I repeated what I

have told you, and added it was the last I ever intended to receive. He {smiled with disdain, © Doubtless it was, and I take upon me to fay it will be the last you shall ever receive from him." He never left me the | Whole evening, but used every cruel malicious expression it was possible to conceive. I con- tinued very ill and agitated that night and great part of the day. In the afternoon my persccutor left me, but Margarite remained; I got up, and was under the most dreadful apprehensions of what might happen; my eyes were continually turned to the window; I suffered the most agonizing terrors, when in a moment they were realized beyond what- ever I could conceive of horror. A violent noise was heard on the stairs, like persons struggling, and in a moment the door was burst open; the Count and his man appeared, dragging in the Chevalier, with his mouth bound, his hands tied, and every mark of cruel treatment; I screamed, and clasped my

hands

254 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH-.

hands, but could not speak ; he made several desperate efforts to free himself—alas ! to little purpose. Let me hasten over the dreadful catastrophe. « Now, (faid the cruel Count) you have your minion where you wished him to be, in your bed-cham-

ber, nor shall he ever quit it alive." I tried

to speak, I threw myself on my knees, Spare, O spare ! was all I could lay, and fell

senseless, but I was. soon recovered by the

officious Margarite, to still greater horror.

« We have waited your recovery (said the

barbarian Tz would not deprive you of so great a pleasure as seeing your lover's last | breath expire for you." He was then drag-

ged into the closet opposite to where I sat, and immediately repeated stabs were given with a short dagger, by the Count, through se- veral parts of his body ; his

blood flowed in torrents, and with groans he fell on his face and expired. Great God! (cried she) here the scene never will be absent from my re-

membrance. 1 sat like one petrified; *

f neither spoke, shrieked, or groane d, but 5 | |

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 255

my eyes fixed on the closet l appeared insen- sible to every thing. The inhuman Count

was not satisfied ; he came and dragged me

to the closet, and seated me by the side of the body, the blood flowing round me. 60 Now, (said he) clasp your beloved Chevalier now

despise the old and cross- looking Count, (words I had once faid in his hearing, long

before I was married) and now enjoy the company of him for whom you despised your

husband." Saying this, he ordered Marga-

rite and Peter to leave the room; and finding I was still unable to speak or move, he pushed me farther into the closet, locked the door and

left me. How long I continued in this state,

T know not; I believe I swooned, for it was day- light when I found myself on the floor,

my clothes covered with blood, and the un- happy murdered Chevalier dead before me.

Tis impossible to describe the horror of that moment; I found myself seized with violent pains; 1 began to think the monster had

poisoned me—the idea gave me pleasure, and

1 endeavoured to bear my pangs without a 5 —_

255 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

groan ; nature however asserted its claims ; I

became fo very ill, I could be silent no longer, I groaned, I cried aloud. Presently the door was unlocked, - the Count and Margarite ap- peared ; they saw me in agonies; © I am dying, barbarian; you will be fatisfied, you have murdered a worthy man who never in- jured you—you have killed an innocent wife.“ I could say no more. Margarite cried out,

« My Lord, my dear mistress is in labour, for | God's sake assist her to her apartment.” He seemed to hesitate, but she urging her request, between them I was conveyed to the bed, and without any other assistance than her's de- | livered of a boy. When a little recovered, the Count entered the room, Peter with him. * do not design to destroy you; no, you may live a life of horror, but dead to all the

world; yet your infant shall be facrificed.” :

I screamed,—IT cried for mercy to my child and instant death to me. He paused and I expected the welcome stroke at last; On one condition your child may hve.” «© Oh! name it, (I said;) any conditions,” © Re-

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 257

member what you fay : you shall join with these two persons, in taking a folemn oath, with the sacrament, that without my permis- sion, you will never reveal the transactions of this night and day never mention the Che- valier's name, nor ever presume to contradict the report I shall make of your death to the

world.” I shuddered, but alas! there was no alternative; he fetched a prayer-book, and making the two poor creatures kneel, we all

joined in the solemn oath, and received the sacrament from his polluted hands. Me- thinks at this moment I tremble at the im-

piety of that horrid wretch. My child was delivered to me; Peter was ordered to

assist Margarite in making a fire and getting neces- saries for me. How I survived such horrors is astonishing ! The curtains were drawn, and that night the body was removed, but where it was carried to, heaven only knows, for | Margarite never was informed. A coffin and every neceslary for a funeral was bespoke and brought home. It was given out I had died in child-bed, and therefore in decency my

my own women only could attend me. A figure or bundle, wrapt in a sheet, was placed in the coffin (Margarite used to think it was the Chevalier's body) and the whole cere-

mony took place without any one's presuming

to doubt the truth. Judge what must have been my feelings, and what an excellent con- stitution I musthave had, to bear suchdreadful

scenes without dying of distraction. In a few days I was removed to another room, and, as I heard, the fatal closet was cleaned out by Peter; the rooms locked up, and orders

given no one should enter them. The Count never appeared befort me until] was up, and able to walk about the room; one morning

he entered, just as I had done breakfast, I

forgot to tell you I had no sustenance for my pPoor babe, consequently it was brought up by hand. The dear infant was laying on my lap; I started with surprise and terror. « Come, madam, (said he, with a look that made me tremble) come and view your former apartment.” © Good God! (I cried) why must I return there?“ „“ Tis my

| CA3TLE OF WOLFENBACH. 259%

my pleasure,” (answered he ;) then bidding Margarite take the child, he ordered me to follow him. I tottered across the gallery, and on entering the room saw the windows barricaded with iron bars, the pictures and toilet taken away, and the whole

appearance

gloomy to excels. © This is once more

your bed-chamber ; no more Chevaliers (faid he, with horrid grin) can convey WN here here you are to reside for ever." „ Oh!

kill me! (I cried) rather than shut me up here death is far more desirable." <© That is the reason I chuse you shall live, to repent.

every hour of your life the wrongs you have

done me: and now hear me—your child you

will see no more." At these words, over- come with the unexpected shock, I dropped senseless on the floor; I was soon recalled to

life. Your oath, (I cried ;) O, spare my child © I do not mean to hurt it's life; I

5 will have it properly taken care of, but the in- 5 dulgence is too great for you to enjoy. 4: here swear, that as long as you remain con-

| fined in this . and observe. your oath, >. never ;

never to reveal the Chevalier's murder, nor undeceive the world respecting your fate, so long your boy's life is safe; I will take care of him, and one day or other, there is a possibi- lity, you may see him again; but if you ever escape from hence, or divulge thele particu- lars, without my permission, instant death | awaits you both, for I shall have a constant spy." To these conditions, dreadful as they were, I was compelled to subscribe. Marga- rite was ordered into confinement with me, for he found she was my friend. That night the child was conveved away: dear and

precious boy! alas, heaven only knows whe-

ther I shall ever see him more; unconscious he has a mother, if he lives, we may remain | strangers to each other! We were locked in, and for three days the Count himself brought our scanty fare; the fourth, he en- tered with Joseph, who was the under garde- ner. 1 was startled to see a stranger, —he ap- peared equally shocked at

seeing me. Here you both are, remember your oath, madam, for on it more than one lite depends, | And

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you, (said he, turning to Joseph) tremble, if you dare break your solemn vow, never to let any person know this woman is alive, never

do suffer her to pass from these apartments,

without my permission, to hold no conversa- tion with her, but when you bring her food, and in fine, to obey every command of mine

and not her's." © I will obey your Lord-

ship," (cried the man, trembling) „ Tis well, then you will preserve her life, and gain my favor. No firangers mult be permitted to remain here, should chance or inclination engage any one to visit this castle, | Remem- ber this fide of it must never be scen, 'tis haunted do you understand me? * I do, my Lord, (answered Joseph) and I promise you, these apartments shall never be looked into." On that depends her existence and

your's." They now quitted my room, and

left me scarcely able to breathe. The follow- Ing day the Count and Peter left the Castle. Every other day Joseph came with neces- faries, and Margarite was permitted to go down, accompenigd by Joseph, to carry up | | | and

262 CASTLE Or wor rEN BACH.

and down water and other conveniencies. In this state I lived two years, if living it could be called, having no other consolation than now and then hearing from my sister; for ! had fo far gained upon Joseph to permit

Margarite's letters, after snewing them to

him, to pass under cover to him, and as he found I carefully preserved my secret from others, the poor fellow granted me that in- dulgence. At the expiration of two

years, the > Count unexpectedly made his appearance. I | shrunk from his sight; he viewed me some time with great emotion; © I am fatisfied with your conduct, (said he) and am come to extend my indulgence to you.“ O, my child! (I cried out.) © No, (answered he) that cannot be granted; but you shall _ have permission to live in the rooms below, and if you {wear to enter the garden only at night, the door into it shall be opened.” I joyfully agreed to this, and was once more led to the rooms below. Peter was still with him; a bed was brought from another room, and * in a {mall parlour, also one for .

CaAsTTIE OF WOLFENBACH. 263 Margarite. The apartments above were again locked up. I tried to soften the Count; he sometimes appeared moveg} and affected, then again stern and cruel ; he, staid near a week the day he left the Castle he came to visit me. © Once more I leave

you, but as there is some danger that stran- gers may come here, I charge you, by every thing that is sacred, by your child's life and your own, should any person sleep in this _ Castle, that you go to the gallery or next apartments, rattle a chain I shall leave for that purpose, groan, and make such kind of noises as may appal those who come here, and drive them hence, under an idea of the Castle's being haunted: I have already sworn Joseph, do you promise the fame.” & Ah! Sir, (cried I) why all these oaths, why. all - these persecutions, which must give you a world of pains, to punish an inno- cent woman?” © Because, (said he, furi- ously) because I prefer revenge to my on quiet ; because I will be feared, and make your destiny hang on my pleasure.” I could ES . 2 *

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say no more, I wept bitterly, but nothing could soften his heart; he made me renew my gows, {till threatenirg the life of my child, if I failed he told me it was well, and carefully attended. I was compelled to ac- quiesce with his request, or rather command, and he once more left me. He regularly came once in two years, for some

time, but latterly it was above four ycars since I had seen him, till the fatal night he carried me off. Tis plain he was well informed of every thing, and knew of Matilda 8 being at

the Castle.

3 dragged o on a wretched existence, in a _ daily hope, that from his own words, © There might be a possibility I should see my child again; and that time might soften his heart, or death deprive him of all power over me. Margarite, who at first hardly brooked her _ confinement, grew more reconciled, and

awed by the dreadful oaths we had taken, we submitted to what we could not prevent, being 1 + always 1 in terror of — watched, and that _ notung

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 265

nothing in the Castle passed unnoticed. This

was our situation when Matilda came. Jo-

seph came to me late in the evening, the day

the arrived at the Castle, acquainting me with

the circumstance, and in consequence of our vos we were obliged to conform to our orders, —he to glve hints of what might hap-

pen, and myself and Margarite try to frighten her from thence - you know the conse-

quence. Had Joseph been at home, proba-

bly she would hardly have obtained permis-

sion to sleep. in the Castle, but Bertha knew

nothing of me, and was prevented by her

fears from ever venturing through the apart- ments. The rest you know. I intended to have placed a confidence in Matilda, as far as being brought to the Castle, but beyond that I dared not violate my oath. At your re- - quest, my dear brother, I

consulted our good Dr. Demoureiz, and he absolved me from my vows, which were compulsatory, and made under such horrid circumstances; L have therefore complied with your wishes, and now pray tell me what I can do, or what 85 vor. 1. N Tought 1

266 CASTLE OF WOLFE NBACH.

TI ought to do? I cannot disclose to the world what I have related, without bringing the Count to condign punishment, for the death of the unfortunate and ever-lamented Cheva- | Her, and perhaps may irritate him never to

inform me whether my child exists or not-

Alas! every way 1 turn 1s — with dif- ficulties and horror.“

Here the Countess stopt, leaving her au- : ditors overcome with astonishment and : : terror.

RE Good been! (ald the - Mw 15 never could have supposed it possible a man | should carry jealousy and revenge to such frightful guilty lengths, and the whole fivey appears incredible and almost impossible, that

he should proceed fo far, trust so many with 5

his secret, and that you should remain such a number of years a victim to his diabolical

passions, when there was always, open to you

the means for 4 and * to your friends. cc Con- |

CASTLE OF wol rENBAccEH. 267

& Confider, my good brother, (said she)

the difficulties, the oaths I had taken never to leave the Castle without his permission, the fate of my child, the certainty that every step T took was known, otherwise I could have offered Matilda an afylum with me, but he assured me I was constantly watched, and therefore any attempts I might make to free

| myself, would, too probably, accelerate the

events I dreaded, and my life (as I doubt not was intended, when he carried me to the wood) would have been the sacrifice. If

you look back, you will observe his cunning:

when he afterwards came to the Castle and saw Joseph, he did not mention my name, and to be sure expected that he would have told him of my being carried away by some banditti, as he doubtless intended Joseph should believe, but the old man being filent, he supposed he was suspected as the author

of the outrage, and therefore determined | to put chat witness out of the way —

% What

bas What a villain ! (cried Mrs. Courtney) and what a wretched life that man must have

endured, with such fears of detection, and

conicious of such complicated wickedness,”

0 It ever Us fate of villany (said the Marchioness) to plunge deeper into vice, and suffer tenfold the miseries they inflict, from

the apprehensions of a discovery, which they know seldom fails at some time or other to

| overtake them, and Providence has so order- ed it, that we generally see the very means they

take to hide their crimes from a knowledge

of the world, are productive of such events as

lead to their detection. I sincerely lament the 85

fate of the poor Chevalier——" 15 5

0 © Ah! sister, (cried the Countels) never | shall I cease reproaching myself on that

ac-

count; had I with firmness refused to receive his second letter, and avoided going to that

room alone, perhaps his life, and all my fub- | sequent miseries would have been spared: I

| failed inthe dug Towed my husband and my- 8 6

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 209 self, in permitting a clandestine correspondence, although I did not intend to continue

it; and one false step, you see, brought on irreparable evils and eternal remorse!”

« J will not pretend, my dear Victoria, | (answered the Marchioness) to exculpate you, as entirely free from blame, but if we consider the ill- treatment you received from the Count, previous to the Chevalier's attempts to see you, and the sudden surprise of the mo- ment, when the first letter was conveyed to you, doubtless some allowance ought to be

made in your favor; and had you positively

| refused to receive a second, you would, tis

| possible, have escaped much bitter reflection;

but the worst that can be said of you, in my opinion, is, that, in your difficult and unplea-

fant situation, it was an error in judgment, for I am well assured in you there was no 0 depra- vity of heart. :

: The poor Countess was drowned in tears. « Be comforted, my dearest & sister, (faid the Marquis,

Marquis, kissing her hand, whilst the ladies

tenderly embraced her) you are, thank hea- ven, and that good lady, restored to your friends; I will consult Dr. Demouriez, as to

our future proceedings, for I will do nothing rashly, and for your sake, would avoid drag-

ing you husband's crimes into public view.”

Volume 2

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH;

A GERMAN STORY,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH ;

GERMAN STORY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By MX s. PAR S ONs, | AUTHOR OF ?RRORS OF EDUCATION, MISS MEREDITH, WOMAN as SHE SHOULD BE, A AND INTRIGUES OF A MORNING,

L 0 N D O N.

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE, AT THE

Minerva Press,

LEADENHALL-STREET,.

AND SOLD BY E. HARLOW, PALL-MALL..

M. Dcc. x C111.

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

A GERMAN STORY,

HE ladies proposed an airing, to divert the Countess from dwelling on past events, and Matilda from apprehenfions of

future ones. The carriage was ordered, and

they drove as far as Hampstead. The even- ing was uncommonly beautiful, and

when they returned, the moon, which was in its meridian, | shone with all its splendour. Just as the car- riage stopped in Harley-street, Matilda, who sat next the dcor, saw two gentlemen pass slowly and look into the coach; she plainly per- ceived one of them was Mr. Weimar: she

met his eyes, and he turned his hastily from

"a CASTLE oF A

her; she gave a faint shriek, and hid her

head behind Mrs. Courtney. Her friends

were alarmed, but hastened her into the | house ; she ran into the dining-parlour, and,

in inconceivable terror, cried out, He is come—he is come!" © Who, who?" | (exclaimed the Countess.) * Mr, Weimar, (answered she;) did you not see him?" No, (replied the Marchioness) and I hope

your fears deceived you." © Too sure they

did not (faid Matilda) and I am convinced also that he knew me." © Fear nothing, (said Mrs. Courtney ;) you are in the power of your friends ; he must prove his right to you be- fore he can take you from us: here are no lettres de-cachet, the laws will protect you from injury; compose yourself, therefore, my dear girl—in England no violence can be offered to you in any shape."

£ This kind and e assurance calmed

che terrors of the trembling Matilda; but when sne retired to rest, and reflected on her cruel

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, _ 3

opt destiny, she shed floods of tears, and * a sleepless night.

The following 4 was appointed for their return to Mrs. Courtney's villa, to spend a

week or two, previous to the preparations for the birth-day, after which the whole

party, with Lord Delby, wy going to

| Scarborough.

The Countess and Matilda bore evident

marks in their features and pale looks, of the

uneasy state of their minds; their amiable iriends

sought to raise their spirits, and they felt too

much gratitude to their kindness not to make

the effort, though their [miles were clouded

with sorrow.

They had a pleafantexcursion to Mrs. Court ney's house, and its delightful situation, with

the cheerful hospitality of its charming owner, could not fail of making those happy who had

the honor of her friendlip.

B 2 The

4 ' CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

The Countess, who was known in public only as Madame Le Roche, and by which

name her friends always called her in com- pany, found in the sympathy of Matilda more consolation than the conversation of strangers or any amusements could afford her; they generally contrived to steal from company and ramble in the gardens, relating past sorrows, and mutually endeavoring to in- | spire each other with hopes of happier days, though despairing of any to themselves. _

A fewdays after they had been in the coun-

try, the Marquis received another packet from the Count De Bouville, enclosing a let-

ter from Madame de Clermont, to Matilda. They learnt, with much sorrow, that the Countess died three days after the Count's first letter; that their affliction had been very great, and preyed much on the spirits of her

affectionate daughter, in consequence of which

she had been advised to visit Aix, and from

thence to the Spa; their departure was fixed

for che end of that week— Madame De Nancy | and

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. | 5

and her amiable sister De Bancre were going with them. Madame De Clermont requested the correspondence of Matilda, and charged her to take great care of her brother. This charge Matilda did not comprehend, until the Marquis congratulated the party on the agreeable addition they might daily expect from the company of the Count De Bouville, who had written to him, that his sister having a party of her own going to Aix, he had no

| inclination to visit that place, and therefore should gratify his wishes, by returning to

England for a few months, and hoped to en-

Joy additional satisfaction by the previews of their ene:

Every one appeared gratified by this in-

formation, except Matilda. She felt her heart flutter at his name; she was convinced he was more interesting to her than any other man, and that in her circumstances she ought not to indulge a preference which never could be returned. Ah! thought she, where is the sorrows that can equal mine? Scarce a 3 wretch

7 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

wretch that breaths but has some connexion,

some relation to own them and sympathise in

their troubles, I alone am destitute of family, or fortune; I can carry only disgrace

to the arms of a husband, and am there- fore an outcait—a being without any natural ties, and mult despair of procuring any other

protect. on but what charity and benevolence

affords me! She felt the full force of these melancholy reflections, and it threw such a

fad impression on her features that every one was touched with compassion, though they knew not the cause, and sought by kindness

and attention to render her more cheerful. ;

Within three days after this letter, which

had occasioned so much pleasure and pain to

different parties, the Marquis, by a note, was informed of the Count's arrival in London. Mrs. Courtney entreated the honor of his

company, and Lord Delby offered to accom- pany the Marquis and escort him to their

friends. This offer was too obliging to be J ˙

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, «

declined ; they set off that evening, and the following morning returned with the Count.

Matilda spent the intermediate time in lay- ing down rules for her behaviour. She {till suffered under the apprehensions that Mr. Weimar had pursued, and would occasion more trouble to her ; she therefore resolved to avail herself of that fear, keep as much in her apartment as possible, and avoid mixing in all the little pleasurable parties where the Count might make one.

The company received the Count with the politest attention. His amiable person, his polisnhed manners, and enchanting vivacity, could not fail of engaging the estee m

of every one who had taste and Cifcerament. After he had been introduced to the lady of the mansion, to the Marchioness, and to Madame Le Roche, whom he knew not, he advanced to Matilda; she trembled; he took her hand, and bowing on it, I am charged, (said he) Vith a housind e of kindness and CCC friend-

8 185 CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

friendship from my sister and Mademoiselle

De Bancre, to the charming Mifs Matilda ;

but you must take them upon trust now, and permit. me to express my own happiness in

seeing my lovely friend well, and situated in

the midst of a fociety so delightful as this.“

She attempted to speak, her voice, her =

powers failed her; Your Lordship does me honor,” was all she could utter. The con-

versation become general and sprightly, but | she had no share in it; the day appeared un- commonly long, and she rejoiced when night

came, that she could escape to her bs and enjoy her own reflections. d

The Count, who had ohferved her emo-

tions, her silence and melancholy air, felt limself much concerned for the unfortunate

girl; he thought her more lovely, more in-

stteresting than ever: the soft melancholy which pervaded her fine features could not

fail of touching a susceptible heart ; and the

Count soon found the tender interest he had formerly taken | in Matilda's misfortunes, re-

vive

*.,,+»CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 9

vive with more solicitude than ever. He seized an opportunity the following morning, to enquire some particulars respecting the cause of her distress. The Marquis told him of her alarm on sceing a gentleman she be- lie ved to be, and possibly, said he, might be, Mr. Weimar. I am really (added he) un-

happy about this charming young women

we all love her exceedingly ; beauty is her

least merit; she has every amiable quality, joined to an excellent understanding, that can adorna human being; I could not love my own

child better; but she has too much sensibility to be happy—she feels her dependent and

_ unprotected state too keenly,—it preys upon her mind and injures her health. Consulting with the Marchioness on this subject last night, I intend this day to write, and order a deed to be drawn, agreeable to our design of 5

making her independent, at the same time, I g |

wish not to burthen her feelings with too high a a sense of obligation, by settling any very large sum on her: four hundred aycar, Engiish money, paid her quarterly, will enable her to Jn live

4J5 . + San ein a. —

10 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. -

live genteelly, should she ever wish to sepe- rate from us, and will be a handsome provi-

sion for pocket expences, it she does us the favor of continuing under our protection.“ |

« Will you permit me, (said the Count,

eagerly) f to add another two hundred to her

income ?” „Indeed] will not, (replied the Marquis;) I think myself as much the

guardian of Matilda's honor and delicacy as of her person : no young man shall boast any

claims upon her, nor shall she be humbled by receiving favors, which, if known, might sub-

ject her to censure—say no more, my dear

Count, (added he, observing he was about to

X reply ;) the Marchioness will not have her _ protegee under any obligations but to herself.”

« Shall I be fincere with you, Marquis?“ (demanded the Count.) * Doubtless, my Lord, you may, and assure yourself of my se-

cresy, if necessary.” © Well then, (resumed the Count) I confess to you, that with the Marchioness's protegee, as you call her, I should be the 2 of men: I feel, andac-

know-

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 11

knowledge, that she has more than beauty she has a soul; she has those virtues, those. amiable qualities, which must render any man happy: but, my dear Marquis, her birth—the scandalous stories promulgated of her in Paris: ab! what can do away these objections which rise hourly before me, and bar me from wry ain and Matilda! * Since ron

- I ond, tis my duty W candbl md mth That I entertain the highest opinion of Matilda, is most certain that I think whoever the man is, who is honored with her hand, will be a happy one, I also acknowledge ; but, my

Lord, family and society have great claims

upon us; we ought not to injure the one, nor disregard the other. Could you bear to fee your wife treated with contempt, as one whom nobody knew, as one who had no

claims to distinction, but what your very great friends might allow her? Could you support the idea, that she whose genuine merit might entitle her to the first society, should be refused ad- mittance among such, as in real worth she ” LY 7 very

IF? $— r

very far surpassed ? No; I know you would feel such a degradation most painfully ; and, though young men, in the moment of pas- sion, think they could sacrifice every thing to the object of it; yet, believe me, passion is but short-lived, and though your wife may yet retain your love and esteem, you will regret the loss of society—you will feel the insults offered to your wite, and you will both be ; 3

55 Ah! my dear Maris 68 the Count) say no more. How happy are Eng- | Iishmen ! free from all those false prejudices, they can confer honor on whom they please, and the want of noble birth is no degradation | Where merit and character deserve esteem ; but we are the victims to false notions, and from thence originates all that levity and vice for which we are censured by other nations.” He walked away with a melancholy air: the Marquis felt for bum, but national honor was in his ** of more re consequence than the gratis

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 13

5 gratification of a private individual, how great sever the merit of the object.

The Count walked into the garden, his arms folded, his mind distrest, unknowing what he should, what he ought to do. Turning into a {mall alcove, he beheld Matilda, her head reclining on one hand, whilst with the other she dried the tears which fell on her face: they both started ; she rose from her seat; he advanced, prevented her going and | seated himself by her. Both were silent for a moment, at length Matilda, making a second effort to rise, exclaimedin a faint voice, © Bless me! I dare say I have made the family wait | breakfast,” and attempted to pass him.

« Stay, Miss Weimar, I beseech you; tell me why I behold you a prey to sorrow and grief?“ „ Because, Sir, (said she, withdraw- ing her hand) I am the child of forrow; I

never knew another parent; poor, forlorn,

| proscribed and dependant, I never can belong to any one," She snatched her hand, which

14 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

he endeavoured to retain, from him, and

flew like lightning towards the house; the

Count followed, full of admiration and grief. He entered the breakfast room; every one was seated, and rallied him on his passion for morning rambles : his natural vivacity re- turned, and he tried to make himself —

able and plcasant.

They bad scarce finished breakfast when

the Marquis received a letter from the French Ambassador, requesting he might sce him in town immediately, on an important affair. The Marquis was surprised, but gave orders for his horses to be ready. The Countess trembled, Matilda was terrified;

each thought herself concerned, and when

the Marquis quitted the house, retired to-

ge! the 1.

« Ah! (cried the Coumel) the Count

has discovered me!" „ No, no, madam,

(pines Matilda) tis, Tam discovered and mall i

'- CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, IS shall be torn from you." Both burst into tears, equally for herself and friend.

The Marchioness, who saw him depart, now entered the room; © As I suppoled, (taid she) you retired to frighten each other, but that shall not allow, so ladies, if you please, throw on your cloaks; I have made up two parties this morning for an airing:

in my coach goes Lord Delby, the Count, my sister, and Miss Matilda; I accompany Mrs.

Courtney, in her chariot nies pray hasten directly, the c carriages wait."

She withdrew on 1 saying these words, and

left them no power toframe excules, and con- sequently they were obliged to follow, though : with aching hearts. |

They were disposed of according to the Marchioness's arrangements, but for some minutes after the carriage proceeded all were filent. Lord Delby first spoke, and regretted the 5 did not leem 1 to accord with the

3 wilhes

10 CASTLE OF WORFENBACH. wishes of the ladies, if he might judge from their averted looks. © Indeed, my Lord, (replied the Countess) you do me particular

| x injustice; I entertain the highest respect for every person here; to your Lordship I owe

obligations never to be forgotten; I infinite- ly esteem the Count, as a friend, and this young lady I love with the affection of a sister. I have been a little agitated by the

sudden departure of the Marquis, and my un-

easiness has communicated itself to my friend; ve beg your pardon, and will endeavor to be better company. After this the conversation

became more general and amusing.

The Marquis proceeded to town, and in-

stantly waited on the Ambassador. © I am

have broken in upon your retirement, and must mention the visit I received yesterday as my apology. A German gentleman, who

sent in his name as Mr. Weimar, requested' - | permission to wait on me; he was

consequent- ly admitted: he entered upon a long itory of

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH, 17

an orphan he had preserved from perishing, of a paper fastened to the child, deputing him the guardian of it till claimed by its parents; and in short, that despairing, from the num ber of years past, that those parents had any _ existence, he resolved to marry the young lady, that he might provide for her without injury to her reputation; that, from what motives he knew not, she had been induced to fly from his house, seducing a servant of his to go with her; and she was now detained from him by you, notwithstanding he had a lettre de-cachet, which he produced, com- manding you to give her up; consequently, by virtue of that order, he requested I would compel you to deliver the young lady to his care. Now, my dear Marquis, I am prepared to hear you on the subject, for it is a delicate affair, and I am convinced you would be sorry it should be noised abroad." © No otherwise, Sir, (replied the Marquis) than as it might wound the young lady's delicacy to be pub- licly talked off. I am obliged to your Ex- . celleney for your communications, and must

18 CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

trespass on your patience to elucidate the affair properly." He then recapitulated the whole of Matilda's story, concealing every thing relative to the Countess at that time; and having deduced it down to the present period, he besought his Excellency to pro- tet an amiable young woman, under the most unfortunate circumstances.

720 l am really (he replied) much interest-- ed for her, and perfectly disposed to comply with your wishes, but the whole affair is re- plete with so many extraordinary circum- stances, that I think we had best consult the German Ambassador before any thing. can be determined . 5

The carriage was ordered, and his Excel- lency took the Marquis with him. They most fortunately found the German Minister at

buome, andatter some deliberation it was settled

Matilda should remain under the protection of the Marquis for one year, he to be answer- able forherd; uringthatintervaladvertisements

snould

CASTLE OF wolrENBAcn. 19

thould be sent to the different kingdoms, in quest of her parents; and if in the course of one twelvemonth no such persons appeared, Mr, Weimar was the natural protector of the young lady, but could not oblige her to marry

| him—neither could he prevent her retiring to

_ a convent, though she might be accountable to him for her choice of such a retirement.

The Marquis was obliged to be contented with this decision, and returning with the Ambassador, he said,] shallin all probability have to trouble you again soon, on a still more

extraordinary affair, and relative to one more

dear and nearer to me than this young lady.“ « Upon my word, Marquis, (replied the Minister, smiling) you are quite a r errant, to protect distressed damfels.” « A

very honourable employment, (answered the other, in the same tone ;) but though these

are not the days of romance, yer I have met with such extraordinary incidents lately as carry much the face of the wonderful stories we have heard of former times: but as the „„ CE deve-

20 CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.,

development of this business will be attended with serious consequences, I mult consider a few days before I make the discovery.” e Very well, (faid his Excellency ;) you have | excited my curiosity, and, if I am not too old to join in a Quixote-like expedition, behold _ me ready to assist in the defence of the fair.” The Marquis

smiled, thanked him, and de- clining an invitation to dine at his house, got into his own carriage, and drove back with all speed, rightly conceiving every one would entertain — td -

The party were but just returned Sow a long morning's drive when the Marquis ar- _ rived; every one met him with anxiety in their looks—he accosted them with a smiling. _ countenance; © A truce to interrogatories at present, (faid he) I have good news for all, but I am really faint for want of refreshment; order something for me, and then J shall give uuaccount of my proceedings,”

Every

CASTLE OF worrEN BACH. 21 Every one flew to the bells, and in a mo-

ment he had chocolate, jellies, wine, and : biscuits set before him.

„ Ah! (hid he, laughing) nothing like giving a little spur to curiosity, I see; this is an excellent lesson for me how to be well serx ed.”

When he had taken his repast, which he _ maliciously prolonged 'till the Marchioness in a pet rang the bell, and declared he should eat no more, the things taken away, and the servants withdrawn. Now hiten, ladies, and thank me for having procured, in the perion of our gallant Ambassador, a Don Quixote, ready to fight in your defence.” He then, in a more serious tone, repeated the particulars which have been already related.

Poor Matilda felt but a gleam of satisfac- tion; „ A twelvemonth, (cried she.)

„A twelvemonth, (repeated Mrs. Court-

5 ney) why, do * consider, my dear girl,

how

how may strange events may happen in that time?” „ Yes, (answered she, sighing) I consider and hope death will free me from

his 1 long before — period expires.”

The Count. & Bouville rose and left the room to conceal his emotions.

cc 1 will noe forgive you, my dear child,

| (faid the Marchioness) if you indulge such desponding ideas; depend upon it happier

days await you—trust in Providence, and re-

joice you are now free from anxiety : equally - under the protection of the ambassadors. and rhe apt Mr, Weimar will not dare to

molest you”

The ladies all congratulated Matilda; and, tie Marchioness taking her hand, Come with me into the garden, I must chide you, but J 1 not do it publicly, though you deserve it.” She led her to a little temple, at one end of the garden, and when seated the said to the still silent Matilda, «© Youdo not con- 8 ier

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 23 sider the advantages we have gained.” © O, my dear madam, (cried the other, interrupt- ing her) how sensible I am of that kind we have gained!“ © Well, well, (resumed the Marchioness) hear me out. We can now take public methods to enquire, if there yet exists a being who has any claim to you, : without fear of Mr. Weimar; a twelvemonth

may make great alterations in his sentiments;

should it appear you kave no particular rela- tions, he has no legal claim upon you, but from his expenditure for your maintenance and clothes let him bring in his bill, he snall be paid to the uttermost farthing; you are my adopted child; consider yourself as such, and dare not refuse that trifle for your future expences if you utter any ohs ! or ahs! if you ever talk of obligations, I will never Pardon you: to be cheerful and happy is the only return you can make or I accept.” She then placed the deed mentioned by the Mar- | quis, with a fifty pound note, upon the lap of the astonished Matilda, and hastened away to the house.

24 | CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

It was some moments before she recovered herself enough to examine the papers. The contents overwhelmed her with gratitude ; she burst into a flood of tears, the papers in her hand, when unexpectedly the Count stood before her. © Good heavens ! (he cried) what means this distress, these tears? © O, my Lord, (answered she) they are tears of sensibility and gratitude." I rejoice to hear it, (replied the Tount) heaven forbid they should ever flow from any other cause." He seated himself by her, she dried her eyes, and put the papers in her pocket. © I con- gratulate you, madam, (resumed he) on the happy turn in your affairs, which the Marquis has informed me of." „ You know me then for an unhappy deserted orphan ?" (faid | the, blushing and mortified.) © I know you | (replied he, eagerly) for the most amiable of your sex; no adventitious advantages of birth or fortune can add to those claims your own merit gives you to universal efteem." * Ah, my Lord, (faid she) to generous spirits like 'your's and this family's, misfortunes are a %% i „

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH. 25

recommendation to kindness and attention,

but with the generality of manking I have not

to learn it must be otherwise. Stranger as I am to the manners and customs of the world, J am sensible birth and fortune have superior

advantages, and that without them, though

with liberal minds we may obtain compas - sion, we can never hope for consideration or respect. Pardon me, madam, (replied the Count) if I presume to say you judge er-

roneously ; she who with ment, with good

sense, delicacy, and refined sentiments can command respect, is a thousand times supe- ' rior to those whose inferiority of mind dis-

graces a rank which the other would ennoble.“

* You are very kind, Sir, (faid Matilda,

rising, and unable to support a conversation

which she feared might grow too interesting 1

for her peace:) you are truly friendly, in en-

deavouring to reconcile me to myself; and! have no way of deserving your favorable

judgment, but by constantly remembering

what J am, that I may at least preserve my

humility.“ She courtesied and walked fast

V tos

26 = CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

towards the house, and to the apartment of

the Countess. That lady was alone, her head resting on her hand, and seemed buried

in thought. Matilda would have withdrawn,

the other entreated her return; © Come in, my dear girl, (said she) my own thoughts are the worst company you could leave me in at present.” © I come to tell you, my dear | madam, (cried her young friend) that my heart 1s bursting with gratitude : the Mar- chioness will not hear me, but I mult have vent for my feelings, or I shall 5 opprest to - death. She burst into tears. My dear April girl, (said the Countess) no more of those showers, —you have too much sensibi- : lity ; I know what you want to tell me, there- fore spare yourself the trouble, and let me ac- quaint you, that I am indebted to my gene- rous brother, for a settlement of treble the value of what he has given you, yet I make no fuss about the matter.” © But, dear ma-

dam, (cried Matilda) sure there is great dif-

ference in our situations, — you have a natural claim—" « A natural claim (repeated

the Countess ;)

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH. = "wy

Countess; ;) the best claim to a generous mind, is being unfortunate with merit that de- serves a better fate. I think little of those favours which are bestowed from claims of affinity only; since family pride, the censure of tlie world, and many causes, may unlock a heart to support their own consequence in their connexions, but the truly benificent mind looks upon every child of sorrow as their relation, and entitled to their assistance; but when beauty and virtue suffer, from whatsoever cause, believe me, dear Matilda, they receive a superior gratification that have the power of relieving sorrows, than the re- ceiver can in accepting the favors." „I be- lieve, my dear madam, (replied Matilda, her heart warmed by the idea) I believe you are right; for if there is a human being! could envy, it would be the one who can raise the desponding heart to hope and peace." «© With that conviction, (resumed the Coun- " tess) feel as if you conferred a favor, without the oppressive notion of having received one; and now pray listen to me. My brother and %%%

28 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. sister hourly importune me to prosecute the Count: you know my objections, God on- ly knows whether I have a child living or not— the doubt gives me a thousand pangs; as to the murder of the poor Chevalier, Peter only was a witness beside myself, and he is a creature of the Count's ; then to accuse one's. | husband, what an indelible reproach ! I never can submit to it: tell me, advise me, dear girl, what I must do?" „ Impossible, ma- dam, (replied she;) I am incompetent to ad- vise, —your own good sense, and the opinion of your friends, are more capable of it than one so little conversant in the world as I am." « Well, (resumed the Countess) I will be guided by Lord Delby and Mrs. Courtney; my own relations are too warmly interested in my favor to give an impartial opinion :— — but pray, my dear, what do you think of our Count, is not he a charming youth?"

= question so mal-a-propos, when poor

Matilda 's heart bore testimony to his merit,

CASTLE QF WOLFENBACH. 29

_ threw her i into the greatest confusion, she was unable to speak.

'The Countess observed her emotion, but. was too delicate to notice it; she therefore —_ added, © Tis a needless question ; I see your sentiments correspond with mine ; but your spirits are low, child—in truth mine are not high, so let us seek for better company.“ She arose, and taking Matilda's passive hand, led her to the drawing-room, where the com- F assembled. 5

| Matilda could not fee her benefaftore 5 vithout being visibly affected, which the Mar- chioness observing, © Come, ladies, (said she) give me your votes, I am collecting them for a party to Windsor to-morrow.” O, doubtless you may command our's (replied the Countess;) novelty has always its charms for us females.” © Very well,

| (faid the Marquis) then it's a settled bu- | siness. i

30 5 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

T be excursion to Windsor, and several other places, in the fortnight they staid at Mrs. Courtncy's jumbled the Count and Matilda so frequently together, and he had fo many opportunities of admiring her strong _ understanding end polist ed manners, that his affection was insensibly engaged beyond all power of resistance, and he determined to brave the censures of the world, and marry . her, if he could obtain her heart. From the moment this resolution took place, he treated ber with that infinuating tenderness in his voice and manners, which seldom fails of com-

municating the infection to a susceptible mind. Matilda's feelings alarmed her; she was conscious of the impropricty of indulging them, and felt the necessity of avoiding the Count as much as possible. He quickly ob- served the alteration in her behaviour, and was determined to come to an immediate expla- nation; justly conceiving nothing could be more wounding to a delicate mind than sul-

pense under such circumstances.

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 31 She so carefully snunned him, that it was not easy to find her alone; but the morning, when it was intended to return in the evening to London, chance afforded him an oppor- tunity. The Marchioness, Matilda, and the Count were in the garden; the Marquis came to them and requested to speak a few words to his Lady ; She disengaged her arm from her companion, and went with him to the house. Matilda turned with an intention to follow; the Count tock her hand, © Let meentreat you, madara, to pursue your walk; I wish to speak a few words, on an affair of consequence, that will not detain youlong from your friends." She trembled, and without speaking, suffered him to conduct her to an al- _ cove at the bottom of the garden. They were both seated for a minute before he could as- sume courage to speak, at length, " I be- heve from the first hour I had the hap- piness of being introduced to you, my admi- ration was very visible, but it was that admi- ration which a beautiful person naturally in- spires,— I knew not then it was your least

32 CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

Feen | Your story, which the Marquis related, convinced me you had every virtue which should adorn your sex, joined with a courage and perseverance, through difficulties which might do honor even to our's. Since] have been admitted a visitor in this house, I have been confirmed in the exalted opinion J entertained of your superiority to most wo- men, and under this conviction I may justly fear you will condemn my presumption, in

offering myself and fortune to your disposal."

« How, my Lord, (cried Matilda, recovering from her confusion, and interrupting him) do you consider who and what I am?"

« Yes, madam, (replied he) I have already told you, I think you one of the most perfect of your sex, and as to any other consideration

tis beneath my notice: if you will deign to

accept of me, it shall be the study of my life to make you amends for the injustice of for-

tune, who blindly bestows her favors on the unworthy.” „ You will pardon me, my ” Lord, (said she) for interrupting you a second time, but I cannot suffer you to proceed in . | T8 error ;

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH, 33

error; I entreat you, therefore to. hear me with patience, and. believe that the sentiments 1 express are the genuine feelings of my heart, from which no persuasions, no tempta- tions shall ever make me depart. Iacknow- ledge, with a grateful mind, the honor you of- fer me is far beyond any expectations I can ever form in life, and such as affords me both

pride and pleasure, that I am not deemed un-

worthy your esteem. At the same time, al- though you can generously resolve to forego

the respect you owe to yourself and family,

my duty to myself obliges me to remember it: without family and connexions, without even a name - perhaps the offspring of poor, or still worse, of infamous parents, brought up and supported by charity ; shall I intrude myself into a noble family, contaminate it's Justre, reflect indelible disgrace on the author of my undeserved elevation, and live despised and reproached, as the artful creature who had taken advantage of your generosity and compassion ? No, my Lord, promne me to say on such terms I never would

condescend to be the wife of a prince. © © shrink at my own littleness; I am in a state of obligation for my support, but I never will incur my own contempt, by deserving it from others. My mind is indeed, I hope, supe- rior to my situation: I will

preserve a recti- rude of principles under every evil that may befal me; those principles impel me to avow, with the greatest solemnity in the face of hea- ven, that under the disgraceful circumstances in which my Bie seems enveloped, I never will be yours." „ Hold, hold, madam, (cried the Count, endeavouring to interrupt her) great God! what have you vowed!" What duty to myself and you required of me, (aid she; ;) and now, my Lord, let this tubject never be renewed. If it can afford vou any consolation, (added she, sostened by the disorder and distress of his appearance) he aslured, my Lord, that as I never can be | your's, I never will be another's; and if my happiness is as dear to you as your's will ever to me, you will from this moment cease to Mak of me but as an unfortunate girl, de- prived

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH 35

prived of all power to return obligations, and therefore with too much pride and spirit to receive them, but from this worthy family, where I conceive it no disgrace to hold myself N dependent."

As she ended these words she rose. © Stop one moment, madam, (exclaimed the Count;) unless you would drive me to madness, afford me one gleam of hope, distant as it may be: your cruel vow precludes me from bliss, yet tell me, too N 9 that you do not hate me, that i=

« Ah! Sir, (faid she, involuntarily) hate you ! Heaven is my witness, that did my : birth and rank equal your's, it would be my

my glory, to accept your hand; but as there exists not a possibility of that, I beseech you to spare me and yourself unnecessary

pain; from this instant determine to avoid me, and I wil esteem you as the most exalt- ed of men."

.C< Without |

Without giving him time to reply, she darted like lightning towards the house, leav- ing bim overwhelmed with admiration, orieh, and despair,

What are the advantages of birth and rank, (cried he) which this sweet girl does not possess? A dignity of sentiment, a rectitude of heart; how greatly su- perior to that wretch Fontelle, whose malici- ous stories have so much injured her reputa- tion, and whose birth and fortune only render her the more despicable ; as mine must be to me of no value, when considered as bars to

8 happiness and *

He walked flowly to the house and met the Marquis. Dear Count, (said he) what have you done or said to my amiable pro-

' togee; I met her running up stairs, out of 3 breath, and tears trembling in her eyes?“

The Count, without the least reserve, repeated the preceding conversation. And did you 2528 make such an on, (cried he) and did the

| CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 37 she refuse it?“ © *Tis very true,” (replied - the Count.) © Why then (faid the Marquis) you are two of the noblest creatures under heaven; that you, my worthy friend, snould step beyond the prejudices of your country —

that you should resolve to brave the censure, the malevolent whispers and contemptuous neglect of your equals, and support the inso- lent derifion of your inferiors, in favour of a young woman under fuch peculiarly distres- sing circumstances, excites my wonder and admiration : but I scarce know any words that can do justice to my sentiments, when I reflect that this very young woman, without friends or fortune, from a sense of rectitude,

and a loftiness of sentiment which would do

honor to the highest rank, could perempto-

rily refuse a situation and prospects so bril-

liant— do violence to her own heart, and pre- fer a dependence her foul is much superior to, rather than incur self-reproach for your degradation. Indeed, my Lord, I

know not any language sufficiently expressive of my feelings: you must admire her more than eee Sh en

ever." © Doubt not, (answered the Count, in a melancholy tone) of my more than ad- miration - my adoration; but, alas! she 15 inflexible—she has sworn never to be mine she has charged me to see her, to think of her, no more." *© Do her justice, my Lord, and obey her ; prove your esteem for such an extraordinary exertion of virtue and prudence, imitate an example so deserving praise, and be assured the trial, however severe at present, will afford you satisfaction hereafter, in sub- duing love, though your highest esteem sne has a right to challenge." © Say no more, Marquis, (cried the Count;) I must cease to think of her before I can cease to love, for this day has riveted my chains more firmly than _ ever. I will not however be an inmate of your house ; though I cannot relinquish the _ charms of her society altogether, yet I pro- mise you I will indulge in no more dangerous tete- a- tetes, but I must see her sometimes." « Ah! Count," (faid the Marquis, shaking his head.) * Trust my honour and discre- tion, (replied he, to his e looks ;) * you

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 39

you may, for that angelic girl will never put them to the proof."

They proceeded to the house, and the car- riages drawing up, the party was collected to- _ gether. Matilda contrived to accompany the Marquis, his Lady, and Mrs. Courtney. The two latter kept up a sprightly conversa- tion with the Marquis, and but once or zwice | broke in upon her reveries ; yet she appeared ealy and cheerful ; in truth, th'e delight of be- ing dear to the amiable Count, and a con-

sciousness of having performed her duty, gave that peace and fcrenity to her mind which never fails of communicating itself to the countenance. . 8

On their arrival in Zarley-street the party separated, and the Count was compelled to accept an invitation from Lord Delby, to reside with him. The Marquis, (said his Lordship) has his family party, but I am lone, and therefore you will do me particu-

lar

40 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH»

lar honor and pleasure i in Hs with my wishes.”

As the Count could not reside with the Marquis, this was certainly the next best fitua- tion, for his Lordship was himself too fond of

the © family party” to be long absent from them; he therefore gladly i him to Cavendish- 88 :

They had OR now near a fortnight in town, enjoying its variety of amusements, and preparing for their journey to Scarborough, which was now to take place in four days. The birth-day being arrived, the Marquis, his Lady and the Count proposed paying their compliments at court, with Lord Del- by: the Count had been previously present- ed. The Countess (still known even by the Count only as Madame Le Roche) Mrs. Courtney, and Matilda, contented themfelves with attending the ball, at night, in the Lord Chamberlain's box. They were ac- cordingly accommodated with an excellent sitvation

| CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH- 41 fituation, and were extremely charmed with the beauty and splendor of the British court.

| Matilda's eyes were so intently fixed on the Royal Family, she had scarce thought of looking round her, until some audible whis- pers in French reached her ear; turning her head quickly, her eyes met those of Ma- demoiselle De Fontelle. A ftranger to the malice of that young lady, she bowed with a ' smile, being rather too distant to speak ; the lady gave her a look of contempt, and speak- ing low to the person next her; before Ma- tilda could recover from her surprise and con- fusion, she observed three or four persons look full at her, with scorn and disdain strong- ly marked in their features. Shocked be- yond measure at this to her unaccountable be- haviour, she turned sick and faint, was obliged to have recourse to her falts, and heard a laughing whisper on one side of her, whilst the Countess on the other was

eagerly. en- quiring the cause of her illness. Her salts, and natural dignity of mind soon enabled her

42 CASTLE OF worrEN BACH.

to recover. She evaded the curiosity of her friend, by complaining of the heat, and declaring herself better. She then turned her head towards Fontelle and her companions; she viewed them with a steady air of the highest contempt and indifference, 'till even the eyes of that malicious girl fell under her's, and she was evidently confused. Ma- tilda then returned to the amusements below her, and, though her mind was not ealy, sne appeared to enjoy uncommon satisfaction.

When the Royal Family had withdrawn, and they were about to quit their seats, they perceived Lord Delby and the Count making way to assist them in getting out. The latter had no eyes but for Matilda, 'till a sudden ex- clamation, and his name, caught his ear in

the moment he had presented his hand to

her; quickly turning, he saw Mademoiselle

De Fonteile and her aunt Madame Le

Brune, Surprised and vexed, he darted at

them a look of scorn, and with an air of the highest respc& and attention, assisted Matilda

nto

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 43

into the room, joined her friends, and they were safely conveyed through the crowd to their carriage, — Lord OY and himself a, in their's,

When they alighted in Harley-freet, Ma- tilda, who had suppressed her feelings in the ball room, and had been likewise deeply af- _ fected by the Count's attentions, scarcely en- tered the drawing room before she fainted":

every one was alarmed, but the Count was

distracted; his behaviour discovered the se- crets of his heart to all the company, and when she recovered, she saw him on his knees, holding one of her hands, whilst his air of distraction was but too expressive of his feel- |

ings; she withdrew her hand, and he arose ;

she apologized to the company, and imputed her diforder to the heat of the room, and the sudden chill she felt in getting out of the car- riage. Her friends, glad to see her recover- ed, enquired no further, but the Count drew the Marquis out of the room, and in much agitation, cried out, That persccuting fiend,

| fiend, in a female form, 1s the cause of her Ulness." Who do you mean?" (demanded the Marquis.) © Who should I mean,

(answered he, warmly) but that malicious

Fontelle; I faw her not far from Ma- tilda, and I. dare say she insulted her; but, by heavens ! if she propagates her infamous falschoods here, she shall repent it, however she may trust to my honor".

The Marquis was a little surprised at this fally, but without appearing to observe it, faid, © You know, Count, we shall leave town three days hence, and consequently be out ofher _ malice. I wonder what brought her to Eng- | land." . « Spiteandenvy (repliedhe;) but does the amiable girl know how much Mademoiselle De Fontelle is her enemy?" © No cer- tainly (answered the Marquis ;) you do not suppose we would wound her feelings, by re- peating the disagreeable reports spread among our acquaintance at Paris." «© Iam glad of it, (said the Count) yet I cannot but think the other affronted her." «© We shall Ee ot on reg ie)" N

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 45

know to- I; but let us return and eat our supper now.

They went : down to the supper room, and were much pleased in beholding Matilda

cheerful and perfectly well.

When the company separated, and she was

retired to her apartment, she gave way to her

own reflections ; she could no otherwise ac-

count for the impertinence of Mademoiselle

De Fontelle, but by supposing she was ac- quainted with her birth; © Ah! (said she) I doubt not but Mr. Weimar published it at Paris, from motives of revenge, and she, who as 2 relation to the Marchioness, received a thousand civilities, is now despised as an im- poster ; an orphan, and a dependent on cha- rity ; nay, even my benefactors may suffer in the opinion of their friends for introducing me! Good heavens ! (cried she) why should I continue in the world—why assume a cha- racter and appearance I have no pretensions to? What blameable pride, what meanness, „ BY

46 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

in accepting gifts which draw upon me Wer and derifion—I will no longer =

Tormented all night by the distress of her situation, the arose unrefreshed, pale, feeble and agitated.

The Marchioness, alarmed at her appear- ance, insisted upon sending for a physician ; the Marquis was going to pull the bel].

« Stay, my dear friends, (cried she) I be- seech you; tis my mind, not my body, that

— disordered, and you only have the power to heal it." „ Speak your wishes, my dear child, (said the Marchioness;) be assured, if in our power, you may command the grant of them." „On that promise, my dearest

benefactress, your poor Matilda founds her hopes of peace." She then repeated the af-

' fronts of the preceding evening, and her own conjectures upon it. I am humbled, my dearest madam, as all false pretenders oughr | to be, en she:) 1 can no longer

support

the

CASTLE OF w. OLFENBACH. 47

the upbraidings of my heart; a false pride, a despicable vanity induced me to lay hold of your sentiments in my favour, which, after the discovery of my original meanness, I ought to have blushed at your condescension, and sought some humble situation, or retired to a convent, where, unknowing and unknown, I might have pursued the lowly path Providence seems to have pointed out for me. I have been punished for my presumpticn and dupli- _ city—it has made me look into myself; doubtless, out of this family, everyone beholds me with the scorn and contempt J have justly. incurred from Mademoiselle De Fontelle, and all who know my doubtful origin. O, my beloved friends, (cried she, wringing her hands, tears running down her cheeks) fave me from future insults, save me from selt- reproach ! complete your generosity and goodness, and let me retire to a convent. My poor endeavours to amuse you as a compa- nion are no longer necessary; the Countels is restored to you, and I have only been a fource of vexation and trouble ever since the hour

you

48 ' CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

you first condescended to receive me a con,

vent is the only asylum I ought to wish for,

and there only I can find reft” Here lle stopt, overwhelmed with the most Pain

fu. emotions.

The Marquis was affected, the Marchioness drowned in tears. © My dear, but too susceptible girl, (aid she, when able to speak) why will you thus unnecessarily tor-

ment yourself; what is Fontelle and her

opinions to us? We are going to Scarbo- rough; you have friends who will protect you

A 7 i py

from every insult, —who will treat you with

increased respect, from a conviction that your

mind is superior to all the advantages which

birth and fortune has given to Mademoiselle De Fontelle, or a thousand such : besides, depend upon my assertions, you sprung not

from humble or dishonest parents,—the vir- tues you possess are hereditary ones, doubt it not, my dear Matilda; if nobleness of birth can add any lustre to qualities like your's, you

will one * ** chat . f 6

Tis

es TLE OF WOLFENBACH. 49

'Tis impossible to express the agitations of Matilda, on hearing such kind and consoling sentiments ; but her resolution to retire from

the world was unconquerable ; she found her heart too tenderly attached to the Count—she knew the impossibility that she should ever be his; she was convinced her story was known, her friends had not attempted to deny it; in whatever public place she might visit, it was very possible to meet persons who had | heard it, and she might be exposed to similar insults, which her spirit could not brook.

The Marquis and his lady made use of per- suasions, arguments, and even reproaches, but she had so much resolution and fortitude, when once she had formed a design, approved by her judgment, as could net be easily shaken ; and though her heart was wounded with sorrow, and her mind impressed with

grief, in being obliged to resist the kindness of her friends, yet she sul persevered.

LT Do. « Well,

« Well, Matilda, (faid the Marchioness,

in a reproachful tone) since you are inflexible. to our withes, I must infist upon your going with me to Mrs. Courtney's : what will she, what will my sister think, but that I have

treated you ill, and you can no longer re-

main with one you have ceased to love.“

« Kill me not, (cried she, in an agony) with.

such reproaches ; let me fly to the Countess

and disclose my reasons—ah ! surely she will do more justice to my heart: oh! madam, that you could fee it that you could read the love, the admiration and respect indeli- bly imprinted there, with your image, never, never to be erased whilst it beats with- in my bosom.“

Overcome with these sensations, she wept

aloud; the Marchioness embraced and sooth- ed her. = |

The carriage was ordered, and they drove to Mrs. Courtney's, the Marquis setting them down, and going on to Lord Delby's.

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 51

It is needless to repeat what passed at Mrs. Courtney's, since it was only a repetition of every argument and persuasion which her pro- tectors had before used in vain. Nothing could shake her resolution; and all the favour they could obtain, was to permit Louison and Antoine to accompany her to Boulogne, and remain in a convent there, 'till her friends re- turned to France, and the twelvemonth ex- pired Mr. Weimar had allowed her to remain under the care of the Marquis.

Whilst every countenance spoke pity, grief, and admiration, the gentlemen sudden- | ly entered the room, the Count with an air of wildness and distress. The moment

Matilda saw him she trembled violently, and could with

difficulty keep her seat. Ah! madam,

(faid he) what is it I hear - is it possible you

mean to abandon your friends, to diftress the most affectionate hearts in the world, to give

up society, and, from romantic notions, bury yourself in a convent? Hear me thus pub-

licly, (cried he, throwing himself at her feet, IF * with

with a frantic look) hear me avow 105

your lover, your protector, and if you will con-

descend to accept of me, your husband ; yes, that is the enviable distinction I aspire to; plead for me, my friends, — soften the obdu-

rate heart that would consign me to everlast-

ing misery. Oh! Matilda, cruel, unfeeling

girl, has a proud and unrelenting spirit sub- dued every tender and compassionate senti-

ment, — has neither love nor friendship any

claims upon your heart * ?" His emotions were violent.

The ladies, till now, strangers to his senti-

ments, fat mute with wonder. :

Matilda had 1 her face with her

handkerchief; when he stopt she withdrew it; it was wet with tears: he snatched it from her trembling hand, kissed it, and thrust it into his bosom. © I bes:ech you, Sir, to rise, (faid she, when able to speak) this

posture is unbecoming of yourself and me.

The resolution I have formed is fuch as my

reason

CASTLE OF wol FEN BAcH. K x

reason approves, and my particular circum- stances call upon me to adopt; I ought to have done it long ago, and blush at my own folly in delaying it." „ But, good God! madam, (interrupted the Count) can the ridi- culous behaviour, or unjust prejudices of one worthless woman weigh against the affections, the esteem of so many respectable friends ? What have we done to deserve being render- ed miserable through her envy and malice ?" Could the warmest love, gratitude and re- spect, which I owe to every one here (an- swered she ;) could the arguments of the most condescending kindness, deeply imprinted here (putting her hand to her heart) could these avail to alter my purpose, I might not de able to withstand your persuasions; but, my Lord, when I have had fortitude sufficient to deny those who are dearer to me than life,

you cannot be offended, that 'tis impossible

for me to oblige you; and here, in the pre- sence of those who have been witnesses to the | honors you have offered me, I release you from every vow, every obligation your too

D 3 ardent

54 casrIE OF WOLFENBACH. |

rdent love has conferred on me, and from

this hour beseech you to think of me as a friend, zealous for your honor and happiness,

for your fame, and the respect you owe to

your family; but equally jealous of every

duty I owe myself, and therefore determined to see you no more." She rose quickly

from her chair, and ran into Mrs. Courtney's

drxessing- room, giving way to a violent burst

of tears. The astonished Count, who had not the power to prevent her departure,

threw himself into a chair, without speaking. The Countess had followed Matilda,

This is really (said Mrs. Courtney) the most

extraordinary young woman I ever met with;

I wender not at your attachment, my dear Count, but after this public declaration, you

have nothing to hope for: imitate her example of fortitude and self-denial, and suffer not your mind to be depressed, when it is neces-— fary you should exert man's boasted supe- riority of reason and firmnels." The Count

replied not.

'The

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 55 The Marchioness looked with a little sur- prise at Mrs. Courtney, who she thought ap-

peared less affected than the ought tor her young friend.

Lord Delby was warm in her praise, and offered to be her escort to Boulogne, as he thougnt it highly improper she should be ac-

companied by servants only, Ph

This offer was thankfully accepted by the Miarchioness. She has absolutely prohibited the Marquis and myself, (faid she) but 1 hope will make no objections to the honor you intend her.

The Count, making a slight apology, witchdrew, and every one joined in pitying the r.ccessity for a separation of two persons so

worthy of each other. Was fortune the

only obstacle her delicacy could raise, (faid the Marquis) there are those who would re- joice to remove it; but when we consider the particular disadvantages of her firuation—

D4 the

56 . CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

the disgrace and insults which would attend the Count, from her want of birth, however great her merit: unjust as I know those pre- judices are, yet I confess it would have given me pain, had she ated otherwise, I ap- plaud, I admire, I love her more than ever, but I do not wilh to see her the Count's wife, _ unless those bars could be removed, which now appear next to an impossibility.” © No! ' (cried the Marchioness, briskly) no! I will not believe, merit like Matilda's is born to wither in the shade; I will hope to see her one day in a conspicuous point of view, that may reflect honor on all who are connected with her, eicher by blood or nen

« You are romantic, my dear madam, (Gaid Mrs. Courtney, with a smile ;) but suppose we go to your young favorite, and see how the poor thing does after her heroics.”

This was said with fo little feeling, that the Marchioness was surprised ; and a fudden idea darting into the mind of the Marquis, he could

| CASTLE or WOLFENBACH. 57 not suppress a smile, whilst Lord Delby look- ed offended with his lister 8 light manner of

speaking.

Under these different impressions they en- tered the dressing- room, and found poor Matilda reclining her head on the Countess,

and both weeping. © Fie, fie, my good friend, (said Mrs. Courtney) is this the way to comfort the young lady, for the sacrifices

The has made to honor and principle. 1 adore your sensibility, madam, (cried Lord

Delby, hastily;) in my opinion, who ever loves Mits Matilda does honor to their own _ heart."

Both ladies bowed to his lordship, though vunable to speak ; but endeavouring to re-cover themselves, the Countess said, © This dear obstinate girl proposes setting off the day after to-morrow." * Well, and if she

is fo determined, what hinders us from all

taking a trip to Dover, previous to our

Scarborough) journey?" (said Lord Delby.) hung WG I

38 CASTLE OF WOLF ENBACH.

Every one agreed to the proposal, afier which they sought to amuse their minds, by talking on different subjects.

The Countess and Mrs. Courtney accom- panied the Marchicness home to dinner, but Lord Delby excused himself, that he might attend to the Count. On his return to Ca- vendish- square he was informed his guest was in the library. He found him writing, and would have retired; the Count requested he would fit down: the conversation naturally turned on the recent occurrences in Harley-

street. © Don't think meanly of me, my dear Lord, (faid the Count) if! cannot help gratifying a little malice and revenge; I have | Just finished a few lines to Mademoiselle De Fontelle; I will, at least, make her remember she is in my power, and tremble every moment, lest I should put my threats in execution; I will plant a thorn in her bosom, if she is ca- pable of feeling, though, alas! I can never draw the ore from my breast !ke has been the Cause of transfixing tl. ere for lic! 1 Hall send 18 5 N 7

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 59g.

to the Ambassador's, to procure her address, as doubtless from old acquaintance Madame Le Brune has been to pay her respects to his lady, and that 1s the oaly clue

at 80 I have to find her.”

When Lord Delby acquainted him the day was fixed for Matilda's departure, and their intended jaunt with her, © Ah! (said he) how hard, that the person most interested in that event should be precluded from being a witness of it, though I know I could rot stand | the shock.” © If my sister does not accom- pany us, which I rather doubt, as one coach cannot hold them, and 1 intend going on horseback, there being no necessity for great expedition, I shall consign her to your care, my dear Count, in cur absence.” If Mrs.

Courtney will accept the attendance of such

a 2 spiritless being as myself, (answered he) I shall be 0noured of permission to to wait upon ber.

D 6 Not

Not to dwell on the melancholy circum- stances of parting, when nothing new or par- ticular occured, 'tis sufficient to say both par- ties were overwhelmed with grief, and Matil- da submitted, with much reluctance, to Lord Delby's going in the packet with her; but

her friends all protesting, if she refused, every one would go, she was obliged to acquiesce ;

and embracing the two ladies a thousand | |

times, with streaming eyes, she tore herself from them and embarked.

The wind was TY they reached Boulogne in seven hours; and whilst they partook of some refreshment at the hotel, Louison and Antoine walked to the Ursuline Convent, in the high town, and having acquainted the porteress with their errand, found, to their great mortification, they took no ladies in chamber, or high pensioners. They were directed to the Annunciate Convent, and there soon procured admission, and accommo- dations for Matilda, and Louison, who gladly attended her, vas. 5 i:

would be only for a

Mort

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, | 61

short time, till ber lady came from Eng- land.

Within a few hours Matilda was received and settled. She took leave of Lord Delby with tears of gratitude. © Ah! (said he, much moved) not one word of remembrance to my worthy guest ?" * Yes, Sir, (faid she, raising her voice) tell him I admire, I esteem pg his happiness 1s the first wish of my heart. Take care, my dear Lord, of the worthy Count; teach him to forget me, and if ever he should be united to an amiable wo- man, deserving and possessing his affection, 1 will then boldly claim his esteem—'till then we must be for ever separated."

She entered the gates, unable to say more, and when they were shut upon her, Lord Delby, overcome with pity and admiration, returned to the hotel; that same evening re- embarked for Dover, and joined his friends before nine the next morning.

Spiritless

Spiritless and unhappy, they arrived in Harley- street the following evening, and send- ing a messenger to Mrs. Courtney, that lady shortly after entered the house, the Count with her; she cheerful and lively, he looking pale and dejected. She enquired, with an air

ol indiffer-nce, the particulars of their journey, but seemed little interested in it; not fo the

Count, he asked a thousand questions, © [|

have a message to you from the amiable Ma-

tilda," (said Lord Delby.) " For me, (faid the Count, eagerly ;) O! why have you de- layed tn?" His Lordship repeated her last words. „ Sweet angelic girl! (cried he) is my happiness dear to her! but why should I doubt it? she is truth and goodness itself;

my esteem, my love, must ever be hers, for no other woman shall ever pc ssess that heart she condescended to prize, and never will I marry, if Matilda cannot be my wife.” Lord bless me! (exclaimed Mrs. Court- ney) let's have no more dismals ; I declare these last five days have vapoured me to death: 1 * our 7 to Scarborough WII.

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 63

will teem with more pleasant incidents than your's to Dover seems to have produced.” « T am sure fo (answered the Count;) the world does not abound with characters like Matilda's to lament.” “

No more was aid ; supper was announced, and more general conversation introduced during the remainder of the evening, though every one en absent and uneasy. >

After the company had lest them the Marchioness took notice of Mrs. Courtney's

behaviour. „ Surely she has taken some pique against Matilda,“ (said she.) © Yes, (replied the Marquis) the pique natural to a jealous woman.” „ Jealous! (repeated the Marchioness) why, surely you do not think she is fond of the Count ?” © Indeed, but I do (replied he;) nay, I am certain of it, from many observations I lately made on her con- duct.“ «© Bless me! (returned she) why Mrs. Courtney is seven or eight and thirty, the Count only two and twenty,” ©@ That's . true,

| true, (said he, smiling) but my love ladies have various ways of concealing their age,

and the depredations of time; besides, vanity

never forsakes them; and to do Mrs. Court-

ney justice, she is an agreeable woman.” « Yes, and a sensible woman, (returned she ;)

1 never can suppose her guilty of such a weak- _ ness; I rather think her prejudiced against

| Matilda, by fome falschoods or other." « Very well, (replied the Marquis) be it fo:

I am always more gratified by your favorable

opinion of your own sex, than a readiness to

condemn them; the one shews a generous

mind, free from guile itself the other, a ma- l cgnant spirit, desirous of acquiring merit from

the deficiencies of others." *© But, pray, (said the Marchioness) how will you account

to Mr. Weimar for the retirement of Matil-

da, should he hear of it, and apply to vou ?" « By the simplest truth, (replied he) except what relates to Bouville. He mutt thank | himself for all the tories Mademoiselle

De Fontelle has repeated to her dis- advantage, and from whence originated her sudden determination. She is now safe; the . +. Ieeer

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 95

letter I procured from the Ambassador, ad dressed to any convent, at least, the superior of it, will always protect her, since mine is the only claim she 1s subject ee

Tranquillised by this, the Marchioness re- commended her young friend to the care of Providence, and retired to rest with a virtu- ous heart, and an easy mind, which could not fail of producing quiet and refreshing | flumbers,

The S Lord Delby, and Mrs. Court- ney, were not equally happy. The former, more sensible every hour of Matilda's worth, cursed the pride of birth, which stood between him and happiness, and determined to live on- ly for her. Lord Delby had been many years a widower ; he had only one son, whom

he carried to Switzerland, at the time the

Countess so fortunately obtained his protec- tion: he was then extremely struck with

her appearance; beauty in distress has a thousand cm upon a susceptible mind; but the

Countess

66 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, _ Countess had good sense, sweetness of temper, and delicacy of manners to recommend

her; and though the first bloom of beauty

was worn off, she had sufficient charms both of mind and body to procure for her the ad-

miration of any man. Lord Delby conceiv- ed a very warm affection for her, though he

knew it was entirely hopeless, unless death

should rid her of her persecutor; he was therefore condemned to silence on a subject

nearest his heart, and felt the restraint very

_ painfully. Mrs. Courtney, from the first moment she beheld the Count, was charmed with his person and manners. She had been a widow four years: when about three and

twenty, at the request of her father, Lord Delby, and the temptations of a very capital fortune, superb carriages, fine jewels, and

those other avenues to the heart of a young

and fashionable female, she gave her hand to

Mr. Courtney, who was struck with her per-

son, and thinking it right to have an heir to his immense possessions, suspended for a time

the delights of Newmarket, and his favorite 5 sprightly,

eAsTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 67

sprightly, to attend the laws of Hymen ; but in a very few weeks his former propensity returned ; his young bride was forsaken for the pleasures of the turf, Newmarket, it's

jockies, it's tumultuous pursuits, deep bets,

and jovial companions, engrossed all his time

and attention. His lady, happily for her, was

not doatingly fond of her husband; she was pos- sessed of every appendage proper for a female in fashionable life, and outshone two-thirds of

her acquaintance in jewels, plate, carriages, and dress; she was therefore extremely easy

about the absence of her husband, and whilst he neither contracted her expences, nor de- prived her of the amusements she liked, she :

was perfectly difposed to shew him the same complaisance. This very modish pair

lived some years together, without feeling

either pleasure or pain, from their different

engagements. Mr. Courtney was at first much disappointed by not having an heir, but

time reconciled him to an event he could not remove; and having determined to make a distant relation, who was to inherit his estate,

take

take his name by At of Parliament, he : ceased giving himself any further concern

about the matter. They had been married

upwards of ten years, when unfortunately taking cold, after very hard riding, a violent

fever terminated his life in fix days, and his

disconsolate widow was left to undergo all the
forms and ceremonies of deep mourning, and
to wear odious black for three months. This
state of mortification being rubbed through,
' she found herself mistress of all her former
finery, and a very noble jointure, to live as she
Pleased. Mrs. Courtney was good-natured, | not from principle but constitution; she | hated trouble of any sort, therefore bore any thing, rather than have the fatigue of being
cout of humour; she was polite and friendly,
where she had no temptation to be otherwise;
in short, she had many negative virtues, with-
out any active ones. Such was Mrs. Court-
ney, when she appeared in this book first.
All men were indifferent alike, till she saw the enpaging Count; a few interviews de-
cided her fate ; she found she loved to excess,
and
CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 69
and hated Matilda in proportion; she disco-
vered his partiality in her favor, long before
it was publicly known, and sought to recom- mend herself to his notice, by paying attention
to his favorite; but finding all her endeavours
ineffectual, she began to dislike the innocent

object of her jealousy, and was casting about in her mind how to get rid of her, when Ma-

tilda unexpectedly declared her intention of go-

ing into a convent. The Counts subsequent

behaviour, his public declaration and protesta-

tions, were mortifying circumstances, tis true, but she depended upon time, absence, and her own endeavours, to conquer a passion he could not but look upon as hopeless. The Countess, so many years secluded from the world, at first felt only the warmest gratitude to Mrs, Courtney and her brother, for their generous protection; but the polite atten-

tion, the mark'd kindness of Lord Delby, in-

spired her with the most perfect esteem for him,—and though, from the melancholy circumstances which attended her early pre- posscssion, her heart was dead to love, she

yer

E. CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

yet experienced all that partiality in his Lord-

ship's favor which her heart was capable of

feeling.

Such was the state and sentiments of the

party, now about to set off for Scarborough.

The day previous to which, after a consulta-

tion between the Marquis, his Lady, and the

Countess, on the entrance of the Count, to

pay his morning compliments, the Marquis led him to the Coonels, « My dear

friend, you have hitherto known this lady only as Madame Le Roche, the name she bears in | England ; I now introduce you to her as Our

dearest sister, the Countess of Wolfenbach,

whose Geath you have heard us often lament."

The Count started with surprise ; © Good heavens ! (said he, after saluting her) how

1s > Lis possible * KF

The Marquis gave him a brief recital of

her confinement, and promised him the parti-

culars another day, © I could no longer

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH 71

keep our secret from you, but she must still retain her former name, until the whole affair is brought forward. The Ambassador was

made acquainted with it yesterday ; he will

take some private steps, at first, if possible, to

do us justice ; and when we return to London

for the winter, we shall use decisive measures; mean time, I have written to a friend, as has

| likewise my sister, to procure Joseph's testi- mony, as far as his knowledge extends, lest,

as he is old, we should lose a witness of some consequence." 7

| The Count entered warmly into the busi-

ness; his life and fortune was at the service

of his friends: they embraced and thanked

him.

The following day they left town, after writing the most affectionate letters to their

beloved Matilda, whose absence they most fincerely regrenes, |

Matilda

72 - CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

Matilda, on her first residence in the con- vent, found it replete with many inconveni- _ ences she did not expect. For the first week she cried incessantly, and poor Louison, not happier, continually prest her to return.“ Ah, mon Dieu! (cried she) if my good master and lady, if the dear charming Count de Bouville knew how miserable you are, they would fly _ to bring you out again. Ah! the good Count, the morning before we came away, gave me ten English guineas ; the tears were

in his eyes; Take care of your charming mistress, Louison, (said he) and I will always be your friend: Pear, dear gentleman | 0. that he was but here! :

| This little anecdote, which one might have | supposed would have added to Matilda's grief, proved a most salutary remevy | for it: she in stantly dried her eyes. © Amiable, generous man! (said she) thall I repine, that I have devoted myself to retirement to pre- serve a mind like his from repentance and {clt- reproach, and from the difdain of those low-

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 13 low-minded people, incapable of the noble- ness of heart which would prompt him to forget his own dignity, to raise a friendless or- phan. No; I will at least prove deserving

of his esteem, by my own self-denial ; I will support every inconvenience, every trial with resignation—happy, if, in facrificing the

trifling amusements the world affords, I can F his peace, and secure his future hap

: piness.

F ortified by these generous sentiments, 1

no longer wept or sighed ; she sought conso-

lation in the practice of her religious duties,

which itrengthened her mind and composed her spirits : she found in the uniform obser- vance of piety, charity, and compassion to- wards the sick and unfortunate, that peace which the world could not give, and that se-

renity of mind which no recollection of mis-

fortunes could deprive her of.

She became the admiration of the whole community; every one was desirous of her

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favor, but Matilda, blest with uncommon pe- netration, and capable of the nicest discrimi- nation, was at no loss to distinguish the selfish and fulsome attentions of the officious, from the approbation of the worthy and humble

few who looked on her with eyes of kindness,

but never intruded ; from these few, to whom

the payed particular civility, her heart select- ed mother St. Magdalene ; she was about eight and twenty, and had been a nun nearly ten years; she was one of those very elegant

forms you cannot behold without admiration;

her face was more expressive than beautiful,

yet more engaging than a lifeless set of fea-

tures without animation, however perfect or blooming, could possibly be; sne was pious

without ostentation, kind and affectionate to

her sisterhood, and courteous, without design or meanness, to the pensioners.

This charming woman soon attracted the notice of Matilda, —she sought her company

and conversation - she received her attentions 55

wich particular 3 ONE : Mother

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 75 Mother Magdalene was sensible of her civilities—she plainly comprehended the value of them, but from peculiar notions of delica- cy, and to avoid giving umbrage to the sister- hood, she rather repressed than encouraged her particular kindness. Matilda, however, | would not be repulsed, and Magdalene was at length compelled to be her © Dear Mother."

They were frequently together, and by her example Matilda was encouraged to the per- severance in every moral and religious duty.

Letters from her two friends, the Marchio- ness and Countess, were the only things she permitted to break in upon them, and those letters were a continual stimulation to a sense

of gratitude and generosity, which she tound herself called upon to exert.

Whilst Matilda had th thus happily reconciled her mind to her situation, her friends were

enjoying the amusements that Scarborough Ce:

afforded. E 2 The

The Count was always the attendant on

Mrs. Courtney; and though his passion was as fervent as ever, and his regrets as power-

ful for the loss of Matilda, he could not be always in company with an amiable woman,

who paid him such particular attention, with- out being gratified by it, and sometimes

shewing those little marks of 1 which

all women expect.

The Count, though he had a more than common share of solidity and stability, with

the most refined understanding and integrity of heart, yet he was still a Frenchman —still

possessed a natural gaiety of heart, the great-

est politeness and attention to the fair sex, and

sometimes fell into the hyperbolical compli- ments so natural to his countrymen, when

addressing the ladies. Mrs. Courtney, too ready to believe every thing to be as she wished, gave him every encouragement, and contrived frequently to draw him into situa- tions and nn which were rather equi-

vocal,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 77

vocal, but by which he meant nothing, though the lady thought otherwise.

They had been near three weeks at Scar- | borough ; the ladies had heard twice from Matilda, but as she requested her name might never be mentioned to the Count, but from necessity, they only answered his eager en-

quiries, by saying she was well, and appeared to be much pleased with her situation. He

| saw there was a reserve in their manner, and

justly supposed jt owing to her restrictions : he did justice to her greatness of mind, which only served to increase his love and regrets.

One morning Mrs. Courtney, entering the Marchioness's dressing- room, flung herself in- to a chair, Bless me! (said she) what shall I do with your friend, the Count? he has drawn me into a pretty scrape,—lI never in- tended marrying again, but he is so pressing, lo ĩrresistible “ “ Who, (cried the Mar- chioness, surprised) the Count? he pres- sing?“ „ Why, yes, (answered she ;) surely

78 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

you must have observed his particular devoirs for some time past.” «© Not I, upon my honor (answered the Marchioness ;) I never supposed his attentions to you wore the face of particularity.” Then you can have ob- served nothing, (said she, peevishly.) Pray, what think you, my dear madam ?” (turning to the Countess.) * Upon my word, I am

_ equally surprised (rephed she;) but if you

can settle the matter agreeably between your- selves, I shall certainly rejoice at it, because I

am very sure Matilda will keep her resolution, in refusing his addresses.”

Those last NEE which were spoken _ designedly, piqued Mrs. Courtney a good deal. I do not think 'tis of much consequence,

(said she, haughtily) whether she keeps her re solution or not l believe by this time he is very sensible of the impropriety of his of- fer- but I forget, I appointed him to meet me ata friend's, in the next street, —bon jour, 8 ladies, (faid shes with a a forced gaiety, and ran

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 79

ran out of the room, leaving them looking at each other with astonishraent)

« Can this be Mrs. Courmney | ? (cried the Countess) my God, what a change!“ © But Is there, can there, be any truth, (said the Marchioness) in the Count's attentions?” Heaven knows, (faid she) but if it is fo, I mall never depend upon man —

Some company coming in, , prevented fur-

ther conversation; but at dinner, when they

all met, the ladies observed the Count appear- ed to be thoughtful and uneasy, Mrs. Court- _ ney gay and lively, Lord Delby rather atteri= tive to both; in short, it was the first dinner in which the party seemed collected within themselves, and forgot

their friends, except Mrs. Courtney, who behaved with remark- able politeness and [weetneis to all.

When the ladies red to ds drawing- room the Count addressed the Marquis in the following manner. I believe, my dear

80 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

Sir, you are sufficiently acquainted with me, to know that I am equally incapable of a dishonourable thought or action to any one, much less towards a lady for whom I enter- tain the highest . and the sister of my | hospitable entertainer." «© For heaven's lake, (cried the Marquis) what is all this,— who dares accuse you?" „ — sion only, I hope, (said the Count, in a calm tone) not an accusation. Both you and all our friends are perfectly acquainted with my 5 attachment to the amiable Matilda, —an at- tachment (added he, raising his voice) that will be as lasting as my life, for I never snall love any other woman : but unhappily the re- spect and attentions I have paid to the merits of Mrs. Courtney, have been misconceived ; I have been upbraided with seeking to gain her affections, and with having given colour to suppose mine were also devoted to her: the highest respect, nay, even admiration of her many amiable qualities, I have undoubt- edly expressed, but not one word beyond what

f friendship would warrant, from a man who :* made

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 81

made no scruple to own his love for another, chough perhaps that other never can be his. My heart, my honor, does not reproach me with the least duplicity or mean design. Can

you, my dear Marquis, from the whole tenor

of my conduct, suppose I could be a trifting coxcomb, much less a deliberate villain, for 1 must hold any man as such who could seek

to gain the affections of an amiable woman,

to gratify his vanity only?“ © I am equally

_ surprised and concerned (said the Marquis) |

that such misapprehensions should have taken. place And I (interrupted Lord Delby) equally displeased and mortified, at being made à party in the business; but there is no ac- counting for the vanity of women, and how _ very readily they entertain ideas they wish to Indulge. I am very sorry, Count, I have been drawn into this foolish affair, for I observed at first it was very unaccountable, that a man | should make his court to one woman, and avowedly profess his admiration of another; I shall however talk to my sister, and I beg the subject may drop and go no further.” I I feel

I feel myself extremely at a loss how to be-

have (said the Count;) I think I had better leave Scarborough.” © By no means, (said

his Lordship, hastily ;) behave as usual ro Mrs.

Courtney, in public, but avoid tete-i-tetes;— if she is wise, she will herself approve this 1 me- * to escape observation.”

The Count reluQtantly 3 knowing

after what had passed, he must appear very awkward in his civilities, which had been * misconceived. ies

They attended the ladies in the drawing- room, and it being proposed to go to the

theatre, the Count, as usual, offered his hand

to Mrs. Courtney, though with a look of con-

fusion and reserve; she accepted | it wich a po- Ute and tender air.

Lord Delby, not Knowing she had exposed

herself to the ladies, requested the Marquis would not mention the affair to them. 5

"Phe

' CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, $3

The evening past off very well, and at sup- per they were more cheerful and talkative than usual. The following day however Mrs. Courtney appeared with a new face ; she look- ed pensive and unhappy, complained of a pain in her breast, eat little, sighed frequently, M in short, engaged that particular attention we naturally pay to those we love, and see indif-

| posed. The Count looked the image of de- | spair ; he addressed her one moment, with an air of tenderness, the next he studiously seem- cd to avoid her; his behaviour was unequal, confused, and evidently perplexed.

Things continued in this state for some days, — Mrs. Courtney more melancholy, the Count more distressed ; when one day, as they

| were at table, the Marquis received an ex- press from London. Every one was alarm- ed; it came from the German Ambassador, rcquesting the Marquis would instantly come to town, the Count of Wolfenbach being there dangerously ill, and desirous of making all possible reparation to the Countess. „ GE 4 This

6 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

This news suspended all the new schemes. The Countess could scarcely be kept alive;

_ she was apprehensive of some fresh plots, and dreaded the idea of being again within his ower. © Fear not, madam, (cried Lord y;) the monster shall never see you - without your friends to protect you.” * Be-

sides, sister, (urged the Marchioness) the Am-

bassador is himself a pledge of your safety, and tells us he is dangerously 11, —perhaps the poor wretch cannot die in peace without your _ pardon.” O, my God! (said she, starting vp) let me go this instant !—alas ! he has need of forgiveness; his

crimes are great, yet if

they were the consequence of his love for me,

'tis my duty to speak peace and pardon ;

grant heaven! (cried she, lifting up her

hands) I may not come too late! I will set off this very hour." *© Be composed, my dear sister, (said the Marquis) we will go this evening; the Marchionels and I will attend you." © And J," (exclaimed the Count.) Wie will all accompany you," (faid Lord Delby.) " 1 my Lord, (answered the Con-

CASTLE or wourajsaacy. 85

| Countess) why should. I fo suddenly call you

from the amusements of this place: you proposed staying three months, we have only

been here a little better than one." © Where- ever my friends are, (replied Lord Delby) is to me the desirable place; 1 have no local at

tachments without their presence; and I dare

answer for my sister, she has no objections, as

I think the air of Scarborough has been of little use to her health." «© You judge very right, my Lord, 1 shall certainly accompany our friends, (faid she, in a languid tone, add-

ing) their e must constitute mine.

The Count, who took every thing literally | which betrayed generosity of sentiment, could not help saying, is impossible to doubt

Mrs. Courtney's concurrence in every scheme productive of pleasure to those she honors with her esteem." This compliment made

ber eyes dance with pleasure.

Their women were called and desired to

set about packing immediately. Every thing

| Was

86 CASTLE OF wolrEN BACH.

was hurried on, and at five the next morning

they were all on their return to London.

About a week previous to this Matilda re- ceived a letter from an unknown hand, and

Sithout a name, signifying that the Count De Bouville was paying his addresses to Mrs.

Courtney; that he was extremely fond of her, but that she hesitated on account of his vows,

to Matilda, which made him very unhappy.

She read this letter with composure, —she

felt some pangs at her heart,—she tried to

overcome them: © Why should I be uneasy, (said she) have not I wished the Count might

make a suitable aliiance ?—did I not release him from his vows? Alas! I have neither claims nor expectations, —let him marry, I

can then renounce the world, and settle here

for life, —when lost to him I have only this asylum to bury myself in for ever.” The

- tcars would flow, but she quickly dried them. % From whence this sorrow, (said she again)

had I any hopes? O, no! all is despair and e bditter-

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 87 bitterness on my side, but I will rejoice in the

happiness of the amiable Count, whatever be- falls ORR

Within three days after this, she received a letter from Mrs. Courtney these were the contents:

6 Rn Miss Matilda,

Honor, sentiment, and generosity impel

me to address you; I am well acquainted with

the nobleness of your heart, and can confide in its integrity. You have refused the Count De Bouville, publicly refused him: was there a shadow of hope you ever could be his, I

would have been silent; but as I deem that

impossible, I trust to your generosity and for- titude, when I tell you, he has for some time past paid his addresses to me, with the warm approbation of all our friends. I at first made objections on your account; he pleaded, you had publicly rejected him; and, as I did not feel satisfied, he offered to write you, and procure 6 %%%

his release : but knowing men have great duplicity, when they wish to carry a point,

I declined his offer and chose to write my- felf ; and I conjure you, my dear Matilda, to believe I will not consent to what he calls his

happiness, without your permission. If you have any hopes or expectations; if you think his love may ever return to you, and that dif- ferent situations may give a countenance to

his addresses, and admit of your claims upon him, depend upon it I will dismiss him, how- ever unhappy he may be; for I would not

wound your peace, by acceding to his wishes,

be the consequence what it may. Your | friends, who are mine also, choose to be en- tirely silent on the subject; nor will they take notice of it, until settled between you

and me.

Look on me as your friend, dear Matilda, — be explicit, do not consider the Count or mylelf; speak your wishes, your hopes, and be assured that your felicity is my first.

with, whatever it may cost me.

Iam my dear Matilda's sincere friend And obedient servant, Mala CovaTxey.”

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P repared as Matilda had been, by the

anonymous letter, to expect such intelligence, no words can express her feelings at receiv- ing this letter; overcome with grief, she re-

tired to her apartment and gave loose to the painful emotions that oppressed her. After a

little time she grew more 1 Pg: heart like his work regreting ? (cried she.)

Could he, if his love had been founded on | esteem, so soon have offered his addresses to

another? O, no! it was only a transient af-

| fection, not imprinted On the heart, but

vanished with my person: how fortunate then our hands were not joined; how miserable

should J have found myself, if united for life to

fo fickle a disposition.” Whilst this impression was s strong upon her,

me took up her pen and wrote the following

bo Dear madam,

6 1 beseech you, my warmest ac- knowledgements for your very friendly and obliging letter: your candid communications

and

— —_ I Tz Ws > e

<a XX . AE - MJ

go CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

and cdnsideration for my peace, I feel in the

most sensible manner; but I beg leave to as- sure you, madam, neither my happiness nor.

peace depend now upon the Count De Bou- ville. I shall always think myself obliged for

the affection he offered me, but as it is im- possible we should ever meet on those terms, I hope reason has entirely subdued an impro-

per sentiment, and if we ever should meet

again, which is not likely, we shall behold

each other with the indifference of common

_ acquaintances, I am exceedingly happy here,

and, if at the expiration of the twelvemonth

Mr. Weimar allowed me, my friends will ac-

cede to my wishes, and permit my stay in this convent, I trust I shall be happy for the re-

mainder of my life.

« I hope this will prove satisfactory to your very friendly offers respecting the Count,

who has my sincerest wishes for his happiness, with any other woman but her who is, my dear madam,

| Your much obliged humble servant, > MATILDA.”

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 9I

After she had sealed and sent off this letter

her spirits grew more tranquillised ; she tried

to conquer her feelings, and consider only the fickleness of men's dispositions. © Yet why

| should I upbraid him, thought she; he has a family, a name to support, and ought to marry : Mrs. Courtney is amiable, has a large

independent fortune, respectable friends, and a noble origin to boast of; — what am I in a

comparative view with her? Ah! (cried she, | bursting into tears) the retrospecticn humbles

and subdues both my pride and regret : what

have I to do but to submit to the lowly state I

am placed in, and bless at a distance those _ generous spirits that have enabled me to pro-

cure such : an = Rm as this.“

Mother Magdalene entered as she was wiping the tears from her cheeks ; taking her hand affectionately between hers, My dear young lady, why those tears? spare me

the pain of seeing you unhappy; remember this is but a short and transitory life; our : pilgrimage through it is painful, no doubt :

thorns

misery which assail the human frame, —and

8 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH-.

thorns are strewed in our paths, sorrows plant-

ed in our bosoms; but if planted and strewed by others, where is the sting to afi& our

own

Hearts ? Believe me, dear lady, reason can

subdue every affliction but what arises from a condemnation within ; with a self-approving conscience, we can look forward with hope ;

and if turbulent and ungracious spirits are too powerful for us to contend with here, we can trust to our Heavenly Father, that our suffer-

ings and patience will meet with a recom-

' pence hereafter, far superior to the brightest expectations that can be formed in this life.“ My dear friend and comforter, (said Matil- da, kissing her hand) be you my monitress if I grieve for temporal evils; yet, alas! my ' misfortunes are not common ones.” © You think so (answered Mother Magdalene;) we |

are all apt to magnify our own troubles, and

think them superior to what others feel; but,

my dear child, you are yet a novice in afflic- tion; when you know more of the world you will know also that there are varieties of

cis

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 93

dis our own feelings that constitute great part of our distress.”

Matilda sighed, and after a little pause, « That I may not appear impatient, nor grie ved at trifles, I will unbosom myself to you,

and perhaps from you obtain * consolation | L have hitherto fought in vain,”

She then related every part of her story, except the name of the Countess and situation

8 of the Castle.

Her gentle friend sympathized with her,

Lie and confessed, for so young a woman, her

trials were very great. But till, my dear | lady, (said she) I bid you hope; you have a Father and Protector, trust in him, and you ill one day assuredly be happy. Another time you shall know my sad story, and will then confess, of the two, I have been most _ wretched ; and, though I cannot entirely ex- clude a painful remembrance sometimes, yet 5 am now eee happy, —-my troubles

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troubles no longer exist, and religion has re- stored peace to my mind. Adieu, my dear child, — take hope to your bosom and com- pose your spirits." * Yes, (cried Matilda) I will at least try to conquer one cause of my _ distress, and in destroying this fatal letter of

Mrs. Courtney's, lose all remembrance of the

Count: surely after having so solemnly re- nounced him, I have no right either to com-

plain of him or grieve for myself.— tis an un- e folly, for every way he is dead to She threw the letter into the fire and ' walked; into the garden.

In the evening she received another visit from her good mother, who was much pleased to fee her so tranquil. Matilda reminded her of her promise to relate her _

My story, my dear child, is not a long one, but replete with many melancholy cir- cumstances. My father was a merchant at Dunkirk ; he married a very amiable woman, and had a numerous family—five girls and

1 four

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 95 four boys; few people lived more respectable than they did, but they were not rich ; a large family, liberal minds, and hearts always dis-

posed torelieve the wants of others, precluded affluence, though they had a decent

compe-

tence. The failure of a very capital house _

in England, with whom my father was mate- rially connected, obliged him to go over, without loss of time; he embarked from Dunkirk. Alas! my dear child, we saw him no more! a storm overtook them, as 'tis supposed, and all on board perished, for the packet was never but once seen or heard of after. When this dreadful news arrived, my mother was weeping over a letter just received | from a friend in London, with the intelli- gence, that the house which had failed could

not pay a shilling in the pound, and from

| some particular connexions between them and my father, all his effects would be seized, and he was likewise declared, or included in the

1 bankruptcy. One of those unhappy gossiping

persons, fond of telling every thing, without : considering the consequence, called upon my - mother,

96 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, |

mother, as she was in an agony over the con-

tents of this letter; © Ah! my dear madam,

(cried she) I see you have received the fatal news?" © Yes, (answered my mother, wringing her hands) we are all undone for

ever!" © But who, (said she again) could write you about it, for only the boat that is just come in saw the packet go down." « What packet?" (cried my mother, start-

ing." Why the packet your good husband

was in."

She heard no more, but fell senseless on the floor. I had been out upon business, and entered the room just as this officious news- monger and the servants were trying to raise

and recover my wretched parent. A stran- ger to all the circumstances, I was frighten-

ed to death almost, and teased every one to know what had happened; no one answered.

It was some time before she was brought to life. With a look of horror I shall never for-

get, she cried, © Hermine, you have no lon- ger a father, a friend, nor a home!" „Great ns e God!

——— —— DN I - SLES

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God! (I exclaimed) what is all this?“ 2 Tis misery in extreme," {said she, still with | 2 fixed look and a dry eye;) your father is

drowned, and I hourly expect every thing to

be seized. Well, (cried she, rather wildly) let it be complete! ruin should not come by degrees. Two or three of the younger children came into the room; the moment | she saw them she gave a violent shriek and fell

into convulsions, Scarce in my senses, I flew

about the house, and by my screams drew se- veral persons to me. We got my mother up to her apartment, a physician was sent for, but it was many hours before she was restored; | she lay three days at the point of death, the

fourth the fever abated, and hopes were en-

tertained of her life. This day a person came and took possession of the house and all our effects. By the interposition of a friend we were allowed to remain in it ten days. Judge, my dear young friend, what must have been my situation; a father dead, a mother scarcely alive, our whole property seized,— | eight children younger than myself, I only

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a — — Doi ne coo to * 7

fifteen, and all unprovided for—obliged to be the comforter, the supporter of all.

Our of the numerous set of acquaintances we had, two only appeared as friends in our distress ; one an old gentleman of small for- tune, the other a young merchant, who had

for some months paid particular attention to me, young as I was. These two persons in- terested themselves a good deal for us. My mother grew better, but her nerves were so shattered, that a kind of pe rtial palsy took ef- fect upon her speech, she spoke thick and

scarcely intelligible ; a sort of convulsive cry

succeeded every attempt to talk ; in short, her situation was most truly deplorable. Within a few days we were removed to the

house of the old gentleman, without any one thing we could call our own, but clothes.

This good and worthy man placed out my sisters in a convent, put my brothers to ichool, raised a subscription for their support, his own fortune being insufficient to maintain us all, and in fine, did every thing a father

and

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and friend could do, for the whole family.

Not one of my mother's former gay acquaint-

ance ever concerned themselves about her;

the was poor and afflicted with sickness, they could not bear to see a woman they esteemed in so miserable a situation, and there- fore were obl:ged to give her up." Oh! my dear lady, of all the worldly evils that can be- fal us, surely there is nothing

so painsul to support as the ingratitude and contumely of those who once thought themselves honoured. in your acquaintance : meer butterflies of the day! they bask in the sunshine of your pro- | sperity, but when night shuts in, and sorrows assail you, they fly elsewhere, insearch of those sweets you can no longer afford them, and de-

spise what they once coveted and admired.

Young, at that time, almost a stranger to

mankind, I felt indignation and astonishment when I met any of our former friends—friends!

let me not profane the name of friendship! 1 mean intimates and companions; my civili- ties were repressed with scorn; my appear- ance glanced over with a look of contempt,

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and © poor souls, they are supported by charity, I pity them to my heart," said aloud in my hearing, with features expressive of every thing but Pity. 5

0: will not dwell on things so common as ingratitude and hardness of heart; stings which you, my young friend, have never yet experienced, —heaven grant you never may, for 'tis a bitter cup to taste of. We lived in the manner I have described for near eight months, my poor mother so ill and helplets I could not leave her. The young gentleman J have mentioned payed me the same atten- tion, and scrupled not to acquaint our good friend, it was his design, in a short time, to make me his wife. © If you do, (said he, one day) you shall have a father's blessing with her when I die; whilst I live I will sup- port the children: but Hermine is a good girl—she who can, at her time of life, give herself up to the care of a sick parent, and | find delight in her duty, will make a * wife." One

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One morning, when the old gentleman was in my mother's room, he was suddenly seized with an apoplexy, and dropt senseless from his chair: my screams soon brought assistance—a surgeon was sent for ;—alas ! he was gone for ever. My mother was, in con-| sequence of her fright, taken in a shivering fit, which in a few moments turned to a stroke of the palsy, and deprived her entirely of | speech and the use of her limbs on the left | fide. That I preserved my senses at such a time, was wonderful. I sent for my lover, in an agony no words can describe; the news flew through the town, and two or three of our late friend's relations hastened to the house; they were rich and wanted nothing, however they began to assume an air of au-thority, when my lover interfered, told them he was convinced there was a will, and that! woas the appointed heir. This enraged them greatly; the will was eagerly called for, and by all parties earnestly sought for: alas! no such thing was to be found. The unfeeling vomen ordered me to remove my mother and

my trumpery the following morning. My lover was almost beside himself with vexation and disappointment: I was stupid with sor-row; I hung over my almost lifeless parent, without speaking, and unable to shed a tear.

Aster some time, those women quitted the

room, leaving orders with a woman servant,

to watch me, that! took nothing but my own,

and to take care I quitted their house next

day. When they were gone, this poor wo- man in circumstances, but rich (oh ! how much richer than her employers !) in good- ness of heart, approached the bed, and, gent-

ly raising me, she gave me some drops and

water that rouzed me from the stupor which had seized upon my faculties, when, looking round the room for my departed friend, and then on my helpless parent, I burst into a flood

of tears. Thank God! (said the good

creature that you can weep : don't be unhap- py, my dear Miss, Providence will provide for you: I have a sister, who lives in a very humble style indeed, and keeps a little shop ; her husband was formerly an under clerk to

your

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your father; he loves the whole family dear- ly, and I dare say, if you will condescend to stay under their mean roof till you are better suited, they will wait upon you with joy." « Ah! where is Mr.?" meaning my lover. I know not, madam, (answered she) but I think he followed the ladies." « Good heavens ! (I cried) could he leave me under such a complication of horrid cir- cumstances ; this is bitterness indeed, if de- serted by him,—bur it cannot be,—he is doubtless gone to fetch a physician." In this vain hope I passed several hours, no lover, no | Physician appeared; Ivas in a state of dis- traction: the servant sent for her sister and brother; they came, and offered me their | services with a heartiness which spoke their fincerity. I was incapable of determining; I sent to my lover, © he was particularly

en- gaged, but would see me some time to-mor- row.“ O, let me begone ! (cried I, in a frenzy) I will take my dear mother in my arms — we will die together,” With difficul- ty they separated me from her: the dear saint 5 e a

was sensible, though incapable of speaking ; her eyes told me all she felt—O ! the expres- sion in them can never be forgotten. what a night was that! In the mor ning my dear mo- ther was put into a kind of litter, and we were conveyed to the humble dwelling of this charitable pair. She was laid in a de- cent bed and dropt a sleep: I was kneeling at the fide of it when the door opened, and the man who called himself my lover appear- ed before me. I felt undescribeable emo- tions; he took my hand, and placing me in a chair, still unable to speak, he said, I came to you, my love, the first moment of leisure ; last night I was engaged; but you shall not stay in this poor place, I will take a decent lodging for you and your mother, and will be answerable for all expences; I will daily be your visitor, and I hope in a little time you will recover your spirits.” At first.

my heart bounded with joy at his kindness;

then again I thought there was a something wrong, though I hardly knew what; art last, " l think, (replied I) that I ought n not to put you

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you to such great expences, nor would it be proper you should maintain me, unless _ There I ftopt. © Unless what?“ (faid he, earnestly.) © Unless I had a claim to your protection,“ (faid I, blushing.) * I will be very fincere with you, my dear Hermine : had your old friend performed his promise, and left you his fortune, though but a small one, I would have married you; but I am young, and only entering into life; a wife without a fortune, a mother in such a fitua- tion, and a family of young relations, would soon ruin me, and of course you : I must prove my love another way; an old rich widow has been recommended to me; I will marry her; I shall then be enabled to support you all in | affluence, and have no ill consequences to dread.

What fay you, my dearest Hermine,

may I hope your sentiments concur with

mine? You will wonder, my dear child, at my patience and silence during this proposal ; In truth I wondered at myself; heaven, no doubt, supported me, and gave me, at that trying moment, superior resolution. « Of „„ -

my opinion, Sir, and of the sentiments you have avowed, you must colle& my thoughts, when I tell you, that so far from living a lite of obligation with such a man, were you this moment possessed of millions, and would offer to marry me, I would prefer poverty and want I would starve, with this dear insulted woman, before I could condescend to marry a man of such infamous principles !—Leave me, Sir, for ever; presume not to enter the habi- tation of virtuous poverty, and blush at your own littleness, when you enjoy the house of wealth and magnificence." He attempted to speak.] hear you no longer, Sir; youare | more mean and contemptible in my eyes than the poorest reptile that crawls upon the earth. _ I ftampt with my foot, and Mrs. Boute came up. I never {aw a countenance fo expres- five of wonder and difappointment when she entered. I am sorry to say, madam, you do nat know your best friends; but should your mind alter upon consideration, you know where to find me, and I shall be always hap- py to attend your commands. I gave him

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no answer, but a look of contempt, and he left the room.

« The spirit and indignation which had supported me through this scene, now sub- sided; I shed a flood of tears. I saw no one being to whom I could look up with any hope

or prospect of comfort. Mrs. Boute, who

fympathized with me, said, © Ah! madam, if Madame De Raikfort, if Madame De Cre-

poniere were acquainted with your forrows,

I am sure you would find friends; they al- ways assist the unfortunate, and particularly persons like you, born to higher expectations. J took my resolution immediately; I wrote to both, describing my past and present situa- tion. From the latter lady I received an al- most immediate visit : she condoled with me; she entered into my concerns with a kindness. and delicacy peculiar to herself, as I then thought; I knew not that the principles of

7 charity and benevolenec were the fame in

every well informed mind and good heart. 1 received the same kind attentions from the 5 ather

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other family: Madame De Raikfort sent me every comfort and convenience I could want for my poor mother. In short, to those good

ladies I was indebted for my chief support during her existence. A fortnight, exactly, from the death of our good old friend, she

expired. There was no apparent alteration

till within a few hours of her death ; and she

went off without a sigh or groan, Though 5

the shock was dreadful, yet J had so long ex-

pected it, and in her melancholy situation it was rather to be wished for, that J found my-

selt, though grieved at my irreparable loss, yet

rejoiced that she escaped from the evils of this life, to awake in a blessed immortality. The | benevolent ladies I have mentioned, did not forsake me; they paid the last sad duties to my parent; they undertook to educate and place my younger brothers and sisters to get

their living decently ; they asked what were

my views and wishes 9 frankly answered, To be a nun.“ Flad I any choice of a convent? I named this; a young lady, a friend of my juvenile days, previous to my

mis-

| CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 109

misfortunes, had professed here. The ladies

told me I should enter upon my noviciate, but on no terms to be persuaded to assume the

veil; it was by no means their wish ; and the

first summons from me they would take me out and provide for me in the world: that

they rather complied with my wishes than their own inclinations—which would be more gra-

tified in my residence with them. I thanked

my generous benefactresses, but persisted in my desire of quitting the world. The day before I intended leaving Dunkirk, I received a letter from my quondam lover, expressing | regret for his behaviour, and an unequivocal offer of marriage. I put his letter under a cover, with these lines: * The man who presumes to insult the feelings of a virtuous female, and when he fails in his purpose, con- descends to solicit pardon, and offers to raise

that ill- treated woman to a level with him- {clf, lowers her more, by such an offer, than the bitterest poverty can inflict : but the per-

son to whom this letter is addressed is fortu- nately beyond the reach of insult or indigence ;

she therefore rejects the proposal with her

whole heart, and with the highest contempt.”

e Having seen my brothers and sisters safe

under the protection of those worthy ladies, and received from them every pecuniary af-

| Gstance I could want, with letters of warm re-

commendation] arrived here; and here, in a

short time, recovered tranquillity and ease : leaving nothing in the world to regret,

studied the duties of my fituation, and, at the expiration of the time allowed to consider, F gave my decided choice of a monastic life, and took the veil. I hear often from my ge- nerous friends. Two of my sisters are wel! married ; the rest of my family have every

prospect of success.

cc. Now, my dear young lady, I have re- lated my history, tell me candidly, have your

troubles ever equalled mine?

| « Oh! no, (cried Matilda ;) I am ashamed of my own impatience and inquietude. Good

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heavens! if such are the evils to be expected in life; if misfortunes are so frequent, ingrati-

tude and malignancy fo prevalent, men fo abandoned, and the good and benevolent al-

| lated so small a share in the proportion of the world, the only asylum for the unfortunate is a

convent.” © Not always (answered Mother Magdalene ;) there are situations and difficul-

ties in life, from which even the unfortunate may extract hope and comfort: your's is such: 'tis possible you have parents still hv- ing, who may one day fold you to their bo- foms ; 'tis likewife not impossible you may ore day be united to the man ycu prefer. In

short, your situation is not hopeless, like

mine: I faw the downfall of every expecta- tion I could form, and had no one hope or engagement to the world; you have many:

you have no right to dispose of your future

destiny, whilst there is the least probable

chance you may be reclaimed. Reside here

as a boarder, my dear child; but under your doubtful circumstances, never take the veil, tor the mind should be entirely disengaged

from

112 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. from all worldly hopes, before it can renounce it 1

Prom this day Matilda grew entirely re- signed; she derived wisdom and comfort from

her good mother's conversation, nor suffered

anticipation ofevils to disturb her serenity.

| The Scarborough party were Dow arrived

in London. The Marquis immediately wait-

ed on the Ambassador. His Excellency told

him the Count Wolfenbach was alive, but

past all hopes of recovery. He knows you are hourly expected, and is anxious to see

The Marquis, taking his address in Dover- street, hastened thither, and sent up his

name.

He waited some time for the servant's return,

at length he was desired to walk up, and on entering the room, scarce could he trace any recollection of the object in the bed before him. It was some years since he had seen

the Count; he was not chen young but age,

anxiety

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anxiety and conscious guilt, with the disorder that now oppressed him, had indeed greatly

altered him. When the Marquis drew near,

he was for a moment filent ; then, addressing

him, © I am told, my Lord, you requested my presence. I did (replied the Count.)

Pray, is your sister with you?“ * Not in the house (answered the Marquis) but she is

in town, and will soon attend, if it is your wish to see her.” © Yes, (faid the Count) let her

come; I can tell my story but once, tis fit : she should be present.”

The Marquis instantly dispatched a messen-

ger for his wife and sister. In the interim the Count defired to be informed in what manner the Countess effected her escape through the wood and got to England. The Marquis re- counted every particular. There was a fate in it, no doubt (said the Count;) Provi- dence intervened, to prevent me from the

commission of the crime l intended, and pre- served her life.” .

Word

| Word was brought up that the Countess and Marchioness were below. They were

desired to enter. When they came into the room the Countess involuntarily shrunk back. „ Approach, madam, do not fear; the dis- covery is now made, and in a very short time J shall have nothing to hope for, nor you any thing to dread." The Countess advanced, trembling, and seated herself by the bed. now (said he) entreat your forgiveness of all the wrongs my cruel jealousy heaped upon you; fay, speak, can you pardon me? tell me that, before I begin my narrative, lest I should be cut off Cer I have finished." I do indeed (replied the Countess;) I pardon you from my soul, and may the God of mercy pardon you likewise." " am satisfied, (said he) and now attend to my confessions —1 was well aware, before I married, of the affection sub- _ sisting between Victoria and the Chevalier; I was not blind to the difference in our persons. and ages, and hated him in proportion to the advantages in his favor. I was resolved to carry my point, to gratisy both passions ; her „ N 8 " father

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. }

TOR seconded my wishes, and she became mine. From that hour I never knew a peace- ful moment. I doated on her to distraction ; jealousy kept pace with love. Her conduct gave me no right to complain ; yet she loved me not, and I feared the Chevalier was the object of her partiality and regret. My tem- per, naturally impetuous and furious, grew daily worse; for what hell can give torments equal to what a jealous man feels? One day | T had been at Vienna, and was informed of the Chevalier's return: desperate and alarm- ed, I came home. In the Park I met

Peter. He had lived some years with me; 5

was blindly devoted to my service, and had

been employed by me to watch the Countess.

He told me a gentleman had been walk ing round the park, examining the house, and on

his going to him, and enquiring who he want

ed, he only asked if the Count and Countess of Wolfenbach were there; and Peter

answer- ing, yes, he walked hastily away. This in- formation was a dagger to my foul : Iresolved to carry her to my castle in Switzerland, se- . cretly.

cretly. I pursued my design. I had been there but a short time before I heard a man, _ disguised, had been about the grounds, who

made off when any person came near him; I

concluded *tx:as the Chevalier, and resolved to have him watched, determined he should. die; at the same time that I thought it im- poslible he 1nould come at the Countess in her apartment. One day going to her room, I heard a sudden noise, found her on the floor, with a paper in her hand, and saw a figure glance from the window. I was struck with rage and astonishment. After confining and upbraiding her, as she may inform you, I clo- seted Peter, and by promises of present reward and future prospects, he took a folemn oath

do assist in my revenge, and to be secret. We

took our stand the following night by the wall,

and saw him advance to climb up the battle-

ments; we sallied out, knocked him down, bound and gagged him, and, determined to have complete revenge, we dragged him to the Countess's apartment." © Spare the re- petition of what passed there (cried she;) it

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 117 was a scene of horror; repeat only what were your transactions out of my light." © You shall be obeyed (answered he.) It was in vain she protested innocence, I gave no cre- dit. My first intention was to murder both; and when J locked her in the closet with the dead body, I hoped terror and fright would have done my business. In the morning we heard her groans; we entered; the sight of her agonies for a moment disarmed my rage,

and I consented Margarite should assist her.

After she was delivered, and the curtains fas- tened, Peter and myself took the body

and carried it to one end of the subterraneous passage, dug a hole in the earth, on one fide, and threw it in. I now grew irresolute with respect to my wife's death; my revenge cool- ed, but I knew it was impossible but she must hate and detest me. One day I went to her, uncertain whether to deftroy her and the child or not, to prevent a discovery. She knows what followed. I felt a thousand soft emo- tions at the sight of the child, and both loved and hated her to madness, I resolved at last OE to

1118 CcasrIE OF WOLFENBACH.

to confine her for life, and to preserve the child. Joseph, the under gardener, the only man who lived in the castle, I was obliged to confide in. I told him my wife had been de- tected in an intrigue, and I had intended to murder her, but she recovered of her wounds,

and now I should only confine her for life. I

{wore him to secresy, and vowed, if ever he betrayed her place of residence, or life, to any one, I would murder both. The poor fellow swore Ay 1 to obey me. The rest ihe — inform you.“ .

But my child! my child!“ (cried the Countels, eagerly.) © Is alive, and an of- ficer now in the Emperor's service.” © Great

God! I thank thee ! (faid she, falling on her

knees; and in this posture, when I return thanks to my Heaventy Father, for his pre- servation, I alfo forgive and bless you, for the care of my child ; may every evil deed be for- given, and may you enjoy peace in your last moments, and everlasting *. here- aster!

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The hard heart of the Count was softened into tears by the warmth of her expressions : he held out his hand; she kissed it, in token of peace. May your prayers be heard (faid he;) but I have more vices yet to confess. I took the child to Vienna,

brought it up, as the son of a friend, very privately. Ata certain age he was placed in the military school, and about six months ago I procured for him a commission. But to return. Once 1n two years I generally visited the Castle. Her resignation and obedience to my orders sometimes moved me in her favor, and every visit my heart grew more and more sostened; yet I dared not liberate her, her death had been so universally believed for many years 1

how could I account for my conduct, or her 5

appearance, without incurring suspicions against myself? Distracted in my mind, I neither enjoyed peace nor rest — alas! there is neither for the wicked, however we may

Aaisqguise our crimes to the world - however we

meet with respect and approbation from man- kind, the man conscious of his wickedness,

wth -

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with doubt and terror gnawing at his heart, is the most miserable of human beings: we may swear to secresy, we may silence every thing but conscience—there is the sting that for ever wounds—there the monitor no bribes can suppress. Life became a burthen to me, yet I feared to die; I feared daily a discovery | of my crimes; I resolved to forbear my vi- fits, but to send Peter every six months, to gain intelligence and see all was fafe. On his return from his last errand of that kind he informed me, that, calling at a woodcut- | ter's cottage, near the Castle, who knew him not, from a curiolity to hear if they were ac- quainted with Joseph (of whose fidelity he was always doubtful) the woman told him a story of a young lady's coming there, being recom- _ mended to the Castle ; and that she had so much courage as to go to the haunted rooms, (for I had taken care to have it supposed that wing was haunted) and that very day was there several hours. Alarmed at this intelli-

gence, Peter flew to me, then ona visit about | s even * from che Castle > frightened out TE DD

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: of his senses. After a little consultation we | resolved to go in the night, break open the doors, if locked, and murder both Victoria and Margarite, and after that fall upon some method to silence the young lady and Joseph in the same manner. We succeeded in our attempt: we dispatched Margarite, and came down to do the same by her mistress, but Providence, who counteracts the designs of wicked men, and turns those very measures we take to secure ourselves to our destruction, sug- gested to me to take her into the wood and destroy her, that Joseph, if he came in the morning, might think it was a gang of ban- ditti who had carried them off; for which reason, I thought my being concerned would never be suspected. This foolish concerted scheme ue pursued ; the Countess remembers I was thrown from my horse, and she took that opportunity to escape. When I re- covered my senses I found J had some bruises on my head and shoulder. I looked round, „ Where, where is the Countess?“ ©« Ah! (cried Peter) I fear we are undone ; the horse vol. II. 2 G6 £ ficw

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flew away with her as I alighted, and your

horse also run off.” © Villain! (I cried)

find her this moment, or I will murder you.” « *Tis impossible to pursue her on foot; tis

| most likely she may be dashed to pieces in the

wood; mean time, Sir, creep, if possible, to

the town, have some assistance; I will bor- row another horse and make all poffible | search.” I had no alternative; distrated with pain and horror, I got with difficulty to

the town, and was put to bed very ill. Peter rode off immediately; he was wanting a day

and a night: I suffered a thousand tortures: I began to think he had berrayed me. *Tis the curse attendent on villains always to be suspi- 5 cious of each other: for what vows or ties can bind a man you know would commit the most atrocious crimes for money. In my - conjectures, however, I wronged Peter; he returned. He had searched the wood, and every part of the adjacent neighbourhood, without gaining any intelligence, but that two _ or three persons had seen a horse saddled, _ galloping furiously in the wood: he had called

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at the cottage—nothing had transpired there.

In short, we began to hope, as our only secu-

rity, that she was killed some where in the

road, and the body carried away by passen- gers. In a few days I got well, determined

to visit the Castle, and either destroy Joseph,

or decoy him away to some remote place. In | short, my schemes were so many and unsettled by fear that I fixed on no positive plan. We arrived at the Castle; we saw no appearance ol any lady ; but Peter, tgking an opportunity to speak to Bertha, was informed there had been a lady, but she had left them three or four days. This was another stroke : the lady, we knew, had seen the Countess ; she might betray the secret, where could she be gone, or who was she ? Peter enquired again, | Bertha knew only that she talked of going to Paris. We were now diftrafted ; the sword seemed suspended over our heads, and we every moment feared detection. That night ve met in the Countess's apartments, and

searched thoroughly; in a drawer we found a

purse with some money, and a paper signed

S3 Matilda,

Marilda, giving an account of sundry articles taken from the drawers. This convinced us we had reasons for our apprehensions: the death of Joseph would rid us of one witness — 1 secretly determined to destroy another. We went to the town the following morning—I procured from the different medical persons some laudanum. We agreed the best way would be to get Joseph and his wife to my other castle, and destroy them there, where they were unknown, I deceived Peter by this foolish scheme, having taken a different resolution. I told him we would return that night to the Castle, take the remaining valu- ables, money, &c. which should all be his, previous to our departure. He joyfully con- sented. I took an opportunity to give him the opium in the evening; by the time we got to the apartment he grew very heavy, and during his search among the drawers, dropt down in a heavy sleep; I put him upon the

bed, fastened every window and door, set fire

to the curtains and counterpane, and went out, locking the door after me; I then hastily es 7 proceeded

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 125 proceeded to the wood house which joined Joseph's kitcken, and soon had that in a blaze; bringing some dry stubble, I lighted it against the door and window shutters, and seeing the whole take fire in both wings, I went to the stable, took my own horse, which was there fastened up, ready saddled, as we left them, and riding off to the town, went to the inn I had been ill at, and waited patiently for news. Within a few hours I was called up: my | Castle was discovered by some wood-cutters do be in flames, and before assistance could be procured was entirely destroyed. I pretend- | ed great vexation and distress; rode to the spot; it was a dreadful sight ; my foul shud- dered—l was in agony. The people imputed | it to a different cause, I asked, had nobody seen Joseph nor his wife. No,

was the ge- + neral answer, and the fire imputed to their . carelesness. Some of the neighbouring FE : gentlemen rode over; every one condoled with me, and offered me accommodations; 1 returned with the gentleman to whom I had first been on a visit. When retired to my EEE ED 3: apartment.

apartment, a retrospection of all my crimes forced themselves on my remembrance. I tried to sleep, alas! there was no sleep be-

friended me; ten thousand horrid images swam before my sight ; I threw myself out of

bed; it was moonlight; my room commands

ed a view of the distant wood, I shrunk at the sight—there lies my wretched wife! then the

Chevalier, Joseph, Bertha and Peter, all

seemed to walk before me treat God! what were my sufferings that night, never to be effaced from my memory. When day- ght came, I went down stairs to the garden; here I first thought of destroying myself—my = | boy shot across my mind I took my reso- lution at once. I fat off that day for Vienna. On my arrival I sent for Frederic, and after some preparation acknowledged him as my 5 son, acquainted him his mother died in child- bed, and I had particular reasons, immaterial

to him, for not owing him sooner; I made

my will, secured my whole fortune to him, by

proper testimonials, that I acknowledged him wy son, and then resolved to retire from the world

— — ers ren ene eee — — CE

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world, repent of my sins, and try to make my peace with heaven. All Vienna was aftonish- ed at my resolution ; my son sought every ar-

gument to divert me from my purpose, — his tenderness, goodne ss and virtue were daggers

to my heart; I fell very ill, and earnestly | Prayed for the hour of death; heaven thought fit to spare me, that 1 might receive some

comfort before the fatal hour arrived. I be-

gan to get better, though weak and declining, when, to my inexpressible surprise, I received a letter from our Minister in England, with a brief account of the Countess, the deposition of the Marquis, and requesting I would ac- knowledge the lady, and not permit such black transactions to appear before the public as the Countess said she had the power of dis- closing. At first I thought this letter was all illusion; but when I considered the possibility

of her escape from. death, and the application

of the Marquis to the Ambassador, I was con- vinced the whole was founded on truth. What

a mountain was taken: from my bosom! 1

| wrote immediately, I would follow che letter.

128 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

In three days my strength mended andy;

yet I was obliged to ke very easy journies,

and by the time I arrived in England fatigue had quite. guhausted me. His Excellency |

sent off an express to you. I now thank hea- ven that both you and Joseph are alive, and adore the ways of Providence, who extracts

good out of evil, and made the very crimes I intended to perpetrate the means of deliver- ance to you both. The death of the unfor- tunate Chevalier I bitterly repent, and can only observe here, that when a man gives himself up to unrestrained

passions of what na- ture soever, one vicious indulgence leads to another, crimes succeed each other, and to veil one, and avoid discoveries, we are drawn insensibly to the commission of such detestable ations as once we most abhorred the idea of: for, although my temper was not good, and my pa tions always violent, had not love and jealousy urged me to desperation, and deprived me of reason, my foul would have shrunk ar the thoughtsof murders, which grew at aft necefiary for my Fanden 5 Here

eAsTIE OF worrEN Aen. 129

Here the Count stopped, exhausted and fatigued ; indeed he had made several pauses in his relation, from weakness, and it was very 1 visible he had not many days to live.

The Countess could not refitain her tears..

Ah! (faid she) I have been the unhappy cause of all—" Do not reproach your-

| self, (cried he, hastily;) I am now convinced bol your innocence ; indeed I long believed it, even when I designed your death the second time; only innocence could have supported

| you to bear my cruelties, and your horrid confinement with resignation: I knew too well the terrors of guilt ;. for let not the un- happy wretch, who forgets his duties towards God and man, who gives himself up to the in- dulgence of his passions, and wrongs the innocent, think, if he escapes detection, he can

be happy: alas !. remorse. and sorrow will one day affail him; he will find he cannot hide his _ crimes from himself, and his own conscience ; will * his bitterest punishment.”

6 5 The

SW CASTLE or WOLFENBACH.

The Countess extremely rejoiced to find Kim so sensible of his guilt, said every thing in her power to ease and calm his mind,

Acster he had a little recovered, he turned to the Marquis. I sent for you, my Lord, not only to hear my confession, but to direct me in what manner I must do my wife justice; if it be your pleasure, I will repeat my story, or atleast assent to a drawn up confession be- fore witnesses.” © By no means, (answered the Marquis ;) it will be perfectly sufficient

if one part of the story, nearly what relates to

her confinement, so as wt authenticate her Ge _ person, is related.

After some consultation the Marquis at- tended the German Minister. A paper was drawn up, fignifying the jealousy of the Count,

without naming any particular object, in con-

sequence of which ke shut up his lady in the Castle, after her delivery, and gave out a re- port of her death; that he had brought up | ker son, now an officer, who was lately ac- 6 „ .

| CASTLE or WOLFENBACH, 13¹

quainted with his real birth, and to whom his

estates were secured : that the lady, after many

years confinement, had found means to escape to her brother and sister, with whom she re-

sided. The Count having accidentally head of her residence, was come to England,

with

na view to obtain her pardon and do herjustices that he acknowledged. her innocence in the strongest terms, and desired, in case of his death, she might enjoy every advantage settled _ en 8 when married to 3 in the fullest . extent.

This paper was signed in presence of che

Ambassador, his Chaplain, and all the friends of the Countess, Lord Delby among the

ves ant wes G63 mditer ee She:

lier, Margarite, or Peter: the former had been so many years given up, as dead by his rela- tions, though they never guessed in what man- ner he died, that it would have been the height of <rucky't to Rove awgkened sorrow so 5

132: CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

long dormant, had it even been necessary, but as no. such occasion appeared to demand an investigation, every thing relative to him and the other victims was buried in oblivion.

The Count survived nearly a week after their arrival in town, and then expired with more resignation and composure than could have been hoped for. Two days previous to his death he wrote to his son a few lines, re- fering him to the testimony he had given the Countess, and requesting he would, by his duty and tenderness, atone for the cruelties of his father; bid him remember the awful lei- son placed before him, and restrain those pas- sions, the indulgence of which had brought sorrow and shame on his guilty parent, whom, nevertheless, he had the comfort to tell him was a 2 truly penitent one. 5

The Marquis, taking upon him to direct

every thing for preserving the body, and

baving it carried into Germany within a fort-

night, a few n after the necessary orders | | were :

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 133

were completed, told the Countess he thought it highly proper she should go in person to | make her claim. She, who was impatient to | fee and embrace her son, received the pro- position with joy. The Marchioness, Lord Delby and Mrs. Courtney accepted an invi- tation to accompany her with pleasure. The former had written to Matilda the late unex- pected and agreeable turn in the affairs of the Countess, and again pressed her return to them. The latter, Mrs. Courtney, still per-severed in her soft melancholy, her tender 35 looks, and attentions to the Count, who, when be found the party fixed fer Vienna, excused himself from attending them, but promised, if the Marquis and his family did not return to France before Christmas, he would join them 5 eg in the spring...

£2 This declaration was a thunderbolt to Mrs. Courtney. She seized an opportunity of speaking to him alone. How, my Lord, (cried she) is it possible you can think of se- parating yourself from your friends, will you 5 not

134 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH»

not go to Germany?" «© It is not in my power, madam," (answered he.) © Say rather not your inclination, (said she, warmly:) you pique yourself on speaking truth, you know." I wish to do fo always, (replied = he) but the ladies will not always permit me." I beg your pardon, Sir, for contradicting you; I, atleast, gave you credit for truth and: sincerity, when you unpardonably sought to gain those affections you have since cruelly

trifled with." *© Such a charge from. Mrs.

Courtney (said he) has too much severity in it, not to call for a serious answer ; I therefore protest, madam, I never sought—I never

| wished to gain the affections of any woman. but Matilda: my love for her is no secret to. my friends, — I glory in it. For you, madam,, L entertained the highest

respe& ; I thought it

my duty to shew you every possible attention,

2 man of politeness was bound. to offer to an

amiable woman; more I never intended

never could be thought to intend, with a heart

avowedly devoted to another.” © And do.

you call this politeness ? (cried she, bighly en- | _) :

CASTLE or WOLF ENBACH. 135

- 8 _) I must tell you, Sir, you have (if you | please to call it so) trifled too much with my peace, by your pallantry ; and was I not completely revenged by the entire indifference of your idol, I should resent it in a very dif- ferent manner. There, Sir, (tossing Matil- da's letter to him) there see how much you are beloved or regretted by an insensible päaltry girl. The Count had caught up the letter, and in his eagerness to read, scarcely heard her last words, He devoured every line with his eager eyes; and when he came | to the conclusion, © happier with another | woman.” © O, Matilda! never, never! ' You may indeed forget me; mine is a com- mon character, but there are few like yours in the world.” Then looking at it again, and turning to Mrs. Courtney, who looked full of fury and malice, « May I be permitted to | ask, madam, on what occasion you wrote this young lady, and of what nature those offers 1 fervice were, made in my name by you.” Mrs. Courtney blushed, and was in the highest. confulion. * Shall I Interpret your looks, madam ? „

x,6 © EASTLE OF WOLFENBACH.

madam ?” (asked he again.) * No, Sir, 1

can speak their language myself. I wrote to

know her sentiments, at the time you were

_ amusing yourself at the expence of my folly,

as I had too much honor to give you en- eouragement, if she had any hopes of you.“

| © $0 then, (said he, in a rage) she believes J was paying my addresses to you, madam.”

(She smiled contemptuously.) No wonder

she renounces me; if such ideas took posses- sion of her mind, she must think me the

most contemptible of men.” © And of what signification are her thoughts to you? are there not insuperable difficulties to a connexion with

her?“ (asked she.) C Not on my side, ma-

dam; this hour, this instant, I would receive her hand with gratitude and: transport ; her

dignity of sentiment, her true greatness of mind are the bars to my happiness.” Well, but if there are bars——” I beg pardon for interrupting you, madam ; I know what you would say; and it is far from my design to be

| rude to any lady, but you must permit me to declare, I amr esolved to wait weeks, months, — n e

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH, ö

or years, to have a chance for the removal of those impediments; and if I do not succeed at last, in all probability I shall never marry at all.” As he ended this speech he withdrew,

with a respectlul, but reserved air. © Hea-

vens! (faid she, peevishly) is this the gallant, polite Frenchman! I see 'tis all over; I can make nothing of him, and I will gratify his vanity no longer; on the contrary, treat him with levity and contempt.” Pride stepped in to her aid, and produced that change of senti- ment which reason, honor, and good sense had failed to do: so true is the yer g

observation,

She determined, however, not to accom- pany her friends; being so lately returned trom the Continent, she had no inclination to revilit it, without a powerful inducement, such

as Ne had no chance of.

The

The Count's motives for refusing were of a similar nature.

| The Marchioness had heard from Matilda. She declined being of tt eir party, and entreat- ed to remain in the Convent till that lady re- turned to France. She wrote a letter of con- gratulation to her dear Countess, on the great change in her situation, but gave, what sne _ thought, very satisfactory reasons for not go- ing into Germany. Lord Delby, however, could not resist his desire of attending the Countess, though so recently returned from thence, He entreated the Count to accept his house, but he had previously e a 55 similar offer from che ——

In a few days the party separated: he

Marquis, his Lady, the Countess, and Lord

| Delby for Germany: the Count, to avoid at- tendance on Mrs. Courtney, went to Bath, and that lady soon after accompanied a party

of friends to Tunbridge. =

From

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH . 139

From the time that Mr. Weimar had agreed, before the Ambassador, to permit Matilda's residence twelve months with the Marquis, her friends had sent advertisements to all the different courts in Europe, de- scribing the particular circumstances attending her birth, without mentioning names. No intelligence arrived, nor enquiries had yet

been made on the subject, though they till

entertained hopes of one day meeting with

| success. As to the young lady herself, she had none; resigned to her misfortunes, her only wish was to remain in the convent, free from the persecutions, and exempt from the temptations, of the world. She heard of her

friend's unexpected restoration to her family and fortune, with real delight; and no men-

tion being made of the Count or Mrs. Court-

ney, in the letter she received from the Mar-

chioness, she concluded they were either mar- ried, or soon to be; and though a few sighs would follow the idea, the supported herself | with fortitude and resolution. |

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She was one day sitting in her apartment, and ruminating on past events, when the su - perior of the convent came in, and with a

look of regret, © Ah! madam, (said she) I am grieved to be the messenger of ill news to you, and sorrow to the whole commu—

nity.” e Bless me! (cried Matilda) what is

the matter?” « Alas! my dear child, 1 have received an order from the king to de-

liver you to a Mr, Weimar, and another

gentleman, waiting to receive you,”

1 The unhappy girl repeated faintly the name of Weimar, and fell back, almost senseless in her chair. The good mother ran to her

assistance; she soon recovered. Oh! ma-

dam, (said she) save me, keep me here; I

| wish to be a nun—I will not go into the world again,” Would it were possible for me to protect you (answered she, shrugging her shoulders) but we have no power to

re-

| tain you from the king . order; vou must S0,

we dare 1 not keep you."

CASTLE OF WOLF EN BACH. 141

At this moment entered St. Magdalene, all 1 in tears.

ce Well, madam, (saĩd Matilda, endeavour-

ing to collect fortitude from despair) have the goodness to inform the gentlemen I will pre-

sently wait on them. The superior appeared

rather unwilling to leave her with her fa-

- vourite, but however she withdrew.

: Her aved mother advised her instantly to

write a few lines to the Marquis, and likewise to the Countess at Vienna. „ Give

mee the first letter, (said she) I will endeavour

to have it conveyed; take the chance of leaving the other at some inn on the road:

but make haste, for we have n no time.

Phi Matilda, more dead than alive, soon _

executed her task, and the other assisting in packing, she was just ready when a messenger came to hasten her. With a resolution that

astonished her friend, she followed the persons

who came for her Trunks, and went down to

take

142 CASTLE or WOLFENBAEH,

take leave of the community. Every one was affected, for she was generally beloved;

but when she kissed the hand of her good mo-

ther, both burst into a flood of tears.

« Farewell, my dear, my amiable friend, (said she;) farewell, my good mother: if my wishes are gratified, and] have ever any power over my own WN I will return to reside

with you forever.” © To the protection of heaven I leave you (aid mother Magdalene;)

persevere in virtue and goodness, trust in God, and doubt not of being the object of his

care; for he is a Father to the fatherless, and

will never forsake the virtuous.“

With streaming eyes Matilda followed her

conductor. The porteress opened the gates; there stood Mr. Weimar and his friend. He seemed at first to shrink from her view; but

recovering himself, advanced and took her

hand. Well, ungrate ful run-away, (said

he) you are once more in the custody of your true and natural protector.“ She made no answer, nor any resistance; sne was placed in

master of my destiny, I know not; but of

| CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 143

1n the carriage between them. Mr. Weimar was hurt at her silence, © You are sullen, you are ungrateful Matilda.” «© No, Sir, I am neither: I am grateful for past benefits, and if I do not speak, tis because my sincerity or

sentiments cannot be pleasing.” © You are mistaken (said he;) I wish you to speak with

sincerity; to tell me why you forsook the

friend of your youth, —the man who offered

to make you his by every holy tie, to fly with an acquaintance of a day, and who, after

all his professions, at last placed you in a con- vent?" It was my own voluntary choice, Sir, and very distressing to my friends, that I persisted in choosing a retirement from the

world. To the first part of your question tis

not necessary for me to answer : you know my

motives for quitting your house, and for the subsequent offer of your hand, if you really were sincere, I must confess I think circum- | stances more than inclination prompted you to it. How you mean to dispose of me, or

by what right you assume to yourself to be

this

144 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

| this you may be assured, no force shall pre- vail upon me to act contrary to my own in- clinations and judgment; and since I am not your niece, you have no legal authority over

Weimar looked confounded at her spirit, the other stared with surprise ; all were mute for tome time, at length he said, © You have taken up unjust prejudices, Matilda; but you | will find I am still your best friend." Then (replied she) I shall truly reoice, for it is grievous to me to think ill-of any one, much more of him, whom, for many years, I was accustomed to think my nearest relation and protector. If you are sincere, permit me to write to the Marchionels that I am in your care, to dispel] the anxiety she will naturally feel on my account." We will think of = that (said he) when \ we are settled. 4

This evasion ITS to her, she had not much favour to expect.

She

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH- I45

She was entirely ignorant of the road they took; she knew it was different from the Paris route, and had no opportunity of asking a single question, much less of dropping her letter; as the chaise being their own, they fat in it whilit they procured horses at the diffe- rent post-houses, and at night stopt at a mi- serable hut, where they got only a few eggs

and a little milk ; no beds were to be had, and they were obliged to remain four hours

in the chaise, until they could enter the next town. The distress of mind, with fatigue and

Vant of rest, overpowered Matilda; as they were changing horses, she fainted, Weimar was frightened ; he had her taken out of the carriage, laid upon a bed, and every method used to restore her. It was a long time be- fore she recovered, and then she was so weak and exhausted, that he was at a loss howto get her on. Some wine and toasted bread was given to her, and he quitted the room a mo- ment, to order refreshments into the chaise: she seized the opportunity; taking the letter and a louisd or out of her pocket, © If you „„ x. have

146 CASTLE oF WOLFENBACH,

have charity (said she) let that letter be sent to the post.“ The woman, surprised, took the letter and money, and going to speak, Matilda heard his footsteps; she put her fin- ger to her lips; the other understood, and thrust both into her bosom. Joy and hope gave her spirits, and when he told her sne must pursue her journey, she arose with dif- ficulty, but without speaking, and was rather carried than walked to the chaise. When they drove off she recollected she had forgot to ask the name of the town; she put the question to him. Faith I have forgot, was his answer. She faid no

more.

The two 3 talked of indifferent matters, which afforded her no information;

she therefore resigned herself to her own con-

templations until they arrived at a sea- port town. e

She was aftonished when he told her they were to embark on board a vessel. Where are you Soing to carry me to, (aid the, -

trembling.) |

CASTLE | OF W OLFENB ach. 147

trembling.) * To Germany, doubtless," _ (replied he. 3 c By water?" © Yes, by water: but ask no questions, Matilda; I am once more your uncle during this voyage, to preserve your character." © And do you think, Sir, (said she, assuming courage under a palpitating heart) do you think I will give a | sanction to your falschoods, and permit myself to be made a slave of?" ©« You will find, (answered he) you can have no voice to alter

my determinations ; but I will now make you

a fair proposal, If you will consent to marry

me, I will, in this very town, receive your hand, and without scruple then carry you to join your friends: if you refuse, I will not part with you, but where I propose carrying | you, shall be entire master of your destiny, The old story is propagated by my servant, that you are my niece, and I am saving you from a shameful marriage with a footman." Good God! (cried she) is my character thus traduced? And do you suppose such methods will oblige me to become your wife? No! Sir; I vill die first," « Very Er TO ; well,

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well, (answered he, calmly) you have had

your choice! shall pursue mine,"

Presently they were informed the vesscl
was ready. She was lifted out of the chaise,
and notwithstanding her resistance, and cries
for help, she was carried on board and
down to the room below.

« You are now safe in my possession (faid
he. I am sorry you made force necessary ; but you must be convinced 'tis now in vain to contend with me.” Matilda fat stupidly
gazing at him; but the vessel beginning to move, she turned very sick : without any fe-
male on board to assist her, she was compelled
to let him place her on the bed; and then
requesting to be alone, he retired, and left
her to her own very painful reflections.

5 All hope of assistance from the Marquis
was now at an end; she knew not the place of her destination; she saw no probability of
escaping from Mr. Weimar; yet she felt an

' CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH« 149

unconquerable repugnance to become his wife—a man capable of such duplicity and cruelty; © O, no! (cried she, weeping)
' sooner will I plunge into a watery grave than
unite myself for life to a man I must hate and | despise.” She continued extremely fick and 3 They had been two days at sea, when sne was alarmed by an uncommon noise over her head ; voices very loud, and every thing in much agitation : soon after

she heard the firing olf guns, and Mr. Weimar entered with an air | of distraction. I am undone, (cried he) unfortunate girl; you have been my ruin and your own, but I will prevent both." He in- stantly drew a large case knife, stabbed her and then himself. At the same instant a num ber of strange men burst into the cabin, Weimar's friend with them. The Turks, (for they were taken by a Barbary Corsair) highly enraged with the bloody scene before them, | were about to dispatch Weimar, who lay on the floor, when Matilda faintly cried, "Spare him, spare him." One of them who under- food I rench, stopped their hands: he ordered

H3 him

150 CASTLE OF WOLITENBAchH. him to be taken care of, and approached Matilda, who, growing faint with loss of blood, could with difficulty fay, © My arm." The clothes being stript off, it was found the wound was indeed through her arm, which being laid across her breast, received the blow which he was in too much confusion to direct as he intended. The humane Turk soon stauncked

the blood; and having with him necessaries

for dressing wounds, he sent on board his own ship for them, and a person who could apply them. He requested the lady to make her- self easy, no insult should be offered to her person. Meantime Weimar was carried on board the Turkish vessel, and carefully guarded. His wound was a dangerous one, and the person who drest it gave but little | hopes of his life; it continued however in a fluctuating state till their arrival at Tunis. . Matilda was out of all danger, but a prey to the most dismal apprehensions of what might befall her. %

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. st

On their arrival she was taken on shore to the captain's house, where a very amiable wo- man received her with complacency, though they could not underftand each other. Weimar

was likewise brought on shore ; and his situa-

tion growing more desperate, he requested to know if there was any hopes of his recovery, and being answered in the negative, the poor wretch, after many apparent convulsive strug- gles, asked if there was any French or Ger- man priest in the city? and being informed there was none, he requested to see Matilda, in presence of the captain and his friend, but that friend had been carried to a country | house, to work in the gardens ; the captain and lady however attended him. When he | faw her he groaned most bitterly, nor could she behold the man to whom she had owed so many obligations in her juvenile days, re- duced to a situation so wretched, without be- ing inexpressibly shocked. He saw her emo- tions, and keenly felt how little he deferved them. © Matilda, (he cried) I shall soon be past the power of persecuting you myself, but

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when I think where and in whose hands I leave you, I suffer torments worse than death can inflict." «© Let not the situation of the lady grieve you, (said the genercus Turk ;) though I pursue an employment I am weary of, I never injure women; if she has friends, they may recover her." c O, Matilda! (said the dying man) I will not deceive you, your death would to me have been the great -

est comfort; I cannot bear the idea, another

should possess you. Swear to me, (added he, _ eagerly) that you will become a nun that you will take the veil." She was terrified by his vehemence ; and though she both wished and designed it, hesitated. The captain said, « How dare you, fo near death, compel an oath foreign to her heart ; no such vow shall pass in my hearing, be your affinity to her what it may." © No, Mr. Weimar, (answer- ed she) I will not swear, though it is at pre- sent my intention so to do," Then I am dumb (said he ;) I will not be the victim to procure happiness for others,"

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 153

It was in vain Matilda and the Captain urged him to speak, he was resolutely silent.

The Turk whispered her to withdraw; sne obeyed; and in about half an hour was desired to return. © I am conquered (said Mr. Weimar ;) this man, this generous enemy has ; prevalled. Prepare to hear a story will pierce you to the heart, I am your uncle, but not a German, nor is my name Weimar.” O, tell me, (cried Matilda) have I a father, have I a mother living?“ © Not a father (answered he, sighing) perhaps a mother you may ping but I have not heard for many years.” She clasped her hands and burst into tears. © O, tell me—tell me all,

for I am prepared to hear a tale of horror.” =

„Horror, indeed! (repeated he) but I will _ confess all. Your father, the CountBerniti—" « My father a Count ! (cried she, in an ac- cent ao joy.) © Yes; but do not interrupt | Your father was a Neapolitan noble- man, I was his younger brother; he had every good and amiable quality that could dignify human nature. From my earliest re- H 5 membrance,

membrance, I hated him; his virtue procured him the love of our parents and the esteem of our friends; I was envious, malicious, crafty and dissipated. My parents saw my early ' propensity to wickedness, but entirely taken up with their darling boy, J must say that they neglected to eradicate those seeds of vice in my nature, which an early and proper at- tention might have done ; but given up to the care of profligate servants, never received but with frowns and scorn; my learning, my dress, my company, all left to myself, and treated in general as a disgrace to the family : | I soon grew hardened in wickedness, and hated my relations in proportion to their neg- le& of me. Parents would do well to consider this lesson: unjust, or even deserved partiali- ties, visibly bestowed on one child, whilst others are neglected, too generally creates | hatred to that child, and a carelefiness in per- forming their duties, which they see are little attended to. It lays a foundation for much future misery in the family; creates every vice which envy and malice can give birth to,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 155

to, and the darling object is generally the

victim. But here I will do my brother jus— tice; the only kindness I ever received was from him, and often with tears he has sup- plicated favours for me, which was the only ones that ever met with a refusal, all others

. he could command. I grew at last so despe- ate that J formed an e with the most

abandoned youth of the city, and was univer- sally despised. About this time my father

died, leaving his whole fortune to my brother,

except a very trifling pittance, weekly, to me.

. disgrace affected me beyond all bounds

; of patience. My brother sent for me; with a heart bursting with rage, I went. The mo- ment I appeared, he rose and embraced me, with tears. © My dear brother, (said he) I have now the power to make your life more comfortable; evil-minded persons set my fa-

ther against you, nor could I ever remove the

prejudice : henceforth we are brothers, more than ever; use this house as your own; give up your idle acqu. intance—I will introduce Jou to che good and worthy, and those only 88 Mall.

156 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, shall be my friends that are my brother's also." A reception so unexpected for a few

moments warmed my heart to virtue, but the impression soon wore off; I accepted his offer, nevertheless, and for some time endeavoured

to keep within bounds, and to be as private in my vices as possible. I found it easy to de- ceive my brother; whilst I preserved a sem-

blance of goodness before him, no suspicion

entered his breast. I had fo long accustom- ed myself to behold him with hatred and envy,

_ that every proof of his kindness, which car- ried with it an obligation, I could not sup-

port; rendered him more hateful in my eyes,

| because I knew it was undeserved. One morning the Count asked what I thought of

the Count Morlint's daughter ? (at that time _ esteemed the most beautiful woman in Naples,

and whom I had long looked at with desiring

eyes.) I spoke my opinion freely. I am

glad (returned my brother) your sentiments

correspond with mine ; she 1s good as well as

beautiful, and T hope in a short time will be- — come my wife," This was a dagger to my

* tt rs . 5 mn

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. - "op

heart: I knew she never could be mine, and

- therefore had suppressed my wishes, but the

idea of her being my brother's wife threw me into a rage little short of madness ; I hastened

from him to vent my passion alone. Every

plan which malice could suggest, I thought

on, to prevent the marriage, but my plots proved abortive, and the union took place, The day previous to the marriage, my noble brother presented me with a deed, which se- cured a handsome annuity to me for life ; as- suring me his house was still my

home—his country seat the same, but he chose to make me independent. From that day I was tru- ly miserable: I adored the Countess, I hated my brother. She treated me with sweetness and civility, which increased my passion. In short, I grew so fond of her, that I neglected | my old associates, and lived almost at home for ever. The dcluded pair were delighted with my reformation, and behaved with re- doubled kindness. Here I must pause (said Mr. Weimar) for I am much fatigued."

Matilda,

Matilda, whose eager curiosity could ill sup-

. port any interruption of the narrative, hasten- ed to give him a cordial, and some —_ to recruit his spirits.

Rehe 1 orveped any further (said Mr. Weimar) 'tis fit an instrument should be drawn and signed by me and proper witnes- ses, proving that I acknowledge Matilda to be the only child and heiress to the late Count | Berniti's estates, which I have unjustly with- held; let this be done, lest the hand of death should cut me off, as I every hour expect."

The generous captain lost no time in pro- curing the instrument to be drawn and properly attested. Matilda withdrew mean time to reflect on what she had already heard, and in trembling expectation of what was to follow. A painful thought obtruded itself. © Ah! had I known, (cried she) some time ago, that my birth was noble, hap- piness might have been my portionit is nox too late!" She was soon recalled to the N 5 room:

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room; and every thing being settled as the unhappy repentant Weimar desired, he lay | a short time composed and then resumed his narrative.

* For some months I lived in the house, a | torment to myself, and concerting schemes to ruin the happiness of others. The Countess advanced in her pregnancy : my brother was overjoyed—Tl affected to be the same. There was at this time a

young woman in the city whom I had seduced, and who was likewise with child; I knew I could bring her to any terms I pleased; I laid my plan accordingly : | she went to live near my brother's country | house, and passed for a young widow, greatly distressed. We contrived my sister should hear of her ; the consequence was, as we ex- _ pected, she was sent for, and told a plausible tale; was relieved, and engaged as a nurse for the Countess's child. She was brought to | bed three weeks before that lady, of a girl. The Countess was delivered of Matilda. Agatha, for it was she, Matilda, whom you well remember, attended her and received the

160 CASTLE OF wol EN BACH. the child. As soon as the Countess could be moved with safety, we all went to the house in the country. It was close to the sea, and at the back a beautiful wood, where my brother fre- quently amused himself by having little vista's cut. It was in this place I designed to exe- cute the horrid plan J had long concerted. I had privately procured a disguise, which lay | concealed at one part of the wood. I knew he generally walked in the evening, and pro- ceeded accordingly. Taking a horse one morning, I pretended to go into the city: I did so; and returned about the hour I sup- posed my brother in the wood : I fastened my Horse at the entrance ot it, changed my dress, put 2 mask on my face, and crept on towards the lower part; I distinguished him through trees—let me hasten from the remem- brance I fuddenly came vupen him, and by repeated stabs, laid him dead at my feet.” Matilda uttered a cry of horror. © do not wonder at your emotion, (faid he) since at this moment 1 tremble at my own. crimes! Irifled

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I rifled his pockets of every thing valuable, to make it believed he had been dispatched by robbers. I returned and dug a hole, at a distant part, where my horse was, hid the clothes, mounted the beast, returned to the public road, and came on horseback to the door; previous to which I had thrown his watch and money into the fea, I had exe- cuted a few little commissions for my sister, in the city, and appeared

before her in good spirits, with the trifles she had sent for. We waited for my brother's return, at the usual time, to supper ; the hour elapsed—she grew alarmed. I made light of her fears for some time; at length] joined in her apprehenfions, and calling the two men servants, proposed to | search for him. She thankfully accepted the offer. We went to the wood, calling on him | aloud, and for some time I pursued a con- trary path to the one I knew he laid in; at last we came to the dreadful st pot, where we all stood aghast; I made most moving la-

mentations. We found he had been robbed _

and murdered. "ON your fellows took up | 55

the body, and we proceeded to the house. I bid them go the back way, whilst I pre-

pared my sister. Villain, and hardened as I

was in wickedness, I trembled at this task, and the agitations of my mind, on entering her room, told the dreadful tale for me. O, | heavens! (cried she, what is become of the Count? He is dead! he is dead!“ (she re- peated) as I was silent to the question. I drew out my handkerchief, and turned from

her. She gave two or three heavy groans and fell to the ground.”

Poor Matilda again gave way to the most | lively emotions of grief. Weimar seemed much affected, and was seme moments be- | fore he could proceed.

8 Lot not dwell on a scene fo horrid. An express was sent into the city, search made for the murderer, but no traces appear- ed that could lead to a discovery. My sister

continued very ill for many days, and my bro-

ther was universally regretted, My melan- choly

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choly was observed by every one. and kindly noticed by the Countess, who desired I would act for her without reserve : this proof of her confidence gave me great credit, and not one | suspicion, I believe, ever glanced on me. It was my first intention to

have destroyed the child, but the deed I had done filled my mind with such horror, I could not imbrue my hands a second time in blood. I was some time unresolved in what manner to act. The Countess still kept her bed, in a very languid state. One morning, going to Agatha's room, I found her in tears; her child had died that night, in convulsions; it was in the cradle, and the features much distorted. A thought darted instantly into my head, to change the children: J proposed it to Aga- tha, and promised her great rewards ; she readily agreed to every thing I proposed ; the dresses were changed in a moment, and the children being only fix weeks old, had been little seen. I left the room. Soon after, a | servant came to the Countess's apartment, (where 1 then was, to pay my morning re- 5 spects,

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spects, a custom I always observed) and re- quested me to step out on business. © O, Sir! (cried she) we are all undone—the poor nurse is frantic—the sweet child, the young Coun- tess, is dead! expired an hour ago, in convul- sions, whilst poor Agatha thought it in a sweet sleep." I pretended to be-most ex- ceedingly shocked ; exclaimed against the nurse, sent for a physician—would have the body examined, I did fo; I ran to Agatha's apartment, the other end of the house, abused her for her carelessness; she, who was really grieved for the loss of her own child, sned torrents of tears. The Physician came; he

examined the child; he said, it was really

sudden convulsions had carried it off and no

fault in the nurse, the disorder being common

among infants. This satisfied every one; nobody troubled themselves about Agatha's child. J sent off to the Count Morlini's, who had left us the day before, intending to return the following one. He came immedi- ately ; I detained the physician. The Count made very minute enquiries, and was, Or ap-

yu Tu

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peared to be contented with the physician's | deposition. © Alas! my Lord, (cried I) who shall break this melancholy accident to the Countess? I cannot, I dare not do it. Unhappy lady! (I exclaimed) how great are your sorrows ! my own share in them is lost, when I consider your's." The Count shook my hand in a friendly manner, but {poke not." He went from me to his daugh- ter; I retired to my own apartment. I was now my brother's heir to his title and estates ; every thing promised to give me an undif- puted right; and I enjoyed, by anticipation, the pleasures which fortune and rank would bestow." Here Mr. Weimar stope. 1 can- © not proceed now, I am fatigued and exhaust- ed." He was quite faint, and they were obliged to give him a respite for the present, and administer cordials. He promised to proceed and fimsh his story in the evening. Matilda withdrew, overwhelmed with grief, horror, and a painful curiosity for the subse- quents events which might have befallen her unhappy mother. Some time after she was

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in her apartment, the captain came in, The surgeon (said he) has just examined Mr. Weimar's wound, and makes a much | better report of it than in the morning. This last dressing has abated the inflammation, and the fever is not so violent." © If his repent- ance is sincere, heaven grant he may re- cover," (said she.)

In the evening, at Mr. Weimar's request,

Matilda and the captain went to his apart=

ment: he appeared much more easy and composed. After recollecting himself a bitte, he went on as follows. 1

The Count took upon him to acquaint the Countess with the loss of the child; but notwithstanding all his precautions, it had a dreadful effect upon her. She was for some weeks deprived of reason, and when recover- ed, the disorder turned to a settled melancholy nothing could remove. Having some relations

at Florence, the Count proposed taking her

there to change the [cene, What had been secured

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secured to her by marriage, was of course hers. From an affected generosity, I presented her with the house and furniture in the city; and under a pretence I, could no longer stay where such melancholy accidents had ta- ken place, and having no relations living, I disposed of my estates, and faid I should tra- vel into Turky and Egypt, without assuming any title. In truth, I was ever in fear some unforeseen events might bring my evil deeds to light : for 'tis the fate of villainy never to be secure; and the constant apprehension of detection embitters every hour of their lives who once plunge into gust. I had persuad- ed Agatha, with the child, to embark on board a French vessel, bound to Dieppe, and there wait for me; having engaged the cap- tain to take care of her, though I secretly wished the waves might swallow them up; at the same time I had not resolution to destroy them. After the vessel failed, I set off from Naples, glad to escape from a place I could not behold without shuddering. Whether any suspicions where entertained of me, I know

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know not; for I kept up no correspondence there. I travelled into France, and arrived at Dieppe, where I found Agatha and the infant, | Thad a great inclination to settle in Switzer- land, and determined to go through the coun- try, and finda habitation, Leaving the wo- man at Dieppe, I went first to Paris, invested great part of my property there, in the name of Weimar; and from thence I went through Germany and Switzerland. Between Lau- sanne and Lucerne, I heard of an estate to be fold. I faw and liked it; the purchase was

soon made, and every thing quickly settled.

I sent for Agatha: she came part of the way by water, the rest, to Lausanne, by land; there I met her, and conducted her to my

house. We now resumed our former inti-

macy, but she had no more children. I en-

deavoured, by my care of Matilda, to atone

for the crimes I had been guilty of, in de- stroying her father, and robbing her of her fortune—a fortune I was afraid to enjoy, and a rank I dared not assume, always apprehen- sive my villainy would be discovered. I kept | but 4

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but little company. Agatha, who was my housekeeper, and directed every thing, many times I was tempted to destroy, but fear pre- served her life. As Matilda grew up, I be- came passionately fond of her; my love in- _ creased with her years, and I determined to ' possess her. Agatha had too much cunning not to perceive my inclination; and having long ceased having any particular attachment to me, the blindly fell in with my desires, and encouraged me to proceed. The cog versation you overheard, Matilda, was wet vou apprehended ; she persuaded me to say I was not your uncle, and the story I told you in Paris, was the one we had fabricated to de- ceive you. I did not at first intend marrying ;

[had an aversion to that tie, and therefore a

different plan was proposed, which, overhear- ing, drove you from my house. Tis need- less to tell you what ensued on discovering you | had left me: I resolved to find you, if pol- fible, and traced you to Paris. I thought to have deceived the Marquis; he was too cunning for me: but I obtained knowledge ER of

1 "PPG CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. of your being in England through the means of Mademoiselle De Fontelle; a servant of | her's having met the Marchioness and you at Calais. I still followed you. You know the concession I made to the Ambassador, which J never intended to observe, having intelligence the Count De Bouville was your lover. I had every step watched, and no | sooner found youwere at a convent then I re- | paired to Paris, told my own story, and ob- ' rained an order for

your delivery. I found letters at Paris, from my steward, informing me of the death of Agatha, almost suddenly. This was a most agreeable piece of news; there was now no one living that could ac- cuse me. Blind, infatuated mortals ! we for- get there is an all-seeing eye, that sooner or later brings us to justice, when most we think ourselves secure ! I went to Brest, I hired a vessel to carry me to Venice, determined to Tefide there with you. With the order in my pocket, and a person who had attended me, more like a confidential friend than a servant, I came to Boulogne, and obtained your deli-

very WD,

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very to me. The rest you know. It was my intention to have married you, unless you rejected mein that case you mult take the consequence. When I saw the Turkish ves- | sel I gave all up for lost; and when they boarded us, expecting you would be sacrificed to their desires, and myself made a flave, I re- solved to prevent both: Providence preserved. you what I have suffered, and the near pro-

spect of death, determined me to confess al!

my crimes—crimes that have embittered every hour of my life, and which have led me into a thousand inconsistences, from fears and terrors, only created by guilt. Thus it is with the wicked; early plunged into vice, they proceed from one bad action to another; afraid to look back, unable to repent, they go on to fill up the measure of their crimes, 'till their best concerted schemes prove their ruin, Had not the hand of death overtaken me, this confession never would have been made; yet even at this moment adore Ma- tilda, Pardon me, dear unhappy girl, the evils I have caused you; let me die forgiven 1 . by.

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by you, and join in supplicating that mercy I have fo little room to hope for, but from Divine goodness to the truly penitent.“

Matilda assured him of her forgiveness, and implored heaven's mercy on him. But tell me, Sir, (hid she) did you never hear of my mother?" „ Only once, and by accident, eight years ago; she was then at Naples, with her family." „ Grant heaven! (faid Matilda) she may be there still; O, what hap- piness, if I should ever embrace a mother!" Tears stopt her utterance ; her uncle was af- fected. ©& O, Matilda! leave me; I can- not bear your tears, they reproach me too deeply ; and I have much to repent of be- fore I leave you for ever."

She quitted the room, oppressed with the most painful sensations: the tragical end of her father, the melancholy situation of her mother, the crimes of her uncle, and her own present distressed and forlorn state, altogether gave her unutterable pangs: yet a gleam of

Joy 6

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joy darted through the gloom that pervaded her fate—she was of noble birth ; no unlaw- ful offspring, no child of poverty: then she thought of the Count Ah! (cried she) he is now the husband of Mrs. Courtney; in all probability I shall never see him more." A sigh followed the reflection, which she strove to place on another score.

She was soon afier joined by the captain.

The surgeon came in as you left the room,

madam ; and notwithstanding the sick man's agitation, in telling his story, he says, he is undoubtedly better, and he begins to enter- tain hopes, if no change happens for the worse." am glad to _ it, (replied she) may he live to repent." © Meantime, madam, (faid he) if you wish to write your friends, I will take care your letters, shall be conveyed by the quickest dispatch possible."

She accepted his generous offer, and retired

to write the Marchioness and Countess what

had befallen her; but recollecting that she | nel 3 | | could

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could not with to be in France until she had visited Naples, the left her letters unfinished,

to consult the captain the following morn- ing. She retired to rest, but the agitations of

her mind precluded sleep: alternate joy and

sorrow, hopes and fears, created such diffe-

rent ideas, that she passed the night without

_ closing her eyes, and arose, at break of day,

resolved to write and address a letter to her

grandfather with her story. © If he lives, (said she) he will be overjoyed ; if not, if 1 have no such relation, no dear mother alive, | some one of the family will doubtless write and inform me. 8

When the 3 came to breakfast, sne imparted her different thoughts to him. She had no way of paying court to his amiable wife, but by kisling her hand, whilst the other pressec her's to her bosom, with tender affec- tion, her husband having related the we" 5 = Kory to her.

The

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The Captain, after some Ae said,] told you once, madam, the employment am, or rather was engaged in, by no means suited me. I was not originally accustomed to this kind of life ; my wife's father always was; he persuaded me to follow it. I failed with him three years; we made a good deal of money. He died six months ago. This laft voyage was the first I ever made for my- felf, I am disgusted at the service, and mean to quit it: my wife wishes me to do so; she. is a good woman; we have enough;

I do not want a plurality of wives—I am content with her. My mother was an English wo- man imbibe her sentiments. I have not disposed of my vessel; 1 will take you to Naples, or even to France, if you wish it, un- der neutral colours, which J can procure. This will be better than engaging your friends to come here. I have no enemy but the Russians to fear, and those I can provide against," © You are very kind, Sir, (said Fol) I really am at a loss how to proceed, and will consult Mr. Weimar," (he could ES 4 TT 8

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not r2concile herself to call him uncle.) She did fo : he approved of the Captain's advice, but thought she had best write her friends of her safety and situation, also of her intention to go to Naples, from whence they might ex- pect to hear her decisive plan; previous to which the Captain could write to some per- sons, to know if any of her relations were living. This being agreed upon, as the best methods to be taken, Matilda resigned her-

self to patience till answers could be obtain-

ed, which must nec essa rily take up some time. N

We must now return to the Countess and meeting any accident. 5

Their first step was to deliver the German Minister's letters to the English Ambassador; his Excellency having sent dispatches to his

own court of this extraordinary affair.

The

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The Countess found but little difficulty in being acknowledged, and put in possession of her rights. Her story engrossed the public attention at Vienna, and she received a thou- sand visits and congratulations from every person of distinction. Though abundantly ratified by their civilities, she was too anxious

to see her fon for her mind to be at ease, A

messenger had been sent to his quarters, by the Marquis, with leave from the Emperor for his return, and preparing him, by degrees, for the agreeable surprise of finding some near and dear relations. The youth had been apprised of his father's death, bur not having

read the Count's letter, was a stranger to ali the circumstances relative to it. He made no difficulty of obeying the order, and set off tor. his father's seat directly.

One day, when every heart beat hich with. expectation, a travelling carriage was fecn driving through the park. „ My son, my fon!" (cried the Countess, farting up.) The Marquis ran out to meet him. Ins 1 5 | 2ment

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moment a tall elegant youth, about sixteen, entered the room, with looks of eager expectation. The Countess flew towards him, threw her arms round him; attempted to speak, but overpowered by tender emotions, till then a stranger to her breast, she fainted | in his arms. The young gentleman, alarm- ed, and equally agitated, assisted, in filence, to _ convey her to a seat; and whilst the Mar-

chioness was busy in her endeavours to re-

store her sister, he kissed her hand eagerly, and cried to the Marquis, Tell me, Sir; who is this dear lady? It is (said the other, with a lirle pause) she is your mo- ther, Sir." „ Mother! (repeated he, drop- ping on his knees) Great God! have I a mother? my own mother!" „" Yes, (re- plied the Marquis) she is indeed your parent, tor very many years believed to be dead."

| Young, Frederic was now in a state very lictle better than the Countess: surprise, joy, | the loft emotions that at once assailed him, ren- dered him speechlels and immoveable,

cCasrTIE OF WOLFENBACH, 179 It was some time before they were both

sufficiently recovered to be sensible of their fclicity. The Countess embraced him with tears of expressive tenderness ; he, on his knees, kissing her hands with ardour. My mother! my dear mother!“ was all he could utter for a long time. The Marchioness at length separated them. My dear Frederic, (said she) you have other duties to pay, befides your present delightful one! claim you as my nephew; this gentle- man is my husband, consequently your _ uncle.” He flew and embraced both. * Gracious heaven ! (cried he) what hap- piness. A few months ago I supposed my- self without family or nn dependent on the Count's bounty; then I was agreeably surprised with being acknowledged as his son, then suddenly separated, and only ten days fince informed of his death—again I was an orphan, and knew not what claims I could or _ ought to make; but now this unexpected ride of joy and happiness—to find a mother ! O. che blessed sound! to find a mother, uncle, |

16 Es aunt,

aunt, all dear and honoured relations! Great God, I adore thy bounty, make me deserving of thy favours.” He again threw himself at the feet of the Countess, who had hung with rapture on his words, and now embraced him with the W GIS |

Aster chis tumult of pleasure was a little | subsided, he eagerly enquired the particulars of her story; which the Marquis repeated, as had been agreed upon, glossing over the

Count's crimes, as much as possibly could be done, to exculpate the Countefs. No men- tion was made of the Chevalier's death; but the youth heard sufficient to comprehend his | mother had been cruelly used, and his features bore testimony of his emotions. Dearest | madam, (cried he) how great have been your fufferings ! henceforth it shall be the study of my life to make you forget them in your fu- ture happiness.

Lord Delby, who had been rambling in the park, now entered. the room. Young F rederic

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Frederic was introduced to him, and the foregoing scene slightly described by the Mar- chioness. © I am glad, (said his Lordship) I was not present; for though I adore sensi-

dility, such a meeting would have been too much for me.“

Growing more rational together, his rela- tions were delighted with the young officer. It must be confessed, (said the Marquis) the Count paid 9 attention to Frede- ric's education.” “ Yes, my Lord, (answer- ed the youth) it would have been my fault, if I had not profited by the instructions I re- ceived ; but I thought my debt of gratitude io great for such uncommon kindness from a stranger, on whom I had no claims, that I strove to exert my small abilities, and by dili- gence and application, evince my sense of his favours, as the only return in my power.” The deception, as far as related to you, (faid the Marchioness) proved a happy one; it laid the foundation for virtue, humility and gratitude, which perhaps happier circum-

stances

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stances and legal claims might never have called forth. Thus sornetimes good {prings 7 out of evil. as

The following day, when the happy party vas assembled, and projecting pleasurable schemes, the Marquis received the letter, which the good Mother Magdalene had found means to send off from Matilda. He started, wich an exlamation of surprise. All were eager to know the contents. Prepare yourselves for some regret, on account of your young friend,” (said he.) “What! Matilda?“ (cri ied both in a breath.) © Yes, I am sor- ry to tell you she is again in her uncle's power; he has again claimed her as his niece.” He then read the letter, and all | were equally grieved at the unfortunate des- tiny of this deserving 8 young woman.

Feb with the warm enthusiasm of youth, cried out, © Is there no clue to trace them

?—l will myself pursue them.” „Alas! mi son, en the Countels) is impos- sidle

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. WS i

Gble to say where he may have carried her

to; but let us hope, as she found means to | send this letter, she will find an opportunity to write again; at all events, she has a pro-

tector, to whose care we mult trust her, until

wie can obtain further intelligence.“

This letter threw a damp on the general joy. e

Her story 1 was repeated to Frederic, whose ardour was again raised to deliver the unhap- |

PY & girl rom her persecutor.

The Marquis, who was that day writing to |

the Count the happy event of their journey, and meeting with his nephew, could not re-

sist throwing in a postscript. © My dear Bouville, added he, we are thrown into the

greatest consternation, by a letter from Matil-

da. She is again in the power of that villain, Weimar; who, contrary to his engagements,

has procured an order from the king, and car- tried

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ried her off, we know not where. We wait.

with impatience to hear further.

This letter from the Marquis found the

Count De Bouville at Bath; where he vain-

ly sought amusement, to remove the anguish | which preyed upon his mind, arising

from the impossibility of ever calling Matilda his. He viewed the gay females of fashion, with birth, beauty, and accomplishments to boast of, with perfect indifference. Ah! thought he, where is the modest retiring sweetness of Ma-

_tilda? Where those unaffected charms those natural graces of her deportment ?

Never shall I meer with a Woman that I can

_ admire or love, after knowing that lovely

girl, whose very virtues preclude my happt- ness. He was in one of these reveries when.

the letter from the Marquis was delivered to

him. The happiness of his friends gave him

infinite d. light; but how changed were his emotions on reading the poits{cript : his rage

_ exceeded all bounds ; i determined to leave Bath instantly. * I will hunt the villain

through.

— | hoy

CASTLE OF wor TEN RAC. 185

through the world (cried he;) I will find her, if she is on earth, and no power shall ever take her from me again. O, Matilda! too

scrupulous girl, you have undone us both, and

ruined my peace for ever." He called his servants, and ordered the necessary arrange-

ments for leaving Bath that night. He went

out to call on some friends he had formed

an engagement with, and to whom he thought more than a card was due. Crossing the parade, he saw, coming towards him, Ma-

dame Le Brune, Mademoiselle De Fontelle, and Mrs. Courtney, who had arrived from Tun- bridge together the preceding evening. No-

thing could have happened more unfortunate than this meeting. His temper irritated be- fore, at the sight of the two ladies together,

both of whom he considered as enemies to Ma- tilda, his, passion increased beyond the bounds

ol politeness torestrain. © I congratulate you,

| ladies, on an intimacy, minds like your's na- turally create, For you, madam, (turning to Mademoiselle De Fontelle, who was pale with

fear, observing his violence) you were never +, object of my esteem, and long since of my

aversion |

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aversion and contempt : your diabolical false- | hoods have deprived me of har piness for ever; bur vengeance vill one day overtake you! promise you it shall, (faid he, in a voice that made her tremble and unable to go on.) For you, madam, (turning to Mr:. Court- ney) I have still some respect: you have many good qualities; but your malice and _ dislike of an unoffending and excellent young woman, is inexcusable, and very evidently pursued, by attaching yourself to one you know all your and her friends despise ; malice only is the cement of your intimacy. Take my advice, madam,—break it off, and entitle yourself to the respe& and esteem of those who are the friends of Tan and T8 | Delby.” „

He was going to leave them, but Mrs.

1 Courtney, truck by his manner and words, 0 pon to him, cried s g 1 70 5

| Bath?” « This night I leave it, (aud he)

and a day or two hence I fall quit England.“ ts 1 „For

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH. 187

« For heaven's fake! (cried she) let me see

you for five minutes, an hour hence; do not deny me, tis the last favour I will ever ask.“ Seeing he hesitated, © At No. 11, on the South Parade—I will expect you.“

She hastily followed her companions, who had | gladly removed a few paces from them, and left the Count irresolute, whether he should oblige her or not: but recollecting the civi- | lites he had received at her house and Lord Delby's, he thought gratitude and honour re- |

_— yore his obedience,

He called on bs friends, and at the ap- pointed hour attended Mrs. Courtney. When introduced, she was alone, and very melan-

choly, but rose to receive him with evident

pleasure. „ I thank you for this visit, (aid the) which I scarcely dared flatter myself wich r eceiving, from your abrupt behaviour to me

cis morning,” « You saw me, madam, very much rallied}; and the company I faw od

you in was not calculated ro pur me in better humour.

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humour. You will pardon me, if I behaved any way rudely ; but I really have too much respect for Mrs. Courtney, to whole hospica- lity and kindness I am under so many obliga- tions, to see her in company with a dissolute woman, whose want of chastity is perhaps her | leaft crime; she is unprincipled, in every re- spect, with a base and malignant heart.“ © Good God! Count, (cried Mrs. Court- ney) J did not know Mademoiselle De Fon- telle, was charged with any other faults than a dislike to Matilda.“ © That of itself, (re- plied he) would to me be a sufficient proof of a bad mind; for only those who dislike virtue and goodness can be enemies to her: but in- dependent of that, Fontelle is a profligate young woman, and by no means a fit

com- panion for a lady of your respectability,

though, being unknown, she may be received

into company. I hope, madam, you will deem this an apology for my abrupt behaviour; and now favour me with your com-

' mands." «© Commands! (repeated she) dear Count, are you obliged to leave Bath fo very

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very soon?" © I am, madam; and I will frankly tell you the cause." He repeated the Marquis's letter. The amiable Matil- da ever was, and ever will be dear to me; tho" her superior greatness of mind will not per- mit her to accept my hand, I neither can nor will marry any other woman; nor shall she, if I can help it, be subje& to the power of any man on earth." * But, (faid she) with- out knowledge even of the road they travelled, how can you pursue them?" © It matters not, {answered he) I will not rest till I do ob- | tain information." This is really a Quixote expedition (said she ; ;) travelling the world through to deliver distressed damsels. ce [t may appear fo, (replied he, gravely) but don't let me think Mrs. Courtney possessed of so little feeling, as to be indifferent about the fate of an amiable girl, who esteemed and respected her. But have you any commands for me, madam, — ! am really hurried at pre- sent?" c Well, Sir, (answered she) if you are determined to go, I must own I wish to preeeve your esteem, at least, and therefore!

promise

* CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

promise you I will profit by your advice, and give up the French ladies." © You will en- title yourself to respect, madam, by fo doing. Every French woman 1s not a Marchioness De Melfort, nor, I hope, a Mademoiselle De Fontelle; but 'tis necessary ladies should dis- criminate in their acquaintance." Then rising and kissing her hand, " Accept, ma- dam, my g rhe thanks for the favours you have honored me with. If I

ever return to England, I shall again pay my respects to you,

if you will permit me; and, if I am ever hap-

pily settled in France, I shall think myself highly honoured by a visit from Mrs. Court-

ney, and her worthy uncle, Lord Delby." Mrs. Courtney's pride forsook her at this po- lite address, she burst into tears, © Adieu, my dear Count; may happiness attend you, though you leave me a prey to regret and sor- row." He hastened from her with some emotion. That woman, thought he, has many amiable qualities, but she wants steadi- ness and respect for herself: an imbecility of mind makes her _- herself up to her pas- sions,

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sions, from the want of resolution or fortitude to subdve them; she has naturally a good and _ generous heart, but she is easily led aside by others more artful than herself. He thought however he had done his duty by warning her against Mademoiselle De Fontelle ; and re +

turned to his lodging with fatisfaction to : himself.

Every thingbeing ready, the Count quitted Bath that night; slept a few hours on the road, and arrived in town the next day.

He pursued his route to Dover, and from thence to Boulogne. He went to the con-vent, to gain intelligence; the porteress very readily answered his questions, but that afford- ed him not the least clue to guide his search, as she knew nothing of the road taken, She told him that Matilda had left money to con- vey Louison to Paris, who had been gone : | upwards of I fortnight.

Although |

192 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

Although the Count scarcely iippaled Weimar would carry her to his own houle, yet

he determined to go there. He wrote the Marquis, and proposed being at Vienna, should he prove unsuccessful in Switzerland.

It would be tedious to follow the Count thro' his journey. He made all possible enquiries through the different towns, without obtain- ing any information. He arrived at Mr. Weimar's ; they had not heard from him since he left England. Disappointed and mor- tified, he went from Switzerland to Vienna, and from thence to the villa of the Countess. He was received with transport. The Countess eagerly exclaimed, * She is found, ve have a letter—O, such good 1 news !”

= The Count had 3 patience te go through the ceremony of introduction, before he begged to know the good news!

The Marchioness had two days before re- ceived

| CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH- 193

ceived the letter Matilda had written from T unis—she gave it him to read.

Matilda had briefly 3 an account of her voyage and arrival at Tunis, the civilities of the captain, and dangerous state of Mr. Weimar. She mentioned, that she had rea- son to suppose she was descended from a noble family, in Naples; that a short time would relieve her doubts; and, at any rate, she would write again, if not Join them, i ina

voy little while.

Lovers, who I ever industrious to tor- ment themselves, would perhaps, like the Count, have conjured up a thousand fears to distract their winds. © Is this all your good news? (cried he) alas ! I see little to depend

upon here; © she has hopes“ she belongs to | some noble family, —a scheme of that villain Weimar's, to keep her easy till he recovers; | | besides, what dependence can be placed on a

corsair? Ah! if these are all your hopes of safety, they are small indeed, „ Upon my

vol. Il * word,

word, Count, (said the Marchioness) you are very cruel, to destroy the pleasing illusion we entertained of her safety ; for my own part, I fee no cause to doubt the kindness of the Captain, who, tis plain, must have permit- ted her to write; and for the other, he can have no power, in his circumstances, whether ill or well." „ hope, madam, (replied the Count) your conjectures are founded on truth and reason, —I shall rejoice to find my fears are groundless; but, be that as it may, 1 am determined to go immediately to Tunis." Tou are right, my dear Sir, (cried the young Count, Frederic;) could I disengage my mind from superior duties, I would, with pleasure, accompany you." a me- knight errantry of youthful folks! (said the Marquis, smiling) but I affure you, my good friend, we are all here equally interested in the fate of Matilda, and equally desirous of pro-

moting any plan conducive to her safety. "

A am {ure of it, (answered the Count) and therefore hope you will not take it ill, if I leave 45 e 5 25

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH® 195

you to-morrow, for I am resolved to go to Tunis, if a vessel can be hired, 8

They saw it was in vain to oppose his r re- solution, and were therefore silent.

He was delighted with the warmth of the young Count, and praised. his spirit in the

most * terms.

He wok kane of them the following : morning, to pursue his plan, with the earnest good wishes of the whole family. 5

Meantime every thing succeeded at Tunis, to Matilda's wishes. Mr. Weimar daily grew better. At first his recovery seemed rather a matter of regret to him; but when she assured him of her entire forgiveness, that she never would betray the secret of her fa- ther's death, and that the restitution of her estates would sufficiently prove his

penitence for the intended wrong done to her, he grew more reconciled, and by degrees, her sensible

42 bee

and pious observations wrought such a change in him, that he determined, when he got well, the Captain giving him his liberty, he would enter into a monastery for the rest of his days. Matilda encouraged him in the design.

The Captain, who was present at many of their conversations, said, one night, that his dislike to the cruel business he had been en- caged in was considerably strengthened by Matilda's dissertations on virtue and vice; he vas resolved never to make another voyage; and, though he could not but think the faith of Mahomet the true faith, yet, for her sake,

he would always respect Christians; because

the two best women he knew, exclusive of his wife, were both Europeans and Christians.

Matilda impatiently expected an answer from Naples. The Captain ar last received one. The good Count Morlini had been dead three years; the Countess, his daughter, was alive, though in a languid state of health, ẽ nu ir RS

cAsTIE OF wol EN BACH. 197

and was gone, with another family to Nice, to | stay two or three months.

This intelligence was delightful to Matil- da: she was anxicus to set off as soon as pol- sible.

Mr. Weimar was now well enough to bear the voyage. He made a deed of gift to his | niece, of all he possessed; having greatly im- proved the original fortune, from a fear of ex- _ citing too much notice and enquiry if he had lived otherwise ; and told her, his intention | was to enter into the order of poverty, as the proper retribution for his inordinate desire of wealth, which had induced him to commit such horrid

crimes. She would have per- suaded him to have chosen an order of less

severity; but nothing could alter his reso- lutions.

be c 1 hastened his prepara- Y tions, the tay was appointed for failing.

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Matilda could not take leave of the Cap- tain's amiable wife without feeling a very sin- cere regret ; for, though they did not under- | stand each other's language, yet the expres- sion, of the hear was comprehended

by both, and engaged mutual esteem and tenderness.

The friend, or rather confidant of Mr. Weimar, was sent for from the country, his liberty given him, and Matilda, at her uncle's request, promised to pay him the sum agreed upon in France, for his assistance to carry her

They set sail with a prosperous gale, but with hearts very differently agitated.

Much about the same time the Count De Bouville had taken leave of his friends; and having hired a vessel at the first sea-port, he

_ proceeded on his voyage to Tunis, and, with- out any accident or interruption, fafely ar-

i 1 there fix wy after Matilda had left it. He

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He was soon on shore, procured an interpre- ter, and hastened to the Captain's house. His heart beat fast with hope, fear and expecta- tion; but who can describe his emotions when informed of their departure for Nice. He asked a thousand questions could scarcely

"0 persuaded but some sinister design was

again practised against her, and it was with much difficulty he at length grew more re-

conciled * satisfied. with the account he

received. N "He had nothing now to do but to follow her to Nice; but as water and some provi- sions were wanting for the vessel, he was _ obliged to bridle in his impatience, and re- main there three or four days, which were ages in his calculation.

Matilda, meantime, safely arrived at Nice. Mr. Weimar instantly left the place, promising. to write his niece, under cover tothe Marquis -

De Melfort, soon as he was settled in 2 : monastery. BO

Ks The

200 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH,

The Captain conducted Matilda to a hotel, and they consulted how to act. It must be confessed her situation was a very distressing one; no female companion, no one to intro-

duce her, she might be supposed an impostor, notwithstanding the testimony of Mr. Wei- mar, signed before the Captain. In short, they found themselves at a loss how to pro- ceed. The first step was to know if the Countess Berniti was there ; of this they were | soon informed, she was, accompanied by the Count and Countess Marsilini. After much deliberation the Captain proposed waiting on the Count, telling him a lady just arrived from Tunis, requested the favour of seeing him, to enquire after some very particular friends and relations she had at Naples. This scheme was adopted and put into execution. The Count was surprised at the message, but curiofity carried him immediately to the hotel, and he was introduced to Matilda. He was extremely struck with her figure and ap- pearance. She trembled, and for some mo- ments was incapable of speaking ; but en- deavouring

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deavouring to collect fortitude from necessity, | the thus addressed him, The liberty I

have taken in requesting the honour of seeing your Lordship here requires many apologies, but TI am in a very fingular and distressing situation. Will your Lordship permit me to ask you how long you have known the Countess Ber- niti?“ The Count started at the question. « Almost from a child, madam ; we were brought up in an intimacy from our youth.” « You knew her unfortunate husband then, and his brother, (said she) and possibly may recollect it was supposed the infant daughter of the Countess died in convulsions ?” & Sup- | posed! (repeated he) good God! What can you mean, madam ?” © To recall to your mind, Sir, those circumstances, on the deve- loping of which my future happiness depends.. 1 {ee your surprise, my Lord, and to eluci- date my meaning, I must entreat the favour of you to peruse these papers, the confession. of a dying man, once brother to the late Count Berniti.” The Count took the pa- pers with the most eager curiosity. _ e * Ou

202 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH« |

Matilda, affected with hopes, doubts and fears, could not suppress her tears: on this important moment her fate seemed sus- pended. „

The Count made two or three exclama- tions, but when he came to the murder of his friend, he smote his breast, Unparalleled

wickedness and ingratitude!“ (cried he.) Fastily proceeding in the narrative, he no | sooner came to the exchange of the children, than throwing his eyes on Matilda, My heart, and your striking resemblance to the charming Countess, tell me, you are her child.” eee MO» ON

« Iam! Iam! (replied Matilda, weep- ing, and strongly agitated) if she will vouch- fafe to own me! He folded her to his bo- som, „ Own you! O, what transport to re- cover such a daughter! Compose yourself, my dear young lady ; I am little less affected than you are,—but let me finish this interest- ing confession of a miserable wretch. He

went

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 203 vent through the whole without any further interruption.

At the conclusion, he Captain related the events at Tunis, and the result of their enquiries at Naples, which had brought them | to Nice.

* Doubt not, my dear lady, but all your troubles are over: behold the hand of Providence in every event; had not your wretch- ed uncle taken you from France; had you not fallen into the power, perhaps of the on- ly man who would have treated his captives with honor and compassion, unknown in ge- neral to people of his profession, — forgive me, Sir, the observation (the Captain bowed) had not the dread of death and everlasting _ _ punishments terrified the guilty wretch ; had not all these singular events happened, through Divine permission, you might, to this hour, have been ignorant of your birth, and my amiable friend deprived of the joy and tran- : = that await her 1 og e K * ; The

The Count again warmly embraced her.

He paid a thousand polite compliments to the

Captain; and though he regretted leaving

them, he was anxious to consult his lady in

what manner to convey this delightful intel-

: gence to the Countess.

When he returned to his lady she saw he

was greatly agitated, and knowing the mes- | Gge he had received, was very curious to hear the result of his visit. She fortunately happened to be alone; he therefore related the

whole story, read the papers, and spoke in raptures of Matilda's person, and engaging manners. Nothing could equal the astonish - ment of the Lady Marsillini. She antici- pated the joy of her friend, yet was at a loss

how to inform her of an event so entirely un-

expected. They knew it mult recall to her

mind the horrid circumstances of her hus-

| band's murder, which neither time nor reason

had ever reconciled her to support with any

\ fortitude. © Yet, (said the Count) to re-

cover such A child; to have a hold, a con- | nexion

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- nexion in life so desirable and so unlooked for, must surely greatly overbalance the afflic- tion of a painful remembrance, at least weakened, * not subdued.

They went to the apartment of the Coun- tess. She was at her toilet. Her woman being dismised, Well Count, (asked she) have you seen the lady from Tunis,—is she a Turkish woman? *© No, madam, she was. brought up in Germany; she is a charming young creature, and you may be proud of the compliment (added he, smiling) when I as- sure you she very strongly resembles your ladyship.” © You are very polite, my good : friend, (answered she, in the same tone) but 1 am neither young nor handsome, and you say this lady is both ;—bur, pray, 1s she acquaint- ed with any of our friends? “ Yes, but by name only ; she has no personal know-. ledge of any one in Naples ; she was very particular in her enquiries after you.” “Of me! (said the Countess, surprised ;) how

could she ö. any ching of me?” © You

remember: |

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remember the Chevalier N——, who went abroad so many years since ?” e Ah! (faid she, with a sigh) I do indeed remember him ; is he alive, does this lady belong to him?“ « He is not living, (answered the Count, for Matilda permitted him to

suppose he was dead, without afferting it;) this young lady was in some degree related to him, but I think more nearly fo to your ladyship.“ « Heavens! my dear Count, you surprise me ! I know not of any female relation I can _ possibly have.” © She is certainly a near relation, however, (replied the Count) and you must prepare yourself for a most agree- able surprise, as I am convinced you will love her dearly.” © Indeed, my good Count, (exclaimed the Countess) you have given me violent emotions; my heart palpitates, and my whole frame trembles ; for God's sake, do not keep me in suspense—who can this lady | be?” „ Before we answer you, my dear friend, (faid the Count's Lady) let me per-

svade you to take a few drops, in water, the

agreeable flutter hed your spirits will require

them.”

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them.“ © All this preparation terrifies me ; I oa! take any thing, but pray be explicit at once.” © Then, my dear lady, bear the joyful recieal, Iam about to give you with re- solution.”

He took up the story, at a French vessel, captured by the Corsair, and a gentleman on board, attempting to destroy himself and a lady, described the subsequent events, and

then began the narrative. When in his ad- dress to Matilda, he said, The Count Berniti was your father, the Countess started

from her chair, © Gracious God! what do I hear; but no, I] can have no interest in it.” : She was silent. He proceeded, whilst she

hung her head, drowned in tears at the men- tion of her husband, whose death he slightly | passed over, till he came to the circumstances of the children. She gave a shriek, and throwing her arms around her friend © If this is true, great God! if this is

true, I may | yet have a child. „ O! say, (cried she, looking * at lun) tell me at once, have

5 | I child?”

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I child?” © You have (faid the Count, ap- proaching her) you have a daughter, my dear Countess, whom heaven has e to bless the remainder of your days.” Tis too much, too much, (said she, putting her hand to her bosom, and instantly rainted in the arms of her friend.) Having drops and wa -

ter at hand, she was soon recovered; and after a few sighs, that removed the oppression

from her heart, she said, “ Tell me, if it is the illusion of my senses only, or if indeed I have a child?” © No, my dear lady, you are not deceived—we have told you truth.“ « Then, where is she? (cried the Countess, eagerly) let me see her] die with impatience !” © Recover your spirits (answered

the Count ;) collect your fortitude, and I will immediately fetch her to your arms.” «© O, hasten! hasten! (cried she, dissolving in

tears) which they were glad to see. And the Count, with joy, flew to the hotel, where poor Matilda waited in all the agonies of sus- pence. The Guicovery 1 is made, my dear Young.

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young lady ; your mother | is impatient to re- ceive and bless you.”

This intelligence, though so anxiously wished for, gave her inexpressible agitations; she got up and sat down, two or three times, without speaking, or being able to move; and at length, with trembling knees, was conveyed to the carriage, the Captain, at the request of the Count, accompanying them. When ar- rived at the house, and conducted to a room, she had a glass of wine to raise her spirits, whilst

the Count announced her arrival. In a few minutes he returned, and took her hand. The Captain wished not to be pre- sent at the first interview. With a tremor

through her whole frame she gave her hand ; the door opened; she saw a lady, at the top of the room, who appeared to be in tears. Matilda saw no more, she sprung from the Count, threw herself on her knees before her, and without uttering one word, sunk into in- sensibility. The friends hastened to her relief. The Countess sat stupid, gazing wildly on her,

„„ without

without moving. When Matikia's senses were a little restored she looked up, she ex- claimed, © My mother! O, have I a mo-

ther ?” That word recalled the Countess to

sense and feeling; she clasped her in her

arms, © Blessed ! blessed sound ! (she cried) my child, my dearest daughter ! heaven be

thanked.” She dropped on her knees and list-

ed her hands and eyes to heaven, then again

embraced her child, whose soft and tender emotions were too powerful to admit of

' speech, nor is it possible to describe the tu-

multuous joy of both for many minutes. The unhappy widow, the childless parent, dead to every hope of comfort, to embrace a child, adorned with every grace, to feel those de- lightful sensations to which her breast had | been a stranger, and which mothers only can conceive, —a blessing so great, so unexpected, no language can describe. What then must be the feelings of Matilda, after suffering tuch

a variety of sorrows, to find herself in the arms of a parent? O, sweet and undefinable emotions! when reciprocal between a mo-

ther

| CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 211 ther and a child ! who can speak the rapture of each tender bosom, when parental and filial

love unites !

After the first transports were a little abated, the Captain was introduced. The | Countess welcomed him as the preserver of

her child. He was struck with the per-

fect resemblance between the mother and daughter, and extremely gratified by the af- 5 fectionate attention n of every one r

. In the evening Matilda TY to relate the parliculars of her whole story, and the : * day to write to her friends. EO

The © ount now kd his voyage to Nice, still doubtful of Matilda's safety, and the sincerity of Mr. Weimar' 8 e.

The wind was not ent to his | impa- tience, and the passage was a tedious one ; at last, however, he was landed at Nice, and, _ after many enquiries, learnt there was a Turk-

ish vessel on the point of ailing. He flew to the ship ; the Captain was on board; with-

out reserve the Count acquainted him with his errand, and search after Matilda. Indeed,

Sir, (said the Captain) I pity you; 'tis pecu- larly unfortunate, that they have quitted Nice three days, on their way to Vienna."

The poor Count was struck dumb with

vexation and disappointment; the Captain, however, related to him the whole story, as he recollected, in Matilda's narrative, he was mentioned as a particular friend. When, (added he) the Countess was acquainted with the extent of her daughter's obligations to the ladies in Germany, she instantly proposed go- | ing to Vienna,

which being correspondent to

Matilda's wishes, their friends consented to

accompany them, and the happy party sat off three days ago. Me, (said the Captain) they have rewarded with unbounded generosity much beyond my wishes or deserts; I shall now return, to live in the bosom of my fa- mily, and give up the sea for ever.“

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The Count applauded his resolution; and taking a ring from his finger, of value, « Wear this, my dear Sir, as a testimony of my esteem for the friend of Matilda, and re- member, that in the Count de Bouville- you will ever find one, upon my future occasion.”

The Captain could not refuse so polite a compliment, though he was already amply gratified for the services he had done.

Thus we see a just and generous action scarcely ever fails of being properly re-compenscd.

"The Count had now nothing to do but fol-

low his mistress. He remembered Mrs. Courtney telling him he was going on a Quixote expedition. What would she say now, thought he, how exult at my disap-pointed knight-errantry? Then, when he thought of the discovery of Matilda's birth,

« Ah! (Aid he) should I no longer be dear :

to her, of what use is my pursuit? she will now-

now be introduced to the great world, and

my pretensions may be distanced by a thou-

sand pretenders of more merit and superior fortune! Nevertheless, I will not give her up until from herself I receive my doom.” Ac- cordingly the following morning, a little re- covered from his fatigue, he set off for

Vienna.

_ Meantime the Countess, her daughter, the Count and Countess Marsallini, with their at- tendants, were safely arrived at Vienna, from whence Matilda wrote to her beloved friends,

and earnestly requested. the favour of feeing |

them.

| "Tis impossible to describe the transports which her letter occasioned. They lost no time in setting off, and that very same even-

ing their names were announced, Lord Delby and the young Count restraining their | impa-

| ence 'ull the following *

The

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 215

The mutual joy, congratulations and ex- pressions of obligation which took place on their meeting may be easier conceived than

described. The Countess Berniti was never

weary of pouring forth her acknowledgements to the friends and preservers of her child,

wahilst they, on the other hand, could not help

admiring the wonderful chain of events which

had gradually led the way to such a happy _ discovery, both for her and the Countess of f Woltenbach. „

ce To mende (ald the Marquis) we

shall beg leave to introduce our friend Lord

Delby, and the young Count, my sister's fon. I assure you, (said he, addresiing Matilda) when we first heard of your being forced

from the convent, our young Frederic, though

only sixteen years old, had the gallantry to

offer himself as your champion, to pursue and deliver you.” © Can I wonder at his

generosity and heroism, my dear Sir, (an- swered she) born of such a mother, and pos- sefling doubtless the virtues of his family?

216 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. No; I am already prepossessed in his favor; | I know he must resemble my charming Countess,”

She forebore speaking of Lord Delby, that she might not be obliged to ask for the

Countess, his sister, as she concluded the mar- riage must have taken place long ago.

They spent a most delightful evening to- gether, and engaged to accompany the Coun-

tess of Wolfenbach to her seat, in three days from the present ; that lady next day sending

orders to prepare for the reception of her

noble guests.

__ Matilda longed to see young Frederic, and her ideas of him were all confirmed when she | beheld bim: his elegant form and polished manners, in some measure, reconciled her

to his late father, for having done his son fo

much justice in his education. Every one was charmed with him; and Lord Delby was

l Led *

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH« 217

received with all the respeR due to his rank | and merit,

. AS both the Countess Berniti and her daughter were silent respecting the Count,

the

others were equally cautious not to name'him,

lest they might say more than Matilda chose to have known; and there being no oppor- tunities for private conversation, the Mar- chioness earnestly wished to be in the country,

that they might coy. a few ununterrupted

retE-I-teres.

At the appointed time they all quitted

Vienna, and arrived at the Countess's villa,

They were just seated at the dinner table

when the Count De Bouville's name was an-

nounced. The Marchioness gave a cry of joy; the knife and fork dropped from Matilda's

hand, and it was with difficulty she wg her

seat when he entered the room.

9 218 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. The Marquis introduced him to the stran- gers as his particular friend: as they had ne- ver heard his name mentioned, they received him with the politeness due to that recommen- dation only: but when he advanced to Ma- tilda the changed colour, and trembled fo violeatly as to attract her mother's observa- 1 tion, although she was too attentive just then 1 to speak, for the Count's agitations were vi- [_ sibly greater than her's; he bowed upon her == hand and faid a few words, but they were not ; intelligible. The Marquis hurried him through the rest of the company, and then placed him between Lord Delby and him- felf, faying, Now, if ycu please, let us have our dinner; I put a negative to all compli- ments and questions for this hour to come [! 'tis plain we are all very olad to fee each 1 other.”

f In consequence of this seasonable order the | conversation became general, and the

Count | and Matilda had time to recover themselves. h Dy She wondered indeed no one asked for his | lady, 5

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 219

lady, nor that she appeared to be of the par-

ty. He cannot help being a little confused,

thought she, and did not expect to find me here, I supose: well, I must try to exert my

fortitude, and, amidit so many blessings, I.

ought not to repine that one 15 withheld from my possession. Occupied by these reflections, she eat very little, nor attended to the « con-

versation.

The Countess, her mother, who had been

an attentive obferver both of the Count and

her daughter, said, © My love, Matilda, you |

eat nothing." She almost started, but re- plied, I beg your pardon, madam: Iam

doing extremely well."

| Bouville, who had been at no loss to dif

cover Matilda's mother, as well from the

likeness as the tender looks of the nen now pu that lady * attention.

When the dinner and servants were re-

moved, the Marchioness complained of a

L - on trilling

tiifling head-ach, and said she would go for a few minutes into the air. Will you step

out with me, Matilda?" „ With pleasure, my dear madam, (answered she, rising quick- ly from her chair, and glad to escape.)

--2T he two tien walked to the garden.

My dear Matilda, (cried the Marchioness)

I could rein in my impatience no longer; I was eager to congratulate you on the arrival

of the Count, and on your happiness, in hav- ing now all your friends about you.” © You are ever good and kind to me, my dear ma- dam. I have indeed met with so many great and undeserved blessings, that my heart bounds

in gratitude to heaven for its goodness to- wards one who, a short time since, thought

| herself the most unhappy of her sex.” ©© You

will remember, my dear, (faid the Mar- chioness) it was my constant lesson to you,

never to despair, Providence has now brought you out of all your troubles ; a re- lance on its justice and mercy, and an humble and grateful heart for the blessings you enjoy,

will

CASTLE. OF WOLFENBACH, 221

will henceforth make your happiness perma- nent. But, my dear Matilda, I can perceive your confidence in your charming mother has not been quite unreserved; Iplainly see she is a stranger even to the name of the Count De Bouville; how comes that to be the case ?”

« As all possibility of any connexion between

the Count and myself was at an end, I con- ceived there would be an indelicacy in men- tioning his former offers to my mother; yet perhaps I was wrong, andought to have done justice to the sentiments he then honoured me with, as theyproved his generosity and noble- | ness of mind. If I have been wrong, (said | she, with a sigh) tis not too late to repair the fault, though it can be of no consequence to him now.” ©

Your words astonish me, | (cried the Marchioness ;) what has the Count De Bouville done to have forfeited your esteem ?" «© Nothing, madam, (replied she, confused;) he has done nothing to lessen his merit or virtues in my estimation." ©« 1 think indeed, (resumed her friend) you must be strangely altered. If it should be fo, for I 885 ET thought

thovght you always an enthusiast in gratitude, | and surely the man who made you an unre- served offer of his hand, and though rejected, still preserved his affection through many temprations—who has traversed lands and feas in search of you." © Of me, madam! (exclaimed Matilda, surprised;) pardon my interruption, but did you say the Count had been in search of me?" © Doubtless I did, (replied her friend;) can that surprise you; could you suppose we did not inform him, you were in the power of Weimar? or that he knowing it, would not range through the

world to find you? I am sorry you do him

so little justice, Matilda, for certainly he is

entitled to your warmest gratitude, if your

heart no longer speaks in his favor." Astonisnment overpowered the senses of Matilda for a moment. © He is not then mar- ried to Mrs. Courtney?" (said she, faintly.) « To Mrs. Court: ey! good God ! no; how came you to entertain such a ridiculous idea ?"

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. "233

Joy, transport and unexpected relief fiom the painful thoughts she long had entertained were now too powerful for her feelings : with difficulty she tottered to a seat, and leaning ker head on her friend's shoulder, burst into a flood of tears, which preserved her from fainting.

« My dear Matilda, (cried the Mar- chioness) I now clearly comprehend the whole; but, at the same time that I give you Joy of your doubts being removed, I could

beat you for presuming to wrong my amiable

friend by entertaining them; see that you ex- cuse yourself well, or 3 9985 my dif- pleasure,"

Matilda, after taking some time to recover her spirits, mentioned the anonymous letter; allo, nearly as she could recollect, the con-

tents of Mrs. Courtney's, written to her

whilst she was in the convent ; she repeated her answer, © After which (added Matilda) your journey taking place, when you kindly. EL 4 ES sent

sent to invite me of your party, the Count was

not mentioned; I therefore naturally con-

_ cluded he was married, and remained with his lady, and that, from considerate motives you

declined giving me the information." How industrious some spirits are to tor-

ment themselves, (exclaimed the Mar- chioness) yet I own you had some little cause

for your conclusions ; but I am most incon- ceivably surprised Mrs. Courtney should

have taken such a step; that she was very

partial to him, I believe, and might wish for a return from him, is also very probable, but I

am convinced the Count never did make, nor ever thought of making the smallest preten-- sions to Sol favour, any more than common politeness required; and fo, my little credu- | Tous, jealous friend, I defire you will return to the compeny, make the Count one of your

best courtesies, and pay him the highest at-

tention, otherwise J will certainly put him out

of the pain that now oppresses him, by telling

: the whole story.” :

Matilda,

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Matilda, who felt her heart uncommonly

light, readily promised to behave very well, and requested the Marchioness would take an opportunity to acquaint her mother with the

Count's generosity and affection for her.

This being agreed on, the ladies returned to the desert, with so much satisfaction in their countenances as excited che attention of their

friends.

0 do not ask after the head-ach, (faid he

Marquis, net a tẽte- A- tẽte seems to have driven it away. © You are right, (answer-

ed his lady, in the same tone ;) it sometimes cures both the head and the heart; but come, give us some fruit, it must be confessed you

have done pretty well in our absence.

The Countess Berniti was delighted to see

her daughter look cheerful ; and as the Count. De Bouville had engaged her in conversation, Matilda joined in it now and then with great co mplaisance towards him, which elevated his VVV

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spirirs to the highest pitch; and every thing relative to her being full in his mind, he ob- served what an uncommon generous Turk the Captain of the corsair was,

Eo Why, do you know him, my Lord?“ | tos the Comp) .

He was struck mute; Matilda bung her head, Ny confused. :

cc Ah Count, Count, (said the Marquis) when men get tipsy, whether with wine or

Joy, out pops all their secrets; but I see you are dumb—I will answer for you. Fes, madam, (added he, addressing the Countess). I believe the Count does know the Captain, for he has been taken a prisoner too." „In- deed | (cricd she) what, at the fame time my daughter was «© [I will not take upon me to say, (answered he, smiling archly at Ma- tilda) that it was exactly at the same time, but I believe it was pretty nearly so."

| The

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 227

The Marchioness and her sister could not

help laughing at this equivoque, which added

to the confusion of Matilda.

" Come, come, (cried the Countess, her

friend) none of your pleasantry, my Lord;

the Count shall tell his own story to the ladies another time, and I will affist him where he

| fails to do himself justice."

The Count bowed ; © You are very good to me, madam ; I am only afraid I shall have

occasion for troubling you and the Mar-

chioness to prove your partiality for me, at the expence of your judgment." © Very

well, Count, (said the Marquis) I am thrown

| out, I see. Faith, you are in the right; a young handsome fellow seldom. fails of en-

gaging the ladies, whilst no such dust thrown in our eyes, to blind our judgment, or obtain a partial testimony," © Be quiet, Marquis, (aid his sister ;) you are really malicious.

16 e The

The company arose soon after, and going into the garden, divided into little parties; The Marchioness and the two Countesses went towards an alcove; the lady of the *house, with Matilda, the Count, Lord Delby and Frederic took another path; the Marquis and Count Marcellini strolled into a different one.

N Matilda now took an opportunity to atone for the omission she had been guilty of, by

- asking Lord Delby after Mrs. Courtney and

his son. Meantime the Marchioness explain- ed to the Countess the sentiments of the Count De Bouville ; his early affection for Matilda, his repeated offers of marriage, and her noble refusal openly, grounded on the uncertainty of her birth, since she did not deny a preferable esteem for him. She also repeated his long and tedious searches after her, as far as she | knew of them, and concluded with observing, his rank and fortune, elevated as both were, fell far snort of his merit and amiable disposition. 8 she had Rashes, I own to you,

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 229

you, madam, (said the Countess) your rela- tion has broke in upon my favourite plan. 1 hoped to have carried my davghter to Naples, and to have seen her married and set- tled there for life. Ah! (faid she) to what purpose did I find her, if we are to b rated again?" © But wherc is the nec: for a separacion ? (said the Couiitess Marcilini) cannot you alternately vilit each other every year?" © No, (replied fie;) when she marries there will be many things to pre- vent it. Indeed, (added she, in tears) good and amiable as the Count is, I with Matilda had never known him." © Pofbly, madam, _ (answered the Marchioness, very gravely) she might then never have seen the convent, never have been carried off, and you till ignorant you had such a daughter living, ' whose generous self-denial deserves some praise, as the Count's disinterested and un- common passion is entitled to tome considera- tion: but I beg

your lac yihip's pardon; 1 have only done my duty in making this com-

communication; the Lady, Matilda, | will doubtless conform herself to your wishes,”

The Countess, struck with her words and manner of speaking them, caught her hand,

da and kissing it, © Pardon me, dearest madam,

(taid she) if I have appeared petulant and un- grateful, my heart is not so , but consider how natural it is for a mother, just in possession of a treasure fo long and painfully regretted as entirely lost, to be jealous of a superior attach- ment, and unhappy at the idea of parting from an object so entwined about her heart.” « Tt is natural, my dear madam, (answered the Marchioness) and if I did not hope some method might be sound out to obviate the ob- jection, I believe the Count would have little chance of succeeding with * Your and my Matilda, (said the Countess, eagerly.) That Lady Matilda” struck me to the | heart.” She is indeed mine, (replied the Marchionesa) my adopted child; and had the want of fortune only prevented her union with the Count, we offered largely to remove

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it; but her objections proceeded from an ele- vation of soul, a greatness of mind, that would

not disgrace the man she married, whilst the Count thought she would dignify any rank, and honour any man to whom she gave her

hand.” © Amiable, good young people

(aid the Lady Marcellini.) O! my dear Countess they ought not be separated.” . Nor shall they, (answered she) if I find their af- fection is still mutual: I will have a private conversation with Matilda to-morrow, and you, madam, shall immediately know the

re sult.“

They now walked towards the house, and were soon joined by the rest of their party.

Notwithstanding every one wished to ap-

| pear pleasing, the evening was not a gay one.

The Countess Berniti seemed collected with-

in herself: Matilda was confused and appre- hensive; the Count De Bouville distracted

with doubts, drew unfavourable omens from the looks of the mother and 2 and there-

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therefore was verr ent. They fepinired at an ay awry, and sought in fleep a forgetful- The following morring, the Countess and Matilda being alone in their drefiing-room, the former said, . How comes it, my dear child, that, in relating your story to me, you never mentioned the particular obligations : you owed to the Count De Bouville, for his generous offers?“ © Because, madam, (an- swered Me tilda, blushing) I thought it would appear to give myself a consequence I did nat with to arrogate, {or merely doing my duty in declining them. Another reason was, 1 had been misled into a belicf, that the Count had married an English lady, a sister of Lord Delby's; and therefore suppoling he never could be any thing to me, I judged it of no consequence, for the | angie least, to say any thing about him.” © You have answer- ed with candour and sincerity (said the Coun- tess) and I expect the fame to the following

question : Do you ove. the Count De Bou- ville?“

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH., 233 - ville?“ « If, madam, (replied she, hesitating ji a little) to prefer him to any other man I ever | saw; if to consoss that I think him deserving of the highest esteem from every one he ho- nours with his acquaintance; if this is to be called love, I must answer in the affirmative.” « You are not quite fo ready and explicit in this answer, (said the Countess, with a smile) nevertheless I believe your sentiments in his favour are pretty decisive ; and if my conjec- tures are

right, what part am I to act, and how be expected to give a sanction to your union, which, in all probability will part us for ever." © Never, my dear mother, (an-

swered she, in a firm tone) never; no power on earth shall part us. again: how great so- ever my affection for the Count may be, be _ assured my duty, my love for you will greatly over: balance it; and if the alternative must be to part with one, behold me ready to give him up, without the least degree of hesita- tion." „ Now, my dear Matilda, (said the Countess, extremely moved by the firmness _ pf her voice, and the expression in her eyes) 15 now

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now you have found the way to subdue me at

once: you shall make no such sacrifices for me, my chud; and I will think of some me- thod to reconcile your duty and inclination to wy wishes," Matilda kissed her mother's

hand with the warmest affection, and some of their friends coming into the room precluded nie eee org She went in search of the Marchioness. She was told that lady

was in the garden, and thither she repaired,

when, coming to an alcove, she saw her seat- ed in earnest conversation with the Count De Bouville. She would have turned back, but the Count ran, caught her hand, and led her to the Marchioness. I am rejoiced to see

you, (said she) my dear child; do, pray, take |

| this troublesome young man off my hands, for] declare he has been making down right love to me." © Who, I?" (said the Count.)

«© Yes, (answered she) you know you have

as a proxy; and, as I am quite tired of being only a substitute, I leave Matilda to supply

my Pee for the present." She got up and walked

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 2353

walked away, Matilda being too ak con- fused to have the resolution to prevent her.

The Count seized this moment to know

his doom. He besought her attention for a

few moments; briefly ran over the affair be- tween Mrs. Courtney and him, as a mere

Bagatelle, without wounding the lady's con- sequence, His distress and pursuit of her through France, Switzerland, Germany, from

thence to Tunis and back again. He de- scribed the fervency of his love and the tor-

tures of suspence; called upon her in the tenderest manner, to remember the time when she had said, © If her rank and fortune equalled his, she would, with pleasure, give

him her hand." «© And now, madam,

(added he) that TR so much wished for by you, though of little consequence, in my esti- mation, when thrown into the scale with un- equalled merit and dignity of mind; that hour is arrived, deign, my beloved Matilda,

to tell me, if I still can boast a share in your

esteem ; F tel me, if I may presume to gh

236 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH-.

that, however changed your situation, your heart, faithful to your other iricnds, has not with- drawn itself from him who lives only for you, and depends on you for happiness or misery m extreme ?".-.

Matilda endeavoured to assume a compo- sure she did not feel, for after the conversa- tion with her mother she thought she was not at liberty to act for herself. Being silent a few moments she replied, © Believe me, Sir, my heart is till

unchanged, ftill the same _ grateful and affectionate sentiments predomi- nate in my mind : the Count De Bouville possesses my esteem, if possible, more than ever, for my obligations to him are increased ; | but—I have a mother; no longer mistress of my own destiny, she must determine for me, I will not scruple to confess, that it will be to me the happiest momentof my life, if my duty and affeftion to her coincide with your

wishes," e

The

* | CASTLE or WOLFENBACH. 237 The Count, transported with joy, kissed her hand in expressive silence, whilst Matilda rose from her seat and hurried to the house, rejoiced that this interview was over. She returned to her mother's apartment. The

ladies were with her. The Marchioness smiled a little maliciously at her, but observing she looked rather agitated, she asked, «© What

is become of the gentlemen this morning?

have you seen the Marquis and his friends,

my love?" «© No, madam, (replied she) I

suppose they are rambling in the grounds."

| Just then the Marquis entered. " Ah!

ladies, (said he) I am happy to see you to-

_ gether: I have undertaken to bring a cause

before your tribunal to-day, against one of your

coteriẽ, and I expect an impartial judgment.

What say you, ladies, dare you promise to be just _ and sincere ?" „ Your impertinent question

is so affronting to us, (replied the Countess). that I think we ought to decline hearing your

cause." © Conscience, conscience, my dear sister, (cried he, smiling) nevertheless, I will

open

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open my brief. A gentleman of rank, for- tune and unquestionable merit (here Matilda trembled) has, for some time, entertair ed the

warmest affection and respect for an amiable |

woman. When first he knew and admired

her she was in a situation that precluded hope, he was therefore condemed to silence; that situation is changed; he has no obstacles to combat but the lady's over-strained delicacy : | she owns a preferable esteem, but—she can- not approve of a second marriage." Here all eyes were glanced at the Countess, who was

confused. Matilda began to respire. " Tell me, ladies, (resumed the Marquis, ingenu-

ously) should so futile an objection preclude her from making a worthy man happy, grati- fying her own partiality in his favour, and giving a dear and valuable additional relation to her friends? You see I put the case sim-

ply and plainly. Will you, madam, (ad- dressing the Countess Berniti) have the

goodness to speak first?" © I am not an advocate, Sir, (she answered) for second mar-

riages; on the contrary, I think there are but

very

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. 23)

very few cases that can justify them. If a woman 1s left with a family she is anxious

to

provide for, and has an eligible offer, that will

enable her to do so, duty to them should make her accept 1t; gratitude to the generous

man, shouldrender her a good and affectionate wife. If a woman has had a bad husband,

who has used her ill, and unworthy of her

merit, I conceive she owes no respect to his memory, but may, without any. imputation whatever, reward the affection of a deserving object, and find her own happiness in so doing.“ The Countess Marcellini, said, « My sentiments exactly correspond with my amiable friend's.” And mine, also, (cried the Marchioness) only I must be permitted to add, that if a woman fo situated declines the

offer, from over-delicacy, which is no delica-

ey a tall, and by so doing renders a worthy man wretched, and refines away her own happiness at the same time, I think her quite inexcusable, and deserving reproach from her friends.“ Thank you, my love, (said the Marquis;) and now, sister, your opinion, if you please.”

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c Mine, (aniwered she, in some confusion)

you are no itranger to, otherwise whence this

appeal? but to convince you I am neither ob-

slinate nor perverse, but open to conviction

and the advice of my best friends, I will

frankly subscribe to the opinion and judgment

of these ladies.” „Now, (faid the Marquis) you have redeemed my love and esteem. I

will not apply to our sweet Matilda here ; she

is unqualified, at present to judge; and I fear her trial is not far off from an accusation something similar, though not on account of

a second marriage; however I shall now re-

joice my client with intelligence, that he has

gained his cause." He bowed with a — air, and left the room.

=" My dear sister, (faid the Marchioness) accept my congratulations : Lord Delby is a

most worthy nobleman, and offers to reside in whatever country you please; wherever you are will be his home,"

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH-. 241

| The ladies all congratulated the Coun- | tess.

I own, (said she) I have a very preferable regard for Lord Delby, and am, in all probability, indebted to him for my life and pre-

_ sent happiness: it shall henceforth be my

study to return those obligations."

This matter being settled, the 1adies re- tired to dress; and, after a little hefitation in her voice, Matilda informed her mother of

the preceding conversation, between herself

and the Count, © J have referred him to you, madam, and I beg previously to observe,

I will implicitly, and without a murmur, abide by your decision. I never will be separated

from you ; and if my union with the Count

mult be attended with so great a facrifice, no consideration whatever shall induce me

to ' marry him. I have already shewn I can re- sign him, when I think it my duty to do so,”

Lou are an extraordinary good girl, (an- swered the Countels) but! will make no pro-

Vol. 11. M mises;

242 | CASTLE or WOLFENBACH. = mises; when I have heard the Count, I shall be the better able to determine what I ought |

to do.”

This day a cheerfulness pervaded through the whole party. Young Frederic, extremely attached to Lord Delby, was delighted with the prospect of a nearer connexion. He was charmed with the Count De Bouville; but his young heart felt a little degree of envy when he considered him as the favoured lover of Matilda, whom he admired fo exceedingly, that his extreme youth only prevented him from being a formidable rival.

In the evening, when they nook their usual | walk, the Count requested the honour of a quarter of an hour's conversation with the Countess Berniti, and they retired to an

5 alcove.

5 Matilda, who was leaning on the Lady Marcellini s arm, trembled so exceedingly, that

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 2243

that she pressed her hand, and said, Fear

nothing, my good girl, and hope every thing."

This a little re- assured her, and they pursued

their walk.

The Marquis suddenly joined them, and observing her companion engaged in chat, drew her gently aside, There is a letter for you, under my cover, and 1 suspect, from Weimar." They walked aside, and Matilda, hastily opening it, found it was really from bim. He had entered among the Carthu- sians, at Paris. He pathetically laments all his past crimes, and acknowledges the justice

and mercy of God: calls upon her to forgive

and pray for him; cautions her against the allurements of the world, and takes an ever-

lasting leave of her; meaning, from the hour he receives one line from her, to inform him,

that she has recovered a mother, and is happy in her present prospects, to shut up his cor- ee and connexion with the world |

for ever."

This letter affected Matilda greatly; she remembered the care he had taken of her youth, though she shuddered when she con- sidered him as the murderer of her father. „ Unhappy man, (cried she) may God afford him penitence and peace in this life, and end- Jess happiness in the world to come !" She promised the Marquis to write an answer the following morning, and he undertook to en- close it. :

She joined her sriends; but the letter had given so melancholy a turn to her thoughts,

that every one took notice of her dejection

and judging it to arise from another cause, every one was anxious to > dispel it, and raise

her ms

At supper they all met. Matilda glanced -

her eyes once towards the Count, and ob- | served joy seemed to animate his whole frame; from thence she derived hope, that he was not very displeasing to her mother. 1

When *

CASTLE OF wor FEN RBAcRH. 245

When they retired for the night, the Countess was silent; u. of course asked no questions.

The next morning the Countess held a long conversation with her two Neapolitan friends; at th conclusion of which, the Count and her daugliter was sent for. They attend- ed, both visibly agitated. After they were seated, the Countess addressed herself to her child : © My dear Matilda, the Count has done you the honour to express a very warm attachment to you, and has requested me to authorize his addresses, without which per- million you have refused to listen to him. 1 expect you answer me with sincerity ; will my consent, my sanction to his addresses meet your wishes ? or, can you renounce him, and follow me to Naples, if I defire it?" 4 Cer- tainly I will, madam, there, or any where you command; at the fame time, I should make a very poor return for the obligations I owe the Count De Beuville, if I heiitated to own, that had his addresses been favoured with the ;

M 3 appro-

approbation of my mother, I could have pre- ferred him to all men living; but no pre- ference whatever shall milicate against _ superior obligations J am under to a parent."

Come to my arms, my dear children, (cried the Countess, extending —. | Know not which 1s most dear to me." |

They threw them{elves at her feet: she - blessed them with tears of joy and joined

their hands. Both were speechless, but language was not necessary to prove their mutual tran- spots. She raised them, and presented them to her friends, Love my children, (faid the) I thin they deserve i „

5 When a little recovered from their joy, and seated by her, Now listen to me, (said the Countess ;) I will not repeat the conver- sation I had with the Count last evening, tis | sufficient to say his offers were beyond my hopes or expectations : he frankly of himself requested my daughter and self should never be separated, for he would settle in Naples, That

cASTTE OF WOLFENBACH. 247

That intention of his did away the only ob-

jection I could make. I consented to his

wishes, but reserved to myself the pleafure of

telling Matilda so. Last night, when I came

to reflect on the sacrifice the Count was about

to make, of his country, his friends, the injury his fortune must sustain, and the uncommon

affection he manifested for my daughter, in

paying me so great a compliment, I felt my-

self little in my own eyes for my acceptance of his generous offer. Dissatisfied and uneasy,

I faid nothing to you, my love, of our con-

versation. This morning I consulted my

friends ; they were equally struck with my- self at the Count's attention to my happiness ; their opinion coincided with my own—that it became my character not to accept such a re-

fignation.” ©« My dear mother!“ (ex- claimed Matilda.) © Patience, my love; _ those generous friends, I presume to flatter

myself, decided against their own inclinations.

In one word, they approved that I should re-

nounce Naples ; that your country, (turning to the Count) should be my country 3 and

M 1 chat

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that the satisfaction of entertaining the friends of my youth, who offer to pay me a triennial visit, should be the only savour I ought to ask, or you consistenly can grant. Yes, my dear children, (added she) I will accompany

you to France, and end my days under your roof.”

Never was delight equal to what the Count felt at this unexpected turn in his favour ; for

it could not be supposed he could renounce :

his country and friends without a pang ; on the contrary, only his superior love for Matilda, and respect for the feelings of her mother, could have induced him to offer so great a sacrifice. He thanked her, in transports of joy. He embraced the Count and Countess. « Complete your goodness, (cried he) and add to my obligations, by making this your

first visit, —go with us to France, and let there

be no drawback on my happiness.

h The Conch and Matilda, wake the 1 5 FO

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, — 49

fame request, they consented to spend three months with dem.

«© Now, young folks, (faid the Countess, smiling) you may take a walk and congratu- late each other, conscious that you deserve

the happiness that awaits you, from nobleness 00 mind, and a generous selt-denial, which prefered the fatisfaction of others to your _ own grarificat ation.

The Count availed himself of this permis- sion, and led Matilda to the garden, whilst the delighted mother sent for the rest of the family and repeated the preceding scene.

Pleasure shone on every face all were equally happy; and even Frederic, with a _ repressed sigh, faid, 5 TOE? were . of each other,”

Within a week from that day the Countels : of Wolfenbach gave her hand to Lord Delby at Vienna, after a mutual agreement, that

Mi. oy

250 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH-. they should divide their time equally between Germany and England, with sometimes a vi-

fit to their friends in Paris, which was pro- mised, on all sides, should be ne Ars

The Count De Bouville wrote to 1 sister, Madame De Clermont, who was re- turned to Paris, with restored health, on the happy turn of his affairs, and requested she would make every magnificent preparation for the reception of his guests, the Count and

Countess Marcellini; the Countess Berniti 1

and Matilda accompanying the Marchioness until proper arrangements should take place

for their marriage, which all were desirous

should be publicly performed at Paris, to con- fute the odium Mademoiselle De Fontelle had thrown upon Maria $ character, 8

Lond Delby and his lady had written w.-

Mrs. Courtney, of the different events which had taken place, and requested a visit

from her to Germany; ; the Marchionels and Ma-

: tilda

CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 257

tilda wrote, also, and entreated the same favour.

These letters a little discomposed her at first ; but as she had given up all hopes of the Count, and was not of a disposition to fret her- telf long on any subject, being naturally of an _ easy temper, she answered their letters with perfect good-humour, congratulated them on the happiness before them, and promised to visit all parties the following spring. =

The parting of the friends from the Coun- tess and Lord Delby was very painful: they were strongly entreated to accompany them,

but Frederic having only another month's leave of absence, to remain with his mother, the time was too short to admit of his going to Paris, and the Countess could not be per- suaded to leave him ; they were therefore obliged to be contented with the assurance of an early visit to the Count De Bouville, ui the Spring, when they would come to meet

Mrs. Courtney,

The

The Paris travellers, though much affect- ad by taking leave, as they proceeded on their journey, recovered their spirits, and arrived without meeting any accident at Paris,

5 Madame De cs her husband, Ma- dame De Nancy, and Mademoiselle De Ban- cre waited to receive them. Great was the Joy of all parties: a thousand embraces and felicitations passed between the Count's sister, | Mademoiselle De Bancre and Matilda; and when the latter called to her remembrance the difference of her feelings now, and when before she had felt herself humbled by their caresses, as 'passing

upon them in a false light, she bent herself, with a grateful adora- tion, to the Divine Being, who had protected her, and by such unforeseen, and apparently, untoward accidents, brought her to such un- gs happineks. -

„ he Count Marcellini waited on » the Nea- - |

politan Minister, who came and payed his

: compliments to the ladies, congratulating the Countess

CASTLE or WOLFENBACH., 2353

countess on the recovery of such a daughter,

and requesting he might have the honor of

introducing them at court.

Three days after the Marchi: oness gave a

superb entertainment: all the foreign ministers were invited, an extensive circle of iriends, and among the rest, Madame Le Brun and her niece, who were just returned from England. Conscious as they were of their ill conduct, they had not the resolution to refuse being present at an entertainment where all the great world was invited, and appeared with much effrontery. When they entered, the Marchioness led them to the Countess Ber- niti, © The Countess Berniti, ladies, mother to the Lady Matilda, whom you had the

honour of seeing with me a few months ago,

as my relation.” They bowed, paid their compliments, in a confused manner, and hur- ried on; but the Marchioness had not done with them ; she observed the Imperial and | Neapolitan Ambassadors were conversing

with unn, they rather shrunk back; | cc Nay,

_ « Nay, ladies, (faid she) you must pay your respects to the queen of the day.” Made- moiselle felt extremely confused, yet resolved to put a good face on the matter; she as- sumed a gay and affectionate air as she ad- vanced. The Marchioness

having intro-

_ duced Madame Le Brun, « And now, (faid

she, to Fontelle) let me present you to Lady Matilda Berniti, one of the first families in Naples, as his Excellency can bear witness; and to your Ladyship I beg leave to say, this is Mademoiselle De Fontelle, the envious

traducer of your character; the defpicable young woman, who, incapable of practising virtue, from the depravity of her own mind, naturally hates the good and exalted charac- ters of those who entitle themselves to the respect and admiration of the world, and who now meets with that contempt and mortifi- cation worthless and censorious characters like her's deserve."

The struggles of Fontelle, to free her hand from the Marchioness, and the elevated 5 voice

EASTLE OF WOLFENBACH, 255

voice of that lady, had drawn a large circle

round her. „ Go, Mademoiselle, (added

she) leave the presence of those you can never Tee without self- accusation; and may your example teach others how cautious they ought to be in judging of persons and appearances

from the malignancy of their own hearts. Candour and good nature (said she, smiling).

will give beauty to the most indifferent faces, whilst envy and malice will render the most beautiful persons truly contemptible."

Matilda, who had not expected this denoue-

ment, was extremely confused, and felt for the mortified Fontelle, but the numbers who crowded round her, and expressed their faris- faction, though it in some degree abated her

regret, induced her to think there was little dependence on the applauses of the multitude : | these very people, thought she, a few months ago encouraged the persons they now repro- bate; let me not be vain of respe& which

only circumstances create!

Matilda

256 CASTLE OF WOLFENBACH. |

Matilda thought justly ; ; since every day 5 experience must convince her, fortuitous cir- cumstances will engage the shew of esteem and respect, which the next moment of mis- fortune will as assuredly deprive us of, among _ those who are not capable of discriminating, and attach themselves only to perscns gifted by fortune, and are incapable of giving merit, if in obscurity, the praise it deserves.

The two ladies having left the room, boil-

ing with rage and indignation, and leaving a

_ useful lesson to the envious and ill-natured, harmony was restored ; every one exerted themselves for the entertainment of others, and every one agreed it was the most delight- ful evening they had ever spent; though many of them called on Mademoiselle De

Fontelle the following morning, expresied

their sorrow for the ill treatment she suffered, and assured her it was the most horrid enter- tainment; the Lady Matilda, the idol of the evening, the most vain, impertinent, Concelt= ed creature they had ever seen. 5 Such

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Such is the progress of envy, such the ha-

tred of virtue, in bad minds, and such you

meet with in all public circles.

In less than a fortnight after their arrival in Paris, the Count De Bouville, who had

been indefatigable in his endeavours to hasten all

the elegant arrangements he had projected for the reception of his bride, had the pleasure of

| seeing every thing in proper order, and by the

approbation of all their joint relations and 5 friends, received the hand and heart of his Matilda, who all acknowledged was the only

one deserving the entire affection of the ac- complisned and respectable Count De Bouville. e „„ us

Thus, after a variety of strange and me-

lancholy incidents, Matilda received the re- ward of her steadiness, fortitude, and virtuous

self-denial. A consciousness of performing

her several duties ensured her happiness ; and when she wrote her beloved Mother St.

Magdalene the happy conclusion of her ad-

ventures, |

ventures, © From you, (said she) I learned re- signation, and a dependence on that Being who never forsakes the virtuous; from you 1 learned never to despair; to your precepts and prevention I am indebted for not taking the veil; and I trust, called into an elevated situation, I shall ever remember the unfortu- nate have claims upon the hearts of those whom _ God has blessed with affluence; and that, through your means, reserved to experience every blessing of life, I shall feel it my duty, by active virtues, to extend, to the utmost of my abilities, those blessings to others less for- tunate than myselt. *

The Castle of Wolfenbach