

BYSH'S EDITION,
OF THE
WONDERFUL LIFE
OF
WOLFE;
A NOTORIOUS
ROBBER AND MURDERER,
WHO WAS CAPTAIN OF A DESPERATE
GANG OF THIEVES,
INHABITING THE
HAUNTED CASTLE,
IN THE
BLACK FOREST.

GIVING A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT

Of his first step to vice as a Deer Stealer.—Murders the Game Keeper.—Joins a Gang of Robbers; with a description of their mode of living.—Destroys the Houses of his former Persecutors.—Leaves the Robbers to enlist for a Soldier.—Deserts with a comrade and repairs to the Black Forest, where he became the Captain of a Gang of Fifty-three Robbers, and is at last taken for Robbing a Church, with his full confession at his Trial, &c, &c.

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WOLFE THE ROBBER



Wolfe taken Prisoner.



Wolfe Shooting the Game Keeper.



Wolfe Stopt in the Forest by the Robber.



The Robbers Chosing Wolfe as their Captain.

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SIXPENCE.

THE LIFE OF WOLFE THE ROBBER.

PASSING through Germany on my tour over Europe, I arrived at the village of Stutgard, in the summer of 1779, about three or four days before an execution was to take place, the wretched victims whereof were the topic of every one's conversation, who, at the same time as they condemned their actions, felt for the agonizing pangs which they were doomed to suffer. The parish-church having been broken open, and robbed of every thing valuable, about three months previous to my arrival, several persons had been apprehended on suspicion, many of whom had been put to the rack, in order to extort a confession, but without any success; in consequence of which, the magistrates had been obliged to release them for want of sufficient evidence to condemn them, and to give up all farther inquiry, till chance should bring the matter to light. Many weeks had now elapsed, before the enraged and disappointed priests, aided by the eagle-eyed assistants of justice, were able to trace out the sacrilegious robbers of the sacred treasures, and feast their savage vengeance on the agonizing struggles of the victims of their remorseless fury expiring on the fatal pile, when at length an accident effected what all the tortures of the rack, their advertisements, and large promises of reward, were not able to do, and delivered into their holy fangs the perpetrators of that horrid action. There lived in the outskirts of the village an old man named Peter, unsuspected by any one, and a great favourite with the children of the place, whom he often treated with sweetmeats and other nicknacks, frequently amusing them also with little stories of his own invention; but he was universally feared by the aged, whose credulity went so far as to persuade them that he had dealings with the infernal monarch of the lower regions, and for no other reason than because, when he was in a good humour, he would shew them some proof of the skill he had in the art of legerdemain. This hoary-headed man, who lived in an almost ruined cottage, with every appearance of the most extreme indigence, and could not be supposed to possess any ill-gotten wealth, went frequently abroad, but for what purpose the neighbours, with all their prying curiosity, were never able to discover, though some ventured to affirm he went a begging; others, still more superstitious, asserted that they had seen him, through the chinks of the window-shutters, lying seemingly deprived of life; while some again

declared, in the most positive manner, that they had seen him riding through the air on a broom-stick, to pay a visit, as they pretended, to his infernal master, to whom it was said he had sold both his body and soul.

Luckily for him, this man was absent from the village at the time when the church-robbery was committed, to the infinite satisfaction of some who thought him to be an harmless being, and to the vexation of those who pretended to have been considerable sufferers by the malicious tricks of his reputed sorcery; since, if he had not, the latter would have found some pretext to deliver him into the hands of the civil power as a suspicious person, because he never went to church, although he was reputed to be a Roman Catholic. Some weeks after the above-mentioned prisoners had been discharged, Peter returned to the village on a holiday after sun-set. The children so sooner saw him approach, than they left off their play, and ran towards him, hailing their hoary friend with loud acclamations of joy, searching his pockets for sweetmeats, and teasing the poor man so unmercifully, that he lost all patience, and threatened to chastise his clamorous followers with a staff which he used to walk with. This threat only served to make them more boisterous than before; and some of them, being more mischievous than the rest, began to prick him with pins: which exasperated him to such a degree as to induce him to put his threat into execution; which was no sooner perceived by the mothers of these unmannerly boys, than they flew on him like so many harpies, in order to revenge the outrage he had committed upon their darling offspring, and his profanation of the holiday, and at the same time alarmed the whole neighbourhood with the loudness of their vociferations, which soon brought the husbands of these female viragoes to their assistance, while the children made the uproar still greater with their cries, upon seeing their old benefactor thus exposed to the fury of their enraged parents. As for poor Peter, he with much difficulty made all possible haste out of the crowd, in order to free himself from the clutches of his merciless persecutors (but not without receiving many a hard blow from the infatuated vindicators of juvenile impertinence,) and at length sheltered himself from farther persecution under the roof of his own humble dwelling.

As soon as he had recovered in some measure from the flurry which this unexpected attack had thrown him into, he, to his inexpressible terror, discovered that he had left his wallet behind him in the scuffle, and rushed forth like a madman, in order to use his endeavours to recover his lost property; which, upon his arrival at the former scene of action, he discovered the victorious party carrying off in triumphant exultation. In vain did he exert all the rhetoric he was master of; it was all to no purpose, although he entreated, whined, and at length, almost driven to madness, called down a thousand curses on them for their treachery; since, to his no small misfortune, the hearts of his enemies were as void of penetration as the adamantine rock; and when, in a paroxysm of rage and chagrin, he attempted to regain it by force, they drove him back to his humble dwelling amid a violent shower of stones.

LIFE OF WOLFE THE ROBBER

On searching the wallet, the first objects that presented themselves, were a tattered pair of breeches, an old ragged shirt, and several odd stockings of various kinds. They next came to a large book, and a few curious instruments; at last they found a heavy leathern bag at the bottom; it was fastened with a cord in such a manner as completely baffled all their efforts to untie it; but at length they succeeded in gratifying their curiosity, by cutting the bag; when to the amusement of the gaping assembly, a vast quantity of gold and silver pieces fell from the hole they had made in the bag upon the ground. A long silence now ensued, which at length was interrupted by a voice exclaiming, "thanks to St. Nicholas! the mystery is unravelled, and we have now found out the sacrilegious robber of our church." There was no more wanting to make the enraged multitude resolve on his destruction, who went immediately in a body to the justice, roaring out with one voice, that they had at length found out the vile despoiler of the church. The justice, amazed at the unusual uproar, felt a strong inclination to inquire into the real cause of it, and accordingly ordered some of the principals to be admitted; but his astonishment was considerably increased when they showed him the vast quantity of money they had found in the wallet of father Peter. In the mean time, such of the mob as had not been admitted, made the best of their way to the mean hovel of their victim, whom they, with relentless fury, dragged forth, and hurried him to the justice's house, amid innumerable blows and insults, where he was immediately delivered into the hands of the officers of justice, who instantly conveyed him to the town-house, and the following day was brought to trial, when he was commanded to give an account of himself, and by what means he came possessed of such a sum of money; which he, however, refused making any answer to, except that he became possessed of it in an honest manner; and, even when he had been put to the rack, he still persisted in his first assertion; through which means the justice, being unable to convict him of what was laid to his charge, was obliged to set him at liberty, but refused to restore the money until he should have brought some person to prove that he had obtained his property by lawful means. Father Peter promised the justice, that he would produce a satisfactory account of his accumulated wealth; and taking his leave, made the best of his way to his humble dwelling; which, upon his arrival, he found had been closely inspected by his neighbours, who, upon being unable to discover any other articles than a few tattered clothes and some broken remnants of furniture, retired greatly disappointed, after having thrown every thing about the place; which, however, father Peter consoled himself for, by reflecting, that, although he had lost his money, he had, by perseverance and fortitude been so fortunate as to obtain his liberty.

In the mean time the justice, who was what the world terms a very prudent man, pretended to drop all farther inquiry; but under this mask of indolent security, he secretly set some of his most trusty followers to watch the motions of father Peter, which for some time seemed of no avail. However, he was seen at last by one of his neighbours to leave his house one morning by break of day, and set off with his wallet on his back and a staff in his hand, full speed. This good-natured neighbour, proud

of the opportunity, fled to the officers of justice, in order to inform them of what he had seen, who no sooner received this intelligence, than they set off after him in disguise; and, after a sharp walk of several hours, succeeded in getting sight of him about noon, whom they followed at a distance, until they saw him enter a lonely ale-house; when, having waited a long time for his coming out to no purpose, they began to entertain suspicions of an unfavourable kind, and accordingly hid themselves behind an adjacent hedge, where they continued waiting his re-appearance until the twilight began to set in. The sable queen of night had scarcely spread her dun mantle over the terrestrial globe, when the trampling of distant horses assailed their ears, and seemed to approach nearer and nearer; nor were they at all out in their opinion, for soon after a large troop of horsemen alighted, and entered the same public-house as father Peter had done before them; which the spies no sooner saw than they ventured from their hiding places, and crept along softly to the windows, where they had not listened long before they heard the jingling of money, and, upon peeping through one of the cracks of the window shutters, discovered a number of armed men sitting round a table nearly covered with dollars, and father Peter at the head, feasting his eyes with the delicious prospect before him. The officers, having now got sufficient information, seized each of them one of the robbers' horses, and, mounting them, rode back to the town with all possible speed.

As the public house was situated at only two leagues distance from the village, it did not take them more than an hour riding thither; when, upon informing the justice of all they had heard and seen, they were immediately sent back with a party of the town guard, well-armed and mounted on the fleetest horses they could procure. The whole party arrived at the scene of action a few hours before midnight, where they found the robbers still seated round the table, drinking and carousing in the most perfect security. It is impossible for words to describe the consternation of the robbers, who all started up as if they had been waked out of their sleep by a sudden clap of thunder, upon the town's guard rushing into the room, who, seizing their arms, threatened to blow their brains out, if they offered to make the least resistance: upon which the robbers, giving way to despair, patiently submitted to have their hands tied. This done, father Peter, the servants of the house, and the landlord, whom they found concealed under the bed, were seized, and, as soon as they were properly secured, borne off in triumph with their vile associates. The robbers, who were ten in number, were dressed in hunting coats, and their purses well lined both with gold and silver. The whole cavalcade moved on slowly with lighted torches, and arrived at the village before day-break; when, owing to the lateness of the hour, the prisoners were lodged in separate dungeons. Early in the ensuing morning they were had up for trial; and the youngest of the robbers being questioned first, refused to make the smallest confession; upon which he was immediately put to the rack, which soon made his stubbornness give way: and, unable to bear the torture, he screamed out for mercy; and, upon being let down, made an ample discovery of all that he knew, namely, that their gang consisted of fifty-three in number, and was scattered all

over the country; that they had secret places under ground, but that their principal resort, or head-quarters, was an old castle on the borders of the Black Forest, which was also the grand magazine of all their ill-got treasures. He also confessed that father Peter was in close connection with all of them, and that he had never any settled place of abode, but took up his residence sometimes in that village, and at other times in the adjacent ones; that he was also possessed of the burghership in several cities, in which he had both houses and estates. The robber concluded his confession with a solemn denial of having had any hand in the robbery committed in the church, but at the same time pointed out three of the prisoners, who he said had been concerned in it, adding that he could not tell whether father Peter had been accessary in that affair or not. The day being now far advanced, they were remanded back to prison; and the next morning, the three robbers, who had been charged with the sacrilege by their companion, were brought to the bar, but all of them refused to plead guilty; upon which they were put to the rack, when the first of them, who was an aged man, bore the three degrees with the greatest fortitude, and died a few hours after, without ever divulging the secret. The second confessed, at the third degree, that he had been concerned in the above robbery, at the same time declaring, in the most solemn manner, that his surviving companion was innocent, and that he himself had been persuaded by father Peter to commit the sacrilege. That hoary hypocrite was next called to the bar, who listened to the charge laid against him by the justice with the utmost composure, and then made an ample confession of his guilt in the following words:—

“Yes!” exclaimed he, his whole frame trembling with the violence of his emotions, “I am guilty; and would to God, that I had no other crimes to answer for than this! The monks, who are the votaries of luxuriousness and debauchery, and who, in honour of an image of stone, have, with a savage fury, ruined and drove from their native land an innocent family, who, in consequence of their cruelty have been forced to beg their bread in the streets of this village—these obdurate villains are far greater felons than myself! I therefore rejoice at being chosen out by Providence as an humble instrument in his hands to avenge the wrongs of those innocent sufferers, and in having been enabled to restore to the hapless objects of their rapacity, in some measure, their lost property. “If,” continued he, with a smile of exultation, “this action of mine appears in your eyes deserving of punishment, you may tear these old limbs asunder; but, although you break these withered bones, and reduce my worn-out frame to its original non-entity, you shall not hear me groan, nor utter a single complaint, conscious of the rectitude of my own actions.”

Here he paused, and the judge and sheriffs gazed at each other in silent astonishment, not daring to question him any further; which he perceiving, proceeded voluntarily to inform them of every occurrence respecting the sacrilege, the family he had before alluded to, and how the Jewels, gold, and silver furniture, which had been taken out of the church and convent, had been converted into money, and forwarded to the injured parties, whom he had discovered by means of an original will, which the monks had secreted at the time when they forged another, in which it was pretended that the testator had left the whole of his possessions to

religious uses, and that the whole had been carried on in so secret a manner, that they were not even acquainted with the names of their benefactors.

The astonishment of those who were present, increased with every word he uttered; and, as soon as he ceased to speak, a general buzz of admiration was heard throughout the court; while the generous motives attending the sacrilege, and the frankness of his confession, operated so strongly in favour with his judges, that they resolved unanimously to mitigate his sentence as much as possible; in consequence of which resolution, father Peter and his associate were put to the bar, in order to have sentence pronounced against them. According to the laws of this country, which in these cases exert their utmost rigour, the two culprits should have been burnt alive; but the judge, giving way to the dictates of his heart, doomed them to be first beheaded, and then burnt; during which awful period, father Peter displayed the greatest firmness of mind, at the same time comforting his companion, although he had betrayed him. As soon as the sentence was passed, he thanked the judges for their clemency, and then left the court, supporting with his arm his confederate, who, possessed of less fortitude than himself, presented to view a ghastly portraiture of despair and despondency. The next day was appointed for their execution. I left the court overwhelmed with misery, and retired to my inn, where I passed the night in broken slumbers, so much was my mind taken up with the occurrences of the preceding day; from which I was awakened the next morning by the solemn tolling of bells, which announced the approaching execution. I immediately arose; and wrapping myself in my cloak, set out with trembling steps to the place where father Peter was to atone for his past crimes. The streets were crowded by the gaping multitude, who seemed to await with savage curiosity the approaching spectacle. Struck with a secret awe, I arrived at the place of execution, and my blood chilled with horror on beholding the fatal pile that was soon to terminate the lives of my fellow-creatures. I had not, however, been long in that situation, before a sudden noise awoke me from my reverie; and, upon raising my eyes, I beheld the solemn procession advancing slowly toward the scaffold. Father Peter marched foremost with firm and manly steps, followed by his fellow-sufferer, who, if possible, looked ten times more dejected than before. The procession halted, and encircling the enclosure, the two victims ascended the scaffold, when his confederate was the first that received the final blow from the avenging hand of justice. Unable to behold a spectacle at once so horrible and terrific, I kept my eyes fixed on the ground, till at length, by the murmuring noise of the multitude around me, I found that the executioner had given him the *coup de grace*, and thus put a period to his sufferings; in consequence of which, I again ventured to raise my eyes to the melancholy scene of action; when I beheld father Peter undressing himself, and approaching with an almost inconceivable firmness toward the fatal stool that was stained with the still-reeking blood of his comrade; where, immediately upon his arrival at the dread spot, he seated himself. Already the sword of the executioner was lifted in the air, and glistened in the sun, waiting the appointed signal to give the fatal blow. Every eye appeared fixed

on the place of execution ; and it was not until father Peter had expiated for his former crimes, that they were sensible of any other object.

An awful sensation, proceeding from one of the tenderest feelings of humanity, thrilled through my heart at this awful moment ; and, unable to abide the remaining part of this horrid tragedy, I forced my way through the gaping crowd, nor stopped until I had gained the city gate ; when, upon turning back, I beheld, to my infinite horror and disgust, a thick cloud of smoke ascending from the pile, and darkening the pure air. Unable to bear a sight so repugnant to my feelings, both as a Christian and a man, I hastened to my apartments, with a full resolution of leaving on the ensuing morning a place that had been capable of disturbing the natural serenity of my mind ; but, however, upon hearing that the captain of the gang was to be tried the next day, I suffered curiosity once more to get the better of my prejudice, and resolved to stay one day longer, in order to learn a few particulars of a man of whom I had heard so singular and remarkable an account ; nor did the result of what I heard upon that occasion leave me the smallest room to repent of the delay it had occasioned.

The trial began about six in the morning. I took care to secure a good place before the arrival of the terrible leader of the robbers, who no sooner appeared at the bar, than an universal terror seemed to pervade the whole assembly, on beholding him. He was of a gigantic make, near seven feet high, his robust limbs corresponding with his extraordinary size. His black and bushy hair covered part of his sun-burnt face, which was disfigured by two large scars across his left cheek. His eye (for he had but one left) flashed like lightning when he beheld the dread arbiters of life and death eager to pronounce his doom. The judge exhorted him to speak the truth, and not to aggravate his guilt by stubbornness. However, nobody expected that a wretch of his appearance would pay the least regard to gentle admonitions, and perhaps remain silent even under the tortures of the rack. His savage look and lofty mien seemed to betoken an haughty spirit not easy to be subdued. Imagine, therefore, my astonishment, when, contrary to all expectation, he thus began :—

“ My Lords and Gentlemen,

“ I am in your power, and well aware that nothing can avert my impending doom. I scorn the torture of the rack, and bid defiance to every human effort, to force me to a confession of my crimes. You might tear my limbs asunder, and kill me by inches, and yet you would never extort a single word from my lips, if I had not other reasons to deal candidly with you. However, I will spare you that trouble, and openly confess my crimes, their origin, and their progress, being firmly persuaded that the history of my life will afford a useful lesson to judges, and teach the guardians of the people to be careful how they inflict punishments, if they will not make a complete rogue of many a hapless wretch, who would have been recalled to his duty, and preserved to human society, by gentle treatment. I never should have become a robber, had not the too great severity of the laws made me an enemy to mankind, and hurried me to the brink of despair. I know my doom is

fixed. However, if your heart is no stranger to pity, you will at least not refuse a tear of humanity to a poor unhappy man, who has been dragged by dire fatality into the path of vice, and forced to commit deeds his soul abhors."

Here he stopped. Awful silence swayed around, and my curiosity was harrowed up to the highest degree, when he proceeded nearly in the following strain :—

"I am the son of an inn-keeper at A—, whose name was Wolfe, and who died when I had reached my twenty-fourth year. I succeeded him in his business, which, being but indifferent, afforded me a deal of leisure time. Being an only son, I had been spoiled by my parents, who were delighted with my wanton pranks, and indulged me in the most foolish fond manner. Grown-up girls complained of my impudence when I was but twelve years old, and the boys all paid homage to my inventive genius. Nature had not been at all deficient with me in respect of bodily endowments ; but an unfortunate kick from a horse had so disfigured my face, that the girls of the village shunned me, and my play-fellows took every opportunity to make me an object of their ridicule. The more my female acquaintances avoided me, the stronger grew my desire of pleasing. As I grew up, I was given to sensuality, and at last persuaded myself to be in love. The object of my attachment treated me with scorn, and I had reason to apprehend that my rivals were more successful than myself ; but the girl being poor, I flattered myself that her heart, which was inaccessible to my vows and prayers, would yield to presents, which I knew not how to procure, the small income of my business being scarce sufficient to defray the expences I was at in vainly endeavouring to render my person less disgusting. Naturally addicted to idleness, and too proud to retrench my expensive mode of life, I had only one resource left to better my fortune—a desperate one, though thousands had often tried it with success. The village in which I lived gave me frequent opportunities of committing depredations on the game, and the money I raised in that way wandered regularly into the hands of my mistress. Robert, a game-keeper to the lord of the manor, was one of the admirers of Jenny, which was the name of my paramour, he soon observed the advantage which my presents procured me over him, and, being spurred by envy and jealousy, he watched me closely. By degrees he began to resort to the Sun, which was the sign of my inn, more frequently than ever, and his prying eye soon detected the source of my liberal gifts.

"A very rigorous law against game-stealing had been renewed not long before, and Robert was indefatigable to find an opportunity of getting rid of his rival. He succeeded but too soon. I was caught in the very act of shooting a deer, and condemned to be sent to the house of correction. It cost me all my little remaining fortune to buy off this punishment. Robert had gained his end, and Jenny's heart was lost to me. Glowing resentment rankled in my breast, and I was determined to be revenged as soon as a proper opportunity should offer. Poverty and wan hunger and despair, tempted me once more to have recourse to game-steling, and Robert's watchfulness surprised me a second time. Being reduced to the lowest degree of poverty, it was not in my power to

and the hands of justice a second time, and I was committed for a whole year to the house of correction. Every lash I suffered from the gaoler's whip gave new strength to my resentment; the separation from my mistress increased my passion, and I hastened on the wings of love and revenge to my native place, as soon as I was set at liberty. I flew to Jenny, but was denied admittance, and treated with scorn. Pinching want having subdued my pride and laziness, I offered my services to the rich in the village, but nobody would employ a fellow who had been in the house of correction. Pressed by hunger and dire necessity, and foiled in all my attempts of getting an honest livelihood, I renewed my depredations on the game, and was entrapped a third time by Robert's watchfulness. The judges looked into the records of the law, but not in the heart of the transgressor, paid no regard to the plea of want and dire necessity, and sentenced me to have the mark of a gibbet burnt on my back, and to work three years in the fortifications. At the close of that term I recovered my liberty a second time; and here begins a new period of my life. I was entirely changed, having entered the fortress as a common transgressor, and left it as a consummate villain. I was not entirely divested of all sentiments of honour when I was first confined. However, the few remaining sparks of ambition were soon extinguished by ignominy, being confined in one room with twenty-three malefactors two of whom were murderers, and the rest infamous thieves and vagabonds. I was laughed at, when mentioning the name of God, and urged every day to utter blasphemies against our Holy Redeemer. My fellow-prisoners sung obscene songs to me, which I could not hear without disgust and horror, and committed actions, which I could not behold without blushing. Every day new rogueries were related, or wicked designs fabricated. At first I avoided the company of that abominable set of wretches as much as possible, hiding myself in the remotest corners of the prison. However, I wanted a companion in my solitude, and the cruelty of my gaoler had refused even the poor consolation of taking my dog with me. My labour was hard, and my health declining. I wanted assistance, and to be sincere with you, I was in need of comfort, which, scanty as it was, I could not obtain, without sacrificing the last remains of my conscience. Thus I used myself by degrees to hear without disgust the most horrid language, and to behold without aversion, and at length with secret pleasure, the most shocking actions. Before the termination of my confinement I was superior in wickedness to my instructors in villainy and began to thirst with increasing impatience for liberty and revenge. I hated the whole of the human race, because every one of my fellow creatures was either happier or less wicked than myself. I fancied myself to be a martyr to the rights of men, and a victim of glaring injustice. I rubbed my chains against the wall in a fit of phrensy, grinding my teeth when the sun was rising behind the rock on which the fort stood, and experienced, with unutterable agony, what a hell an extensive view creates in the bosom of a prisoner. The free air whistling through the iron grates of my windows, and the swallow perching on the massy bars, seemed to mock me with their liberty, and rendered my imprisonment more hateful and horrid to me. Seized with the burning fangs of

despair, I vowed an unrelenting revenge to the whole human race, and have been as good as my word.

"The first idea which rushed upon my mind, as soon as I found myself at liberty, was that of my native village. I had indeed not the least glimmering of hope to meet there with the smallest assistance in my distress. However, I entertained sanguine hopes to glut my revenge, which gave wings to my steps. My heart beat violently when my impatient eye beheld the steeple of the village; however, it was not that sweet satisfaction which I had felt on my first pilgrimage, which was now heaving in my bosom. The recollection of all the misfortunes and cruel persecutions I once had suffered there awakened me suddenly from a kind of stupefaction; all my wounds began to bleed anew, I quickened my steps, anticipating the pleasure it would afford me to strike my enemies with terror by my sudden appearance, and to feast my eyes on the pangs of the devoted victims of my vengeance. The bells were ringing to summon the inhabitants to worship, when I made my appearance in the market place. I was soon known by the inhabitants, who were going to church, and every one who met me started back at the sight of me. Having always been very fond of children, I could not resist the involuntary impulse of giving a penny to a boy, who was skipping by. He stared at me for a moment, and then threw the money in my face. If my blood had not been heated so much, I should have recollected that my long and bushy beard had frightened the poor boy; however, my polluted heart had infected my reason, and tears, which I had never shed in my life, were trickling down my cheeks. 'The boy does not know who I am, nor whence I came,' said I, half loud, to myself, and yet he avoids me like a wild ferocious beast. Is my black heart marked on my brow, or have I ceased resembling a human being, because I am sensible that I hate all human kind?' The contempt of that boy grieved me more than my long imprisonment, because I had treated him kindly, and could not accuse him of personal hatred. I seated myself on a large stone opposite to the church. What intention I had, I do not know; however, I remember very well, that I rose up in a fit of burning rage, when I saw that all my former acquaintances passed by with visible contempt, and scarcely deigned to look at me. I left my station in an agony of vexation, to find out a lodging. As I was turning round the corner of a street, I met my Jenny. 'My dear Wolfe!' she exclaimed, and offered to embrace me. 'God be praised that you are returned at last. I have shed many a bitter tear during your absence.' Hunger and misery were marked in her face, and I beheld with horror that she was infected with an ignominious illness. Her tattered raiment, and her whole appearance, told me plainly what a miserable wretch she was. I soon guessed the origin of her abject situation, concluding, by the sight of some dragoons, that soldiers had been quartered in the village. 'Soldier's strumpet!' I exclaimed, and turned my back to her with an exulting laughter. It gave me some satisfaction to see her infidelity rewarded in so shocking a manner. I had never loved her sincerely.

"My mother was dead, and my house had been sold for the benefit of

the creditors. I had no friend, no money, except a few groats; every body fled me like a mad dog; but I was dead to shame and disgrace. After my first imprisonment, I had shunned all human society, because I could not stand the contempt I met with every where. Now I intruded upon them, and it afforded me a malicious satisfaction to drive them away by my appearance. It gave me a pleasure, because I had nothing farther to lose, and nobody to care for. I had no farther occasion for the least good quality, because nobody believed I had one left. The whole world was open to me, and perhaps I should have been able to recover the character of an honest man in a distant province. However, I had no courage to assume even the mask of honesty. Despair and disgrace had forced these sentiments upon me, and I persuaded myself that every sense of honour was useless to me, since I had no claim to the smallest share of it. If my vanity and pride had maintained their dominion over me, I certainly should have put an end to my existence. I did not know what my intentions were; I wanted to do mischief; so much I knew. I wished to deserve my fate. 'The laws,' said I to myself, 'are the guardians of human happiness, and therefore I will do whatever is in my power to subvert them.' Necessity and thoughtlessness had once compelled me to sin; but now I did it voluntarily, because it gave me pleasure. I had again recourse to game stealing; for hunting had always been my chief passion, and life called for support. But this was not the sole motive which prompted me to re-assume my former favourite occupation; the desire of bidding defiance to the laws, and to infringe the prerogatives of the prince, was an additional impulse. I had no apprehension of being taken up once more, for I had a ball in readiness to stop the mouth of my informer, and was sure I could not miss my aim. I killed all the deer which came in my way, selling only a few pieces on the frontiers; the remainder I left behind to rot. I lived very sparing, in order to be able to afford the expences of powder and shot. My depredations, and the havoc I made in the forest, caused great alarm, but nobody suspected me; my miserable appearance screened me from suspicion, and my name was forgotten.

"This mode of life I continued several months without being detected. One morning I was rambling through the forest, pursuing the traces of a deer. Having hunted without success two tedious hours, I began to give up every hope of coming at my prey, when I saw it once more within the reach of my gun. I took my aim, and was going to fire, but started suddenly back, when I saw a hat upon the ground not far from me. I looked around with great circumspection, and beheld Robert, the gamekeeper, standing behind the trunk of an oak, and aiming at the same deer which I intended to kill. My blood froze in my veins, as I beheld the author of all my misfortunes; and this very man, whom I hated most among the whole human race, was within the reach of my fusée. Infernal joy thrilled my whole frame. I would not have exchanged my gun for the universe; the burning revenge, which till then had been rankling in my bosom, rose up into my fingers' ends, which was going to put an end to my adversary's life, when an invisible hand seemed to retain my arm to prevent the horrid deed. I trembled violently, as I

directed my gun against my foe ; a chilly sweat bedewed my face ; my teeth began to chatter, as if a fever-frost had seized my frame ; methought I felt the icy fang of death upon my heart, and every nerve was quivering. I hesitated a minute—one more elapsed—and now a third. Revenge and conscience were struggling violently for victory. The former gained, and Robert lay weltering in his blood. My gun dropped on the ground, when he fell. ‘Murderer!’ I exclaimed, with quivering lips. Advancing nearer to the spot where my enemy was swimming in his blood, I saw him just expire. Petrified with horror, I stood motionless before my murdered foe. At length, a yelling laughter restored me to the use of my senses. ‘Wilt thou any more tell tales, good friend?’ said I, stepping boldly nearer, and turning him upon his back. I grew serious, and every power of utterance fled ; strange and horrid sensations chilled my heart. Till then I had been a transgressor of the laws on the score of the disgrace I had suffered, but now I had perpetrated a deed for which I had not atoned. An hour before that horrid accident, no man living would have been able to persuade me that there was a more abject being upon earth than myself ; I had a confused notion of a halter and gibbet, and of the execution of a murderer, which I had witnessed when a boy. The idea of having forfeited my life froze my very soul with dreadful fear. I wished ardently, that it might be in my power to restore to life my slain enemy, and racked my brain to recal to my recollection all the injuries he made me suffer, but strange to tell! my memory seemed to be entirely extinguished. I could not recal a shadow of all the ideas, which but a quarter of an hour ago had filled my soul with glowing revenge ; I could not conceive how I could commit such a horrid deed.

Alarmed by a noise on the high road, which was about a mile distant, I went deeper into the forest, but recollecting that Robert had been used to wear a watch, I wished to get it in my possession. I wanted money to reach the frontier, and yet I had no courage to return to the place where the corpse lay, the idea of the devil, and the omnipotence of God, rushing suddenly on my mind. I struggled a few moments, and having summoned up all my boldness, determined to go back and fetch the watch in defiance of God and the devil. I found what I expected, and in a green purse a little more than a dollar, in silver coin. As I was going to put both in my pocket, I started suddenly back, and considered whether I should take it, or not. It was no fit of shame, nor was it fear to aggravate my crime through robbery ; it was rather scorn, which prompted me to fling the watch upon the ground, and to take only one half of the money. I wanted to be thought an enemy of the game-keeper, but not his robber. Now I fled deeper into the forest. I knew that it extended 22 miles towards the north, where the frontiers of the country began. For six hours I fled through the forest ; as I entered a narrow footpath, which led through the darkest thicket, suddenly a rough commanding voice ordered me to stop. The voice was not for off ; agony and the horrors of despair, which had assumed their dreadful sway over me, had made me entirely regardless to the objects around me ; my eyes were cast to the ground, and I had covered part of my face with my hat, as if that

could have hidden me from the eye of the lifeless creation. Starting and lifting up my eyes, I saw a savage looking man coming toward me. He was armed with an enormous club, his figure was of a monstrous size (my first surprize, at least, had made me think so,) and the colour of his face was of the mulatto hue, which gave to the white of his squinting eye additional terrors. Instead of a girdle, he had his buttonless great coat tied with a thick cord, to which an enormous knife and a brace of pistols were fastened. I had quickened my steps, when his terrible voice assailed my ears, but he soon came up with me, and stopped me with a powerful arm. The sound of a human voice had filled my soul with terror; however, the sight of a ruffian raised my spirits. In my miserable situation, I had reason to tremble at the sight of an honest man, but none at all at a robber.

"Who art thou?" thundered the frightful figure in my ear. "Thy equal," I replied, "if thou art really what thy appearance bespeaks?"—"This is not the right way. What business hast thou here?"—"And what right hast thou to question me?" I replied, in a determined accent.

"The terrible man surveyed me from top to toe. He seemed to compare my haughty answer with my defenceless situation. "Thou art an impudent beggar," he resumed at length. "Very possible, I have been one but yesterday." He laughed, exclaiming with a horrid grin, "My honest friend, I hope thou dost not presume to be thought any thing better."—"That is nothing to thee." So saying, I wanted to pursue my way.

"Fairly and softly, my dear boy, why in such a hurry? What weighty business is it which makes thee run so fast?" I mused a moment, and cannot conceive what prompted me to reply, in a slow accent, "Life is short, and hell everlasting." He stared at me with a ghastly look. "I will be damned," he resumed at length, "if thou hast not stumbled against a gallows on thy way." "It may come to that one time. Farewell, comrade."—"Stay a moment longer," he exclaimed, taking a tin bottle from his hunting-pouch, and offering it to me after he had swallowed a large draught. The hurry of my fright and the dreadful agonies of mind I had undergone, had reduced my strength very low, and my parched lips had not been moistened with one refreshing draught that whole unfortunate day. Famine had already stared me horribly in the face, in that extensive forest, where three miles around no refreshment could be procured; you may therefore easily think how joyfully I accepted this offer. I swallowed greedily the contents of the bottle, and new strength animated my whole frame; my heart was expanded with fresh courage, and hope and love for life returned in my desponding breast. I began to fancy that I was not completely miserable, so much relief afforded me that welcome draught; and I must confess that my situation began to appear less dreadful to me, since I, after a thousand frustated hopes, had found at last a being that bore some resemblance with me. In the desponding situation in which I was, I would not have hesitated to pledge the health of an infernal spirit, in order to have a confidant.

Meanwhile my new companion had stretched himself upon the grass, and I followed his example. "Thy brandy has given me new life," said

I; "we must be better acquainted with each other" He made no reply, but struck fire, and lighted his pipe. "Is it long since thou carriedst on this trade?" He stared at me, and said, "What means that question?" I took the knife from his girdle, being now grown bolder; and continuing my discourse—"has this instrument done much execution?"—"Who art thou?" he roared out in a terrible accent, at the same time flinging his pipe on the grass, and starting up. "A murderer, like thyself, but only a beginner." He gazed at me very earnestly and took up his pipe. "Thou art no inhabitant of these districts," he resumed, at length. "I am; hast thou never heard of Wolfe, the inn-keeper, at A—?" He started up, as though frantic, exclaiming in a rapturous accent, "Wolfe the inn-keeper, who has been so severely punished for game-stealing!" "That very man I am." "Welcome, comrade, a thousand times welcome!" he exclaimed, shaking me joyfully by the hand; how glad am I that I have found thee at last! I have been many, many months in search of thee. I know thee very well, know all that thou hast suffered, and have been longing for thy assistance this great while." "For my assistance! To what purpose?" "Every body speaks of thee. Thou hast many enemies, hast suffered glaring injuries, hast been entirely ruined, and persecuted with unheard of severity." He grew warm. "They have immured thee in the house of correction, have treated thee like a galley-slave at the fortress, and reduced thee to beggary, because thou hast killed a few paltry deer, which the prince suffers to prey on our corn, and to rob us of the fruit of our diligence. Is it come to that, brother, that a human being is valued less than a hare or a boar? I am ashamed that a fellow like thyself could brook such injury." "What could I do?" "That we shall see. But, pray tell me, whence dost thou come, and on what errand?" I then related my whole history to him. He could scarcely find patience to hear the end of it; but jumping up with joy, pulled me after him with all his strength. "Come along, brother," he said, "now thou art ripe, thou art the very man I wanted for my purpose. I shall acquire great honour by introducing thee to our commonwealth. Make haste, and follow me." "Whither art thou going to conduct me?" "Don't ask questions, but come and see." So saying, he dragged me forcibly after him.

"As we proceeded, the forest grew more and more intricate, impenetrable and gloomy. Neither of us spoke a word until I was suddenly, roused from my apathy by the whistle of my leader. I looked around and beheld myself at the declivity of a steep rock projecting over a deep cavern. A second whistle answered from the bottom of the rock, and a ladder rose slowly from the abyss, a thundering voice halloed from the deep, and the winding cavern echoed to the sound. My leader descended, first bidding me to wait till he should return." I must first secure the mastiff, which guards the entrance to our abode," he said, "thou art a stranger and the ferocious beast would tear thee to pieces." So saying, he disappeared. My leader soon re-appeared, bidding me descend into the cavern. I had no other choice left but to submit to necessity, and went down. Having advanced a few steps under the excavated rock, our passage grew larger, and I beheld some huts at a distance; and, as

I approached nearer, a round spot covered with grass appeared to my view. About twenty people were sitting round a blazing fire. 'Here, my leader exclaimed, 'here I bring you a new member of our society, whose name is not unknown to you. Rise, and welcome the celebrated Wolfe of A—.' 'Wolfe!' they all exclaimed with one voice, forming a circle around me, men, women, and children. Their joy was unfeigned and cordial; confidence, and even respect, was marked in their looks. My unexpected arrival had interrupted their dinner; they retook their seats, and pressed me to partake of their inviting meal, which consisted of venison of all kinds and stewed fruits. The goblet filled with delicious wine wandered from hand to hand, and spread merriment and joviality around; plenty and concord seemed to reign in that little society, and every one strove to manifest his joy at my presence. I was seated between two females, which at their table was reckoned the highest mark of honour; and having expected to meet with the refuse of their sex, how great was my astonishment when I found among the gang of robbers two of the most beautiful female figures my eyes ever beheld! Margaret, the eldest and handsomest of the two, was called miss, and could not be much above eighteen; her language was very licentious; and her looks still more so. Maria the youngest, was married, but had ran away from her husband who had treated her ill; her form was superior to that of my neighbour; however, she was of a pale and delicate constitution, and in the whole less striking than the lively Margaret. They seemed to contend who first should kindle my desires; the beautiful Margaret strove to dispel my timidity by wanton jokes, but I soon conceived an unconquerable dislike to her, and the modest Maria took possession of my heart. 'You see, brother,' said the man who had introduced me, 'how we live here; every day passes like the present. Is it not true, comrades?' 'Yes, every day passes like the present,' the whole gang exclaimed. 'If, therefore, you think you can accustom yourself to our manner of life, then stay with us, and be our captain. Do you consent to it, comrades?' An unanimous yes rent the air. My imagination was now fired with wine and loose desires, my reason lulled asleep, and my blood heated. Human society had banished me; and here I found brotherly affection, good living and honour. Whatever might have been my choice, I could not escape the hand of punishing justice; but in a situation like that which was offered me, I could at least sell my life dear. My resolution cost me but very little, and I exclaimed, after a moment's consideration, 'I will stay with you, comrades, if you will assign to me my beautiful neighbour.' All of them instantly agreed to consent to my request, and I became unexpectedly the avowed possessor of a mistress, and the chief of a gang of robbers.

"To be revenged on the prince, in whose dominions I had suffered so much disgrace, was the chief desire of my heart; and to effect that purpose, was the first use I made of my new acquired authority. Our gang consisted of eight stout fellows besides myself; the rest was composed of women and children. Previous to my joining my new associates, they had contented themselves with clandestine depredations in the pantries and cellars of the rich peasants, and game-stealing, but

never had recourse to violent means. My views went farther. I proposed to declare open war against the game, which had brought on my disgrace and ruin, and to rob the houses of the judges who had punished me so severely. To effect our purpose we wanted horses, the frontiers, where the dominions of my former sovereign terminated, being at least three miles distant. By means of house-breaking and some highway robberies, we soon got possession of a sufficient sum of money, with which we dispatched one of our associates to a distant town to buy four horses, fire-arms, powder and ball. Thus furnished, the first tempestuous night the houses of the hated judges were pillaged; and whenever the face of the earth was covered with midnight darkness, we sallied forth from our den to destroy the game in those parts where my misfortunes had commenced, and I always took care to let my persecutors know that it was Wolfe who committed these depredations. The terror of my name soon spread itself all over the country, and the neighbouring magistrates tried every means to get me in their power; a great reward was promised to him who should take me dead or alive, and, if one of my associates, a full pardon; notwithstanding which, I was so fortunate as to elude the watchfulness of my pursuers for a considerable time, and to frustrate every attempt on my liberty.

"I had carried on this infernal trade a whole year, when I began to be tired of it. The gang, whose leader I was, having disappointed my sanguine hopes, I soon perceived, with terror, how much my fancy, heated with wine and loose desires, had been imposed upon, when I consented to become the captain of these robbers. Hunger and want frequently supplied the place of luxury and ease, which I had expected, and I was necessitated many a time to risk my life in order to procure a scanty meal, which hardly sufficed to appease the violent cravings of my empty stomach. The visionary image of brotherly concord disappeared, and envy, suspicion, and jealousy, stepped in its place, loosening the ties of society. The solemn promise of a full pardon to him who should deliver me into the hands of justice, was a powerful temptation to lawless robbers, and I was well aware of the dangers which surrounded me. I became a stranger to sleep, a victim to never-ceasing apprehensions; the phantom of suspicion pursued me every where, tormented me when awake, laid down with me upon my couch, and created frightful dreams, when my weary eyes were now and then closed by the hand of slumber. About this time a war broke out in Germany, and recruits were raising every where, which gave me some hopes to retreat in an honourable manner from my associates, and turn a useful member of society. I accordingly wrote a letter to my prince, humbly intreating his pardon, and desiring to enlist in his service.

This petition was not taken the least notice of, as were neither a second and third; when, not having the least hope of being pardoned left, I determined to leave the country, and die in the service of the king of Prussia as a soldier. I gave my gang the slip, and began my journey. My road led through a small country town, where I intended to stay the night. A few weeks ago a proclamation had been published through the whole country, commanding a strict examination of every traveller

because the prince had taken a part in the war, as a member of the German empire. The gate-keeper of the town which I was going to enter, was sitting upon a bench before his house as I rode by; my forbidding countenance and motley dress raised his suspicion, and as soon as I had entered the gate he shut it, and demanded my passport, after he had first secured the bridle of my horse. I was prepared for accidents of that sort, having provided myself with a passport, which I had taken from a merchant whom I had robbed. However, this testimony would not satisfy the eagle-eyed gate-keeper, my physiognomy being in contradiction with it, and I was obliged to follow him to the bailiff's house. He ordered me to wait his return at the door. The passport was examined, and meanwhile a rabble began to assemble around me, attracted by my strange figure; a whispering arose among the multitude, and some of the crowd were pointing alternately at me and my horse; the latter having been stolen by one of my former associates, my conscience gave the alarm. The gate-keeper returned with the passport, and told me, that the bailiff, understanding that I came from the seat of war, would be glad to have half an hour's conversation with me, and to get some information of our army. This message increased my apprehensions of being known; and fearing the invitation of the bailiff to be a snare to get me in his power without any resistance, I clapped spurs to my horse without returning an answer.

"My sudden flight gave the signal for an universal hue and cry. "A thief! a thief!" exclaimed the whole multitude, pursuing me with all possible speed. "I therefore redoubled the swiftness of my flight, goading the sides of my horse without mercy. My pursuers were soon far behind me, panting for breath, and liberty promised to gladden my heart again, when the fleetness of my flight was suddenly stopped by a dead wall. My pursuers gave a loud shout when they saw me entrapped, and I had given over every hope of effecting my escape, when a sudden thought struck me, that the wall might be the city wall, and that perhaps I could regain my liberty through a window of one of the houses at the bottom of the street. The door of that on the left side was open. I jumped from my horse, and entered it with a pistol in each hand, bolting the door after me, and hastening up stairs without being seen by any of the inhabitants. My pursuers were close at my heels, and thundered at the door when I was rushing into a room where nobody was but an old woman. Seeing a man with a brace of pistols, terror fettered her tongue, and she fell in a swoon. I opened the window, and imagine my joy, when the open fields met my anxious eye. I bolted the door, placed chairs and tables against it, threw the bed out of the window, and concealed myself in the chimney, to await the setting in of the night. This was the work of a few moments; and I was safely housed in my hiding-place, when the door was forced open with a thundering noise. My calculations had not deceived me, and my plan succeeded as well as I could expect it. My pursuers, seeing the window open, and the feather bed lying in the field, believed firmly that I had effected my escape. Some young men jumped boldly down, and others went on horseback to pursue me; the old woman, who could tell al

was carried to another part of the house, and I was left alone to muse on my awkward situation.

"Soon after the owner of the house came into the room with some of his neighbours, and confirmed, by his discourse, my hope that nobody suspected my hiding place. One of the company thought I might be concealed under the bed; but his idea of my being still in the house was, to my inexpressible satisfaction, treated with ridicule. As soon as the coast was clear, and the tranquillity of the house restored, I climbed higher up the chimney, with an intention to get upon the roof: however, on maturer consideration, I thought it safer to remain where I was, hearing many voices in the field, which made me afraid of being detected. The time crept slowly on, and I thought the wished-for hour of midnight would never set-in. Hunger and thirst increased the horrors of my situation, and conscience began to remind me of my wickedness. My resolution of leaving the path of vice acquired new strength, and I vowed fervently never to sin again, if I should escape once more.

"At length the feather-bed was brought back, but nobody came to sleep on it that night, and the room remained unoccupied. As soon as midnight silence announced to me that every body was gone to rest, I slid softly down the chimney, tore one of the bed-sheets, and twisted it in a line, to make use of it in getting into the field. No sooner had I touched the ground than I took to my heels, to reach before day-break the Black Forest, which I knew was only two miles distant, being well aware that the whole country would be in a hue and cry after me as soon as my nocturnal escape should be known. Fatigued and entirely spent, I reached the skirts of the forest, and threw myself into the first thicket to rest my weary limbs. After the long journey I had made, and the anxiety and fear which had harassed my mind, I fell asleep. I had not slept two hours, as I could guess by the sun, when I was suddenly roused by the distant barking of dogs. I started up and listened, when the hallooing of two huntsmen vibrated in my ear. They seemed to direct their course toward the spot where I was concealed, and no other means of escape were left me, but to climb up an adjoining oak-tree, and to hide myself amid its thickest branches, where I fancied to find security. Here all my fears and apprehensions returned with redoubled force, when the dogs came to the tree that sheltered me, and began to bark in a terrible manner; the huntsmen were close at their heels, but seeing no game, they recalled my new persecutors, and pursued their way. Fear of falling into the hands of my enemies obliged me to remain where I was until the dark mantle of night should once more cover my flight.

"Hunger and thirst had hardly left me sufficient strength to keep my situation any longer, when, to my inexpressible joy, I espied the nest of a raven in the top of a tree, and six eggs in it. This unexpected relief gave me new strength, new life, new hope, and I waited with patience the setting in of night, when I got down, and pursued my way through the forest. During my journey I was overtaken by a most tremendous storm, and was soon wet to the skin; my whole frame shaking with cold, I began to run without knowing whither I was directing my course, when suddenly the ground gave way beneath my feet, and I fell into a deep pit. My

fall was violent ; however, I received no other hurt except a few bruises, my coat being entangled in the roots of a tree about four yards from the bottom of my subterraneous dungeon. I strove to climb up the wall, which appeared to be horizontal, and the dreadful spectre of famine stared me in the face. I sat down upon the damp ground, and began to muse upon my forlorn situation. At length a thought occurred to me, that perhaps the flash of powder would disclose to me an outlet, if I was to fire a pistol. I took one out of my pocket, and discharged it, when I beheld a passage to the left, which I instantly pursued with alacrity. Ere long I came to an iron door, which soon yielded to my efforts to open it, and let me into a spacious vault. Having groped about half an hour longer, I discovered, after many fruitless researches, a narrow staircase, which led me into a roomy hall, faintly illuminated by the rays of the moon, which was peeping through the lofty windows, composed of stained glass."

Here the robber gave a full description of the Haunted Castle on the skirts of the Black Forest, and then resumed his narrative.

"Having explored every corner of the ancient fabric, without meeting a living soul, I struck fire with the help of a steel I had in my pocket, and the flint of one of my pistols, and soon was seated by a blazing flame, drying my wet garments, and the soothing hand of sleep began to close my eyes. I slept till after sunset, when I left the castle to pursue my way to F—, where I intended to enlist in the Prussian service. Directed by the silver rays of the rising moon, I soon found my way to the high road. At the first well I fell in with I cleaned my sooty face and hands, and then went briskly on. I determined not to enter any inhabited place before I should be obliged by necessity to do it, lest some new misfortunes might cross my military scheme. With that view I left the high road whenever it led through a village, walking all night long, and slept in the day-time. Thus I travelled onward two nights without having met with any accident, when, at the close of the third day, I was obliged to direct my course to a small hamlet, in order to provide myself with provisions. As soon as it was dark I went with fearful steps to a baker's shop to purchase some bread, but great was my terror when I wanted to pay for the small loaf of coarse bread I had bought, and could not find my purse, which must have dropped out of my pocket when I dried my garment in the hall of the castle.

"Being entirely destitute of money, I offered one of my pistols, which I took out of my pocket, in lieu of payment. The baker viewed me from top to toe, and after some hesitation agreed to the bargain. Unfortunately, the house of this man had been robbed some time ago by a gang of thieves, and my savage look, joined with my singular appearance, rendered me suspicious to the baker, who, ever since the robbery, took every ill-looking stranger for a thief. Prompted by that notion, he ordered one of his people to follow me at some distance as soon as I had left the house, and went instantly to the bailiff to inform him of his suspicions, and the strange substitute for money which he had accepted from me. The magistrate, who had been indefatigable in his researches after the daring robbers, without succeeding in his endeavours to find

them out, soon fell in with his opinion, and ordered some stout fellows to follow the suspected thief, and to secure him. In the mean time I had struck again into the forest, seated myself behind some bushes by the bank of a rivulet, and began to appease the demands of hunger, not observing that I was followed, when suddenly four sinewy arms seized me from behind. The unexpected surprise, the continual fatigues I had undergone, and the strength of my adversaries, rendered it impossible to disengage myself from their powerful grasps, and I was dragged before the magistrate, who demanded my passport. Having been obliged to leave it behind, when my alarmed conscience had drawn upon me my late disaster, I had no other choice left but to pretend to be an Austrian deserter, who wanted to go into the Prussian service. The magistrate, mistrusting my veracity, ordered me to be searched, when a loaded pistol and a large knife were found upon me. This increased the suspicion of the zealous magistrate, who, without further ado, sent me to prison. New apprehensions of a dreadful nature assailed now my unhappy soul. The fear that all my former crimes would be detected, filled my desponding soul with black despair; however, my lamentable situation soon took a turn more favourable than I could expect. A transport of Prussian recruits passing through the village in the afternoon, the magistrate ordered me to be delivered to the commanding officer, thinking this to be the most commodious way to rid the country of a fellow, whose whole appearance bore evident marks of his thievish profession, and to save himself the trouble of a tedious examination. My size, and the robust make of my limbs, rendered me a very acceptable acquisition to the recruiting officer, and I was enrolled as a Prussian soldier, to my unutterable joy.

“ Thus, from a robber, was I at once appointed to fight the battles of Frederic the Great, and made a solemn vow to fulfil cheerfully the duties of my honourable calling. Our transport arrived safe at Magdeburg, where, with the rest of my companions, I was instructed in the military art. The corporal that was appointed to teach me the manual exercise, was famous for his severity, conforming to the principles of his royal master, who, as it is universally known, had laid it down as a rule to inspire his martial bands with heroism by the frequent application of wooden arguments. I was not in the least partial to this sort of reasoning, and found it very difficult to brook the brutality of my drilling master, who seemed to have a secret predilection for me, by his plying my back so frequently and severely.

“ Nevertheless, I exerted myself to the utmost of my ability to please this rigorous corporal, and to shelter myself against the heavy showers of blows and cuffs; but not being able to accomplish my object, resentment and hatred began at last to rankle in my heart; my whole stock of patience was exhausted, and I began to have frequent recourse to drinking, in order to dispel the gloominess of mind which haunted me incessantly, and to drown the recollection of my forlorn situation. One day, coming half intoxicated to the parade, I acquitted myself so badly, that my military mentor plied my back most unmercifully. My anger was roused, my blood was boiling, and I called my chastiser a savage beast, a blood-hound, and many other names of the same description.

The fury of my tyrant being raised to the highest degree by that language, he inflicted his blows with such violence, that I, in a fit of despair, struck him to the ground with the butt end of my gun. I was seized, carried to prison, and sentenced by a court martial to run the gauntlet. The day of execution arrived, the soldiers were drawn up, and my back was bared; when lo! the mark of my ignominy was seen between my shoulders; it being evident that the sign of a gallows was there marked, and that I had been under the hands of a common hangman. I was thereupon declared unworthy to receive military punishment, and was sentenced to work in the fortifications.

"Confined with the dregs of human kind, and ever in company with the basest of villains, my weak virtuous resolution began gradually to wear away; and I concerted plans of effecting my escape. One of my fellow-prisoners joined with me in devising the means of regaining our liberty, and after many fruitless efforts we at length effected our escape, assisted by an impenetrable fog, which covered our flight. As soon as our escape was known in the fortress, the cannons were fired, and the country roused. Notwithstanding which, we happily eluded our pursuers, and reached at the close of the day a wood, where we resolved to conceal ourselves in the tops of the trees till the heat of the pursuit should abate. In this uncomfortable situation we remained as long as our small stock of provisions lasted, consulting with each other by what means we could procure an independent livelihood, and at last agreed to resort to the Haunted Castle in the Black Forest, and there commence robbers. After many fatiguing rambles and alarming fears, we arrived at length at the wished-for asylum. My inventive genius soon suggested to me a scheme for rendering that desolated fabric more secure and guarded against the intrusion of unwelcome visitors, by raising an idea in the fancy of the neighbouring villagers of its being haunted by evil spirits. In order to accomplish our design, we set up a most dreadful howling and doleful lamentation, whenever we perceived any villagers near the environs of the castle. The gloomy appearance of that half-decayed fabric, aided by the superstition of the credulous peasantry, rendered all our schemes successful, and in a very short space of time none of the villagers dared to approach our lurking place, from which we sallied out every night disguised in the skins of goats which we had stolen, and committed numberless robberies in the village. Having procured a sufficient stock of money, my associate was dispatched to a neighbouring town to get fire-arms, powder, and ball, and then we began to prey upon the unwary wanderer. To relate the numberless robberies which we committed previous to our being joined by our new associates, would swell volumes. As our numbers increased, we of course became more daring, and extending our depredations many miles over the country, till after a series of years, our infernal society sustained a deadly blow by the nocturnal surprise which delivered us into the power of punishing justice.

"Thus my lord, and gentlemen, I have related the leading particulars of my unhappy life. I have not wilfully omitted any circumstance.

I throw myself entirely on your mercy; and whatever sentence you may deem proper to inflict, I shall cheerfully, and with resignation, submit to it."

The court then ordered him from the bar, and agreed to take time for considering his sentence. He has since confessed that they have a great number of hiding places besides the solitary castle, and that their gang consists of fifty-three ruffians, who are dispersed all over the country. Through this information, the judges have been enabled to secure a great number of inn-keepers and publicans, who were in league with that infernal set; but the money, and the great booty they are supposed to have hoarded up, has never been discovered. It is imagined to have been removed on the first alarm, by the rest of the gang.

Wolfe's life will be spared, on account of his faithful confession, and the great assistance he has afforded his judges in putting a final stop to the depredations which have been so long committed near the Black Forest. He is to be committed for life to the house of correction, where he will have sufficient leisure to reflect on his past life, and to prepare to meet that Eternal Judge who sooner or later overtakes the wicked in their vile pursuits.

THE END.

For the purpose of the present work, the following list of names is given, in the order in which they are mentioned in the text.

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