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LITTLE COLLIER

[ca. 1830?]

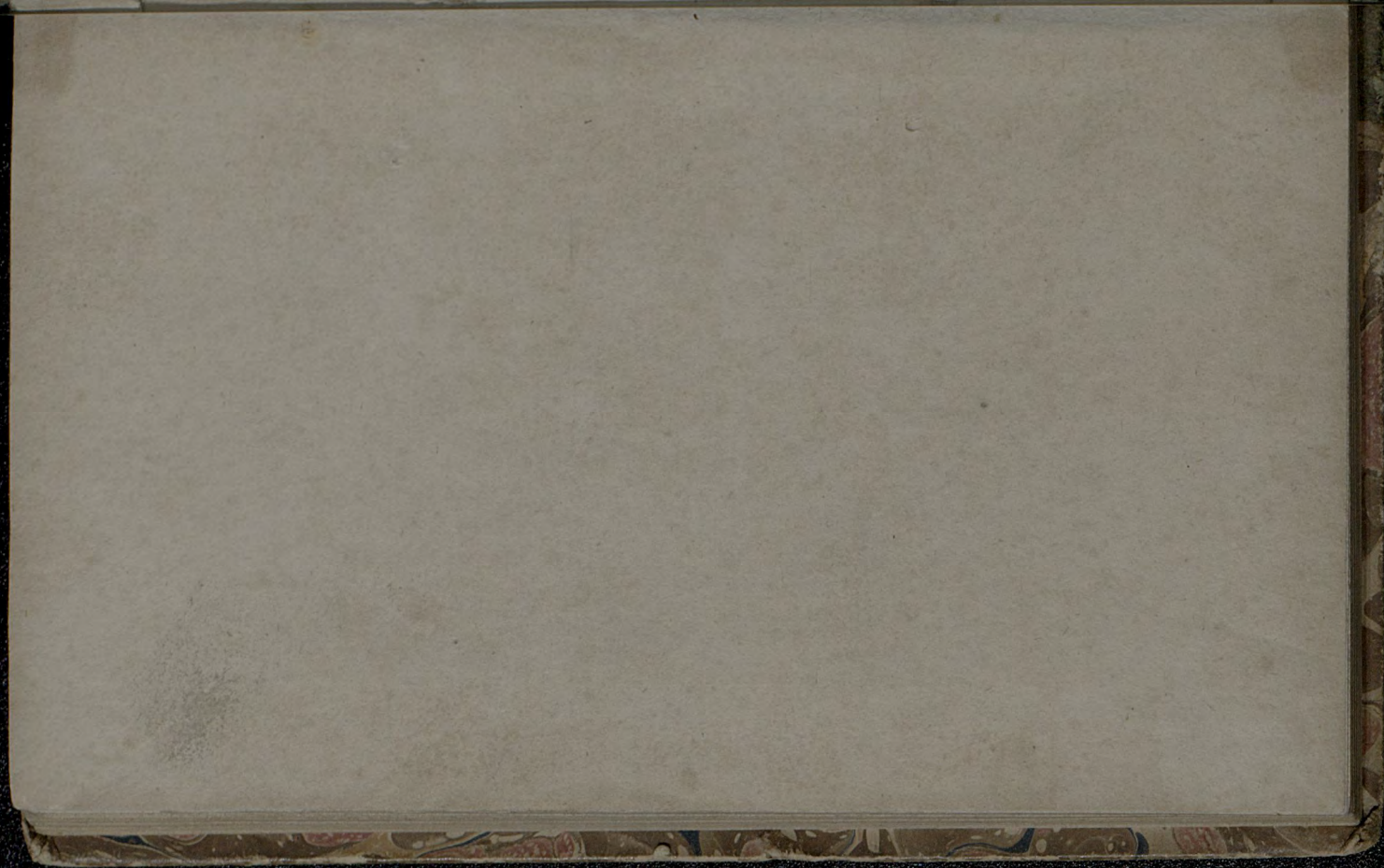


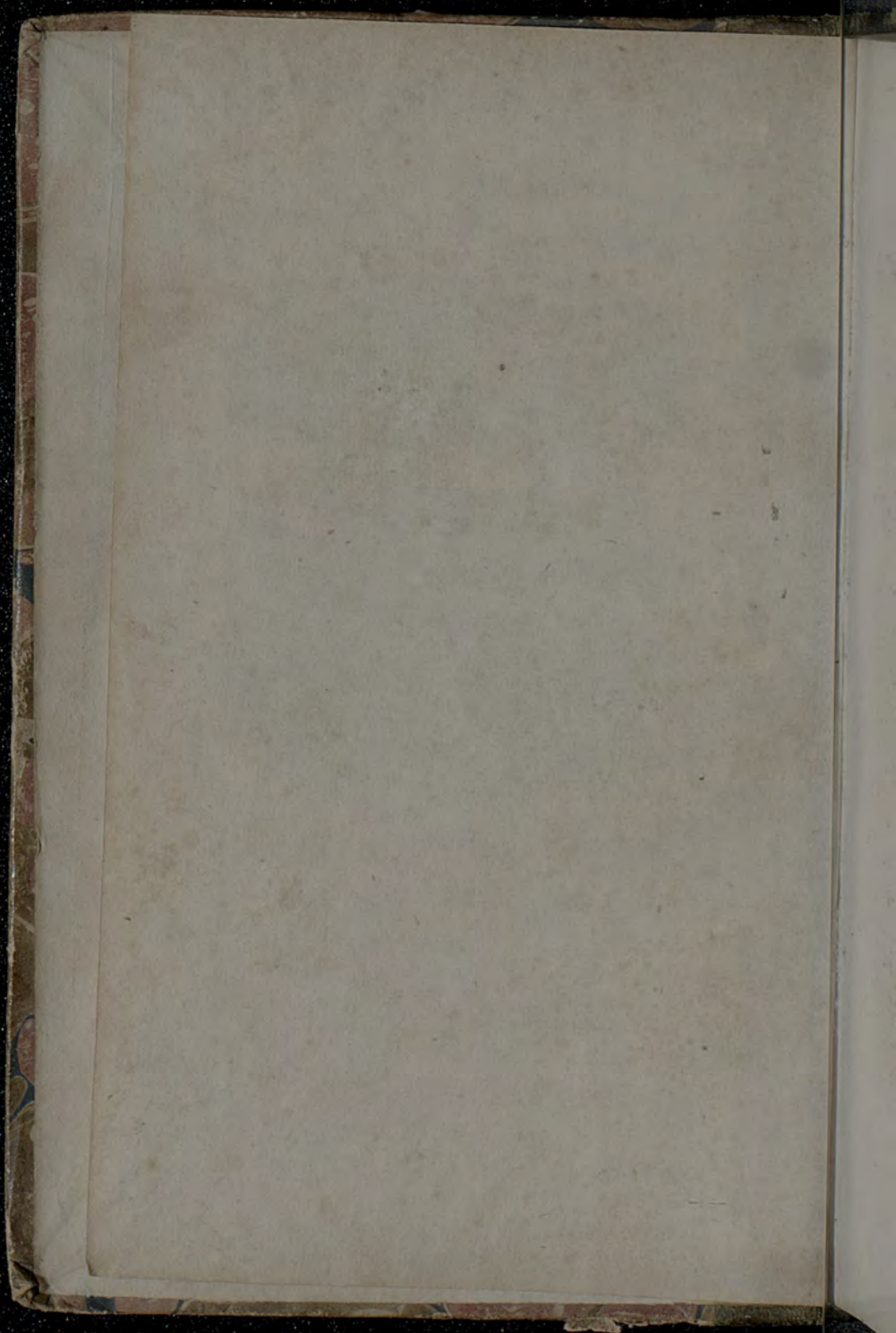
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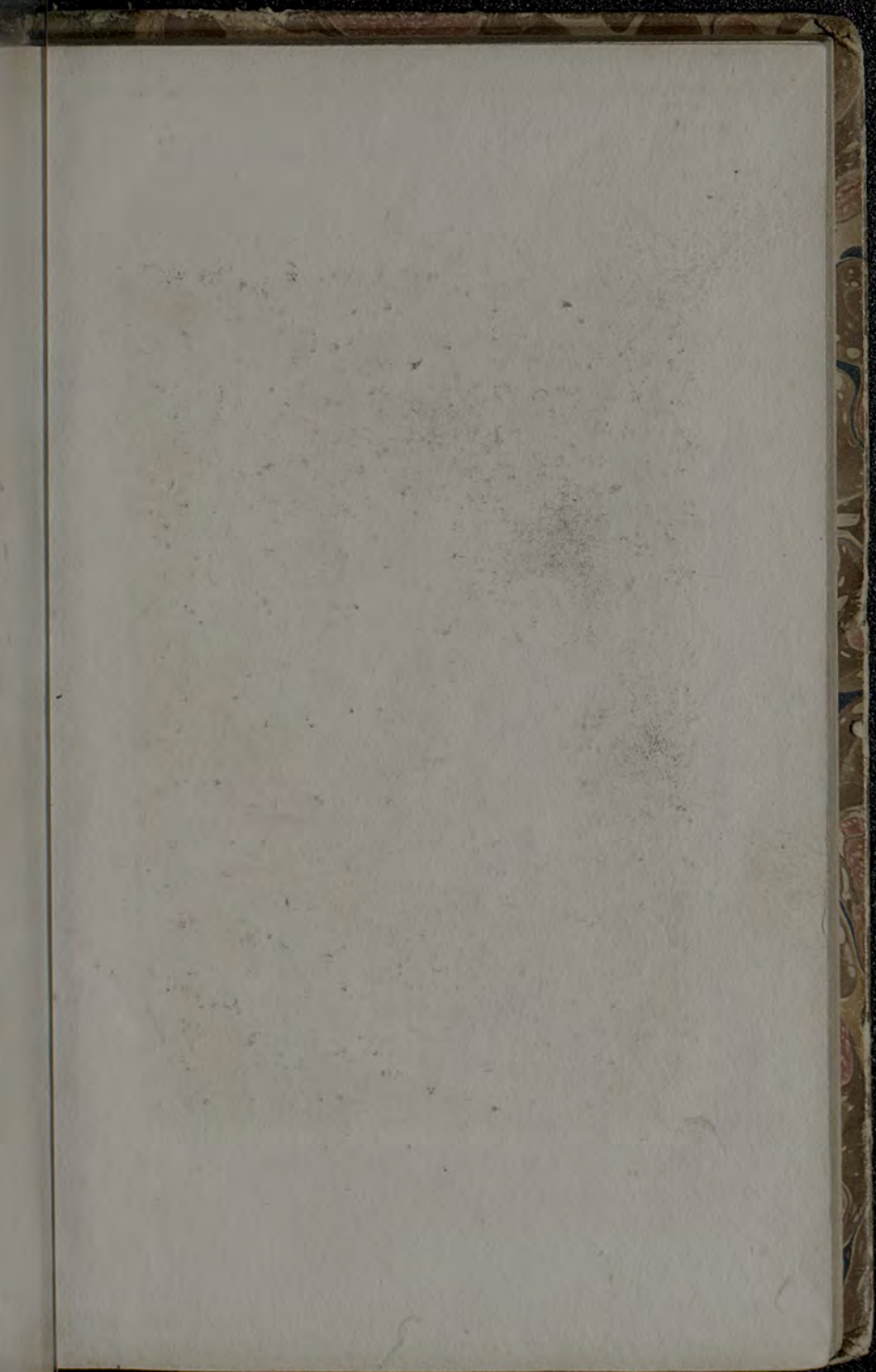
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FRONTISPIECE.




O blefs me what a beautiful infant!
see he stretches out his little arms to me.

Page 8

THE
LITTLE COLLIER
OF THE
BLACK FOREST;
OR,
THE MAGICAL MIRROR.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
THE UNTOWARD ORPHAN.



THE SECOND EDITION.

Embellished with Engravings.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY OLIVER AND BOYD,
AND SOLD BY ALL THE BOOKSELLERS
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THE
LITTLE COLLIER
OF THE
BLACK FOREST,
OR
THE MAGICAL MIRROR.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
THE WIDOWED ORPHAN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

LONDON: Printed and Sold by
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PRINTED AND BOUND BY GILBERT AND RAY,
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THE
LITTLE COLLIER

OF THE
BLACK FOREST.

CHAPTER I.

Prosper is taken to the House of James, the Collier, in the Black Forest.

IN a small miserable looking cottage, near the centre of the Black Forest, and free from care, lived James, a poor collier, and his family. He had not a single wish for any thing in the world ; for he possessed the necessaries of life, and had always enjoyed the blessing of good health.

His wife, Joan, a very coarse healthy peasant, was nursing a fine child which she had lately presented to her husband ; James was sitting smoking his pipe beside her, and the rest of the little ones sported on the grass around them, when they heard, all of a

sudden, the trampling of a horse among the trees of the forest. "What's that, wife?" said the collier; "I think some stranger must be near." Scarcely had James finished the sentence, when a very fine gentleman made his appearance, and alighted about two paces from the cottage. On coming up, he saluted them very amicably, and addressing them, said,— "I have been informed, my good friends, that in these woods there lives a simple honest family, formed to merit all my esteem. That family is yours, James; and it is to you, my friend, that I wish to confide a precious deposite, under the seal of the greatest secrecy. Your cottage is far from every habitation; you have almost no commerce with the world; you are honesty itself, and that is all I can desire for the safety of this great affair with which I am going to intrust you. From this moment, my friends, fortune opens her treasures to you; and although you are still to remain in your present condition, it is merely for form's sake, and not to awaken the jealousy of your neighbours. Now the business is this:—

"My name is Desronais; I am a midwife-doctor, and, as such, I am charged to seek a nurse for the son of a great lady. Reasons, which I cannot reveal to you at present, oblige me to conceal the name and rank of the father of the child. Joan will nurse him;

and you will receive money enough to indemnify you amply for the trouble to which you are to be subjected. Will you both consent to take charge of little Prosper?"

The stranger waited a moment for the answer of James. The husband and wife looked at each other; but it was easy to read in their looks the pleasure that this proposal gave them, which was accompanied only with the fear that he sported with their credulity. The stranger guessing their thoughts, sought to inspire them with confidence, and to receive James's promise that Joan would be the nurse of little Prosper, and that they would never part with the child, but return it either to himself, or some one sent by him. At the same time, M. Desronais put into the hands of James a gold cypher, cut in such a manner, that when another was applied to it, they formed the initials of the names of the child's father and mother. "Don't give away little Prosper," continued the doctor, "but to the person who can shew you the other half of this cypher. This precaution is indispensable on the present occasion.—I now quit you," added Desronais; "but in a few hours you shall see me again with my little charge."

After the departure of the doctor, Joan was lost in conjecture about this singular event. "This is undoubtedly the son of a great princess," said she;

“She will have made a love-marriage; and to avoid the displeasure of her parents, she conceals her son. Is it not thus, James?” “Let it be that or t’other thing,” replied James, “it signifies little to me; I don’t wish to crack my scull about any thing. It is a child, and there is an end of it; and as we are paid for nursing it, and keeping the secret, all that remains for us, is to do our duty.”

Joan had not finished her conjecture about little Prosper, when the child arrived, carried by the faithful, friendly Desronais. He put the little babe into the arms of Joan; who cried out, “O bless me, how beautiful! See how white it is! This is surely the child of a prince. See, he stretches out his little arms to me! Indeed, doctor, I feel a great affection for this child; I love him as well as if he were my own.” “Well, well, good Joan,” said M. Desronais, smiling, “I ask nothing more; but go and suckle him quickly. He is eight days old, and has, as yet, been deprived of that salutary nourishment.”

Whilst Joan, with all the eagerness of a good heart, was employed in nursing the little infant, M. Desronais gave James a purse of fifty louis. “Behold,” said he, “the first of your yearly expenses: you will receive the same sum every year.” James was astonished at the sight of the gold: never had he touched so much at a time. “Let us see, husband,”

said Joan, stretching out her neck, and staring with surprise; "dear James, what will we do with all this money?" "What you please, my good Joan," replied M. Desronais; "but above all, don't change your manner of living in any respect; don't wear better clothes. Have a care only to nourish yourself well; that is necessary for the health of the child." "But," said Joan, examining the beautiful linen and laces of the child, "do you think our neighbours will imagine that I have been at the expense of all these fine clothes? Carry them back again, Sir; I have enough of linen, both for this little one and my own." "Your good sense charms me, nurse," said M. Desronais; really it did not occur to me that this circumstance could betray our secret. Take away, then, this finery, rendered useless in your solitude; replace this cambric by a coarser cloth; but let the child be always kept clean, and do, in a word, what you would do for your own son.

"*A propos*," added M. Desronais, "I must give you this paper, written by the hand of the infant's father." At the same time the Doctor opened an ivory pocket-book, mounted with gold, and drew from it a little billet, in which were traced these words: "This child's name is Prosper de la Peluse; he is born of a lawful marriage, and of noble parents. We recommend him to the humanity of James and his

wife, until the moment arrive that we can recompense their care and fidelity."

M. Desronais gave James the paper and the pocket-book. "Keep this carefully, my friend," said he; "if I should die, you will at least be able to give this proof of the existence of the son of M. de la Peluse; but remember never to mention to any person what you have just heard; the life of the infant will go for it, and—perhaps your own." At these words the good people appeared terrified, and entreated him to take back the money and the child: but the prudent Doctor encouraged them; and having again recommended secrecy to them, he quitted them, and went to tranquillize Monsieur and Madame de la Peluse, who that same night departed for a distant land, to avoid becoming the victims of impending troubles in the country they inhabited.

M. de la Peluse was against the government; and a powerful party sought his ruin. This was what induced him to conceal his child, whom they would have pursued, as heir to his rank and fortune. With sorrowful hearts, Monsieur and Madame de la Peluse departed, but for a much longer time than they at first imagined.

CHAPTER II.

The Death of Joan and James.—Prosper turned away from the House.

M. DESRONAIS came exactly as he had promised. He gave James the 1200 livres, as agreed, and returned, blessing Providence for having so well disposed of his little Prosper.

James, whose expenditure was extremely limited, found no better way of employing his money, than by purchasing a small piece of ground for himself and family. It was a great fortune for a man in his situation ; but he had the good sense not to boast of it.

M. Desronais came the six following years ; the seventh year they looked for him in vain ; he never appeared. Prosper, who called him his good friend, was the first to perceive his absence : he complained bitterly ; and perhaps from a foresight of innumerable misfortunes which this desertion seemed to presage to him, he shed many a heart-felt tear. His foster-father and mother, uneasy in their turn, tried to console him ; but it was decreed that M. Desronais should never again return to the Black Forest. From this time James heard no news of the parents of his adopted son ; but as he loved him, he was consoled. This simple

and unambitious man thought himself amply paid for his attention to the child ; and if the remembrance of M. Desronais sometimes drew a sigh from his bosom, it was the thought, that his dear Prosper, who was so beautiful, should have no other condition in life than that of a collier.

It was three years since Prosper had seen M. Desronais ; he had even forgotten the visits that this good friend used to make, and firmly believed that James, the collier, was his father. Joan, his good nurse, was taken from this world, and Prosper wept as if she had really been his mother. However, he had still many more tears to shed ; for a year after, James, who had languished and drooped ever since the death of his wife, followed her to the grave. Before his death, the good man desired to speak in private with Prosper ; but this was no easy matter, as the cottage, being formed of ill-joined planks, allowed all to be seen and heard. When the old man expressed this wish, his sons, out of obedience, left them alone ; but jealousy, which had never quitted them with regard to Prosper, now sharpened their malice against him. " What could be said to him in secret ? to him, who was the youngest of them all ? Always a preference ! At every time their father and mother had treated him better than the rest ; they exempted him from the hardest labour, with which they were loaded without mercy. This

was the reason why this *gentleman* had such a beautiful white skin. He seemed to look upon them as his servants." It was in this manner that they exasperated one another against him.—When Prosper was beside the bed of the old man, James drew from under his pillow a little leather purse, and presented to him the ivory pocket-book and the cypher of gold, at the same time instructing him in the secret of his birth. Prosper learned, without pride, the name of his father, and the rank that was reserved for him in the world; but his mind was wholly taken up with the thought, that the person he loved most was at the point of death. His heart felt as if bursting, when he looked on the venerable figure before him, pale, and worn to a shadow. He took the hand of James, and, in his innocent language, expressed his lively gratitude for the care taken of him from his infancy. The old man, fatigued with the efforts he had made, and perhaps too much moved with the tears of this child, gave no longer any signs of life. Prosper, thinking him dead, uttered a shriek, and called his brothers; who entered immediately. Behind the adjoining part of the cottage they had heard all the conversation of the old man, and their hatred was now increased. James was not dead: he begged them to remain a moment with him; and whilst Prosper, who had retired to a corner of the forest, was imploring Heaven for the preserva-

tion of his foster-father, James recommended him to the protection of his sons. "My dear children," said the good man, "become the protectors of your brother Prosper. You ought to do so from affection, and even from gratitude; for the little that I have has been given me on his account. Take care of his infancy; I entreat you to do it." They all gave him their promise, but it was only to compose him; for as soon as James's eyes were closed, they assembled, and resolved to turn off Prosper. "You are not our brother," said they to him, "so you ought not to pretend to any thing here. Go, see who will give you any thing. We don't wish to keep you any longer for nothing." Prosper began to weep, and went from the house, without knowing what was to become of him. He was then only ten years of age.

CHAPTER III.

A beneficent Goddess appears to Prosper in a Dream, who promises to protect him, and gives him the Magical Mirror.

LITTLE Prosper, on being turned away from the house, fell on his knees under a tree, and put up a fervent prayer to Heaven, begging God to guide his steps,

and to send him the help he stood so much in need of. He rose, full of confidence in Providence; for James had taught him never to despair of succour from the Almighty.

This poor child wandered as chance directed him a great part of the day. As night came on, he arrived near a forsaken coal-pit: he entered it, threw himself down in a corner, upon a heap of dried leaves; and, although dying with hunger, he was so fatigued, that he fell asleep immediately.—He dreamed that he lay upon a green turf, enamelled with most beautiful flowers: thickets of roses and honeysuckle embalmed the air with their odour; a limpid rivulet caused a soft murmur, which conveyed to the soul a most delicious calm: in a word, the residence appeared enchanted.

Whilst Prosper contemplated this beautiful place, he perceived coming towards him, under the same grove in which he was, a lady, beautiful beyond description, whose noble and majestic air inspired respect, and a kind of religious awe. Prosper rose; the lady made him a sign to remain. She seated herself upon a bank of moss, and made him draw near her; then taking his hand, she looked at him with eyes beaming with goodness and benevolence, and spoke to him thus: “My dear child, you are yet very young; however, you already experience the rigour

of destiny. Prepare yourself to support strong trials. You have a long time to suffer. In the mean time, as I have pity on your youth, and as I love you on account of your father, who has never abandoned me, I wish to be useful to you, and give you counsel, of which your age has the greatest need. I only exact of you, in return for the services I will render you, an unlimited confidence. Despondency will be an offence I will with difficulty pardon; but if ever you fall into despair, you lose me entirely. Misfortune is the crucible which tries virtue; he who has never suffered, knows not his strength. Never lose courage, whatever may happen to you; and believe that I am always with you, though invisible.

“I will assist you still more, on account of the weakness of your age, by giving you a mirror, which will be a guide to you in any embarrassment. If the thing you have a desire to do is right, the face of the mirror will be clear; if it is doubtful, the mirror will grow dull; and if it is decidedly bad, it will be quite darkened. Consult this faithful monitor often; it is incapable of deceiving you. If you are attentive not to neglect its advice, you may arrive at the highest point of happiness to which a human being can aspire; but if, on the contrary, you do not pay attention to it, you will be inevitably ruined.” In finishing these words, the beautiful face of the lady assumed a stern

air ; which so terrified the child, that the exertion he made to withdraw his hand from her awaked him.

It was day-light. His surprise was not to be described, when he perceived the magic mirror lying by his side. "What !" said he to himself, "has my dream any truth in it ? Will this lady really protect me ? If that is the case, I will not be quite so unfortunate." He took the magical mirror in his hand : its face was very beautiful, and perfectly transparent. Then he began to think over, in his own mind, all that the beautiful lady had said to him. "Very well," said he, "I will be tractable to this lady : I will not, by my disobedience, render myself unworthy of her protection." After having thus reasoned with himself, he rose and walked away, with the intention of leaving the forest, carrying with him his precious mirror.

Whilst living with the honest collier, Prosper had never been far from the cottage ; therefore, instead of taking the path which conducted him to the public road, he sunk deeper into the immense forest ; and, after having walked a great way, he found himself at the point from whence he had departed the preceding day, that is to say, pretty near his former dwelling. On seeing this hospitable cottage from afar, in which he had passed his infancy in the arms of James and his wife, Prosper could not refrain from tears. He

threw himself on his knees, clasped his hands, and, raising his eyes to heaven, recommended himself to the care of God. His prayers turned with tenderness to the happy souls of his ancient friends; for James had taught him that there was a better life beyond this world, where the good would be rewarded, and the wicked punished, to all eternity. "O my dear James and Joan," cried he, sobbing bitterly, "if you still regard your Prosper, see him without a home, without bread, dying for hunger, and not knowing what is to become of him. Pray for him. Remember how much you loved him when you were on earth; O do not abandon him now." This fervent prayer was not without effect; for he who prays with all his heart, always receives consolation. Prosper dried his tears; he felt his courage renewed; an internal voice promised him happier days; he even foresaw happiness, but it was at a distance. He rose immediately. "Why do I weep?" said he: "If the great lady of my dream saw me, she would be very much displeased. I am young and healthy; I must work. Let me go and seek some one who will take me into service; I must not lose courage." This was thinking very justly for a child of ten years of age. However, he was hungry, and the forest offered no resource against his pressing wants.

CHAPTER IV.

*Prosper consults his Mirror.—He is taken by Robbers,
and conducted to their Cave.*

PROSPER then walked away, often looking back at the dear cottage, where a little while ago he had been so happy, when he perceived, at some distance, sleeping on the ground, that brother, who, speaking for the rest, had inhumanly turned him from the house. Prosper approached softly, sometimes concealing himself behind the trees, sometimes walking with precaution. He saw at last that Rusto, this merciless brother, slept profoundly, having by his side an enormous piece of bread, and a large hare that he had just killed. "What good luck!" said Prosper, "I am going to make a good breakfast, and to be revenged on this wicked creature, by carrying off his hare, which will be very serviceable to me, made ready on charcoal. I see very well that the good lady has not deserted me: it is she, no doubt, who has sent me this little provision." However, in the midst of his joy, Prosper experienced a feeling within him, which left him in doubt with regard to the action in which he was about to be employed. He durst not advance a step farther; his face became like crimson, although

he was alone. What if his brother were to awake, or some of the rest to spring from behind the trees, and come upon him by surprise, at the moment he was carrying off Rusto's hare and breakfast? Prosper hesitated more than before; he began to think he was going to commit some fault; "For," said he, "if the thing is right, what need I deliberate so long? Am I afraid of being seen?" At last he thought of his mirror; in a moment he uncovered its face, and beheld, to his great grief, that it was dull—so dull, that he could not see his figure in it. He remained quite amazed. "This is very singular," said he; "is there so much harm in taking this morsel of bread, when I am dying with hunger, and when Rusto can have another when he pleases? And this hare, what great harm would there be in robbing him of it? Could he not kill another in the forest for himself? I think this lady is very severe; however, I dare not disobey her, for fear she should punish me in a manner that would make me repent not having listened to her." To avoid doing this bad action, Prosper went away. He was soon recompensed for it. A beautiful pheasant was taken by the wings in a bush: the child seeing it, ran to it, and, regardless of its elegant plumage, twisted its neck without mercy. The circumstance seemed to authorise him to act thus. Near this beautiful bird, Prosper also

found wherewithal to make his breakfast: this was several eggs, still warm, which he swallowed immediately. Thus fortified in body and mind, Prosper continued his journey. "Providence directs me," said he; "He who has found me eggs for my breakfast, and a pheasant for my dinner; who has done more, kept me from a bad action, will surely conduct me in the right way." "Courage, Prosper!" said a voice within him, "thou hast already gained much, since thou listenest to the dictates of thy conscience, and puttest thyself under the guidance of God: Courage!"

With a mind as much at ease as his situation would permit, Prosper continued to walk lightly along, when he perceived two men coming towards him. At the same time, he heard, from different sides, loud calls and whistles, which terrified him. He knew too well what sort of men they were who inhabited the forest, and made use of this method to call themselves together. The chief of the robbers, and his lieutenant (for such they were), seized little Prosper by the arm. "Where are you going? What have you got there? What is your name?" both of them demanded at once. The child, terrified to death, had, however, presence of mind enough not to make himself known. "I am," said he, "a son of James, the collier: I have wandered away from the cottage, without perceiving it, and on my way I killed this pheasant."

The dress of Prosper made them readily believe what he told them. They did not search him ; so that he preserved his pocket-book, his cypher, and his mirror. " Come along with us," said the captain ; " we have need of a child of your age ;" and, without any further ceremony, they took him by the hand, and led him away. As they advanced, they were joined by the rest of the gang, to the number of forty. At last they arrived at a very deep hole, shut by a trap-door, newly covered with grass. One of the robbers raised the trap-door, and they all leaped into this subterraneous place, as frogs leap into a pond. Prosper leaped into it also, with no other damage than a fright. The captain then took him under the arm, and helped him along.

After this singular entrance, they opened a very strong grate of iron, which was shut within by enormous bolts. A hole like the first, but much deeper, presented itself to them, into which they descended, one after another, by the help of a rope. Arrived at the bottom, Prosper saw, by the light of a lamp suspended from the arched roof, a large hall, or rather cavern, dug in the rock. A table stood in the middle, with seats ranged around it ; and against the walls were placed mats, which served as beds for those who composed this noble assembly.

Prosper saw no more that day ; but next day he was conducted through all the apartments. These immense vaults, dug by men, had been for ages the retreat of banditti. It was as difficult to force into this place of refuge, as it would have been to destroy it ; besides, it was so far from any frequented place, that it was not in the power of the unfortunate victims of these ruffians to make their cries be heard. Beyond the first hall, of which we have spoken, lay the kitchen, and other places for keeping the wine and provisions. All these apartments formed one side of the cavern.—In case of alarm, there was another retreat, much farther off, to which they were conducted by winding paths, which branched out in different directions. After walking for the space of ten minutes, they came to a place in the form of a star, from which proceeded twelve lanes, at equal distances from each other. Each of these lanes terminated in a large iron door, which opened either into another chamber, or into the vault itself ; the numberless outlets of which were so difficult to find, that those who attempted to follow the robbers would infallibly have been lost and murdered. It was in these chambers that the robbers deposited the spoil of travellers. They contained large heaps of gold and silver, jewels of every kind, and property of every description.

To return to our hero. The first day they exacted nothing from him: the captain made him sup well, which he really stood in need of; then he made him go to bed in a corner, upon a bundle of straw.

Scarcely had Prosper fallen asleep, when the fairy appeared to him. "I am satisfied with you, Prosper," said she; "you have had some command over yourself. Do good to all, whether they deserve it or not; for you will be punished for your own faults, and not for those of your neighbours. I again recommend to you to be on your guard against appearances. It does not belong to you to judge whether a thing is right or wrong; the wisest and most enlightened men are apt to be deceived on this point. Allow yourself to be guided by the wisdom of Providence, which is infinite; and believe firmly, that what seems an evil to you, is sent either for your amendment, or to produce some great good."

Prosper awoke, quite satisfied with his dream, and put on a resolution never to do any thing that could displease this beautiful lady, in order that he might see her the oftener; for at this time her air was so sweet and smiling, that the young creature was quite transported with joy at the sight. He looked at his mirror; the face appeared to him as if made of one entire diamond, it shone with so brilliant a lustre.

CHAPTER V.

*Prosper saves the Lives of his Father and Mother,
without knowing who they are.*

THE youth of our hero prevented the robbers from asking any thing of him that was oppressive ; and the captain, who was fond of him, made him his servant. The gentle looks of Prosper pleased him, and his acuteness gained more and more on his affections every day. Nothing could displease the captain more, than to speak disrespectfully of his *prodigé* ; so that not one of the gang durst give him the least cause for uneasiness.

However, Prosper suffered much from being in their bad company, where he every day beheld objects that made his feelings revolt. The discourses which he heard, and the ferocious joy which shone in the eyes of these villains at the odious recital of their expeditions, with the spoil of the unfortunate travellers displayed to his sight, all inspired him with a horror which he could scarcely conceal, and his young heart suffered much by constraining itself. He formed the design of making himself less agreeable to the chief, in expectation of being turned away ; but on consulting his mirror, he was very much surprised to see the

face of it cloudy. "What!" said he, "is there any harm in trying to fly from such savages?" Then, on reflection, he added, "It is, without doubt, the means that I employ which is blameable: besides, let me await the event; perhaps it is not yet the time that I should go from the cavern." The following night, the beautiful lady testified to him her extreme satisfaction at the manner in which he had interpreted her will. "Your presence is necessary here, Prosper," said she; you will quit the robbers in due time." In this manner did the amiable child, every night, receive either advice concerning his future conduct, or applause for his good behaviour; and, thanks to the protection of the fairy, he made rapid progress in the paths of virtue, in the midst of the most infamous corruption; which proves, that he who listens to the voice of wisdom, and takes conscience for his guide, can never go wrong.

One day, however, Prosper disobeyed the captain; who, in the humour of the moment, struck him. The child, humbled by this chastisement, concealed himself and wept. When he was a little consoled, he drew his mirror from his bosom, but could not see himself in it. At first he thought that the darkness of the cavern prevented him from distinguishing any thing in the mirror; but on going to a lamp, he saw no better. "I have acted wrong," said he, with

grief; and the poor child went to bed more sad than usual: "Yes, Prosper, you have done wrong," said the lady to him, as soon as she appeared; "the captain is your master; he supports you; you ought to obey him in every thing that is not contrary to the law of God, and serve him punctually and faithfully. Remember this for the future."

Prosper had lived two years with the robbers, when one day they returned sooner than usual, carrying an immense booty, and conducting in the midst of them a gentleman of a noble appearance, a very beautiful lady, and a governess, who held by the hand a little boy about six years of age. On seeing this, Prosper glided into the group, and under the pretence of disarming his master, he examined the strangers; but the tears came into his eyes, when he beheld the masculine courage of the husband, the resignation of the young wife, and the terror painted on the charming features of the child: as for the poor governess, she was almost frightened to death.

Prosper had never yet seen the robbers make prisoners of the people whose baggage they had taken. What did they mean to do with these persons? Would they put them to death? At this thought the blood froze in his veins. However, he resolved to watch the steps of the chief, and to listen with scrupulous attention to all that was said on this subject.

To ascertain whether his conduct on this occasion had gained the approbation of his illustrious protectress, Prosper hastened to consult his mirror. Never had the face appeared so beautiful. "Well," said he, "I can follow the impulse of my heart, which speaks to me in favour of these unknown strangers. Yes, I will assist them, though it should cost me my life."

The strangers were confined in an apartment of the cavern where the arms of the robbers were kept, with bundles of straw and mats to serve them for seats and beds. After they were secured, the band sat down at table; and having congratulated themselves on the value of their prize, they began to deliberate on the destiny of the prisoners. It was decided with one voice, to get rid of them. "These are persons of distinction," said they, "and it is dangerous to set them at liberty; for, in spite of all their promises, they would betray us." The chief begged the life of the child. "He is young," said he, "and we can train him up; so I claim him as my part of the booty." "The wife is young and beautiful," said another of the robbers. "Peace!" replied all the company, as if with one consent, "none of your pity; it will prove our ruin." A mournful silence succeeded this cruel resolution.

The chief again renewed the subject: "Gentlemen, I think we may, without endangering ourselves,

soften the sentence, by rendering the death of these wretches as easy as possible; for I confess to you, that I cannot, in cold blood, imbrue my hands in that of the innocent. He who perishes in defending himself excites not my pity; he only exposes his life, and I expose mine: but here, what do we risk? Prudence says, we should get clear of these prisoners, whom fortune has placed in a class of society that would not let the offence go unpunished that we have done them; and, since they must die, I am of opinion that they should die by poison." They all, with one accord, repeated, "They shall die by poison." It was then agreed, that a large quantity of opium should be put into the wine which the travellers were to have at supper; and that, during the night, their bodies should be carried into a little cave set apart as the sepulchre of the band. So this affair being settled, they spoke no more of it, but continued drinking and singing a great part of the night.

Prosper, who had not lost one word of their infernal conversation, observing they were in a fair way for getting intoxicated, went and prepared a bottle of the same appearance as the one they were to carry to the prisoners, and threw into it a very small quantity of a soporific powder; then dextrously substituted this bottle for the one which contained the opium, trusting the remainder of the adven-

ture to Heaven. After making this change, Prosper had the curiosity to look at his mirror; and he saw that the face of it, which was usually very bright, threw out a fire, the lustre of which dazzled him. "What can this mean," cried he, "unless it is a proof that I have done a good action? O my God! second me in this laudable enterprise."

Soon after this, a slight supper was served up to the travellers, of which they stood in the greatest need, as they had not tasted any thing the whole day. The lady hesitated to touch the victuals presented to her; but her husband pressed her to take something, assuring her that the robbers, who were to the number of more than sixty, having nothing to fear from them, would never employ the cowardly means of poison to get rid of their victims. Forced by imperious necessity, they all ate and drank of what was set before them. The soporific soon acted upon their senses; and, resting their heads upon the table, they fell asleep, almost without changing their attitude.

The robbers, on their part, enjoyed an abundant repast; and the wine held them, as if by enchantment, till midnight; when their heads being yet pretty sound, the chief remembered the prisoners. He ordered one of his people to see in what condition they were; adding, that if he found them dead, to inter them immediately in the place designed for

this purpose. The messenger, ill pleased at quitting the table, and already a little stupified, hastened to fulfil his commission. From the situation in which he found them, he concluded they were dead; and, without farther examination, or even without undressing them, he carried them, with the assistance of Prosper, into the little cave where the banditti deposited the dead bodies of the gang and of those who fell into their hands. Leaving charge on our hero to strip them, the robber rejoined the troop, praising the zeal of Prosper in order that they might not observe his negligence in doing his duty.

When Prosper returned into the hall, the chief, half-intoxicated, paid him a compliment: "I am well pleased with you, my friend," said he to him; "this is the first time you have assisted us, and to prove that I am satisfied with you, you shall also have your share of the booty. I reserve for you a beautiful gold repeater." Prosper, happy at having succeeded so far, then carried away the child of the unfortunate travellers, while asleep, and put him to bed; after which he returned to wait on his master.

The robbers, already dead drunk, were all sunk in profound sleep; some lying on the table, others stretched on the floor. Prosper wished very much to go to sleep too, that he might enjoy one moment of repose, and receive, in his dream, from the good lady,

the praises he deserved; but many things yet remained to be done; for it was necessary to prevent any one from going into the little cave, and he must provide for their safety, by making them leave the subterraneous cavern.

Prosper had acquired some experience during the time he had been with the robbers, and he knew that now there was not a moment to be lost. Therefore, as soon as he thought the effect of the sleeping draught was over, he ran to the cave, and in few words informed the strangers of the dangers that threatened them, as well as the measures they must take for their escape. After dressing and arming them like persons belonging to the gang, in order to be in readiness for his purpose, he comforted them with regard to their son, whom they wished to take along with them; and begged them, with his hands anxiously clasped together, not to oppose their deliverance, since he could not assist them in any other way. The gentleman and lady at last yielded to Prosper's entreaties: "But, noble and generous child," said the lady, "how can you remain among such wretches? but at this time it is not proper to ask any questions respecting you; yet I hope that one day we shall see you again. Stript of all by these robbers, we are deprived of the means of testifying our gratitude; but, if ever you should leave this infamous place, come to Naples, my

dear; there we may be able partly to reward the important service you have rendered us." She took a ring from her finger, being the only thing she possessed, and gave it to Prosper, "Keep this ring for my sake, my child," said she; "don't forget me; and in whatever place you find me, if it should even be at court, do not fail to present it to me." Prosper received the ring with respect; but hearing a noise, he made the prisoners conceal themselves, and hastened his return to the hall, where happily the robbers were still asleep.

Heaven came to the assistance of this amiable child, for as day-light began to appear, one of the robbers, who had been left sentinel, gave the signal that a company of rich merchants, in a caravan, were crossing the Black Forest. Immediately the captain awoke, gave the order to arm, and in a moment they were all ready. Prosper ran to the apartment, ordered the strangers to follow him, and warned them to keep silence. He led them to the hall, where the dimness of the lamp, joined to the effects of intoxication and the want of rest, prevented their being remarked. They hoisted themselves up with the rest, climbed the ladder, ran to the place directed by Prosper, and, by the help of the trees, disappeared, without any one perceiving their absence.

Prosper, whose mind was now at ease with regard to their fate, immediately went to bed, and was asleep in a moment. "My son," said the lovely goddess, stretching out her hand to him, "you have done a good action; know that, as the reward of it, those whom you have saved are your father and mother." She immediately disappeared, and Prosper felt so lively a sensation at learning this news, that he awoke, his whole frame agitated with an excess of joy. The danger the authors of his existence had run made him tremble, fearing some reverse of fortune might happen to them. Ah! if he had known them sooner, what happiness would he have experienced!—but perhaps his tenderness would have betrayed them. He threw himself on his knees, according to custom, and thanked God for the happy deliverance of his dear parents. The precious ring he had on his finger he kissed a thousand times with transport; "My mother has worn it," said he to himself; "she has given it to me, as a pledge of her tenderness and love to me! O yes, I will find you! you, whom I love more than my life!" cried the amiable child, his eyes filling with tears; "and you will have no reason to blush for your son."

Prosper paid great attention to the little boy, who was, without doubt, his brother. He endeavoured to

amuse him; and, before the day was finished, he had the satisfaction to see the banditti return, with the certainty that his father and mother had escaped their fangs.

CHAPTER VI.

Prosper is confined at the bottom of the Cave, and condemned to die by Hunger.

WHEN the robbers felt themselves rested, the captain, recollecting that he had promised a recompense to little Prosper, was anxious to encourage the boy, to whom he daily grew more attached. In order to train him to his own profession, and give him a desire for riches, he presented him with the beautiful gold repeating watch, set round with brilliants, which the robbers had taken from his father. The captain likewise gave him some money, and promised to let him have a share of the plunder, if he would make himself useful.

Our hero could hardly conceal his joy at receiving this present; but the captain attributed the satisfaction that shone in his countenance to a very different motive. He rejoiced to think, that, at twelve years of age, this child was so sensible to the love of riches;

and from that moment he thought him his own for life.

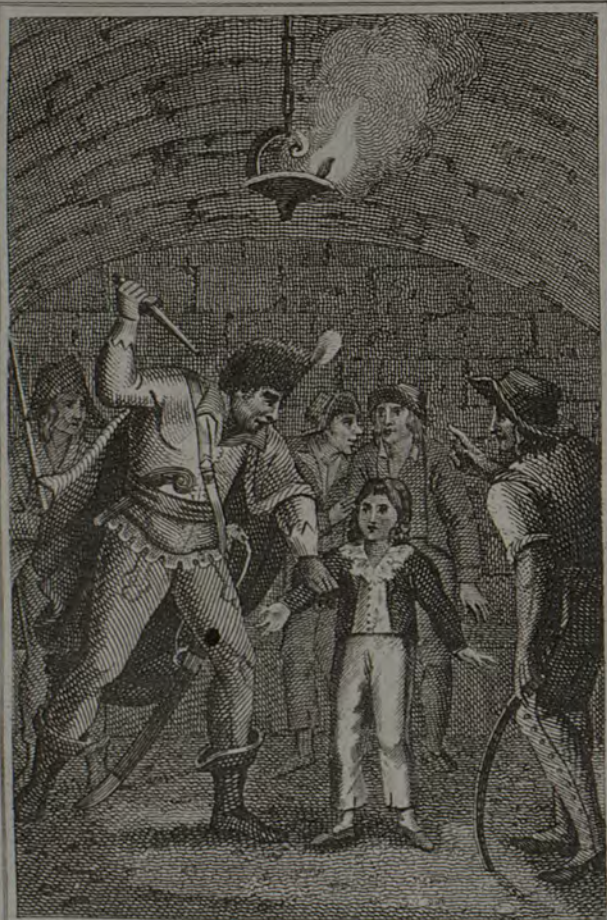
As soon as Prosper was alone, he examined the watch they had given him, looked at it over and over again, kissed it a hundred times, and leaped for joy at having it in his possession. A moment after, he was gazing at it again, then made it strike, then kissed it again. At last he tried to open it, and soon succeeded; but what was his surprise, to find that it contained the other half of the gold cypher he already possessed! Prosper felt of what importance it was for him to have this cypher, of which another might make but a bad use. His fate now began to clear up; the lady he had seen in his dreams came into his mind, and he recollected all her wise counsels. "She was right," said he; "we should not judge from appearances: what seems a great misfortune, is often the source of supreme felicity. If I had not come into this cavern, I would not have had the happiness of saving my father and mother; nay, I would have lost them for ever." It is easy to make such reflections when one is happy; the greatest difficulty is to remember them, and put them in practice, when in adversity. We shall see if our hero can always remember this very consoling maxim, that the happiest lot often seems the worst, and that we should never lose courage.

In the mean time, little Augustus, the brother of our hero, was visibly losing his health; the want of fresh air, and the unwholesome damp of the place, had quite changed his appearance. The captain, fearing to lose him, took him from the cave; and giving him out as a seafaring lad, confided him to the care of a rich farmer. Prosper, happy on learning that his brother was out of the cavern, and breathing a purer air, flattered himself that fortune would at last smile on him, and that he would soon have an opportunity of seeing his father, mother, and brother again; for the captain did not conceal the place of his brother's residence. But as our knowledge is extremely limited, and a thick veil conceals the future from us, we often afflict ourselves when we ought to rejoice, and rejoice when we ought to be afflicted; which teaches us to keep our spirits in a perfect equilibrium, and to yield entirely to the will of God.

Whilst Prosper was building beautiful castles in the air, and entertaining the most flattering hopes, one of the robbers thought of going into the little cave where the bodies of the father and mother of our hero, and the governess of Augustus, were supposed to be deposited. He soon perceived that they were not there, and the unfortunate Prosper was accused of having favoured their escape. He was brought before the captain, who, shaking him rudely by the arm,

asked him why, and where he had concealed them. Prosper trembled in every limb, and seeing the inflamed face and terrible look of the captain, he could not utter a word. "Speak!" cried the chief, in a dreadful passion, "tell the truth, or you shall die!" and at the same time he raised his dagger over him. In this awful moment, a supernatural strength seemed to animate the little child. "I have saved my father and mother," said he, "and only done my duty; you shall know nothing more. My life is at present in your hands." The captain, struck with so much courage at so tender an age, was almost moved to pardon him; but as the rest of the banditti did not seem to acquiesce in his sentiments, he durst not make them known.

The captain anxiously wished to know more of the history of Prosper, and why persons of such distinction had left him so destitute; but Prosper was unwilling to answer any of his questions, and besides, he was ignorant of the history of his parents. He did not know, that it was to shun a dreadful and inevitable death, Monsieur and Madame de la Peluse were forced to fly America, where they remained for eight years; that they had returned, and had lived for some months in a most comfortable situation; that the strictest search had been made for their dear Prosper, but without effect, since, by the wickedness of James's



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children, they entirely lost every trace of his route ; and when chance brought them together in the cave, they had not even the consolation of knowing him.

Though the captain was obliged to conceal what passed in his soul, yet he resolved in his own mind to assist Prosper, if an opportunity occurred, without letting the band suspect he had any share in it. Having formed this resolution, he left him, to deliberate with the rest of the robbers on the punishment that Prosper's crime deserved. The child was condemned, by a great majority, to be shut up in the interior of the subterraneous vault, and to be there starved to death.

Prosper heard this sentence ; but he shewed no weakness, asked no pardon, being conscious that he was to die in a good cause. Ah ! before whom should he be abashed ? At this moment he proved himself the worthy, the noble son of Monsieur and Madame de la Peluse ; the greatest monarch on earth would not have disowned him. The captain felt tears of affection rolling from his eyes. "Virtuous child," said he to himself, "you deserve a better fate, and judges who could appreciate the beauty of the action they condemn." This man, too sensible of the disposition of this gang of banditti, dared not oppose their injustice ; but he determined to repair it, if possible. Prosper was conducted into the subterraneous vault,

to the place that formed a star, composed of twelve passages, each terminating with a large iron door. His conductors fixed on one: it was opened, and he was thrust in; then, giving him a small loaf, they shut the door, and left him in frightful darkness.

CHAPTER VI.

Our Hero gets out of the Subterraneous Vault.

THE deliberation of the banditti had been so quick, and the sentence executed with so much celerity, that they never once thought of the watch, money, or trinkets, they had given to Prosper; consequently he was still in possession of them, his pocket-book, and, above all, his inestimable mirror. When he was left alone, his firmness forsook him, and he shed tears in great abundance. His courage, however, returned by degrees, and he ventured to walk forward in the dark. When he had got at some distance from the place where he was, a most frightful noise assailed his ear. This was occasioned by a kind of gulf of great depth, whose narrow mouth gave passage to a considerable quantity of water, which ran with great rapidity, and then discharged itself, with a dreadful noise, into this unfathomable abyss.

After having examined, in every direction, the place where he was, Prosper perceived with terror, that this gulf would prevent him from proceeding farther. In this dreadful dilemma, despair took possession of his mind, and he exclaimed, "What does it serve me now to have done my duty, if I am to be thus recompensed for it? See what the advice of this fine lady has brought me to! It is because I have listened to her that I am going to perish! Had I been left to myself, I might have got out of this dreadful cave long ago." He then burst into tears, and dashed his head against the wall, as if he meant to destroy himself; till at last, overcome by the agitation of his mind, he fell fast asleep. The goddess now appeared to him, and stood at a distance; but her air was so grave and severe, that Prosper durst not look at her. "I recommended to you, young man," said she, "to place an unlimited confidence in me. This you promised; but you have not kept your word. If happiness and prosperity were to have accompanied all your steps, what need had I to put you on your guard against despondency? Nothing happens in this world without the permission of God; consequently it is rebellion against him not to submit to his decrees without repining. If it is decreed that you are to die in this place, and in this manner, you must be resigned to your fate. Divine Justice awaits you in

the next life, and in it you will be rewarded according to your sufferings in this." Prosper felt the justice of the lady's reproaches; and he prostrated himself at her feet, with his face to the earth. "Rise, young man," said she, "recover the dignity of your character; learn to suffer; and profit by the lessons of experience." Having said these words, she disappeared.

When Prosper awoke, he recollected his dream. "The lady is in the right," said he; "if it is the will of Heaven that I should die here, of what use is it for me to complain? It is one of the greatest crimes, and perhaps will deprive me of eternal happiness."

The poor child, sad, but now resigned, awaited death with some degree of courage. However, as his grief could not banish the sharp calls of hunger, he ate a part of his loaf, and drank of the water of the stream, which greatly refreshed him. He reflected a long time on his cruel destiny, with tears flowing down his cheeks; then, persuaded he had only a short time to live, he threw himself on his knees, and recommended his soul to God. In the fervour of his prayer, raising his hands to Heaven, he struck one of the sharp points of the rock from which the water rushed that formed this dreadful lake; when, all at once it came into his mind, that the rock might afford him a passage out of the cavern, if the projecting pieces were firm enough to support the weight of his

body. Our hero, looking upon his death as certain if he remained in the cave, and impelled by his desperate situation, did not hesitate a moment to adopt this expedient, which offered him at least a chance of escape. He climbed up the rock, begging God to protect him; seized a projecting stone, got his foot upon another, clung to a third, and so moved forward, with his body totally suspended over the awful gulf in which the torrent was lost.

Instead of crossing this rapid and deep river, Prosper perceived, from the noise of the cascade, that he was drawing near its source. Here his strength failed, and his courage began to desert him; but having with some difficulty found a small fragment of rock, he sat down in order to consider what he ought to do. In the awful obscurity which surrounded him, there appeared as much danger in returning as in continuing his progress; and perhaps, thought he, I may have already got more than half way; "So come on, I will proceed, whatever happen." Prosper rose, and groping around him, found the stone on which he was seated was joined to the one forming the edge of the cataract; but this, though surrounded with water, did not stop his pace, for he went into it courageously, keeping himself up by the side of the rock. On stretching out his hand before him, he felt a continuation of little steps, in the form of a ladder; and by

the help of these he ascended along the side of a rock, where, to his great surprise, he found himself on the other side of the torrent.

This obstacle overcome, our hero had a more considerable space to travel in. He did not gain much ground at first; however, the course of the river directed him on his way. After walking a long time, he listened, and guessed, from the noise of the water, that he was at no great distance from the entrance of the cave; but the subterraneous river had made the place so extremely damp and slippery, that the poor little fellow tumbled at every step; besides, he sometimes knocked his head against the sharp corners of the rocks, which he could not see; and sometimes he would descend rapidly, without knowing where or when he was to stop, the ground being so uneven, and the declivity so steep.

Prosper had travelled for a day and a night through this immense subterraneous place without being disheartened, though his arms and legs were bruised black and blue, and his body bent down with weariness. He had lost the only morsel of his bread that remained, and as no prospect yet appeared of his getting out of the cavern, his courage was again deserting him, when a slight noise struck his ear; but the weak state in which he was, prevented him from distinguishing exactly what it was. He thought he

might be near some inhabited place; but terror took possession of his soul immediately, on hearing the sound of several voices, and he had not a doubt of its being the robbers, from being so near their dreadful dwelling. He thought they had come to see if he was still alive, and to end his days; which alarmed him so much, as almost to make him lose his senses. "Let me finish voluntarily a life so full of misfortune, and already too long," said he, "that my enemies may not have the satisfaction of putting me to death." And the ungrateful Prosper, forgetting his powerful protectress, ran towards the river, with the intention of plunging himself into it; but his eyes were struck with a sudden light, appearing through the crevices of the rock, which so reanimated him, that he wished no longer for death. He instantly recovered himself, and following its direction, at last arrived on the banks of a river which washed the walls of the cavern.

The first thing he did on his arrival, was to throw himself upon his knees, and thank God for his deliverance. He shed tears of joy and gratitude, and remembered with bitterness the impulse of despair, which had brought him to the verge of destruction, at the moment when Heaven was protecting him in a most visible manner. Ashamed of his fault, he did not dare to look at his mirror. At last he took

it out, as an expiation for his culpable conduct ; but, alas ! the face of it could hardly be perceived. “ I foresaw this,” cried he ; “ but, O my God ! I intreat your pardon, and never again will I distrust thy Providence, whatever may happen to me through life.”

Prosper, after devoting himself to prayer and repentance of his fault, began to look around him, and to examine the steep banks of this great river, when he perceived, not far from the place where he was, some fishermen occupied in adjusting their boats. It was them he had heard whilst he was in the cavern, and whom, in his terror, he had taken for the robbers. He tried to make them perceive him, but to no purpose, for he was at too great a distance, and they were too much occupied by their labours to hear him. Besides, he was concealed by an enormous piece of rock, which was so steep he could not climb it : here then he must either wait till the fishermen advanced with their boats to the place where he was, or throw himself into the water, and swim to them. Our hero would have taken the last alternative without hesitation, if his strength would have permitted him ; but his extreme weakness, from fatigue and want of food, prevented his quitting this hollow, which served him as a shelter.

Prosper having now effected his escape from the frightful cavern and banditti, thought nothing impos-

sible; so he appeased his hunger with some small fish, and waited patiently for the moment when he could make himself be heard. He had slept none for the last two days; the sun was upon the decline; and the heat beginning to abate, he lay down on the bank, and soon fell asleep; but his patroness did not appear to him at this time. When he awoke, he recollected with grief, that she had told him he would lose her, if ever he gave himself up to despair, and the tears flowed afresh down his cheeks; for the older he grew, the more he felt the value of this amiable lady, whose counsels had been so useful to him. He hoped, however, to get himself again into her good graces, by setting a strict watch over all his actions, so that the face of his mirror might always be clear and beautiful. In this he was right; for when conscience does not reproach us, the power which directs all our actions cannot desert us.

The third day after he left the cavern, our hero perceived a little boat making towards him. He had been observed by one of the fishermen, who came and delivered him from his embarrassing situation, and took him home to his cottage.

Prosper gave the fisherman a recital of his adventures; but he concealed from him who he really was, and the little treasure he had brought with him.

CHAPTER VIII.

Prosper stays some time with the Fisherman.—What happens to him there.

THE fisherman, who had so providentially come to the assistance of our hero, possessed a good heart ; but the sale of his fish being his only means of support, it scarcely afforded him the bare necessaries of life. In addition to his other misfortunes, he was burdened with the maintenance of a worthless son, who worked little and ate much. Yet, in spite of his poverty, this fisherman had a calm and contented appearance, because he relied on Providence, who had never allowed him to want. Although the most unfortunate of any in his profession, he was always ready to offer his cottage to strangers, and to share with them the little he possessed, without making himself uneasy about to-morrow ; persuaded that a good action never goes unrewarded.

When the fisherman had heard the adventures of our hero, he invited him to stay with him. “ You don’t know where to go,” said he ; “ you must dwell here with me. I am poor ; but we will both work here, and live comfortably together.” Prosper thanked this honest man, but told him, that he wished to see

the world; for, having as yet lived only with James the collier and the robbers in the cavern, he now wished very much to see a large city, and the inhabitants of it. The truth is, he anxiously wished to go and seek his father, but had no idea of the distance he was from any of the cities of Europe, nor the situation in which they lay, and the fisherman, as ignorant as himself, could give him no information on this point; therefore he resolved to travel, and leave the care of finding his parents to chance.

However, the hospitable fisherman insisted on Prosper staying at least a day or two with him before he set out; to which he frankly consented. He went a-fishing with his kind host, and, fortune seconding their labours, they caught a great many. When the day was ended, the fisherman took his young friend into a garden that belonged to the cottage, which he had planted with his own hands, and had cultivated during his leisure hours. At the end of the garden there was a little wood, surrounded with a thick hedge, which was the boundary of this poor man's possessions. As Prosper walked along musing on his fate, they reached the wood, the thick foliage of which formed a very agreeable shade, and under it the fisherman had raised seats of turf, here and there, to repose on after his labour.

Our hero examined this solitude with pleasure, and

thought within himself, that if his duty did not urge him to seek his parents, he could feel great pleasure in remaining with the fisherman, whose mild and simple manners, when contrasted with those of the banditti of the cavern, inspired him with affection and respect. Such were his reflections, as he walked in silence by the side of the fisherman, when he perceived at a little distance a rustic tomb, newly covered with turf, and surrounded with little bushes. "Is it a parent or a friend that rests here?" said Prosper. "Neither the one nor the other," returned his host; "the person that now sleeps in peace there was a traveller, who had not fortitude enough to bear up against his misfortunes." On speaking these words he approached a turf seat, and, waving his hand, invited Prosper to sit down beside him.

"This traveller," continued the fisherman, "was robbed by highwaymen, perhaps the same banditti that shut you up in the cavern, who left him in the forest bound, after stripping him of all his clothes. Chance conducted me to that spot to gather wood: I unbound him; and, after covering him with some of my own clothes, I led him to my cottage, and put him into my bed. He was seized with a violent fever; in the course of which I observed, that the disease lay rather in his mind than in his body. I tried to console him, but he could never get the better of the

loss of his gold. 'They have taken all from me!' he exclaimed continually; 'and I have lost all that I possessed! Never, never will I rise again!' I tried to convince him that his condition was not so bad as he supposed; that he would get the better of it by time and patience, that man brought nothing into this world at his birth, proving to him that the earth, that good nurse, was sufficient to provide for all his wants; that the comforts which luxury and vanity render necessary were superfluous, and alike useless to the savage and the philosopher.

"Perceiving that this reasoning made no impression on his mind, I took another way of it. Hope, that supports the afflicted, came to my assistance; and I endeavoured to persuade him, that the loss of his effects might soon be made up by one of those strokes of fortune which it is impossible to foresee, but which sometimes happen. After listening to me, he shook his head. 'All is lost!' said he; 'I am ruined without redress! I have nothing left me now but to die.' He soon lost his reason, and died with all the signs of the most violent despair, without devoting one moment to the repentance of his sins. I interred him here, and then prayed for his soul.

"Next day, whilst I was in my boat, my son came to call me in. 'What is the matter?' said I to him; 'I have cast my nets; wait till I am ready.' 'Fa-

ther,' said he, 'it is a gentleman who is seeking the merchant that was robbed in the Black Forest. "Tell him he died yesterday,' I replied, 'and stands in need of nothing now. But stop, come in my place, and hold my nets; perhaps the gentleman may want assistance. Stay here; I will return in a moment.'

"I went immediately to the stranger, who appeared pale and emaciated. It was the brother of the unfortunate merchant, at the news of whose death his heart had almost failed him. 'I have come here in search of him,' said he, overcome with grief. 'Why did I not die myself before I came hither?' As soon as he was able to speak, he told me that his brother had scarcely set out on his journey, when they succeeded to a considerable fortune, so that they had no occasion to carry on business for the future. 'I wished to write to my brother,' continued he, 'but did not know where he was. At last I learnt, by the public papers, that he, and the rest who had set out with him, had been robbed in the Black Forest. As I did not hear of their being murdered, I still entertained some hopes of finding him, and I set out for this place. On inquiring for my brother, I was told that he lived at the house of a neighbouring fisherman: there I found your son, and now I have learned——O my unfortunate brother! why hast thou not been able to resist thy misfortunes? Thy presence would have

cheered me through the rest of my life ! but what is fortune to me without thee ? How can I now enjoy happiness ?' In this manner the stranger breathed out his sorrows : he remained two days to mourn for his brother, and then departed. I come here very often, to muse and meditate on the fate of man, who is, for the most part, the cause of his own misfortunes ; moderation in good, and courage in bad fortune, is what man ought to do on his part—Heaven does the rest."

During this recital, Prosper said to himself, ' It is nearly in this manner that I have conducted myself : O ! I have been very much to blame, for the lovely goddess does not now appear to me in my dreams : Alas ! shall I never see her again ?' His resolution gained new strength by the reflections he made upon the fate of the merchant. He promised before God, that adversity should never make him forget the submission he owed to his eternal decrees ; and in this he kept his word.

CHAPTER IX.

Prosper leaves the Cottage of the Fisherman.—He meets with an old Man.

WE have already observed, that the fisherman had a son, who did not in the least resemble his father in the good qualities of his mind. This boy, who was about the age of our hero, was named Hierome. One day Hierome wished to engage Prosper to lay aside some fish, without the knowledge of the fisherman, in order that they might sell them, and keep up the money. Prosper not only refused to do this, but even represented to him the greatness of the crime he was about to commit, in deceiving the best of parents. Hierome was highly irritated, but fearing that Prosper would discover this circumstance, he resolved to prevent it, and get him turned away from the house. With this view, he accused him of having sold some fish secretly to a stranger, in the absence of his father. The honest fisherman was sorry to hear that the youth, in whom he placed so much confidence, had been guilty of such a base action; and reflected, with grief, on the corruption of the human heart; concluding, that the bad company in which Prosper had lived so long had spoiled his good inclinations.

Having still some remains of affection for him, the fisherman did not reproach him with his misconduct ; he now only wanted to get rid of him. " You wish to travel, young man," said he to him ; " the season is favourable, and you may set out." Prosper was astonished to receive his permission to depart in this abrupt manner, and he looked at the fisherman with an air that testified his surprise, but said nothing ; for he thought within himself, " I have staid too long here, and I am now punished for it ; for this man is poor, and perhaps, notwithstanding my labour, I am too great a burden upon him."

Prosper was not altogether destitute of pride ; which made him suffer much in his mind, by thinking that he had brought this affront upon himself by his want of foresight. The next day he bade adieu to the fisherman, and begged him to accept of some money, which he offered him ; but the fisherman, not knowing that Prosper had concealed his riches when he first arrived at the cottage, thought, with some appearance of reason, that this money was the produce of the little illicit commerce of which Hierome had accused him ; therefore, looking very grave, he accosted him thus : " Keep your gold, young man ; well or ill acquired, it will be useful to you in the countries you are going to travel through. Make a good use of it ; that is all I desire : so, farewell, and

may Heaven conduct and bless you." On saying this, the fisherman quitted him, leaving him astonished and confounded at what he had just heard, and at the cold behaviour of the man, who, only two days before, had shewn him the tenderness of a father.

Prosper left the cottage, musing and sorrowful, without knowing where to go ; every path was alike to him, and he walked till the middle of the day, buried in thought, without perceiving that he had got into the high road.

Let us return to the fisherman. This honest man was very sorry to send Prosper away in this manner, for he loved him with all the affection of a father ; but appearances had deceived him. It was not long, however, before the truth was discovered ; for Hierome, who now no longer feared the vigilant eye of Prosper, deceived his father so openly, and so often, that it was impossible for the good man to remain any longer blind to it. He bitterly regretted his having listened to the false reports of his son concerning Little Prosper ; but the evil was done, and he could not remedy it. This teaches us, that we should not easily believe what we hear to the disadvantage of any person ; for an honest heart is cruelly wounded by such conduct.

On seeing the high road, Prosper stopped, not knowing whether he should go to the right hand or

the left. As he was pondering in his own mind which way he should take, he perceived a venerable old man, leaning upon a staff, whose long beard and white hair inspired respect. Prosper ran to him. "I beg pardon, father," said he, "for stopping you; but I have the greatest need of your counsel. One word only I beg of you."

This respectable personage had filled the highest situations in the magistracy, and more than once had his eloquence saved the widow and the orphan. He had been an upright and well-informed judge; but so far from enriching himself in this honourable situation, he had sacrificed all his fortune, sometimes in repairing an involuntary injustice, sometimes by assisting the unfortunate persons whom the loss of a process had driven to the verge of despair. Such a man as this was a treasure to our hero in his present circumstances. "Speak with confidence, my son," said he to him; "I will assist you to the utmost of my power." Encouraged by a reception so full of kindness, Prosper related his history to the old man in a few words. He told him of James, of the robbers' cavern, and of the fisherman, dwelling at some length on this last adventure, which had affected him very much. "Have you nothing to reproach yourself with in your conduct towards this honest man?" asked this venerable gentleman. "No, father," replied the innocent child.

The old magistrate knew the human heart : the sound of the voice, the face, even a gesture, revealed to him what passed in the soul, and he pronounced our hero innocent ; perceiving clearly that some secret enemy had wronged him in the eyes of the fisherman. “ If your conscience does not reproach you with guilt, my son,” said this respectable judge, “ nothing ought to trouble you. Look at me : I am eighty years of age ; I am not rich ; I see the grave open beneath my feet, and yet I am happy, because I have no serious crimes to charge myself with, and because I have always done as much good as I was able. You are young ; and if you have an upright and honest heart, hope will encourage you ; all nature will smile on you ; and fortune, always favourable to youth, will load you with her gifts ; but above all, never yield to despair ; it is a secret worm that will destroy your happiness.

“ From what you have told me, my son,” continued the old man, “ I perceive that you are destitute of parents, without a home, and without experience. Consent to put yourself under my care ; I will guide your first steps in the world ; and perhaps you may one day have reason to bless your fate, that you listened to me.” The more the old man spoke, the more Prosper felt his confidence increase ; and he thought himself very lucky, by finding, in the protec-

tion of this venerable man, a defence against the misfortunes of inexperience, and counsels that would prevent him from acting wrong, in a world with which he was totally unacquainted.

The old gentleman soon perceived the ignorance of Prosper; and, as they went along, he formed a project for his instruction. "I am going to Strasburg, my son," said he, "and you shall accompany me thither; in that city I will place you under a tutor, who will teach you what it is indispensably necessary you should know—reading, writing, and arithmetic." Our hero blushed at first; but shaking off his false shame, he thanked his venerable friend, and accepted with gratitude his generous offer. The old man stopped at a house where he was acquainted; and Prosper saw, by the respect with which he was treated, the esteem they had for his person. The travellers were then shewn into a neat chamber, in which there were two beds; where, after making an excellent repast, they retired to rest.

Scarcely was Prosper asleep, when the lady of his dreams appeared to him. "I have pardoned you, my son," said she; "you have made amends for your fault, by your determined and courageous conduct since you left the cave, and by your discretion with regard to Hierome, who would have enticed you to do a bad action. Another circumstance has given me

great pleasure, which is, that by walking firmer in the paths of virtue, you have never had occasion to consult your mirror. Continue to behave yourself in this manner, listen to the old man under whose care you are placed, and hope for a happier destiny." The next day our travellers set off, and in a short time they arrived at Strasburg, where the old man lived.

Prosper was placed under a schoolmaster, and in a short time he acquired the elements of several sciences. In three months he obtained a tolerable knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic ; for he had no time to lose. This young man, whose mind was naturally full of penetration and vivacity, did not leave his teacher all to do, like many other scholars, but, with great willingness and application, he laboured incessantly, and consequently made astonishing progress. Prosper never lost sight of the scheme he had formed, of travelling in search of his father and mother ; but he thought it best to delay the happiness of meeting with them, until he could make himself more worthy of their care, by possessing at least the first rudiments of human knowledge. Prosper was soon able to read the precious writing which he had carried about with him for so many years ; for often had he mourned over his ignorance, which deprived him of this satisfaction !

Prosper remained for two years under the direction

of this venerable magistrate, to whom he owed his education, knowledge of the world, and a great firmness of mind. At the end of this period, the old man resigned his pure spirit into the hands of him who gave it. Prosper wept, not for his benefactor, for he was happy; he wept for himself, at being deprived of his guardian angel. He honoured the memory of this virtuous man, by continually remembering his counsels, and conducting himself as if he was always under his eye. During these two years Prosper had never once consulted his mirror, and the lady only appeared to him to praise his good conduct.

CHAPTER X.

Prosper gets into the House of a Merchant, in quality of Clerk.—He goes to London.

ALTHOUGH our hero had lost his patron, yet he was not, as formerly, without resource and protection, for the friendship of this inestimable man extended beyond the grave; and he had, with his dying breath, recommended Prosper to the care of a rich merchant, a particular friend of his own.

As soon as the venerable magistrate had closed his eyes, this merchant, whose name was Dalbane, came

in search of Prosper : he took him to his house, and made him his clerk, with a salary considerable enough for his youth and inexperience. To discharge the trust that had been reposed in him by his deceased friend, M. Dalbane made Prosper continue his studies.

The good old man had been dead six months, when the affairs of M. Dalbane called him to London. He took Prosper along with him, who had now become a great favourite, and was very useful to him, particularly for correspondence, because he wrote the German and French languages with great accuracy. M. Dalbane wished him also to learn the English language ; and as soon as they arrived in London, he procured him a master. Prosper, in this city, began to study painting and music. His business and education employed the greatest part of his time, and very little was left for pleasure. He never went abroad but in the company of M. Dalbane, who loved him with all the affection of a father, so that his manners were formed in the society of this worthy merchant, and he became a very amiable young man.

Four years had now elapsed, and during that time our hero had never felt any uneasiness, except at the thought of his inability to search after his parents. But this was impossible, as the money he had saved was not considerable enough to allow him to give up

his situation, and to defray the expenses of a long journey. By this time he had studied geography, and could calculate how long he would take to go to Italy, and the money that it would be requisite to lay out. Besides, he was no longer the Little Collier, for whom a morsel of bread and a bundle of straw would have been sufficient, and who at that time he could have made the tour of the world with a crown-piece in his pocket, for now every thing was changed. However, let it be said to the honour of Prosper, that his heart was always pure, benevolent, and good: his mirror, which, when he consulted, for the most part remained unspotted; and the lady, his protectress, visited him as usual, either to encourage him to continue in the paths of virtue, or to put him on his guard against the allurements of vice. She gave him every assurance that he would find his father, mother, and brother again, and the certainty of one day enjoying this inestimable happiness, encouraged him to wait for a more favourable moment. He also resolved to improve every opportunity that offered, in order that he might appear before the authors of his being with all the advantages of a liberal education, such as the son of M. de la Peluse ought to have, and this noble pride excited his emulation, and made him do wonders.

Although Prosper had neither had a noble father, nor a considerable fortune to expect, he would nevertheless have made his way in the world; for he was an excellent scholar, and of an irreproachable character: still more, he had the way of making himself beloved by the sweetness and equality of his temper; and in every situation Prosper distinguished himself in a particular manner.

As the most virtuous characters often feel the effects of calumny, and see themselves ranked in the same class as the wicked, Prosper was now to be exposed to the most severe trial that he ever had to bear.—M. Dalbane was one night robbed of all his money and jewels, which were kept in a secretary that stood in the closet where Prosper had been employed during the day. The robber was supposed to have had a false key, as the lock was not injured, and, by an inconceivable fatality, on examining the keys of our hero, one was found that opened this secretary, as if it had been made on purpose. Such appearances of guilt almost amounted to a certainty, yet M. Dalbane, who really esteemed the unfortunate young man, almost believed him innocent, on Prosper's candidly assuring him, that he was incapable of committing such a base action; but the enemies whom his great merit had raised, profiting by this circumstance, made use of it in order to work his ruin. They went

so far as to bribe false witnesses, who brought a number of accusations against him ; one of whom had seen him carrying jewels to a merchant ; another had met him at unseasonable hours coming from a gaming-house ; and a third, that he was addicted to every other vice, under the mask of hypocrisy.

M. Dalbane shewed a great want of judgment in this case ; for though calumny sometimes bears the semblance of truth, yet the cruel wounds it leaves are not easily healed. Prosper was shut up in his closet ; his secretary was examined ; and in it they found, besides the money he had saved, the gold repeating watch set with diamonds, and the pocket-book containing the gold cypher. Though M. Dalbane knew that none of these effects belonged to him, yet it occurred to him, that Prosper must have taken them from some other person ; and this suspicion led him naturally enough to believe, that the young man was guilty of the theft with which he was charged. Prosper, left alone in his chamber, with his elbows leaning on the table, and his head resting on his hands, gave himself up to the most bitter reflections. Although his conscience did not reproach him with this crime, yet, if the truth was not discovered, he would appear in the eyes of M. Dalbane, and before the world, as a person void of all honour. This dreadful thought disordered his whole frame.

However, although every thing combined to place the guilt of Prosper beyond a doubt, M. Dalbane hesitated in proceeding farther in the business, until he could obtain more substantial evidence against him, and wished to be thoroughly convinced of his guilt before he entirely deserted the young man, thinking there was still a possibility of the evidence turning out in the end to be nothing at all. As for our hero, he passed a very sorrowful night, without the smallest prospect of proving his innocence. In the subterraneous cave he had seen death near at hand, but did not then feel the agony with which his soul at this moment was tortured; because the dishonourable light in which he now appeared, seemed to him, with reason, a thousand times worse than the most frightful death. Towards morning he fell into a slumber, and immediately the lady, his protectress, appeared to him. He regarded her with eyes in which the most lively grief was painted, while she said to him, "Courage, Prosper, it is not enough to have a clear conscience, you must learn to brave the injustice of men; show yourself great in your misfortunes, and superior to your fate, that I may not lose my labour in assisting you. With me, one may be happy amidst the horrors of a dungeon. Socrates, when drinking the poison, smiled on his friends, because I had not deserted him." After speaking these words, the lady immediately disappeared.

The next day Prosper, on recollecting his dream, put on a resolution to meet his fate courageously, even though he should fall a victim to the malice of his enemies. He therefore presented himself before M. Dalbane with a modest, but undaunted countenance, which pleaded much in favour of his innocence.

CHAPTER XI.

Prosper's Innocence discovered.—M. Dalbane embarks with him for France.—Death of M. Dalbane.—What happens to Prosper during the Voyage.

M. DALBANE was still continuing his investigation into the conduct of Prosper, when he one day received information that a person had been arrested, in whose custody several jewels were found bearing his cypher, as it was described by him in the advertisement he had made. This villain, as it afterwards appeared, had introduced himself secretly into the closet of M. Dalbane; and having found the key of the secretary, he had taken possession of such of the effects as he thought would be most useful to him. The whole of the jewels were recovered; but the money was irredeemably lost, for the robber had spent it all.

M. Dalbane was overjoyed to find his dear Prosper innocent, and offered to make him all the reparation he could demand. Prosper requested only the restitution of his own property; on obtaining this, he related to M. Dalbane the manner in which the pocket-book, the cypher, and the watch, came into his possession. The merchant no sooner learned of what family our hero was descended, and how ardently he desired to find his father and mother again, than he resolved, in order to repair in some measure the grief he had caused him, to hasten a voyage he had long intended to make into France, and to conduct Prosper into the bosom of his family. M. Dalbane put his affairs in order, and in a month after embarked with his young friend for France; from whence he intended to proceed to Montpellier, where he had several accounts to settle with his correspondents. But scarcely had they got out to sea, when this worthy man was taken ill, and, after a short sickness, expired in the arms of Prosper, recommending him to follow out his intention, and leaving him sufficient money to carry him to Naples, where he hoped he would find his parents.

The death of M. Dalbane keenly afflicted poor Prosper; for he had not only lost a protector, but he saw nobody around him in whom he could place any confidence. The captain of the vessel, to whom

M. Dalbane had recommended him before his death, was indeed a very honest man; and Prosper would have willingly consulted him in matters of difficulty, if his imperious, and almost savage manners, had not prevented him.

The captain was detested on board, on account of his extreme severity; for our hero heard nothing around him but complaints, which almost made him shun the presence of this disagreeable man. Soured perhaps by the hatred of his crew, the captain maintained the utmost rigour of discipline, and the slightest fault was severely punished; but their discontent soon became general, and the greatest part of them rebelled. Our hero's situation was extremely embarrassing; for if he was faithful to his duty, by taking the part of the captain, this might cost him his life, and seemed a dangerous expedient, therefore he had some thoughts of joining the strongest party. To satisfy himself, however, if he was right in doing so, he had recourse to his mirror; but its face was quite clouded. "Well," said he, "whatever may happen, I will stand by the captain, and shall have nothing to reproach myself with."

After he had spoken these words, he cast his eyes upon the glass, which was now become transparent, and our hero no longer hesitated about what conduct he ought to pursue. He declared to those

who solicited his assistance, that they should never find him among the number of the mutineers, and that he would defend the unfortunate captain, if they went so far as to endanger his life. This determined resolution encouraged the captain's party, which was the weakest, to rank themselves on his side ; and the crew being thus divided, the mutineers gave up their project.

Prosper had here another opportunity of seeing, that, by opposing the designs of the wicked, he raised himself enemies. The conduct of Hierome was an example of this, and the seamen acted after the same manner. Fearing to be punished for their mutiny, they agreed among themselves to go to the captain, and accuse Prosper of having spoken disrespectful words, tending to blame his conduct, and to excite them to rebellion. The captain, who was not in the habit of examining whether any report had a foundation or not, ordered Prosper to be confined at the bottom of the hold, to teach him, as he said, to weigh his words. Our hero supported this fresh piece of injustice by strength of mind, and an admirable resignation ; for a few years of misfortune had taught him, by experience, that prosperity cannot be attained without difficulty. "The captain," said he, "will some time or other blush for his conduct towards me, and I shall have the advantage over him ;" at this

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thought his soul was elevated within him ; conscious of having acted right, he cared not losing the regard of a man whose judgment was so easily deceived ; so, with that tranquillity of soul which a conscience free from guilt can alone bestow, Prosper slept upon his little couch, as if he had been upon a bed of roses.

The lady appeared to him in his dream, but she was more beautiful and courteous than ever, and her celestial form filled him with astonishment and admiration. She stretched out her hand to him, saying, " My son, I have not a more faithful friend than you ; your conduct is worthy of the greatest praise ; continue to walk in the narrow path of truth, sooner or later you will reap the fruits of it." Having thus encouraged him to persevere in virtue, the lady informed him, that the vessel was threatened with a dreadful tempest. " In the tumult which the storm will occasion," added she, " the life of the captain will be in great danger ; those mutineers who have been punished, will be anxious for revenge before they die ; therefore you, my son, must shew your noble and generous spirit, by flying to the assistance of the man who has confined and treated you unworthily without examination, and without listening to the dictates of reason."

The lady was finishing this address, when cries of terror put an end to the dream, and awoke our hero.

He rubbed his eyes, and began to listen ; his dream returned to his recollection, and he concluded that the storm was commenced. The water had just begun to penetrate his prison when the door of it opened, and he was conducted on deck to the captain, who made him work along with the rest of the crew. Prosper shewed great presence of mind on this occasion ; his activity was unequalled ; in a word, he was seen every where, labouring very hard ; but still he kept a watchful eye upon those with whose bad intentions he was acquainted. All at once they rose in a body, seized their arms without order or discipline, and rushed towards the captain ; but Prosper, snatching up a sabre, made his way through this mutinous group, and placed himself by the side of the captain, who being taken by surprise, had only time to seize a sword, and retire to a corner of the ship, with his lieutenant and boatswain's mate. Here he had to contend against sixty furious men, who had determined to sacrifice him to their resentment ; but Prosper placing himself in front of the exasperated crew, said loud enough to make himself be heard ; " Let the wisest among you lay down their arms," said he, " and they will yet find pardon. One moment more, and the rebels shall have no quarter." This short exhortation had the same effect as in the former instance ; for the example of our hero was fol-

lowed by the less ardent of the crew, who came and ranged themselves around him. Both sides being now nearly equal, they fought with great obstinacy; but the victory did not long remain doubtful. On one side were the mutineers, blinded by passion, without a leader, and without discipline, who knew much better how to fight with their hands than with swords; on the other side was seen great presence of mind, military talents, and experience in arms. Prosper carried death every where; and he inspired the rebels with such terror, that they disappeared like a cloud before the rays of the sun.

During this combat the tempest calmed, and they saw from the damage sustained, that the ship was in need of immediate repair: the captain, dissembling his just resentment against the mutineers till he got on shore, set the pumps a-going; and they soon after reached the coast of France. On their landing, the captain, eager to shew his gratitude to his young deliverer, acknowledged with frankness, that he had been too precipitate in his judgment with regard to Prosper, and confessed that he was indebted to him for his life; but to make amends for his fault, he promised to be the same friend to him that the worthy M. Dalbane had been, and to endeavour to discover his parents. As to the ship's crew, the worst of them were arrested, tried, and condemned to be hanged.

CHAPTER XII.

*Prosper arrives in Paris.---His Conduct in that City.---
He goes to live with M. de Bonneville.*

THE captain knew that M. Dalbane intended to carry Prosper to Montpellier, in order to put him into the hands of a steady person, who would conduct him to Italy; and he was anxious to fulfil in part this laudable design, and to contribute as much as he could to the happiness of the young man; so, leaving the vessel under the care of his lieutenant, he took the road to Paris with Prosper. On their arrival in that city, he introduced his young friend into the best of company, gave him some useful information, and carried him to every remarkable place in the beautiful capital of France. Prosper was now, for the first time in his life, in a world new to him: all that can seduce a young heart burst upon him at once; the attractions of luxury, the charms of licentiousness, and the pleasures that crowded upon him, so intoxicated his mind, as to overturn his prudence.

Our hero could not accuse himself of any considerable fault, yet his mirror looked quite cloudy; and when the lady appeared to him in his dreams, it was with so stern a countenance as to fill him with terror.

Her silence likewise afflicted him ; but he did not presume to ask her any questions, for she seemed as if she would have reproached him with his conduct. Thus, in his dreams he was fearful and almost penitent, but when awake, these melancholy pictures were soon driven from his mind.

The captain had introduced Prosper to some giddy young men, who laughed at his morality, turned the most respectable subjects into ridicule, and by their wit, gaiety, satirical and ingenious raillery, made him blush at being so different from them. It was here that our hero, walking upon a precipice covered with flowers, was in imminent danger, a thousand times more to be feared than the robbers' cave, the subterraneous vault, or the conspiracy of the sailors : it was thus, that, shutting his ears against the dictates of conscience, he forsook the paths of wisdom. This shews how much a young man is to be pitied, when left without a guide, in a world where even the experience of age is so often at a loss how to conduct itself.

The captain had been two months in Paris ; and as the season was advancing, he began to think of returning to his vessel. He confided Prosper to the care of a rich Genevan of his acquaintance, a very honest man, who promised to take the easiest method of carrying our hero to his destination. The captain

having thus acquitted himself towards his deliverer, took his leave, wishing him as much happiness as he deserved ; and Prosper went to the house of the captain's friend.

M. de Bonneville, for that was his name, had not the elegant manners of the society in which Prosper had lived for the short time he had been in Paris ; but if he wanted the brilliant qualities which give consequence in the great world, he possessed, in their room, a very uncommon openness of heart, sound sense, great probity, and the esteem of every honest man. He was economical, without being parsimonious ; strict in his manners, without trying to display his virtue ; and religious, yet free from bigotry. He had come to Paris on account of a process at law, on which his fortune depended ; and he passed his days and nights in writing, and in arranging his papers. It was not for himself that M. de Bonneville feared the loss of his fortune : with his easy manners and simple taste, he would have been happy in a poor humble cottage ; but he had a numerous family, and a wife whom he adored. It had cost him many a bitter reflection, the idea of seeing his wife and children, whom he loved, torn from their former condition. He considered himself accountable to them for the use he made of his wealth ; and was often heard to say, that

the inheritance he held from his forefathers should descend untouched to his children.

Prosper now led a very different life with M. de Bonneville ; for it became necessary to renounce the company of those young rakes who had been his companions ever since he came to Paris ; and his respectable host intimated to him in a few words, that it would be attended with very bad consequences if he continued these dangerous connexions.

At first the time hung very heavy on the young man's hands, for every hour was regulated in this house. All the family rose early in the morning, and M. de Bonneville wrought alone in his closet, while Prosper gave himself up to study, which he for some time past had greatly neglected. After breakfast, our hero was closeted with his host, who made him write till dinner time, explaining to him, with wonderful patience, the most obscure passages of a perplexed lawsuit quite foreign to one of his age. After dinner M. de Bonneville and Prosper went out together, either to a flower-garden or to the open fields, to gather medicinal herbs ; or perhaps into some virtuoso's closet, to acquire new knowledge, and make interesting and instructive discoveries. They always returned satisfied with their excursion, promising to renew it next day.

Prosper made great progress while he was with M. de Bonneville, for he taught him the elements of botany, natural history, chemistry, and phisic, which were the favourite pursuits of this respectable Genevan, who sought always to employ his time properly, the value of which he so well knew.

M. de Bonneville would sometimes postpone his walks to see a good French play acted, the only amusement he did not condemn. "Tragedy," said he, "elevates the soul; one returns home from it a better man than he was before; and besides, the language is spoken with great purity and elegance." It was only tragedy that this amiable man loved; for he usually went away before the farce began.

Such was the life that Prosper led for six months, the time that was requisite for M. de Bonneville to finish his tedious lawsuit, which he at last was so lucky as to gain.

CHAPTER XIII.

Prosper goes to Milan.

By degrees our hero became reconciled to his situation ; and he did at last from choice what he at first was obliged to do from necessity. In proportion as the pleasures of the world vanished from his mind, the love of virtue and honour recovered its empire over him. He reflected upon his past conduct, and saw the danger he had escaped, while the instructive and moral conversation of M. de Bonneville, so similar to that of the good old man, his former protector, opened his eyes to the corruption of a world, in which licentiousness was accounted lawful because it was fashionable. His former pleasures, now stripped of their delusive charms, appeared in their most awful colours ; impiety, which sets Heaven at defiance ; folly, which outrages nature ; and, in a word, vice, which destroys itself with its own hands. Having thus weighed the advantages of his situation, he did not hesitate a moment in giving the preference to the life he now led, under the protection of the virtuous man into whose hands his good fortune had placed him. The sinner that repents will receive pardon, and Heaven will assist him in pursuing his good intentions.

Prosper had neglected his mirror, with which, for some time past, he was never pleased; but from this moment he put on a resolution not to let one day pass without examining it. He accordingly drew it from his bosom, and its face was already much brighter. "This," said he, "is a proof that even a good resolution is acceptable to Heaven; I will persevere, and shun bad company; I will only associate with persons of well-regulated conduct and solid understanding, like M. de Bonneville, or young people of my own age, educated under such men, and in the same principles." This return to virtue was followed by the sweet sensation he felt in acting right.

The same night Prosper saw the goddess in his dream, but she had no longer a severe and terrifying look; her air was mild, and full of charms. "It has cost me many efforts, my son," said she, "to keep silence so long; but unruly passions, like the agitated waves of the sea, have prevented you from attending to me. I have often shewn myself to you, but without the hope of seeing you so soon delivered from your chains, for you were in the hands of my bitterest enemies: you might have seen by my countenance to what degree I condemned your conduct; but far from correcting yourself, you seemed to fear my presence, and to dread my counsels. Heaven, however, has not permitted you to perish; for it has sent the wor-

thiest of men to pluck you out of the fatal gulf of pleasure and sensuality. You have now returned to me; quit me no more, I conjure you, or I may desert you for ever, and then what will become of you? Oh! you know not how greatly that person is to be pitied who gives himself up to his passions; for the criminal, in the midst of his tortures, suffers not so much as he, when the veil that conceals his dreadful situation is torn from his eyes." On saying this, she disappeared.

Prosper, self-condemned, promised faithfully never again to deserve the reproaches of the goddess of his dreams; and he kept his word, for we now see him in the midst of a great city, yet his virtue is in no danger. He now examined his mirror every day, and conducted himself so prudently, that it was very seldom clouded. The behaviour of our hero affords us another proof, that to arrive at this point of perfection, after having lost the innocence of former years, it is necessary to watch continually over our passions, for through them every evil enters into the heart, and drives away wisdom and virtue.

M. de Bonneville, having finished his business, at last quitted Paris, and arrived at Geneva with his young friend. He presented Prosper to his wife and children, who received him as a friend after a long absence. M. de Bonneville having passed about a

month in the bosom of his family, to rest himself after so long an absence, then set out for Milan with Prosper, in order, if possible, to find the parents of his young friend, and restore him to their arms.

As soon as they arrived in this city, the honest Genevan waited on several merchants of his acquaintance, by whose assistance he wrote to Naples for information concerning M. de la Peluse. A month elapsed without receiving any intelligence; but at last his correspondents returned for answer, that they knew nobody of that name in Naples, nor in any of the neighbouring towns. Prosper at that moment beheld all his hopes of happiness vanish, and a deep melancholy seized upon him. To divert him from his grief, M. de Bonneville made him walk abroad to see the town, which was very populous, and of great extent, and to the cathedral, which is admired by every stranger; but nothing could raise the spirits of this unfortunate young man, who blamed himself for having been so long in going to search out persons so dear to him. By this culpable negligence, he had perhaps lost them for ever; they might be dead, or they might have quitted Italy. In this manner did he aggravate his misfortunes, by exaggerating them; and to add to his misery, M. de Bonneville received letters from Geneva, which obliged him to return. Uncertain what he ought to do with regard to Prosper, the Ge-

nevan consulted a worthy man, who held a distinguished rank in the city, expressing much uneasiness about the young man's situation. It happened luckily for Prosper, that the head of a college in Rome had written to this gentleman, to procure for him a person qualified to teach the German, French, and English languages. The Milanese shewed this letter to M. de Bonneville, who, overjoyed at the circumstance, prevailed on Prosper to accept of this place, because it would afford him a settled situation, and from being nearer the city where his parents had once resided, he would the more easily obtain information respecting them.

Prosper was soon ready to set out. He took leave of M. de Bonneville with tears in his eyes, and promised punctually to maintain a correspondence with him. The Genevan affectionately clasped his hand, and quitted him without saying a word, that he might not diminish his courage by allowing any weakness to appear. Prosper, furnished with a letter of recommendation, took the road for the ancient metropolis of the world, and M. de Bonneville set out on his return to Geneva.

CHAPTER XIV.

Prosper arrives in Rome.---He contracts a Friendship for a young Italian Nobleman.

UPON our hero's arrival in Rome, he presented his letter of recommendation, and was immediately accepted of. The principal of the college, to whom he was recommended, took great delight in shewing him the curiosities of that city, which recalled so many ideas to his mind. He took him first to the spacious and magnificent church of St Peter, the most beautiful building that ever was erected by Christians for the purposes of religious worship; then to all the places which contained the masterpieces of great artists; then to the cabinets of antiquities in the Roman college, the palace of Farnese, the Borghese villa, and the palace of Medicis. He likewise shewed him a great number of antiquities, scattered around the neighbouring village of Frascati; and a thousand other things, every one more curious and more interesting than another.

When Prosper had satisfied his curiosity with the sight of all that was remarkable in Rome, his next care was to ascertain the characters of the individuals with whom he was to reside. He learned, to his great

satisfaction, that among the number of young men who were students in this college, there were several of them from Naples. Among the Neapolitans under Prosper's charge, there was a young nobleman about fifteen years of age, and of a very handsome figure, whose name was Augustus. The name of this youth struck our hero; it was the same as his brother's, and he seemed to be about the same age. Upon inquiring who the father of Augustus was, he heard it was the Prince d'Avellino, and from that time he never thought of making any farther inquiry. Nevertheless, a secret affection drew him towards this young nobleman, and stimulated him to bestow particular care on his education, which in the end gave rise to the most cordial friendship.

Prosper was the more attached to the young Italian, as the lady of his dreams seemed to approve of it. "Continue to instruct Augustus," said she; "he will be grateful for it:" and his mirror, formerly so much tarnished, now shone with redoubled lustre. "This young man must without doubt be virtuous," said he, "since the goddess, who was so severe against my former acquaintances, does not condemn our intimacy."

In the mean time Prosper took every method to obtain intelligence of M. de la Peluse, but without effect, for no one knew any thing of him, and he

concluded that his parents were no longer in existence, or that Peluse had been an assumed name. During his residence at Rome, he studied those sciences he had before learned under M. de Bonneville, and took a particular delight in music and painting. The noble productions which he saw every day inflamed his imagination; the very ground seemed to inspire him; and, as an amateur, he possessed every valuable qualification. His education was now complete; and, what did him the greater honour, he was indebted only to his own exertions for the progress he had made. It is true, the old magistrate, M. Dalbane, and the worthy Genevan, were the means of developing his faculties; but at the age he then was, assiduity in study became absolutely indispensable, and courage was necessary to overcome the numerous difficulties that were spread before him. He always shewed great docility towards his teachers and superiors; and by his ability and perseverance, his education had been completed in the short space of seven years.

During a whole year, Prosper, who was become the friend of the overseer of the college, did not lose one moment. The young nobleman also made rapid progress in the sciences under the tuition of our hero, who placed his whole affection upon him, for one year sufficed to learn him all the different languages that Prosper taught, and he was now able to carry

on a correspondence with the prince, his father, in German, French, English, and Italian, not to mention Greek and Latin; for Augustus spoke and wrote in Latin with all the elegance of Cicero; and it was to Prosper that he owed this rare qualification. The friendship of these young men took deep root in a short space of time; they had only one heart and one soul; and what rendered their attachment the more durable was, because it was founded on virtue.

Prosper and his young friend flattered themselves that they were to remain together for a long time; but, to their great grief, Augustus received an order from his father to return home immediately. There was no room for deliberation; he was obliged to depart; and one of the tutors was nominated to conduct the young Prince d'Avellino to Naples; who, after shedding many tears, bade his friend adieu, promising to use every endeavour to see him again soon.

The departure of Augustus threw a mournful shade over the mind of Prosper; for he was so much accustomed to his company, joined with so much pleasure in all his labours and amusements, that our hero thought in one moment he had lost the charm of his existence, and time, which flew so fast away while in the company of his dear young friend, now hung very heavy on his hands. Study came at last to his aid; but his wandering mind found it extremely dry

and wearisome, until by degrees he became interested in making new discoveries, and this recovered his serenity.

CHAPTER XV.

Prosper goes to Naples.---He finds his Father, Mother, and Brother.

AUGUSTUS, under the care of his parents, did not forget his dear Prosper. If he received praise for his progress and talents, it was Prosper who gave him his lessons with care, complaisance, and unexampled assiduity. If the prince, his father, charmed to see him possess such inestimable qualities, tenderly expressed to him his happiness at his love of virtue, it was Prosper who, by his example and wise advice, had contributed to make him what he was. Thus did the amiable youth, overcome with gratitude, attribute all his improvement to his friend.

Augustus even ventured to express his desire of seeing Prosper established at Naples, in the house of the prince. "How slight is the friendship of youth! Augustus, like the most of young people, exalts to the skies, and loves with enthusiasm, the person

whom, in a moment of pleasure, he would most easily forget." In this manner did the parents of Augustus judge and speak of his friendship for Prosper; but they were much mistaken.

Perceiving that all his efforts to gain his point were in vain, Augustus became melancholy; every thing disgusted him; and his appearance was so much changed, that his parents began to be seriously alarmed for his health. He spoke of nothing but Prosper, and praised him so warmly and so often, that at last the prince, who tenderly loved his son, resolved to gratify his wishes, by admitting this young man into his family. He wrote to the principal of the college at Rome, where his son had been educated, requesting to be informed of the moral character and abilities of one of the professors of languages, of the name of Prosper, who had been much attached to Augustus while he studied there; and added, that if this person was what his son described him to be, the principal might make him an offer of living at Naples, in quality of secretary to his highness, with a salary proportioned to his merit. "It is needless," he continued, "to return an answer to this letter, for if the young man be in every respect a suitable person, and accepts the offer, let him set out for this place immediately; but if he does not answer the description, you must not make the proposal to him."

The prince accompanied the letter with a draft upon his banker at Rome, to defray the expenses of Prosper's journey, if there should be any occasion for it.

When the letter was shewn to Prosper, it gave him great satisfaction. He was again to be blessed with the company of his dear Augustus, in that city which had been the great object of his desire to see for many years; and he exulted in the thought, that he might yet be able to discover his parents. The principal could say nothing against him, for his character was faultless; yet he felt much uneasiness at the thought of being separated from Prosper. But when he perceived that the happiness of Prosper depended upon this journey, he advised him to set out immediately, lest the prince should change his mind.

Our hero, on his arrival at Naples, was received as the friend of an only son beloved by his parents, while Augustus hung upon his neck, and called him a thousand times his dear Prosper. A neat apartment had been prepared for him, close to that of Augustus, in which, by the kind attention of that amiable youth, Prosper found a library, musical instruments, and, in a word, all that could be either useful or agreeable to him.

Prosper was greatly caressed by the Prince and Princess d'Avellino. His handsome address, noble appearance, simple yet elegant manners, and respect-

ful politeness, gained him the affection of the princess, who applauded Augustus on the choice of such a friend: the prince, more difficult to please, examined into the extent of his knowledge. In the course of their conversation his highness confessed that his son, although a boy, had judged of Prosper with the discrimination of a man.

After having devoted a few days to the service of his patrons, Prosper, along with Augustus, visited the city of Naples, accompanied by an intelligent person. Naples is one of the most considerable cities in Europe, both on account of its fine climate, beauty of the country in which it is situated, and the number of villas that surround it. Augustus conducted his friend to the port, which is large and magnificent, and serves the inhabitants as a promenade. After having seen all that was worth notice in the city, the places adjacent were taken in their turn; the grotto of Pausilippe, the baths of San Germano, the Grotto del Cani, Solfaterra, the Lake Lucrinus, Monte Nuovo, the lake Avernus, and the town of Pozzuolo; then the village of Portici, under which is the ancient city of Herculaneum, covered by the lava of Mount Vesuvius, into which they descend with torches. Prosper wished to examine this terrific, yet beautiful sight, more narrowly, but Augustus being afraid of his remaining any longer in this tremendous place, prevented him.

Eight days passed in this pleasing manner, and then our hero entered upon his new employment. He soon procured a numerous acquaintance in the city, and inquired of every person, that he thought could give him any information, about the fate of his parents, carefully concealing the true reason of his search; for he felt that it would be much better to remain in his present obscurity, if his family was forever lost to him, than to boast of an illustrious name that might not be credited, and the splendour of which he was not in a situation to support. This excess of delicacy even prevented him from revealing the secret to Augustus, and he always experienced such a sensation of fear and respect in the presence of the prince, that he could not mention the circumstance to him, or ask his advice.

Notwithstanding all his endeavours to gain information about his parents, Prosper heard nothing that could give him the slightest encouragement; every step he took only shewed him the folly of taking another. Although afflicted to the highest degree, he bore his misfortunes so well, that his young friend never perceived his melancholy; for entirely devoted to his duty, he thought only of distinguishing himself, and making Fortune blush for her cruelty towards him.

Several months passed without any thing remarkable happening. Prosper, better known to the prince

and princess, was every day more beloved by them ; Augustus improved wonderfully, and became quite perfect in the sciences ; the lady of Prosper's dreams always looked affable and smiling ; and the magic mirror remained always brilliant.

Things were going on in this manner, when one day, as Prosper was turning over some papers which the prince had given him to arrange, he saw upon an old parchment the name of De la Peluse. He looked at this writing a second time ; his hand trembled, and his heart palpitated with anxiety. " Ah !" thought he, " if I should be so happy as to discover —— " But he durst not dwell on the thought ; for if deceived, he would be more unhappy than before. In the greatest agitation, he carefully examined all the papers that the prince had committed to his charge, and he discovered that La Peluse was the family name ; that, for two hundred years, they had been in possession of the principality of Avellino ; that he was then in the house of his father and mother ; and that his young friend, who loved him as a brother, was the same Augustus that he left in the hands of the captain of the robbers. Too much agitated to appear before his parents, he laid upon his desk the ivory pocket-book, the gold cypher, and the repeating-watch, and then retired to his apartment with a beating heart.

After the first emotions of joy and surprise had subsided, he recollected a thousand circumstances that had before escaped his notice. On his arrival at Naples, when presented to the prince and princess, he remembered their features, but could not recollect where or when he had seen them ; while the elegance of their dress, the pomp with which they were surrounded, and their high title, all conspired to bewilder him. The hand-writing of the prince had also struck Prosper ; yet although he perceived some resemblance between that of the note he possessed and the papers that passed through his hands every day, this circumstance made no impression on his mind, as he could not possibly ever suppose that M. de la Peluse and the Prince of Avellino were the same person. Besides, the note, written in a moment of agitation, was scarcely legible, but the writing of these papers was beautiful beyond description. Now that Prosper had no longer any doubt, every object appeared in its true light ; for he was certain that he had found his parents and brother, and his happiness was inexpressible.

Whilst our hero was exulting in the happy discovery he had made, the prince of Avellino entered his closet, where he found his papers lying scattered up and down, and Prosper absent. He accused him of negligence, and was proceeding to pick them up

and lay them in their places ; but his eye glancing on the desk, he stopped all of a sudden, struck at the sight of objects so dear to his remembrance. “ What means this ? ” said he, looking at the pocket-book ; for it was the same he had given to Desronais with his unfortunate child, who was now lost to him for ever. “ This is the cypher,” added he, “ that I ordered Desronais to commit to the care of the collier.” In extreme agitation, he opened the pocket-book, and found in it the note in his own hand-writing, which was an undeniable proof of its identity. “ But how came this watch here ? I was robbed of it in the Black Forest ! What is the meaning of all this ? ” He rang the bell. “ Has any stranger been here ? ” said he to the servant who appeared. Upon being answered in the negative, he ordered him to send Prosper to him immediately.

The young man, almost overcome by his feelings, now appeared before the prince, threw himself on his knees, and seized one of his hands, which he covered with kisses and tears, exclaiming, “ O my father ! bless your son ! ” He could say no more ; his sobs stopped his utterance ; and the prince fell into a chair, struck dumb with astonishment ; but he stretched out his hand to Prosper, and made him a sign to rise and sit by his side. Our hero becoming a little more composed, again kissed the hand of the prince, wiped

away his tears, and sat down beside him. His father desired him to relate his history, without omitting the smallest circumstance; and Prosper, beginning at the death of James, gave him an account of all that had happened to him, down to the present moment. The prince was thunderstruck to hear that it was his son who had saved his life in the cave of the robbers; and it endeared him to his heart the more on that account.

It was necessary that the princess should be informed, that the child who had cost her so many tears was at last restored to her; but on account of her extreme sensibility, it was necessary that she should be prepared to receive this joyful news; and they agreed that Prosper should remain in his apartment till he was sent for. The prince flew to find his wife; but his fine features, always smiling and animated, had on this occasion an expression of joy which struck the princess. "What good news do you come to announce?" said she; "there is something in your appearance which gives me a happy presage." Charmed with this overture, the prince informed her that their son was found, and that this son was no other than Prosper. He then related to her how Prosper had discovered his family, and shewed her the proofs which attested the truth of this extraordinary event.

The joy of the princess was inexpressible. "Where is my son?" she exclaimed; "Let me see him! Let me clasp him in my arms!" Prosper, whose impatience had brought him to the door of the apartment, could restrain himself no longer, but rushed into the room, and threw himself into the arms of his mother; they mingled their tears together, and this moment made ample amends for the many years of sorrow they had suffered.

Augustus soon learned, with great joy, the new tie which bound him to his best friend; and saw, without the least uneasiness, Prosper raised to that rank which he had so long enjoyed. He had no ambition but to deserve the love of his parents; and the share of their affection that still remained to him left him nothing more to desire. He came to welcome his brother, and to congratulate him on his good fortune; but he complained of the silence that Prosper had observed since his arrival at Naples; adding, that if he had mentioned the circumstance of his family, either to him or his father, they might all have enjoyed, long ago, their present happiness.

Prosper signifying his anxiety to hear the adventures of his parents, and the manner in which his brother had escaped out of the hands of the captain of the banditti, his father promised to gratify his curiosity at a more convenient time. Accordingly

he chose a day, when, free from visits and business, he might, in the midst of his family, indulge the feelings of his heart, in relating the story to his dear son. This period soon arrived; and while Prosper was seated between the prince and princess, with his hands in those of his parents, his father proceeded to satisfy his curiosity.

CHAPTER XVI.

Conclusion.

“ I WILL say nothing to-day, my son, concerning the events which forced us to leave, for a time, our property and our country; this may be the subject of another conversation. When we were obliged to fly from Naples, and at last from Italy, your mother, far advanced in her pregnancy, was taken ill, and delivered of you near the Black Forest. This occurrence threw us into the greatest embarrassment; for to take you with us was impossible; and as we were strangers in the country, we knew nobody with whom we could leave you. The doctor who attended your mother was very skilful in his profession, and had been recommended to us; we desired a farther acquaintance with him; and after receiving every as-

surance that he deserved our utmost confidence, we employed him to take charge of you, and find out some honest family, with whom you might remain unknown till our return. You already know what followed.

“ In our exile, we were informed of the care that James and his wife took of you ; and during the six years that Desronais lived, we had at least the consolation of knowing that you was still in existence ; but at last this gentleman died, and to add to our misery, left us in ignorance of your abode ; for, faithful to his promise, he had religiously kept the secret. From that moment our fears on your account increased.

“ The disturbances in Italy having ceased, we returned to Naples, and our first care was to make every effort to gain information of Desronais and James ; but neither the one nor the other was in existence. We did not think it safe to reveal the secret, or engage people to make search for you, because our enemies might make use of this opportunity, either to injure you, or deceive us ; but we conceived that the wisest plan would be, to go in person and make the inquiry. But what was our grief, on arriving at the collier's house, to learn from his children, that they had turned you away, and were ignorant of where you had gone to !

“ We wandered, as chance directed us, through the Black Forest, reflecting with sorrow on your helpless situation, when the robbers came suddenly upon us. Behold, my child, how Providence disposes all events. It was the will of Heaven that you should be in the cave among the banditti; and it was your young heart, moved by its natural goodness, that prompted you to save our lives. The ring that your mother gave you, (here Prosper drew it from his bosom); her inviting you to come to Naples; the information you received from the lady, your protectress, that you had saved the lives of your parents; and a number of other little incidents, have all tended to bring us nearer to each other; and at last we have the happiness of embracing a son, who is an ornament to his family, by the many amiable qualities with which Heaven has endowed him, and the innumerable trials by which it has been pleased to purify his virtue.

“ The robbers knew us,” continued the prince, “ by the papers they found among our baggage; and saw that our rank made it dangerous to release us, therefore they resolved to take our lives. Even after our escape and return to Italy, if the thought of endangering the life of the child we had left in their hands had not prevented us, we would have purged the earth of those infamous villains.

“ You have told me, my son, that you became a victim of their cruelty, on account of your favouring our escape ; and that they shut you up in the subterraneous vault, with the intention of starving you to death ; at least, this was the sentence that the band pronounced against you. The captain, who really felt for your situation, hastened, as soon as he possibly could, to liberate you from your frightful prison ; but not finding you there, he thought that despair had driven you to finish your existence by a speedy death, and that you had thrown yourself into the subterraneous lake. The grief he expressed at your loss brought him to a sincere repentance.

“ One day a stranger was announced, who wished to speak with me in private. It was the captain of the banditti, who came to restore to me your brother Augustus. His disposition was now entirely changed, for he professed a detestation of his former way of life ; and, to shew his penitence, declared his resolution of retiring to the monastery of the Carthusians. I gave him a letter to the superior of the convent, that he might be received without any objection ; and thus we separated. I have since learned, that he has become a pattern of piety, and an example to the whole order.

“ Having now recovered your brother, I resolved to take vengeance on the robbers. I immediately

wrote to Germany, informing the magistrates of their haunt, and desiring them to send a strong detachment to seize them. They were all taken, and have now suffered a punishment much too mild for their multiplied crimes.

“ This, my dear son, is what you desired to be informed of ; but let us for ever bury in oblivion these terrible scenes, and only think of the happiness of being reunited, never to separate till death.”

Gratitude was not one of the least virtues of Prosper ; for he sent an express to Geneva, informing M. de Bonneville of his situation, and inviting him, in the name of the prince, to come and augment their happiness, by sharing it with them. Information of this joyful event was also sent to the principal of the college, and the English captain ; who both received proofs of the prince’s gratitude.

When these debts of gratitude were performed, the marriage of Prosper next engaged their attention. He had been captivated by the charms of his young and amiable cousin, who lived in the family ; and he soon obtained her hand in marriage. The happy couple had a separate lodging assigned to them in the palace, where they lived in the utmost felicity.

The beautiful goddess now appeared to Prosper for the last time. “ You have now wisdom enough,” said she, “ to walk without my assistance,

and I will be always near you, though you will see me no more ; I take back the mirror that I gave you ; for your conscience must now be your only director, and you have been taught to listen to its dictates. Always remember, that he who takes wisdom for his guide, can never wander from the right path. Having spoken these words, she vanished for ever.

Prosper continued steadily to follow his former line of conduct ; for he was a dutiful son, an affectionate husband, and a tender father, and was never known to be immoderately afflicted at the difficulties which surrounded him. " They are the portion of human nature," said he ; " and we come not into the world to enjoy perfect happiness." He educated his children in the practice of every virtue ; and taught them, above all, never to despair of the assistance of Providence.

END OF THE LITTLE COLLIER.

and I will be always near you, though you will see
 me no more; I look back for the first time I have you;
 the great consolation which now is yours, only I think,
 and you have been taught to know by its distance.
 Always remember that he who loves without his
 father, can never wander from the right path. Thus
 the spoken word, she vanished for ever.

She never continued steadily to follow the same line of
 conduct; but she was a brilliant and distinguished
 beauty, and a tender heart, and was never known to
 be any thing but cheerful and amiable when she
 returned home. She was the person of whom
 every body said; "Oh, and we were not into the world in
 every period of happiness." She retained her position
 in the presence of every prince; and taught that
 there, all, never to depart of the existence of her
 father.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME

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UNTOWARD ORPHAN.

A KING of Persia, who had no offspring to inherit his throne, finding a beautiful little orphan boy begging in the streets one day, had him carried home to his palace, and formed the design of adopting him as his son and heir. When the child was dressed as the king's son, he looked quite enchanting, and soon became the delight of the whole court.

In a short time after the king died, and left a will, wherein he ordered that the child should be educated with the greatest care, until he was fifteen years old; and on arriving at that age, should he turn out according to the education that was bestowed upon him, by showing himself virtuous and worthy of a throne, he was to inherit the kingdom: but if, on the contrary, he did not profit by the instructions he received, and gave himself up to vice, he was to be stripped of all his grandeur, turned out of the palace, and condemned to work in the mines for life.

The administrators of the king paid the strictest attention to the execution of the will ; they procured the best governors and teachers for the child, and omitted nothing that might contribute to instruct, and to make him perfect. However, during his infancy, he shewed very bad inclinations ; was disgusted with every thing that could be useful to him ; he hated his masters, trampled upon his books, or threw them out of the window, and broke or destroyed every article that was put into his hands for his instruction. When he was more advanced in years, they informed him of the will of the king, and every day reminded him, on the one side, of the sceptre and crown he was to possess, as the reward of his good behaviour ; while, on the other side, they represented to him the infamy and the punishment to which he would be condemned, in consequence of an opposite conduct. These considerations, however, made no impression upon him ; for, at an already advanced age, his only occupation was in raising little houses of clay, and building castles with cards. When his masters would overturn these frivolous works, he wept, fretted, threatened ; and instead of studying the task allotted him, he was no sooner left alone than he returned to his childish employments, determined to learn nothing. He attained, however, by some means unknown, a habit of uttering the rudest and most indecent lan-

guage ; and it was in vain to try to reclaim him, for he would not be corrected.

As he grew up, he shewed new defects, and gave himself up to the greatest vices. Passion, cruelty, avarice, excess in eating and drinking, were not the only conspicuous faults in him ; his conversation was of a piece with his disposition : he only praised vicious actions ; he only esteemed debauchery ; he only loved intemperance. In this manner he at last arrived at the age of fifteen ; the council assembled, and he appeared ; the will of the king was read to him, and, with an unanimous voice, he was declared unworthy of the throne, condemned to be stript, and sent to the mines for the remainder of his life.

On hearing this sentence, he, for the first time, appeared penitent ; he grew pale, trembled, shed tears, sobbed, and asked pardon ; but the sentence was put in execution.

The fate of this child, nevertheless, must draw forth our compassion. What a disastrous day for him ! What a fall ! What an irreparable loss ! But his conduct was rebellious, hateful, and insupportable. Unfortunate creature that he was ! did he not know what he had to hope and to fear ? Alas ! my young readers, do you not yourselves know that you are this child by your adoption, destined to reign eternally, if your conduct in this world is worthy of the crown

promised you ; and threatened with eternal punishment, if you lead a life unworthy of your adoption ? Like him, you have been taken from the bosom of misery and indigence ; you have been washed from original sin by the water of baptism, and clothed with the robe of innocence. How charming were you then in the eyes of the celestial court ! But you have soon sullied this robe, and you have lost all your charms. Compare your life with that of this orphan ; you will find it as frivolous, as unworthy, and as vicious as his. Meanwhile you are instructed ; and you know what has been done for you. If God, in his mercy, has sometimes deprived you of the unworthy objects of your attachment, far from reflecting, and devoting yourself to him, you still continued obstinate, and have only loved the world. But the time draws near, when he will decide whether you are worthy of heaven or hell : tears and lamentations will avail you nothing in that awful day.

THE END.

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