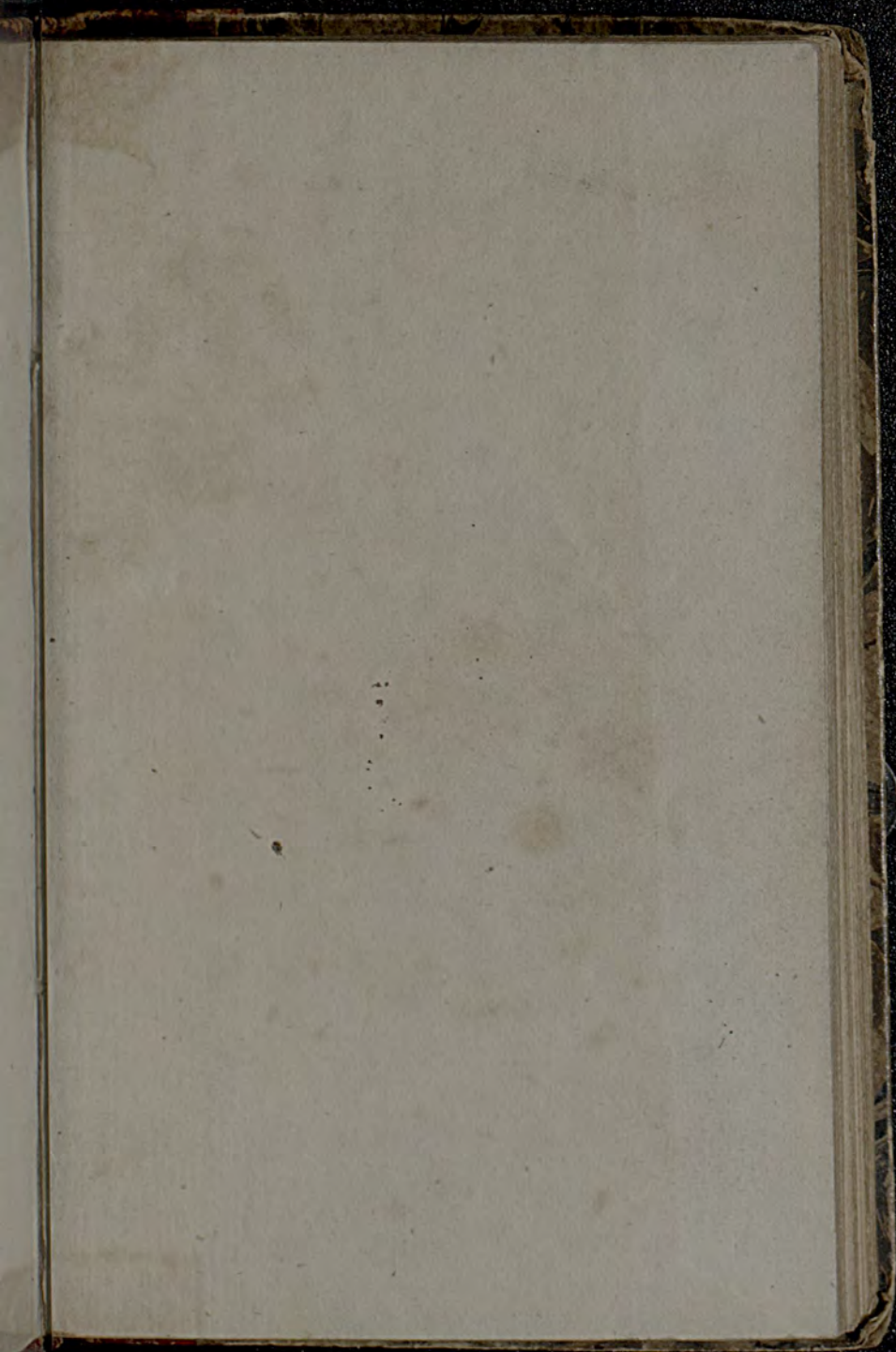


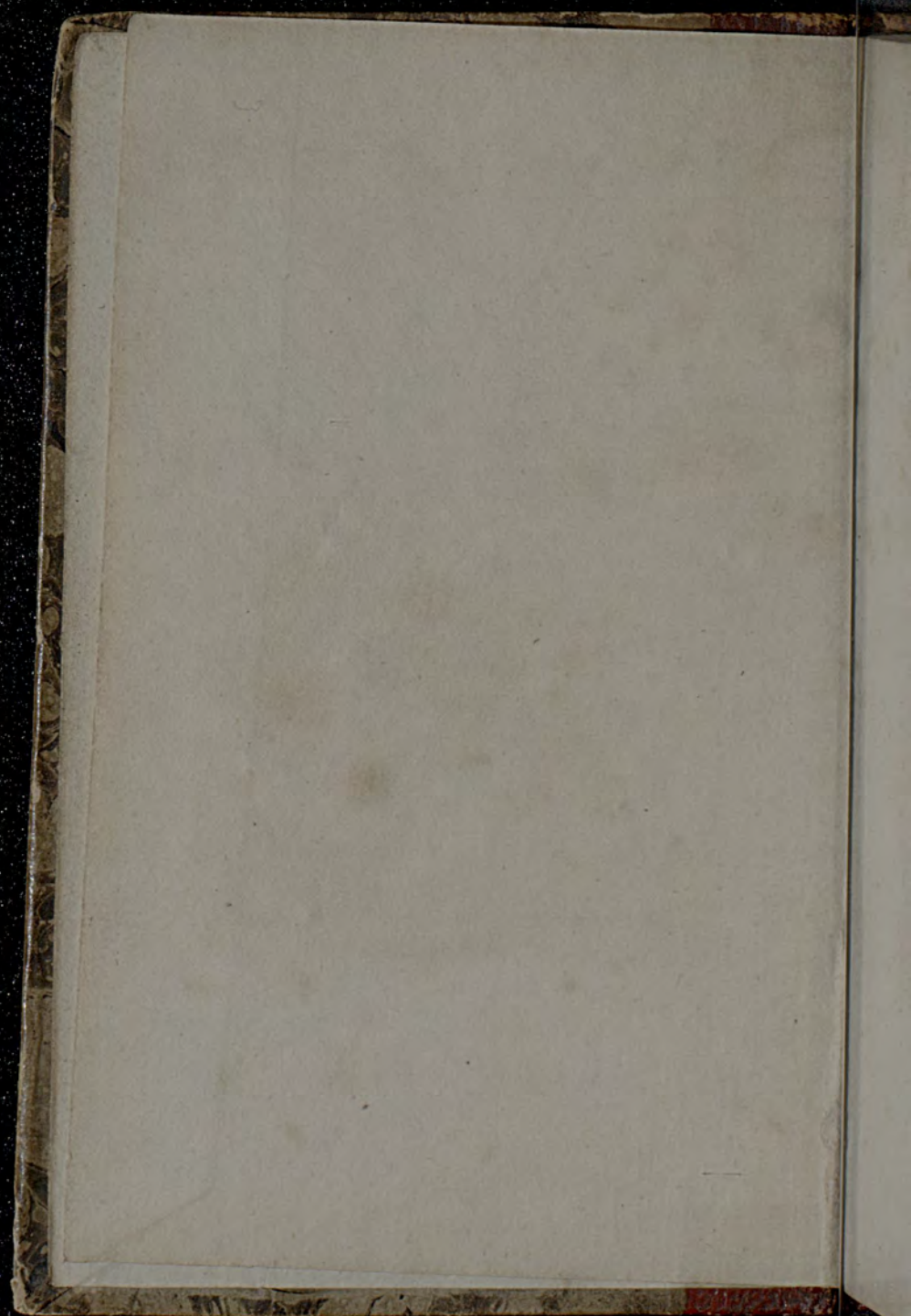


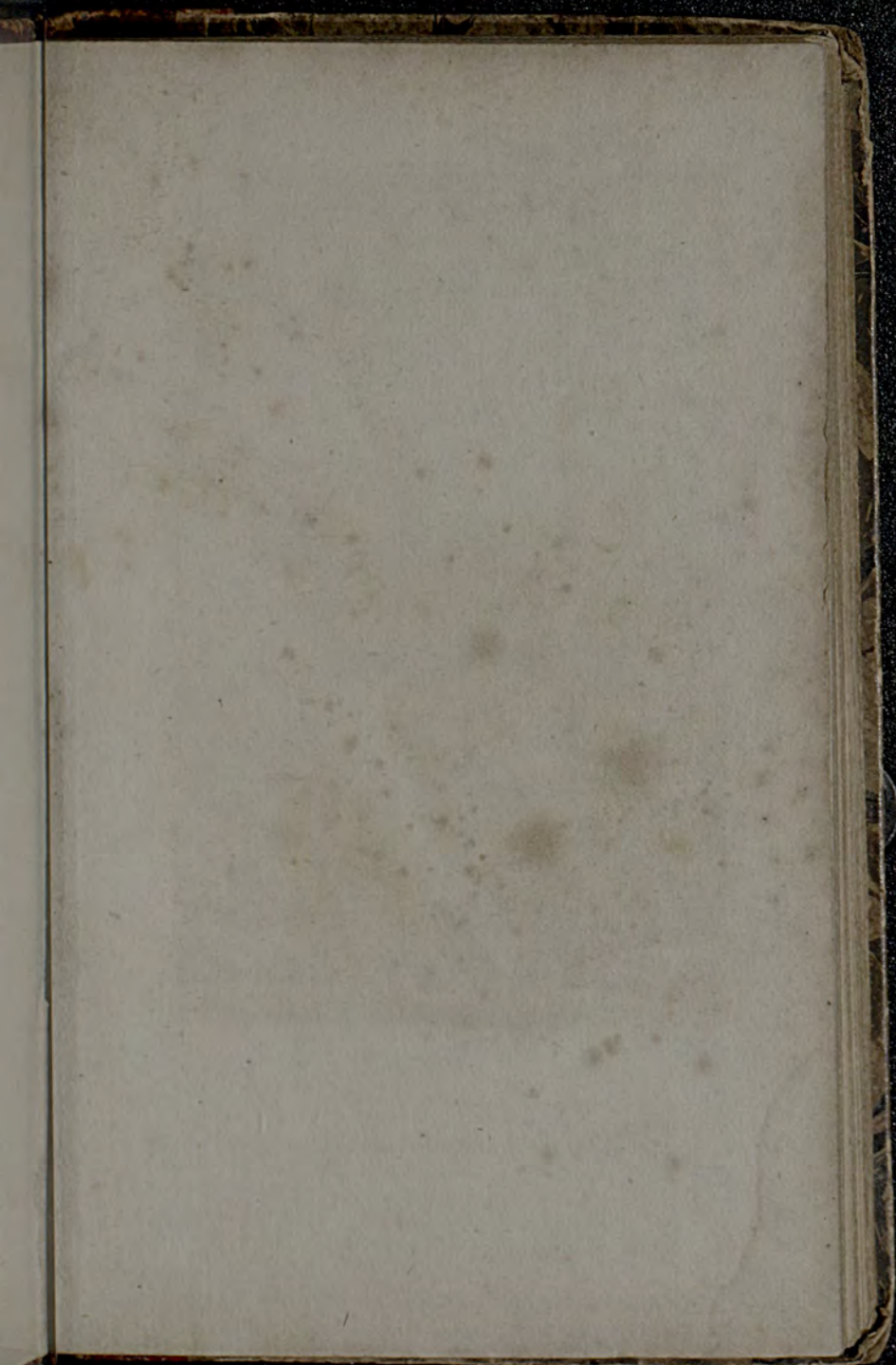
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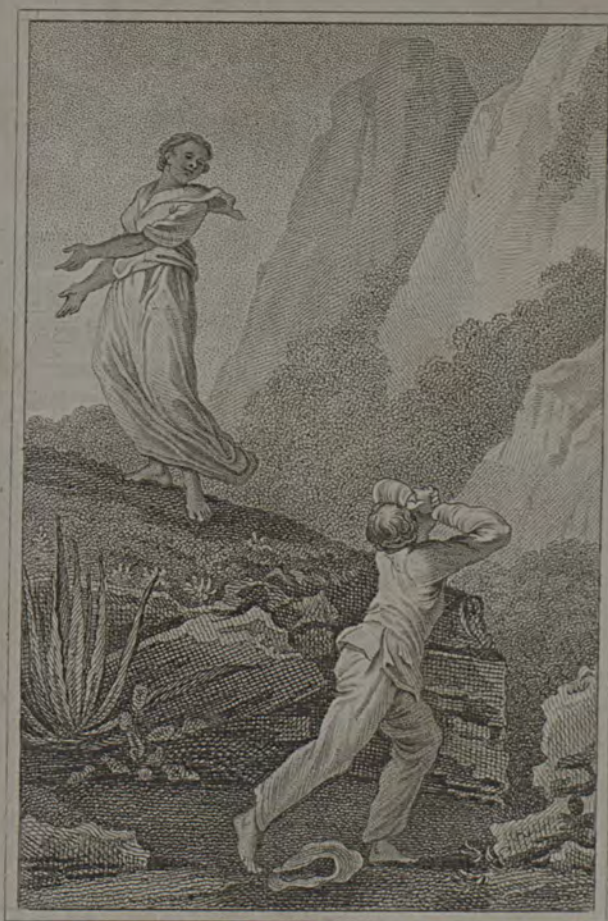
Mary O. Spence

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PAUL AND VIRGINIA.

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PAUL AND VIRGINIA,
A TALE.

TRANSLATED

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AUTHOR OF 'SACRED BIOGRAPHY.'

FROM THE FRENCH OF
JAMES HENRY BERNARDEN DE ST. PIERRE,
Author of 'The Indian Cottage,' 'Studies of Nature,' &c.

WITH A BEAUTIFUL FRONTISPIECE,
By Mr. Freeman.

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P R E F A C E.

I HAVE proposed to myself an object of no mean importance in composing this little work. I have endeavoured to paint in it, a soil, and vegetables different from those of Europe.

Our poets have long enough composed their lovers to rest, on the banks of the rivulets, in the flowry meads, and under the foliage of the beech-tree. My wish is to seat mine on the shore of the sea, at the foot of rocks, under the shade of cocoa-trees, bananas, and citrons in blossom.

Nothing is wanting to the other hemisphere of the Globe, but a Theocritus, or a Virgil, in order to our having pictures at least as interesting as those of our own country.

I am aware that travellers, of exquisite taste, have presented us with enchanting descriptions of several of the islands of the South-Sea; but the manners of their inhabitants, and still more those of the Europeans which frequent them, frequently mar the landscapes. It was my desire to blend with the beauty of Nature between the Tropics, the moral beauty of a small society.

It was likewise my purpose, to place in a striking light certain truths of high moment, and this one in particular: that human happiness consists in living conformably to nature and virtue.

It was not necessary for me however to compose a romance, in order to exhibit a representation of hap-


PREFACE.

py families. I declare in the most solemn manner, that those which I am going to display have actually existed, and that their History is strictly true, as to the principal events of it. They were authentically certified to me by many respectable planters with whom I was acquainted in the Isle of France. I have connected with them only a few indifferent circumstances; but which, being personal to myself, have on that very account, the same merit of reality.

When I had formed, some years ago, a very imperfect sketch of this species of pastoral, I besought a fine lady, who lived very much in the great world, and certain grave personages, who mingle very little with it, to hear it read over, in order to acquire some pre-sentiment of the effect which it might produce on readers of a character so very different: I had the satisfaction of observing that it melted them all into tears.

This was the only judgment which I could form on the matter, as indeed it was all that I wished to know. But as a great vice frequently walks in the train of mediocrity of talents, this success inspired me with the vanity of giving to my work the title of 'A Picture of Nature.' Happily for me, I recollected to what a degree the nature of the climate in which I received my birth was strange to me; to what a degree, in countries where I have contemplated the productions of Nature merely as a passenger, she is rich, various, lovely, magnificent, mysterious; and to what a degree, I am destitute of sagacity, of taste, and of expression, to know and to paint her. On this I checked my vanity, and came to myself again. I have therefore comprehended his feeble essay under the name, and placed it in the train of my Studies of Nature, to which the public has granted a reception so gracious; in order that this title, recalling to them my incapacity, may likewise preserve an everlasting recollection of their own indulgence.

PAUL AND VIRGINIA.



ON the Eastern declivity of the mountain which rises behind Port Louis, in the Isle of France, are still to be seen, on a spot of ground formerly cultivated, the ruins of two little cottages.

They are situated almost in the middle of a bason formed by enormous rocks, which has only one opening turned toward the North.

From that opening, you perceive on the left, the mountain known by the name of Mount Discovery, from which signals are repeated of vessels steering for the island; and at the bottom of this mountain, the city of Port Louis; to the right, the road, which leads from Port Louis to the quarter of Pamplémousses; afterwards the church of that name, which rises with its avenues of bamboos, in the middle of a great plain; and beyond it, a forest which extends to the farthest extremities of the island.

You have in front, on the brink of the Sea, a view of Tombay: a little to the right Cape Misfortune, and beyond that the boundless Ocean, in which appear, on a level with the water's edge, some uninhabited little isles, among others Mitre Point, which resembles a bastion in the midst of the waves.

At the entrance of this bason from whence so many objects are distinguishable, the echoes of the mountain incessantly repeat the noise of the winds which agitate the neighbouring forests, and the roaring of the billows, which break at a distance upon the shallows; but at the very foot of the cottages, no noise is any longer to be heard, and nothing to be seen

around except great rocks, as steep as the wall of a house.

Tufts of trees grow at their bases, in their clefts, and up to their very summits, on which the clouds settle

The rains which are attracted by their peaks frequently paint the colours of the rainbow on their green and dusky sides, and constantly supply, at the bottom, the sources of which the small river of the Lantianiers is formed. A profound silence reigns through this inclosure, where all is peace; the air, the waters, and the light. Scarcely does the echo there repeat the murmuring sound of the palmists, which grow on their elevated stalks, and whose long arrow-formed branches are seen always balanced by the winds.

A mild light illuminates the cavity of this basin, into which the rays of the Sun descend only at noon-day; but from the dawning of Aurora, they strike upon the brim of it, the peaks of which, rising above the shadows of the mountain, present the appearance of gold and purple on the azure of the Heavens.

I took pleasure in retiring to this place, where you can enjoy at once an unbounded prospect, and a profound solitude. One day, as I was sitting by the platform of these cottages, and contemplating their ruins, a man considerably advanced into the vale of years happened to pass that way. He was dressed, conformably to the custom of the ancient inhabitants in a short jacket and long trowsers. He walked barefooted, and supported himself on a staff of ebony wood. His hair was completely white, his physiognomy simple and majestic. I saluted him respectfully. He returned my salute, and having eyed me for a moment, he approached, and sat down on the hillock where I had taken my station.

Encouraged by this mark of confidence, I took the liberty of addressing him in these words: "Can you

inform me, Father, to whom these two cottages belonged?" "My son," replied he, "these ruins, and that now neglected spot of ground, were inhabited about twenty years ago by two families, which there found the means of true happiness. Their history is affecting: but in this island, situated on the road to India, what European will deign to take an interest in the destiny of a few obscure individuals? Nay, who would submit to live here, though in happiness and content, if poor and unknown? Men are desirous of knowing only the history of the Great, and of Kings, which is of no use to any one." "Father," replied I, "it is easy to discern from your air, and your style of conversation, that you must have acquired very extensive experience. If your leisure permits, have the goodness to relate me, I beseech you, what you know of the ancient inhabitants of this desert; and be assured that there is no man, however depraved by the prejudices of the world, but who loves to hear of the felicity which Nature and Virtue bestow."

Upon this, like one who is trying to recollect certain particular circumstances, after having applied his hands for some time to his forehead, the old man related what follows.

"In the year 1735, a young man of Normandy, called De la Tour, after having to no purpose solicited employment in France, and looked for assistance from his family, determined to come to this island in the view of making his fortune. He brought along with him a young wife whom he passionately loved, and who returned his affection with mutual ardour. She was descended from an ancient and opulent family of her Province; but he had married her privately, and without a portion, because her relations opposed their union on account of the obscurity of his birth.

"He left her at Port Louis, in this island, and embarked for Madagascar in the hope of there purchas-

ing some negroes, and of immediately returning hither for the purpose of fixing his residence. He disembarked at Madagascar during the dangerous season, which commences about the middle of October, and soon after his arrival died of the pestilential fever, which rages there for six months of the year, and which always will prevent European Nations from forming settlements on that Island.

"The effects which he had carried with him were embezzled after his death, as generally happens to those who die in foreign countries. His wife, who had remained in the Isle of France, found herself a widow, pregnant, and destitute of every earthly resource except a negro woman, in a country where she was entirely unknown. Being unwilling to solicit assistance from any man, after the death of him who was the sole object of her affection, her misfortunes gave her courage. She resolved to cultivate with the help of her slave, a spot of ground, in order to procure the means of subsistence.

"In an island almost a desert, the soil of which was unappropriated, she did not choose the most fertile district of the country, nor that which was the most favourable for commerce; but looking about for some sequestered cove of the mountain, some hidden asylum, where she might live secluded and unknown, she found her way from the city to these rocks, into which she slunk as into a nest.

"It is an instinct common to all beings possessed of sensibility, under the pressure of calamity, to seek shelter in places the wildest and most deserted; as if rocks were bulwarks against misfortune, or as if the calmness of Nature could compose the troubles of the soul. But Providence, which comes to our relief when we aim only at necessary comforts, had in store for Madame de la Tour a blessing which neither riches nor grandeur can purchase; and that blessing was a friend.

“In this place for a year past had resided a sprightly, good, and sensible woman, called Margaret. She was born in Brittany, of a plain family of peasants, by whom she was beloved, and who would have rendered her happy, had she not been weak enough to repose confidence in the professions of love of a man of family in the neighbourhood, who had promised to marry her; but who, having gratified his passion, abandoned her, and even refused to secure to her the means of subsistence for the child with which he had left her pregnant.

“She immediately resolved for ever to quit the village where she was born, and to conceal her frailty in the Colonies, far from her country, where she had lost the only dowry of a poor and honest young woman, reputation. An old black fellow, whom she had purchased with a poor borrowed purse, cultivated with her a small corner of this district.

“Madame de la Tour, attended by her black woman, found Margaret in this place, who was suckling her child. She was delighted to meet with a female, in a situation which she accounted somewhat similar to her own. She unfolded, in a few words, her former condition, and her present wants. Margaret, on hearing Madame de la Tour's story, was moved with compassion, and wishing to merit her confidence rather than her esteem, she confessed to her without reserve the imprudence of which she had been guilty: ‘For my part,’ said she, ‘I have merited my destiny, but you, Madam - ———, virtuous and unfortunate!’

“Here, with tears in her eyes, she tendered to the stranger the accommodations of her cottage, and her friendship.

“Madame de la Tour, deeply affected with a reception so tender, folded her in her arms, exclaiming, ‘I see that God is going to put an end to my sufferings, since he has inspired you with sentiments of

greater kindness to me, an entire stranger, than I ever received from my own relations.

"I had the felicity of Margaret's acquaintance; and though I live at the distance of a league and a half from hence, in the woods, behind the long mountain, I looked upon myself as her neighbour. In the cities of Europe, a street, a simple partition, separates the members of the same family for years; but in the new Colonies, we consider as neighbours those who are only separated from us by woods and by mountains. At that time particularly, when this island had little commerce with India, neighbourhood alone was a title to friendship, and hospitality to strangers was considered as a duty and a pleasure.

"As soon as I learnt that my neighbour had got a companion, I went to see her, in order to offer to both all the assistance in my power. I found in Madame de la Tour a person of a very interesting figure; majestic, and melancholy.

"She was then very near her time. I said to these two ladies, that it would be better, for the sake of the interests of their children, and especially to prevent the establishment of any other settler, to divide between them the territory of this bason, which contains about twenty acres. They entrusted me with the care of making this division; I formed it into two portions nearly equal.

"The one contained the upper part of that enclosure, from yonder point of the rock covered with clouds, from whence issues the source of the river of the Lataniers, to that steep opening which you see at the top of the mountain, and which is called the Embrasure, because it actually resembles the parapet of a battery. The bottom of this spot of ground is so filled with rocks and gutters, that it is scarcely possible to walk along. It nevertheless produces large trees, and abounds with fountains and little rivulets. In the other portion, I comprised all the lower part

of the enclosure, which extends along the river of the Lataniers, to the opening where we now are, from whence that river begins to flow between two hills toward the Sea. You there see some stripes of meadow-ground, and a soil tolerably smooth and level, but which is very little better than the other; for in the rainy season it is marshy, and in drought stiff as lead. When you wish in that case to open a trench, you are obliged to cut it with a hatchet.

"After having made these two divisions, I persuaded the ladies to settle their respective possessions by casting lots. The upper part fell to the share of Madame de la Tour, and the lower to Margaret. They were both perfectly satisfied; but requested me not to separate their habitations, 'in order,' said they to me, 'that we may always have it in our power to see, to converse with, and to assist each other.' It was necessary however that each of them should have a separate retreat. The cottage of Margaret was built in the middle of the bason, exactly upon the boundary of her own domain. I built close to it, upon that of Madame de la Tour, another cottage; so that these two friends were at once in the vicinity of each other, and on the property of their families.

"I myself cut palisadoes in the mountain, and brought the leaves of the Latanier from the sea-side, to construct these two cottages, which now no longer present either door or roof. Alas! there still remains but too much for my recollection. Time which destroys, with so much rapidity, the monuments of empires, seems to respect in these deserts those of friendship, in order to perpetuate my affliction to the last hour of my life.

"Scarcely was the second of the cottages completed when Madame de la Tour was delivered of a daughter. I had been the god-father of Margaret's child, who was called Paul. Madame de la Tour begged me to name her daughter also, in conjunction with

her friend, who gave her the name of Virginia. 'She will be virtuous,' said she, 'and she will be happy; I knew calamity only in ceasing to be virtuous.'

"When Madame de la Tour was recovered of her lying-in, these two little habitations began to wear the appearance of comfort, with the assistance of the labour which I occasionally bestowed upon them; but particularly by the assiduous labour of their slaves; that of Margaret, called Domingo, was an *Iolof Black*, still robust though rather advanced in life.

"He possessed the advantage of experience and good natural sense.

"He cultivated, without distinction, on the two districts, the soil which appeared to him the most fertile, and there he sowed the seeds which he thought would thrive the best in it. He sowed small millet and Indian corn in places where the soil was of an inferior quality, and a little wheat where the ground was good. In marshy places he sowed rice, and at the foot of the rocks were raised giraumonts, gourds, and cucumbers, which delight in climbing up their sides: in dry places, he planted potatoes, which there acquire singular sweetness; cotton-trees on heights, sugar-canes on strong land; coffee plants on the hills, where their grains are small, but of an excellent quality; along the river, and around the cottages, he planted bananas, which all the year round produce large supplies of fruit, and form a beautiful shelter; and finally, some plants of tobacco, to soothe his own cares and those of his good mistresses. He went to cut wood for fuel in the mountain, and broke down pieces of rock here and there in the plantation, to smooth the roads. He performed all these labours with intelligence and activity, because he performed them with zeal. He was very much attached to Margaret, and not much less so to Madame de la Tour, whose slave he had married at the birth of Virginia.

He passionately loved his wife, whose name was Mary. She was a native of Madagascar, from whence she had brought some degree of skill, particularly the art of making baskets, and stuffs called pagnes, with the grass which grows in the woods. She was clever, cleanly, and what was above all, incorruptibly faithful. Her employment was to prepare the victuals, to take care of some poultry, and to go occasionally to Port Louis to sell the superfluity of the two plantations; this however was very inconsiderable. If to these you add two goats, brought up with the children, and a great dog that watched the dwellings during the night, you will have an idea of all the possessions and of all the domestic economy, of these two little farms.

"As for the two friends, they spun cotton from morning till night. This employment was sufficient to maintain themselves and their families; but in other respects they were so ill provided with foreign commodities, that they walked bare-footed when at home, and never wore shoes except on Sundays when they went to mass early in the morning, at the church of Pamplemousses which you see in the bottom

"It is nevertheless much farther than to Port Louis; but they seldom visited the city, for fear of being treated with contempt, because they were dressed in the coarse blue linen cloth of Bengal which is worn by slaves. After all, is public respectability half so valuable as domestic felicity?

"If these ladies were exposed to a little suffering when abroad, they returned home with so much more additional satisfaction. No sooner had Mary and Domingo perceived them from this eminence, on the road from Pamplemousses, than they flew to the bottom of the mountain, to assist them in re-ascending it. They read in the eyes of their slaves the joy which they felt at seeing them again. They found in their habitation cleanliness and freedom, blessings which they owed entirely to their own industry, and to ser-

vants animated with zeal and affection. As for themselves, united by the same wants, having experienced evils almost similar, giving to each other the tender names of friend, companion and sister, they had but one will, one interest, one table. They had every thing in common. And if it sometimes happened that former sentiments, more ardent than those of friendship, were re-kindled in their bosoms, a pure and undefiled Religion, assisted by chaste manners, directed them toward another life, like the flame which flies off to Heaven when it ceases to find nourishment on the Earth.

"The duties of nature were besides an additional source of happiness to their society. Their mutual friendship redoubled at the sight of their children, the fruits of a love equally unfortunate. They took delight to put them into the same bath, and by them to sleep in the same cradle. They frequently exchanged their milk to the children; 'My friend,' said Madame de la Tour, 'each of us will have two children, and each of our children will have two mothers.' Like two buds which remain upon two trees of the same species, all the branches of which have been broken by the tempest, produce fruits more delicious, if each of them, detached from the maternal stock, is grafted on the neighbouring stem; thus these two little children, deprived of their relations, were filled with sentiments toward each other more tender than those of son and daughter, of brother and sister, when they were exchanged at the breast by the two friends who had given them being.

"Already their mothers talked of their marriage, though they were yet in the cradle, and this prospect of conjugal felicity, with which they soothed their own woes to peace, frequently terminated in a flood of tears; the one recollecting the miseries which she had suffered from having neglected the forms of marriage, and the other from having submitted to its laws;

the one from having been raised above her condition; and the other from having descended below hers; but they consoled themselves with the thought that the day would come, when their children, more fortunate than themselves, would enjoy at once, far from the cruel prejudices of Europe, the pleasures of love and the happiness of equality.

"Nothing indeed was to be compared with the attachment which the babes betimes testified for each other: If Paul happened to complain, they shewed Virginia to him; at the sight of her he smiled and was pacified. If Virginia suffered, you were informed of it by the lamentations of Paul; but this amiable child immediately concealed her pain, that her sufferings might not distress him.

"I never arrived here, that I did not see them both entirely naked, according to the custom of the country, scarcely able to walk, holding each other by the hands, and under the arms, as the constellation of the Twins is represented. Night itself had not the power of separating them; it frequently surprised them, laid in the same cradle, cheek joined to cheek, bosom to bosom, their hands mutually passed round each other's neck, and asleep in one another's arms.

"When they were able to speak, the first names which they learned to pronounce was that of brother and sister. Infancy, which bestows caresses more tender, knows of no names more sweet. Their education only served to redouble their friendship, by directing it toward their reciprocal wants. Very soon every thing that concerned domestic economy, cleanliness, the care of preparing a rural repast, became the province of Virginia, and her labours were always followed by the praises and caresses of Paul.

"As for him, ever in motion, he digged in the garden with Domingo, or with a little hatchet in his hand followed him into the woods; and if in these rambles a beautiful flower, a delicious fruit, or a nest of

birds, came in his way, though at the top of the highest tree, he scaled it to bring them to his sister.

"When you chanced to meet one of them, you might be certain the other was not far off. One day that I was descending from the summit of this mountain, I perceived Virginia at the extremity of the garden; she was running toward the house, her head covered with her petticoat, which she had raised behind, to shelter her from a deluge of rain.

"At a distance I thought she had been alone; and having advanced to assist her, I perceived that she held Paul by the arm, who was almost enveloped in the same covering; both of them delighted at finding themselves sheltered together under an umbrella of their own invention. These two charming heads, wrapt up in the swelling petticoat, reminded me of the children of Leda enclosed in the same shell.

"All their study was to please and to assist each other; in every other respect they were as ignorant as Creoles, and neither knew how to read or write. They did not disturb themselves about what had happened in former times, and at a distance from them; their curiosity did not extend beyond this mountain. They believed that the world ended at the extremity of their island, and they could not form an idea of any thing beautiful where they were not. Their mutual affections and that of their mothers engaged every feeling of their hearts: never had useless science caused their tears to flow; never had the lessons of a gloomy morality oppressed them with languor. They knew not that it was unlawful to steal, every thing with them being in common; nor to be intemperate, having always at command plenty of simple food: nor to utter falsehood, having no truths that it was necessary to conceal. They had never been terrified with the idea that God has in store dreadful punishments for ungrateful children; with them filial duty was born of maternal affection;

they had been taught no other religion than that which instructs us to love one another; and if they did not offer up long prayers at church, wherever they were, in the house, in the fields, or in the woods they raised toward Heaven innocent hands and pure hearts, filled with the love of their parents.

"Thus passed their early infancy, like a beautiful dawn which seems to promise a still more beautiful day. They already divided with their mothers the cares of the household: as soon as the crowing of the cock announced the return of Aurora, Virginia rose, went to draw water at the neighbouring fountain, and returned to the house to prepare breakfast. Soon after, when the sun had gilded the peaks of that enclosure, Margaret and her son went to the dwelling of Madame de la Tour, where they immediately began a prayer, which was followed by their first repast.

"This they frequently partook of before the door seated on the grass, under a bower of bananas, which furnished them at the same time with ready-prepared food, in their substantial fruit, and table-linen in their long and glittering leaves.

"Wholesome and plentiful nourishment rapidly expanded the bodies of these young persons, and a mild education painted in their physiognomies the purity and contentment of their souls. Virginia was only twelve years old; already her person was more than half formed; a large quantity of beautiful flaxen hair ornamented her head; her blue eyes and coral lips shone with the mildest lustre on the bloom of her countenance: they always smiled in concert when she spoke, but when she was silent, their natural obliquity toward Heaven gave them an expression of extreme sensibility, and even a slight tendency to melancholy.

"As for Paul, you might already see in him the character of a man, possessing all the graces of youth.

his figure was taller than that of Virginia, his complexion darker, and his nose more aquiline: his eyes, which were black, would have possessed a certain degree of haughtiness, if the long eye-lashes which surrounded them, and which resembled the fine strokes of a pencil, had not given them the greatest sweetness.

“Though he was almost continually in motion, the moment his sister appeared he became tranquil, and seated himself beside her; their meal frequently passed without a word being uttered: their silence, the simplicity of their attitudes, the beauty of their naked feet, would have tempted you to believe that you beheld an antique group of white marble, representing the children of Niobe: but when you beheld their looks, which seemed desirous to meet each other, their smiles returned with smiles still sweeter, you would have taken them for those children of Heaven, those blessed spirits, whose nature is love; and who have no need of thought to make their feelings known, nor of words to express their affection.

“In the mean time, Madame de la Tour perceiving that her daughter advanced in life with so many charms, felt her uneasiness increase with her tenderness: she used to say sometimes to me, ‘If I should chance to die, what would become of Virginia, dow-erless as she is?’

“She had an aunt in France, a woman of quality, rich, old, and a devotee, who had refused her assistance in a manner so unfeeling, when she married de la Tour, that she resolved never to have recourse to her again, to whatever extremity she might be reduced.

“But now that she was become a mother, she no longer dreaded the shame of a refusal: she acquainted her aunt with the unexpected death of her husband, the birth of her daughter, and the embarrassment of her affairs; being destitute of support, and

burdened with a child. She however received no answer; but, being a woman of exalted character, she no longer feared humiliation, nor the reproaches of her relation, who had never forgiven her for having married a man of low birth, though virtuous. She continued therefore to write her aunt by every opportunity, in the hope of raising in her breast some favourable emotions toward Virginia: many years however elapsed before she received from her any token of remembrance.

"At length, in the year 1746, on the arrival of M. de la Bourdonaye, Madame de la Tour was informed that their new Governor had a letter to deliver from her aunt.

"She immediately ran to Port Louis, for this once entirely indifferent about appearing in her coarse habit; maternal love raising her above respect to the world. M. de la Bourdonaye delivered her aunt's letter, which insinuated that she merited her condition, for having married an adventurer, a libertine; that the passions always carried their punishment along with them; that the untimely death of her husband was a just chastisement of God; that she had done well to remain in the island, instead of dishonouring her family by returning to France; and that after all she was in an excellent country, where every body made fortunes, except the idle.

"After having thus reproached her, she concluded with making her own eulogium: to avoid, she said, the almost inevitable evils which attend matrimony, she had always refused to marry: the truth was, that being very ambitious, she had refused to unite herself to any except a man of rank; but although she was very rich, and that at Court every thing is a matter of indifference, fortune excepted, yet no person was found willing to form an alliance with a woman homely to the last degree, and at the same time possessed of a most unfeeling heart.

"She added, by way of postscript, that every thing considered, she had strongly recommended her to M. de la Bourdonaye: she had indeed recommended her, but, conformably to a custom but too prevalent at this day, which renders a protector more to be dreaded than a declared enemy, in order to justify to the Governor her severity to her niece, in feigning to pity she had calumniated her.

"Madame de la Tour, who could not be seen by the most indifferent person without interest and respect, was received with the greatest coolness by M. de la Bourdonaye, thus prejudiced against her. To the account which she gave of her own situation, and that of her daughter, he answered only by harsh monosyllables; 'I shall enquire,'—'we shall see,'—'in time,'—'there are many unhappy people,'—'why offend so respectable an aunt?'—'you are certainly to blame.'

"Madame de la Tour returned to the plantation, her heart oppressed with grief, and full of bitterness; on her arrival she sat down, threw her aunt's letter on the table, and said to her friend, 'Behold the fruits of eleven years patience.' But as no one of the society knew how to read except Madame de la Tour, she took up the letter again and read it to all the family. Scarcely had she concluded, when Margaret said to her with vivacity, 'What need have we of thy relations? Has God forsaken us? He only is our father; have we not lived happily until this day? Why then should you afflict yourself? You have no fortitude.'

"Perceiving that Madame de la Tour was much affected, she threw herself on her bosom, folded her in her arms and exclaimed, 'My dear friend, my dear friend!' her own sobs quite choaked her voice. At this sight, Virginia melting into tears, alternately pressed the hands of her mother, and of Margaret, to her lips, and to her heart; whilst Paul, his eyes

inflamed with rage, exclaimed aloud, clenched his fists, stamped with his feet, not knowing how to vent his rage.

"At the noise which he made, Domingo and Mary ran in, and nothing but exclamations of distress were heard in the cottage: 'Ah, Madam!'—'My good mistress!'—'My dear mother!'—'Do not distress yourself.' Such tender marks of affection soon dissipated the anguish of Madame de la Tour: she embraced Paul and Virginia, and said to them with a look of satisfaction, 'My dear children, you are the cause of my tears, but you are also the source of all the happiness I enjoy: Oh, my children, misfortune attacks me only from afar, felicity is ever around me.'

"Paul and Virginia did not comprehend what she said, but as soon as they saw that she was composed they smiled and caressed her.

"Thus was peace restored, and the past scene was only like a stormy cloud in the midst of Summer.

"The good dispositions of these children were unfolding themselves from day to day.

"One Sunday about sun-rise, their mothers having gone to the first mass at the church of Pamplémousses a fugitive negro-woman made her appearance, under the bananas which surrounded their plantations. She was as meagre as a skeleton, and without a bit of clothing except a shread of tattered canvas about her loins.

"She threw herself at Virginia's feet, who was preparing the family breakfast, and thus addressed her.

"My dear young lady, take pity on a miserable runaway slave: for more than a month past I have been wandering about these mountains, half-dead with famine, and frequently pursued by the hunters and their dogs. I have fled from my master, who is a wealthy planter on the Black River: he has treated me in the manner you see.'

"In saying these words, she shewed her body deeply furrowed by the strokes of the whip which she had received; she added, 'I had thoughts of drowning myself, but knowing that you lived here, I thus reflected; perhaps there are still some good white people in this country, I must not die yet.'

"Virginia, much affected, replied, 'Take comfort, unfortunate creature! eat, eat.' Upon which she gave her the breakfast which she had prepared for the family. The slave in a few moments devoured the whole of it.

"Virginia, seeing her refreshed, said, 'Poor wretch! I have a great desire to go to your master and implore your pardon: at the sight of you he must be touched with compassion: will you conduct me to him?'

'Angel of God!' replied the negress, 'I will follow you wherever you lead me.'

"Virginia called her brother, and entreated him to accompany her: the fugitive slave conducted them by narrow paths to the middle of the woods, across high mountains over which they scrambled with difficulty, and great rivers, which they forded.

"At length, toward noon, they arrived at the bottom of a mountain on the banks of the Black River. They there perceived a well-built house, considerable plantations, and a great number of slaves engaged in different occupations. The master was walking in the midst of them, with a pipe in his mouth, and a ratan in his hand. He was a very tall, lean man, of an olive complexion, with his eyes sunk in his head, his eye-brows black and meeting each other.

"Virginia, quite petrified, holding Paul by the arm, approached the man, and entreated him for the love of God to pardon his slave, who was a few paces behind them.

"The master, at first, did not pay much attention to these two children, who were but meanly clad:

when however he had remarked the elegant form of Virginia, her beautiful flaxen hair, which appeared from under a blue hood, and when he had heard the sweet tones of her voice, which trembled as well as her body while she implored his forgiveness, he took the pipe from his mouth, and raising his ratan toward Heaven, declared with a terrible oath that he would pardon his slave, not for the love of God, but for the love of her.

“Virginia immediately made a sign for the slave to advance toward her master, and then ran away, with Paul running after her.

“They scrambled together up the steep declivity of the mountain, by which they had descended in the morning, and having arrived at its summit, they seated themselves under a tree, exhausted with fatigue, hunger and thirst.

“They had travelled from the rising of the Sun, more than five leagues without having tasted food: Paul addressed Virginia thus: ‘Sister, it is past mid-day, you are hungry, you are thirsty; we shall find no refreshment here, let us again descend the mountain, and request the master of the slave to give us something to eat.’

“Oh, no! my friend,” replied Virginia, ‘he has terrified me too much already. Do you not remember what mamma has often said; the bread of the wicked fills the mouth with gravel?’

“What shall we do then?” said Paul, ‘these trees produce only bad fruits: there is not so much as a tamarind, or a lemon to refresh you.’

“God will have pity on us,” returned Virginia, ‘he hears the voice of the little birds which call to him for food.’

“Scarcely had she pronounced these words when they heard the bubbling of a fountain which fell from a neighbouring rock; they immediately ran to it, and after having quenched their thirst with water more

clear than crystal, they gathered and eat a few of the cresses which grew upon its banks.

"As they were anxiously looking about from side to side, to see if they could not find some more substantial food, Virginia perceived among the trees of the forest a young palm-tree.

"The colewort which is inclosed in the leaves that grow on the top of this tree is very good to eat; but though its trunk was not thicker than a man's leg, it was more than sixty feet high. The wood of this tree indeed is only formed of a bundle of filaments, but its pith is so hard that it resists the edge of the keenest hatchet, and Paul had not so much as a knife.

"The idea occurred to him of setting fire to the palm tree, but here again he was at a loss; he had no steel; and besides in this island, so covered with rock, I do not believe that a single flint stone is to be found. Necessity produces industry, and the most useful inventions are frequently to be ascribed to the most miserable of mankind.

"Paul resolved to kindle a fire in the same manner that the blacks do.

"With the sharp point of a stone he bored a little hole in the branch of a tree that was very dry, which he mastered by pressing it under his feet: he then, with the edge of this stone, made a point to another branch equally dry, but of a different species of wood. Afterwards he applied this piece of pointed wood to the little hole of the branch which was under his feet, and spinning it round with great rapidity between his hands, as you trundle round the mill with which chocolate is frothed up, in a few moments he saw smoke and sparks issue from the point of contact.

"He then gathered together some dry herbage, and other branches of trees, and applied the fire to the root of the palm tree, which presently fell with a terrible crash. This fire likewise assisted him in

peeling off from the colewort its long ligneous and prickly leaves.

"Virginia and he ate a part of his cabbage raw, and the other part dressed upon the ashes, and found them equally savoury.

"They enjoyed this frugal repast with the highest satisfaction, from the recollection of the good action which they had performed in the morning; but their joy was greatly damped, by the uneasiness which they had not a doubt their long absence must have occasioned to their parents.

"Virginia recurred frequently to this subject, while Paul, who now felt his strength restored, assured her that it would not be long before they got home to quiet the anxiety of their mothers.

"After dinner they found themselves much embarrassed, for they had no longer a guide to direct them homewards.

"Paul, who was disconcerted at nothing, said to Virginia 'Our cottage looks toward the noon-day Sun, we must therefore pass as we did this morning, over that mountain which you see below with its three peaks. Come, let us walk on, my friend.' This mountain is called the Three Paps,* because its three peaks have that form.

"They descended then the gloomy declivity of the Black River toward the north, and arrived, after an hour's walking, at the banks of a considerable river

* There are many mountains, the summits of which are rounded into the form of a woman's breast, and bear that name in all languages. They are indeed real paps, for from them issue multitudes of brooks and rivers, which diffuse abundance over the face of the earth. They are the sources of the principal streams which water it, and furnish them with a constant supply, by continually attracting the clouds around the peak of the rock, which overtops them at the centre, like a nipple

which barred their progress. That large portion of the island, entirely covered with forests, is so little known even at this day, that many of its rivers and mountains are still without a name. The river, upon the banks of which they were, flows impetuously over a bed of rocks.

"The noise of its waters terrified Virginia; she durst not venture to put her feet into it for the purpose of fording over.

"Paul upon this took Virginia on his back; and thus laden passed over the slippery rocks of the river, in spite of the tumult of the waves. 'Be not afraid,' said he to her, 'I feel my strength renewed, having the charge of you. If the planter of the Black River had refused to your entreaties the pardon of his slave I should have fought with him.

"How!" exclaimed Virginia, 'with that man, so large, and so wicked? To what have I exposed you? My God! how difficult a thing it is to act properly! Evil alone is performed with facility!'

"When Paul had arrived on the farther side he was desirous of continuing the journey, laden as he was with the weight of his sister, and he flattered himself that he should be able thus to ascend the mountain of the Three Paps, which he saw before him at the distance of a league and a half, under the same burden with which he had crossed the river; but his strength very soon failed, and he was obliged to set her on the ground, and repose himself by her side.

"Virginia then said to him, 'Brother, the day is declining fast, you have still some strength remaining, but mine entirely fails; suffer me to remain here, and do you return alone to our cottage to restore tranquillity to our mothers.'

"Oh no!" said Paul, 'I will never leave you. If the night should surprise us in these woods, I will

the colewort, and I will make of its leaves an ajoupa to shelter you.

"Virginia however being a little revived, gathered from the trunk of an old tree which grew upon the edge of the river, long leaves of the scolopendra, which hung down from its boughs.

"She made of these a species of sandals, which she put on her feet; for they were wounded to bleeding by the sharp stones which covered the road. In her eagerness to do good she had forgot to put on shoes.

"Feeling herself relieved by the freshness of these leaves, she broke off a branch of bamboo, and proceeded on her journey, resting one hand on this reed, and the other on her brother. Thus they walked slowly on through the woods; but the height of the trees, and the thickness of their foliage, soon made them lose sight of the Three Paps, to which they were directing their course, and even of the Sun, which was near setting.

"After some time they strayed, without perceiving it, from the beaten path which they had hitherto pursued, and found themselves in a labyrinth of trees, of lianes, and of rocks which had no outlet.

"Paul made Virginia sit down, and ran about quite distracted, in quest of a road that might lead them out of this maze, but he fatigued himself in vain. He scrambled to the top of a large tree, with the hope of discovering at least the mountain of the Three Paps, but he could perceive nothing around him except the summits of trees, some of which were gilded by the last rays of the setting Sun.

"In the mean time the shadow of the mountains had already covered the forests in the valleys; the wind was hushed, as it usually is at the setting of the Sun; a profound silence reigned in these solitudes, and no other sound was to be heard but the

braying of the deer, which came to seek a place of repose for the night in these wild retreats.

"Paul, in the hope that some huntsman might hear his voice, then called out with all his might; 'Come, come to the relief of Virginia:' but the only answer he received was from the solitary echoes of the forest which repeated at intervals, 'Virginia! Virginia!'

"Paul at length descended from the tree, oppressed with fatigue and vexation; he meditated on the means of passing the night in this place; but there was neither fountain nor palm-tree to be found in it; nor even so much as branches of dry wood proper to kindle a fire.

"He then felt from experience the inefficacy of his resources, and began to weep.

"Virginia said to him, 'Do not distress yourself, my friend, if you would not wish to see me overwhelmed with grief. It is I who am the cause of all your sufferings, and of those which our mothers now endure. We ought to do nothing without consulting our parents, no, not even what is right. Oh! I have been very imprudent!'

"Thus saying, she burst into tears. In the mean time she said to Paul, 'Let us pray to God, my brother, and he will take compassion on us.' Scarcely had they finished their prayer when they heard a dog bark.

"It is," said Paul, 'the dog of some huntsman, who comes of an evening to kill the deer in their retreat.'

"A short time after the barking of the dog redoubled.

"I have an idea," said Virginia, 'that it is Fidèle our cottage dog: yes, I recollect his voice: Is it possible that we should be so near our journey's end, and at the foot of our own mountain?'

"In truth, a moment afterwards, Fidèle was at their feet, barking, howling, groaning and loading

them with caresses. Before they had recovered from their surprize they perceived Domingo, who was running toward them.

"At the sight of this worthy negro, who wept with joy, they also shed tears, without being able to say one word.

"When Domingo had a little recovered himself: 'Oh, my young masters,' said he to them, 'what distress your mothers are in; how astonished they were at not finding you on their return from mass, whither I had accompanied them! Mary, who was at work in a corner of the plantation, could not tell whither you were gone: I wandered about the grounds not knowing myself where to seek you: at length, I took the old clothes which you used to wear*; I made Fidèle smell to them; and as if the poor animal had understood me, he immediately set off to trace your steps. He conducted me, always wagging his tail, to the Black River. There I was informed by a planter that you had brought a fugitive slave back to him, and that he pardoned her at your intercession.

"But what a pardon! he showed her to me, fastened with a chain round her foot to a log of wood, and an iron collar with three rings round her neck. From thence, Fidèle following the scent, conducted me to the Mount of the Black River, where he again stopped, and barked as loud as he was able.

"It was on the brink of a fountain near a palm-tree which had been levelled, and a fire not quite extinguished; at length he conducted me to this place. We are at the foot of the mountain of the

* This trait of sagacity in the black Domingo, and his dog Fidèle, very much resembles that of the savage Tewenissa and his dog Oniha, mentioned by M. de Crèvecoeur, in his humane work, entitled, *Letters of an American Farmer*.

Three Paps, and it is still four good leagues from our dwelling. Come on, eat and recruit your strength.'

"He then presented to them a cake, some fruit, and a large gourd bottle filled with a liquor compounded of water, wine, lemon-juice, sugar, and nutmeg, which their mothers had prepared to strengthen and revive them.

"Virginia sighed at the recollection of the poor slave, and at the distress of their mothers. She repeated several times, 'Oh, how difficult it is to do good.'

"While Paul and she were refreshing themselves, Domingo lighted a fire, and looking about among the rocks for a crooked billet, which we call round-wood, and which burns even in the sap, throwing out a very bright flame, he made a flambeau of it, and set it a burning; for it was now quite dark. But he had to encounter a much greater difficulty

"When all was ready for proceeding forward, Paul and Virginia were absolutely incapable of walking any farther; their feet being swelled and raw all over.

"Domingo was completely puzzled; he could not determine whether it would be more advisable for him to ramble about in quest of assistance, or to prepare for passing the night with them where they were. 'Whither has the time fled,' said he to them, 'when I carried you both at once in my arms? But now you are increased in stature, and I am old.'

"While he was reduced to this state of perplexity, a company of run-away negroes appeared, about twenty paces distant.

"The leader of the troop, approaching Paul and Virginia, thus addressed them: 'Good little whites, be not afraid; we saw you this morning passing along in company with a negress of the Black River; you were going to solicit her pardon of a cruel mas-

ter; out of gratitude we will carry you home upon our shoulders.'

"Upon this he made a sign, and four of the stoutest black fellows immediately formed a litter with boughs of trees and lianes, placed Paul and Virginia upon it, hoisted them upon their shoulders, and, Domingo marching before them with his flambeau, they took the road amidst the joyful acclamations of the whole company, who loaded them with benedictions.

"Virginia, quite overcome, whispered to Paul: 'Oh, my dear friend! God never permits a good action to go unrewarded.'

'About midnight they arrived at the bottom of their own mountain, the ridges of which were illumined with various fires.

"Scarcely had they got to the top, when they heard voices calling aloud: 'Is it you, my children?' The blacks and they replied together, 'Yes, yes, here we are!' and presently they perceived their mothers and Mary coming to meet them with flaming torches

"Unhappy children!" exclaimed Madame de la Tour, 'Whence come you? Into what agonies have you thrown us!'

'We come,' replied Virginia, 'from the Black River, whither we went this morning to implore the pardon of a poor fugitive negress, to whom I likewise gave the family breakfast, for she was just perishing with hunger; and here, the black run-aways have carried us home again.'

"Madame de la Tour tenderly embraced her daughter, utterly deprived of the power of speech; and Virginia, who felt her own face moistened with her mother's tears, said to her: 'How you repay me for all that I have suffered!'

"Margaret, transported with delight, locked Paul in her arms, saying: 'And thou too, my son, thou hast performed a good action!'

“Being arrived at their cottage with the children, they gave a plentiful supper to the black guides, who returned to the woods expressing a thousand good wishes for their prosperity.

“Every succeeding day was to these families a day of happiness and tranquillity.

“They were strangers to the torments of envy and of ambition. They coveted not, from abroad, that vain reputation which is purchased by intrigue, and which the breath of calumny destroys. It was sufficient for them to be in the place of witness and of judge to each other.

“In this island where, as in all the European Colonies, no curiosity is expressed except in hunting after malicious anecdotes, their virtues, nay their very names, were unknown.

“Only when a passenger happened to ask on the road to Pamplémousses, of one of the inhabitants of the plain: ‘Who lives in yonder cottages on the top of the hill?’ the answer returned, without pretending to any farther knowledge of them, was: ‘They are good people.’

“Thus the violets, from under the prickly shrubbery, exhale at a distance their fragrant perfume, though they remain unseen.

“They had banished from their conversation the practice of evil-speaking, which under an appearance of justice, necessarily disposes the heart to hatred or to falsehood; for it is impossible to refrain from hating men if we believe them to be wicked; or to live with the wicked unless you conceal your hatred of them under false appearances of benevolence.

“Evil-speaking, accordingly, lays us under the necessity of being upon bad terms with others, or with ourselves.

“But without sitting in judgment on men, in particular, they entertained one another only in devising the means of doing good to all in general; and though

they possessed not the power, they had an invariable disposition this way, which animated them with a benevolence at all times ready to extend itself in an outward direction.

"By living therefore in solitude, so far from degenerating into savages, they had become more humane.

"If the scandalous history of Society did not supply them with matter of conversation, that of nature replenished their hearts with transports of wonder and delight.

"They contemplated with rapture the power of that Providence which, by their hands, had diffused amidst these barren rocks abundance, gracefulness, pleasures pure, simple and perpetually renewing themselves.

"Paul, at the age of twelve, more vigorous and more intelligent than Europeans in general are at fifteen, had embellished what the Negro Domingo only cultivated. He went with him to the adjoining woods, to take up by the roots the young plants of lemon and orange-trees, of the tamarinds, whose round head is of such a beautiful green, and of the attier, whose fruit is stored with a sugary cream which emits the perfume of the orange-flower.

"He planted these trees, after they had attained a considerable stature, all around this enclosure. He had there sown the grains of such trees as, from the second year and upward, bear flowers or fruits, as the agpthis, from which depend circularly, like the crystal pendants of lustre, long clusters of white flowers; the Persian lilach which raises straight into the air its gray flaxen girandoles; the papayer, whose branchless trunk, formed like a column, bristled all over with green melons, carries aloft a chapter of broad leaves resembling those of the fig-tree.

"He had likewise planted in it the kernels and the nuts of the badamier, of the mango, of the avoca

tier, of the goyavier, of the jacqs, and of the jamrose. Most of these trees already yielded to their young master both shade and fruit.

"His industrious hand had diffused fecundity even over the most sterile spot of the enclosure. Aloes of various kinds, the raquet, loaded with yellow flowers striped with red, the prickly tapers arose on the dusky summits of the rocks, and seemed desirous of mounting up to the lianes, garnished with blue or scarlet flowers, which hung down here and there along the precipices of the mountain.

"He had disposed these vegetables in such a manner that you could enjoy the sight of them by a single glance of the eye.

"He had planted in the middle of the bason, the herbage, which grows to no great height, after that the shrubbery, then the trees of small stature, and last of all the great trees which garnished its circumference; so that this vast enclosure appeared, from its centre, like an amphitheatre of verdure, of fruits and flowers, containing pot-herbs, stripes of meadow-ground, and fields of rice and corn. But in subjecting thus the vegetable kingdom to his plan, he had not deviated from the plans of nature. Directed by the indications which she vouchsafes to give, he had placed in elevated situations the plants whose seeds are volatile, and by the side of the waters those whose grains are adapted to floating.

"Thus each vegetable grew in its proper site, and each site received from its vegetable its natural dress. The streams, which descended from the summit of these rocks, formed below in the valley, here fountains, there broad and capacious mirrors, which reflected in the midst of the verdure, the trees in bloom, the rocks, and the azure of the Heavens.

"Notwithstanding the great irregularity of the soil, these plantations were for the most part as accessible to the foot as to the eye. In truth, we all assisted

him with our advice, and with our exertions, in order to accomplish his purpose.

"He had traced a path which winded round the bason, and of which several ramifications converged from the circumference to meet at the centre. He had availed himself of the most rugged places of his domain, and united, by a harmony the most delicious, facility of walking with the asperity of the soil, and domestic, with forest trees.

"Of that enormous quantity of rolling stones, which now obstruct these roads as well as mar the greatest part of the surface of this island, he had formed in various places huge pyramids, in the layers of which he had mixed with earth, and the roots of rose-trees, the poincillade and other shrubs which take pleasure in the rocks.

"In a very short time, these gloomy and inanimate piles were covered with verdure, or with the dazzling lustre of the most beautiful flowers.

"The cavities worn by the torrent in the sides of the mountain, bordered with aged trees inclined toward each other, formed arched subterraneans inaccessible to the heat, to which they retired for coolness during the sultry ardour of the meridian sun.

"A narrow path conducted into a thicket of wild trees, at the centre of which grew, sheltered from the winds, a household-tree loaded with fruit.

"There was a corn field whitening to the harvest; here an orchard. Through this avenue you could see the houses; through that the inaccessible summits of the mountain.

"Under a tufted grove of tatamaques, interlaced with lianes, no one object was distinguishable even in the brightness of noon-day.

"On the point of that great rock adjoining, which juts out of the mountain, you could discern all those contained within the enclosure, with the sea at a dis-

tance, on which sometimes appeared a vessel arriving from Europe, or returning thither.

"On this rock it was that the two families assembled of an evening, and enjoyed in silence the coolness of the air, the fragrance of the flowers, the bubbling of the fountains, and the last harmonies of light and shade.

"Nothing could be more agreeable than the names imposed on the greatest part of the charming retreats of this labyrinth. The rock of which I have just now been speaking, from whence they could discern my approach at a considerable distance, was called Friendship's Discovery.

"Paul and Virginia, in their sportiveness, had planted a bamboo upon it, on the summit of which they hoisted a small white handkerchief, as a signal of my arrival as soon as they perceived me; in imitation of the flag which is displayed on the neighbouring mountain on seeing a vessel at sea. I took a fancy to engrave an inscription on the stem of this reed.

"Whatever pleasure I may have enjoyed in the course of my travels, in contemplating a statue, or a monument of antiquity, I have enjoyed still more in perusing a well-conceived inscription.

"It seems to me, in that case, as if a human voice issued out of the stone, made itself audible through the mighty void of ages, and addressing itself to man in the midst of deserts, told him that he was not alone; and that other men, in these very places, had felt, thought, and suffered like himself.

"Should it happen to be the inscription of some ancient nation, which subsists no longer, it conveys our soul into the regions of infinity, and communicates to it the sentiment of its own immortality, by shewing that a thought has outlived the ruins even of an Empire.

"I inscribed then on the little mast which carried the flag of Paul and Virginia, these verses of Horace:

—Fratres Helenæ, lucida sidera,
Ventorumque regat Pater,
Obstrictis aliis, præter lapyga.*

'May the brothers of Helen, stars radiant like yourselves, and may the ruler of the winds direct your course; binding up every ruder blast, and filling your sails only with the breath of the Zephyr.'

"I engraved the following line from Virgil, on the rind of a tatamaque, under the shade of which Paul sometimes sat down to contemplate from afar the agitated ocean:

Fortunatus & ille deos qui novit agrestes

'Happy too is he in knowing no deities but those who make the plains their care!'

"And that over the door of Madame de la Tour's cottage, which was the place of general rendezvous:

At segura quies, & nescia faller a vita.

'Peace undisturb'd, and hearts devoid of guile.'

"But Virginia did not approve of my Latin; she said that the inscription which I had placed below her weathercock, was too long and too learned.

'I should have rather preferred this,' added she, 'Always agitated, but ever constant.'

'That device,' replied I, 'is still better adapted to virtue.' My observation excited a blush in her cheek.

* Thus imitated:

May Helen's brothers, stars so bright,
And Æolus guide your course aright,
That, safe from every ruder gale,
Zephyrs alone may swell the sail.

"These happy families extended their benevolent dispositions to all that surrounded them. They bestowed the most tender appellations on objects apparently the most indifferent. To an inclosure of orange-trees and bananas, planted in form of a circle round a portion of mossy ground, in the middle of which Paul and Virginia sometimes used to dance, they gave the name of 'The Concord.'

"An ancient tree, under the shade of which Madame de la Tour and Margeret related to each other their misfortunes was called 'The tears wiped away.'

"They gave the names of 'Brittany and Normandy,' to small spots of ground where they had planted corn, strawberries, and pease.

"Domingo and Mary, wishing after the example of their mistresses, to call to remembrance the places of their birth in Africa, denominated two pieces of ground where that grass grew of which they made baskets, and where they had planted a great gourd, 'Angola and Foullepointe.'

"Thus, by those productions of their own climates, these exiled families cherished fond ideas of their native country, and soothed their sorrows in a foreign land.

"Alas! I have seen the trees, the fountains, the rocks, of this spot, now so changed, animated, by a thousand charming appellations; but in their present state like a Grecian plain, they only present to view ruins and heart-affecting inscriptions

"Of the whole enclosure however no spot was more agreeable than that which went by the name of 'Virginia's Rest.'

"At the foot of the rock named 'The Discovery of Friendship,' is a hollow place whence issues a fountain, which forms from its source a little lake, in the middle of a meadow of fine grass.

"When Margaret had brought Paul into the world, I made her a present of an Indian cocoa-nut which

had been given me. She planted this fruit on the borders of the lake, intending that the tree which it should produce might serve one day as an epocha of her son's birth.

"Madame de la Tour, after her example, planted another there likewise, with a similar intention as soon as she was delivered of Virginia.

"From these nuts grew two cocoa-trees, which formed the whole archives of the two families; one was called the tree of Paul, the other that of Virginia."

"They both grew in the same proportion as their young master and mistress, of a height rather unequal, but which surpassed at the end of twelve years that of the cottages. Already they interwove their branches, and dropped their young clusters of cocoas over the bason of the fountain.

"This plantation excepted, they had left the cavity of the rock just as nature had adorned it. On its brown and humid sides radiated, in green and dusky stars, large plants of maiden hair? and tufts of the scolopendra, suspended like long ribands of greenish purple, waved at the pleasure of the winds.

"Near to that grew long stripes of the periwinkle, the flowers of which nearly resemble those of the white gilly-flower, and pimentos, whose blood-coloured husks are brighter than coral. Round about these the plants of balm, with their leaves resembling a heart, and basilicons, with a carnation smell exhaled the sweetest of perfumes.

"From the summit of the rugged precipices of the mountain hung the lianes, like floating drapery, which formed on the sides of the rocks large festoons of verdure

"The sea-birds, attracted by these peaceful retreats, flocked thither to pass the night.

"At sun-set you might see the rook and the sea-

lark fly along the shores of the sea ; and high in air the black frigate and the white bird of the tropics, which abandon, together with the orb of day, the solitudes of the Indian Ocean.

"Virginia delighted to repose herself on the borders of this fountain, decorated with a pomp at once magnificent and wild.

"Thither did she often resort to wash the linen of the family, under the shade of the cocoa-trees ; and sometimes she led her goats to pasture there. While she prepared cheeses of their milk, she took delight to see them browse on the maiden hair which grew on the steep sides of the rock, and suspend themselves in the air on one of its cornices as on a pedestal.

"Paul, perceiving this to be the favourite retreat of Virginia, brought thither from the neighbouring forest the nests of all kinds of birds. The parents of these birds followed their young ones, and established themselves in this new colony.

"Virginia scattered among them from time to time grains of rice, of maize and of millet. As soon as she appeared, the whistling black birds, the bengali whose warbling is so sweet, and the cardinal with his flame coloured plumage, left the bushes ; the paroquets, as green as the emerald, descended from the neighbouring lataniers ; the partridges ran nimbly along the grass ; all hastened in variegated groups to her very feet, like little chickens, while Paul and she amused themselves with transport, at their playfulness, their appetites, and their loves.

"Amiable children, thus did you pass your early days, in perfect innocence and employing yourselves in acts of virtue !

"How many times, in that spot, did your mothers, folding you in their arms, give thanks to Heaven for the consolation which you were preparing for their old age, and at seeing you enter into life under auspices so happy !

"How many times under the shadow of these rocks, have I partaken with them your rural repast, by which no animal was deprived of life!

"Gourds filled with milk, fresh eggs, cakes of rice served up on the leaves of the banana-tree, baskets filled with potatoes, mangoes, oranges, pomegranates, bananas, attés, and pine-apples, presented at once the most nourishing aliment, the gayest colours and the most agreeable juices.

"Their conversation was as sweet and as innocent as the repast. Paul frequently talked of the labours of the day past, and of those of to-morrow; he was always meditating something which would be subservient to the general good: here the paths were not commodious; there they were indifferently seated these young bowers did not give a sufficient shade; Virginia, would be more comfortable in another place.

"In the rainy season, in the day-time, they assembled all together in one of the cottages, masters and servants, and employed themselves in weaving mats of the herbage, and baskets of bamboo.

"You saw displayed, in the most perfect order, along the boards of the wall, rakes, hatchets, spades, and close by these instruments of agriculture, the productions which were the fruit of them, bags of rice, sheaves of corn, and rows of bananas. Delicacy was there ever blended with abundance

"Virginia assisted by the instructions of Margaret and her mother, amused herself with preparing sherbets and cordials, with the juice of the sugar-cane, of citrons, and of cedrats.

"When night arrived, they supped by the glimmering light of a lamp; after which Madame de la Tour, or Margaret, related the histories of travellers who had lost their way by night, in the forests of Europe infested by robbers; or of the shipwreck of some vessel driven by the tempest on the rocks of a desert

island. On hearing melancholy details of this kind the hearts of these sensible young folks caught fire.

"They implored of Heaven the grace to put in practice, one day, the duties of hospitality to unhappy persons in such circumstances.

"Afterwards the two families separated to enjoy the gift of sleep, but in the ardor of impatience to meet again next morning.

"Sometimes they were lulled to rest by the noise of the rain rushing down in torrents on the roof of their cottages; or by the roaring of the winds, conveying to their ears the distant murmuring of the billows which broke upon the shore.

"They united in giving thanks to God for their personal security, the sentiment of which was heightened by that of danger remote.

"Madame de la Tour from time to time read aloud to the company some interesting portion of the History of the Old or New Testament.

"They reasoned sparingly on the subject of those sacred books; for their theology consisted wholly in sentiment, like that of nature, and their morality, wholly in active benevolence, like that of the gospel.

"They had no days destined some to mirth others to melancholy. Every day was to them a season of festivity, and every thing that surrounded them a divine temple, in which they incessantly admired an intelligence infinite, omnipotent, and graciously disposed toward man.

"This sentiment of confidence in the Power Supreme filled them with consolation respecting the past, with fortitude for the present, and with hope for the time to come.

"Thus it was that those females, constrained by calamity to fall back into nature, had unfolded in themselves, and in their children, those feelings which are the gift of nature, to prevent our sinking under the pressure of calamity.

"But as there sometimes arise in the best regulated spirits clouds to disturb its serenity, when any member of this society had the appearance of pensiveness, all the rest felt attracted toward that one, and dissipated the bitterness of thought rather by feelings than by reflections.

"Each exerted, to this effect, their particular character: Margaret a lively gaiety; Madame de la Tour, a mild theology; Virginia, tender caresses; Paul frankness and cordiality. Nay Mary and Domingo contributed their share of consolation.

"When they beheld affliction they were afflicted, when they saw tears shed they wept.

"Thus the feeble plants interlace their boughs, in order to resist the violence of the hurricane.

"When the weather was fine they went every Sunday to mass to the church of Pamplemousses, the tower of which you see below in the plain.

"The wealthy planters resorted thither in their palanquins; and made many efforts to form an acquaintance with these happily united families, and invited them to partake of their parties of pleasure. But they uniformly declined accepting such tenders, civilly and respectfully, under the conviction that persons of consequence court the obscure, only for the pleasure of having compliant hangers-on, and that it is impossible to be complaisant but by flattering the passions of another, whether they be good or bad.

"On the other hand they shunned, with no less circumspection, all intimacy with the lower settlers, who are for the most part jealous, back-biters, and vulgar. They passed, at first, with one of those sets, for timid and with the other for haughty; but their reserved behaviour was accompanied with marks of politeness so obliging, especially to persons in distress, that they imperceptibly acquired the respect of the rich, and the confidence of the poor.

"When mass was over, they were frequently sought unto, for the interposition of some gracious office or another. It was a person in perplexity who applied to them for their kind advice; or a child importuning them to visit a sick mother in one of the adjoining hamlets.

"They always carried about them some receipts adapted to the diseases incident to the inhabitants, and they administered their prescriptions with that good grace which communicates such a value to small services.

"They succeeded particularly in curing the maladies of the mind, so oppressive in a state of solitude, and in an infirm state of body.

"Madame de la Tour spoke with so much confidence of the Deity, that the sick person, listening to her discourse, felt the impression of his presence.

"From these visits Virginia frequently returned with her eyes bathed in tears, but her heart overflowing with joy; for she had been blessed with an opportunity of doing good. She it was who prepared beforehand, the medicines necessary to the sick, and who presented them with a grace ineffable.

"After those visits of humanity, they sometimes extended their walk by the valley of the long mountain, as far as my habitation, where I expected them to dinner, on the banks of the little river which flows in my neighbourhood.

"I provided myself for such occasions with some bottles of old wine, in order to enliven the gaiety of our Indian repasts by those pleasant and cordial productions of Europe.

"At other times we had our rendezvous on the shore of the sea, at the mouth of some other rivers, which in this part of the world can hardly be called any thing more than a larger kind of brook. Thither we carried from the plantation various kinds of vegetable provision which we added to the abundant sup-

plies furnished by the Ocean. We fished along the shore for cabots, polypuses, lobsters, roaches, shrimps, crabs, urchins, oysters, and shell fish of every kind.

"Situations the most terrible, frequently procured us pleasures the most tranquillizing.

"Sometimes seated on a rock under the shade of a velvet tree, we contemplated the billows from the main rolling on, and breaking under our feet with a tremendous roar.

"Paul, who, besides his other qualities could swim like a fish, now and then advanced upon the shallows to meet the surge, then, as it approached, fled toward the shore, pursued by its vast, foaming and raging swell, a considerable way up the strand.

"But Virginia, as often as she saw this, screamed aloud, and declared that such kind of amusement terrified her exceedingly.

"Our meals were followed up by the singing and dancing of these two young people.

"Virginia chanted the felicity of a rural life, and the wretchedness of sea-faring men, whom avarice prompts to encounter a furious element, rather than to cultivate the earth, which confers so many benefits in peace and tranquillity.

"Sometimes, after the manner of the negroes, Paul and she performed a pantomime. Pantomime is the first language of man; it is practised among all nations. It is so natural, and so expressive, that the children of the whites quickly learn it, from seeing those of the blacks thus amuse themselves.

"Virginia, recollecting the histories which her mother used to read, those especially which had affected her the most, exhibited the principal events of them with much natural expression: sometimes to the sound of Domingo's tam-tam, she made her appearance on the downy stage, bearing a pitcher on her

head. She advanced with timidity to fill it with water at the source of a neighbouring fountain.

"Domingo and Mary, representing the shepherds of Midian, obstructing her passage, and feigned to repel her.

"Paul flew to her assistance, beat off the shepherds, filled the pitcher of Virginia, and placing it upon her head, at the same time bound around it a garland of the scarlet flowers of the periwinkle, which heightened the fairness of her complexion. Then, taking a part in their innocent sports, I assumed the character of Raguel and bestowed Paul my daughter Zipporah in marriage.

"At another time, she represented the unfortunate Ruth, who returns to her lamented husband's country a widow, and in poverty, where she finds herself treated as a stranger, after a long absence.

"Domingo and Mary acted the part of the reapers. Virginia appeared, gleaning up and down after them, and picking up the ears of corn.

"Paul, imitating the gravity of a Patriarch, interrogated her; she, trembling, replied to his questions. Moved with compassion, he immediately granted an asylum to innocence, and the rights of hospitality to misfortune.

"He filled Virginia's apron with provisions of every kind, and brought her before us, as before the elders of the city, declaring that he took her to wife, notwithstanding her extreme indigence.

"At this scene, Madame de la Tour, calling to remembrance the state of desertion in which she had been left by her own relations, her widowhood, the kind reception which Margaret had given her, now succeeded by the hope of a happy union between their children, could not refrain from tears; and this blended recollection of good and evil, drew from the eyes of us all the tears of sorrow and of joy.

"These dramas were exhibited with such a truth

of expression, that we actually imagined ourselves transported to the plains of Syria or of Palestine. There was no want of decorations, of illuminations, and of orchestras, suitable to this spectacle.

"The place of the scene usually was at the cross-paths of a forest, the openings of which formed around us several arcades of foliage.

"We were at their centre sheltered from the heat, all the day long: but when the sun had descended to the horizon, his rays, broken by the trunks of the trees, diverged into the shades of the forest in long luminous emanations, which produced the most majestic effect. Sometimes his complete disk appeared at the extremity of an avenue, and rendered it quite dazzling with a tide of light.

"The foliage of the trees, illumined on the under side with his saffron-coloured rays, sparkled with the fires of the topaz and of the emerald.

"Their mossy and brown trunks seemed to be transformed into columns of antique bronze, and the birds, already retired in silence under the dark foliage for the night, surprized by the sight of a new Aurora, saluted all at once the luminary of day, by a thousand and a thousand songs.

"The night very often surprized us regaling ourselves with these rural festivities; but the purity of the air, and the mildness of the climate, permitted us to sleep under an ajoupa in the midst of the woods, free from all fear of thieves either at hand or at a distance.

"Every one returned next morning to his own cottage, and found it in the same state in which it had been left.

"There reigned at that time so much honesty and simplicity in this un-commercial island, that the doors of many houses did not fasten by a key, and a lock was an object of curiosity to many Creoles

"But there were certain days of the year cele-

brated by Paul and Virginia as seasons of peculiar rejoicing; these were the birth-days of their mothers.

"Virginia never failed, the evening before, to bake and dress cakes of the flour of wheat, which she sent to the poor families of whites born in the island, who had never tasted the bread of Europe, and who, without any assistance from the blacks, reduced to live on maize in the midst of the woods, possessed, toward the support of poverty, neither the stupidity which is the concomitant of slavery, nor the courage which education inspires.

"These cakes were the only presents which Virginia had it in her power to make, from the affluence of the plantation; but they were bestowed with a grace which greatly enhanced their value.

"First, Paul himself was desired to undertake the charge of presenting them to those families, and they were invited on receiving them, to come on the morrow and pass the day at the habitation of Madame de la Tour and Margaret.

"There arrived, accordingly, a mother with two or three miserable daughters, yellow, meagre, and so timid that they durst not lift up their eyes.

"Virginia presently set them all at their ease: she served them with a variety of refreshments, the goodness of which she heightened by some particular circumstances, which according to her, increased its relish.

"That liquor had been prepared by Margaret; this by her mother; her brother himself had gathered that fruit on the summit of the tree.

"She prevailed on Paul to lead them out to dance. She never gave over till she saw them content and happy. It was her wish that they should become joyful in the joy of the family. 'No one,' said she, 'can find happiness for himself but in promoting the happiness of another.'

"On taking their leave to return home she pressed

them to carry away any thing which seemed to have given them peculiar satisfaction, veiling the necessity of accepting her presents, under the pretext of their novelty, or of their singularity.

"If she remarked their clothes to be excessively tattered, she, with the consent of her mother, selected some of her own, and charged Paul to go by stealth and deposit them at the door of their cottages.

"Thus she did good, after the manner of the Deity; concealing the benefactress and shewing the benefit.

"You gentlemen of Europe, whose minds are tainted from your early infancy by so many prejudices incompatible with happiness, you are unable to conceive how nature can bestow so much illumination, and so many pleasures. Your souls, circumscribed within a small sphere of human knowledge, soon attain the term of their artificial enjoyments; but nature and the heart are inexhaustible.

"Paul and Virginia had no time-pieces, nor almanacks, nor books of chronology, of history or of philosophy; the periods of their lives were regulated by those of nature.

"They knew the hour of the day by the shadow of the trees; the seasons, by the times when they produce their flowers, or their fruits; and years, by the number of their harvests. These delightful images diffused the greatest charms over their conversation.

'It is dinner-time,' said Virginia to the family, 'the shadows of the bananas are at their feet;' or else, 'night approaches, for the tamarinds are closing their leaves.'

'When shall we see you?' said some of her companions of the vicinity to her; 'at the time of the sugar-canes,' replied Virginia. Your visit will be still sweeter and more agreeable at that time returned these young people.

"When enquiries were made respecting her own age and that of Paul, 'my brother,' said she, 'is of the same age with the great cocoa-tree of the fountain, and I, with that of the small one. The mango-trees have yielded their fruit twelve times, and the orange trees have opened their blossoms twenty-four times, since I came into the world.'

"Like Fauns and Dryads their lives seemed to be attached to those of the trees.

"They knew no other historical epochs but the lives of their mothers; no other chronology but that of their orchards; and no other philosophy but universal beneficence, and resignation to the will of God.

"After all, what occasion had these young creatures for such riches and knowledge as we have learnt to prize? Their ignorance and their wants were even a farther addition to their happiness.

"Not a day passed in which they did not communicate to each other some assistance, or some information: I repeat it, information; and though it might be mingled with some error, yet man in a state of purity has no dangerous error to fear.

"Thus did these two children of nature advance in life: hitherto no care had wrinkled their foreheads, no intemperance had corrupted their blood, no unhappy passion had depraved their hearts; love, innocence, piety, were daily unfolding the beauties of their soul in graces ineffable, in their features, in their attitudes, and in their motions.

"In the morning of life they had all the freshness of it: like our first parents in the garden of Eden, when, proceeding from the hands of their creator, they saw, approached, and conversed with each other, at first, like brother and sister.

"Virginia, gentle, modest and confident like Eve; Paul like Adam, with the stature of a man, and all the simplicity of a child.

He has a thousand times told me, that sometimes being alone with her, on his return from labour, he had thus addressed her.

'When I am weary the sight of thee revives me ; when from the mountain's height I descry thee at the bottom of this valley, thou appearest like a rose-bud in the midst of our orchards, when thou walkest toward the dwelling of our mothers, the partridge which trips along to its young one's, has a chest less beautiful, and a gait less nimble than thou hast. Although I lose sight of thee through the trees, there is no occasion for thy presence in order to find thee again ; something of thee, which I am unable to express, remains for me in the air through which thou hast passed, and on the grass upon which thou hast been seated.

'When I approach thee all my senses are ravished ; the azure of the Heavens is less radiant than the blue of thine eyes ; the warbling of the bengali is less sweet than the tone of thy voice ; if I touch thee only with the tip of my finger, my whole body thrills with pleasure.

'Dost thou remember that day on which we passed across the pebbly bed of the river of the mountain of the Three Paps ; when I arrived on its banks I was very much fatigued, but as soon as I had taken thee on my back, it seemed as if I had gotten wings like a bird : tell me, by what charm thou hast been able thus to enchant me : is it by thy understanding ? Our mothers have more than either of us : is it by thy caresses ?

'Our mothers embrace me still oftener than thou dost : I believe it is by thy benevolence ; I shall never forget that thou walkedst bare-foot as far as the Black River, to solicit the pardon of a wretched fugitive slave.'

'Receive, my much loved Virginia, receive this flowery branch of the lemon-tree, which I have ga-

thered for thee in the forest: place it at night by thy pillow: eat this morsel of honey-comb, which I took for thee from the top of a rock. First however repose thyself upon my bosom, and I shall be again revived.

"Virginia replied, 'Oh, my brother! the rays of the rising sun on the summits of these rocks afford me less delight than thy presence: I love my own mother dearly; I love thine; but when they call thee son, I love them still more.

"The caresses which they bestow on thee are felt more sensibly by me than those which I myself receive from them.

"Thou askest me, why thou lovest me? But those that are reared together always love each other: behold our birds, brought up in the same nest, they love like us, like us they are always together: hearken now they call and reply to each other from bush to bush: in like manner, when the echoes bring to my ear the airs which thou playest on thy flute from the mountain-top, I repeat the words of them at the bottom of this valley: thou art most dear to me, but above all, since that day on which thou wert determined to fight the master of the slave for my sake: since that period I have said to myself a thousand times: ah! my brother has an excellent heart: but for him I should have died with terror.

"I daily implore the blessing of the Almighty on my own mother, and on thine, on thyself, and on our poor domestics: but when I pronounce thy name my devotion seems to glow, I so earnestly intreat the Almighty that no evil may befall thee.

"Why dost thou go so far off, and climb to such heights, to find me fruits and flowers? Have we not enough in the garden? How fatigued, and in what a heat thou art just now?"

"Then with her little white handkerchief she wiped

his forehead and his cheeks, and gave him a thousand kisses.

"Nevertheless for some time past Virginia had felt herself disturbed with an unknown malady.

"Her fine blue eyes were tinged with black, her colour faded, and an universal languor weakened her body.

"Serenity no longer sat upon her forehead, nor smiles upon her lips: all at once might be seen in her, gaiety without joy, and sadness without sorrow.

"She withdrew herself from her innocent amusements, from her sweet occupations, and from the society of her much-loved family.

"She wandered here and there in the most solitary places of the plantation, seeking rest and finding none.

"Sometimes, at the sight of Paul, she ran up to him in a playful manner; when all of a sudden, as she was on the point of coming in contact with him, an unaccountable embarrassment seized her; a lively red coloured her pale cheeks, and her eyes no longer dared to fix themselves on his

"Paul thus addressed her: 'There rocks are covered with verdure, the birds warble when they see thee: all is gay around thee, and thou alone art sad.'

"Thus, with embraces, did he endeavour to re-animate her; but she, turning away her head, flew trembling to her mother.

"The unhappy girl felt herself discomposed by the caresses of her brother.

"Paul was quite ignorant of the cause of caprices so new and so strange.

"Misfortunes seldom come singly. One of those summers which desolate from time to time the lands situated between the tropics, happened to extend its ravages here also.

"It was toward the end of December, when the Sun, in Capricorn, scorches with his vertical fires the

whole Isle of France, for three weeks together: the south-east wind, which reigns there almost all the year, now blew no longer.

"Huge whirlwinds of dust raised themselves from the highways, and hung suspended in the air.

"The earth was cleft asunder in all parts, and the grass entirely burnt up; ardent exhalations issued from the sides of the mountains, and most of the rivulets were dried up.

"No cloud arose out of the sea; during the day-time, only red vapours ascended above its surface, and appeared at sun-set like the flames of a great conflagration.

"Even the night season diffused no coolness over the burning atmosphere.

"The bloody disk of the moon, rose of an enormous size, in the hazy horizon; the languid flocks, on the sides of the mountains, with their necks stretched out toward Heaven, and drawing in the air with difficulty, made the valleys resound with their mournful cries: even the café who conducted them lay along the ground, endeavouring to cool himself in that position.

"Every where the soil was scorching hot, and the stifling air resounded with the buzzing of insects, which sought to quench their thirst with the blood of men and of animals.

"One of those parching nights Virginia felt all the symptoms of her malady redouble.

"She got up, she sat down, she returned to bed, but in no attitude could she find either sleep or repose.

"She rambled by the light of the moon toward the fountain; she perceived its source, which, in defiance of the drought, still flowed in silver fillets over the dusky sides of the rock.

"Without hesitation she plunged herself into its basin; at first the freshness re-animated her; and a

thousand agreeable recollections presented themselves to her mind.

"She remembered how, in the days of infancy, her mother and Margaret amused themselves with bathing Paul and her in that very stream, and how Paul afterwards, appropriating this bath solely to her use, had deepened its bed, covered the bottom with sand, and sowed aromatic herbs around its brink.

"On her naked arms, and on her bosom, she perceived the reflexes of the two palm-trees, which had been planted at the birth of her brother and at her own, and which now interwove their green boughs, and their young cocoas, over her head.

"She called to remembrance the friendship of Paul, sweeter than perfumes, purer than the water of the fountain, stronger than united palm trees, and she heaved a sigh.

"She then reflected that it was the night season, and that she was in solitude; a consuming fire enflamed her breast.

"Immediately she hastened in dismay, from these dangerous shades, and from waters more ardent than the suns of the Torrid Zone: she hurried to her mother to seek refuge from herself.

"A thousand times, wishing to disclose her anguish, she pressed the maternal hands between her own: a thousand times she was on the point of pronouncing the name of Paul, but her heart was so full as to deprive her tongue of utterance, and reclining her head on the bosom of her mother, she bedewed it with a shower of tears.

"Madame de la Tour plainly perceived the cause of her daughter's disorder, but even she herself had not the courage to speak to her about it.

"My child," said she to her, "address yourself to the Almighty, who dispenses health and life according to his good pleasure. He makes trial of your virtue to day, only in order to recompense you to-

morrow; consider that the chief end of our being placed on the earth is to practise virtue.'

"In the mean time, those excessive heats raised out of the bosom of the ocean an assemblage of vapours, which like, a vast parasol, covered the face of the island.

"The summits of the mountains collected these around them, and long furrows of flame from time to time issued out of their cloud-capt peaks.

"Presently after tremendous thunder-claps made the woods, the plains, and the valleys, reverberate the noise of their explosions.

"The rain in cataracts gushed down from the Heavens.

"Foaming torrents precipitated themselves down the sides of this mountain; the bottom of the bason was transformed into a sea; the platform on which the cottages were raised into a little island; and the entrance into the valley had become a sluice, out of which rushed, with awful impetuosity, by the force of the roaring waters, the earth, the trees, and the rocks.

"The whole family, seized with trembling, addressed their prayer to God in Madame de la Tour's cottage, the roof of which cracked dreadfully by the fury of the tempest.

"Though the door and the outside window-shutters were closely barred, every object was clearly distinguishable within through the joining of the boards, so bright and so frequent were the flashes of lightning.

"The intrepid Paul, attended by Domingo, went from the one cottage to the other, notwithstanding the raging of the elements, here securing a wall by a cross beam, and there by driving in a stake; he went in only now and then, to comfort the family with the hope of the speedy return of fine weather.

"In reality, towards evening the rain ceased; the trade-wind from the south-east resumed its usual current; the stormy clouds were driven to the north-west, and the setting sun appeared in the horizon.

"The first wish which Virginia expressed was to revisit the place of her repose: Paul approached her with a timid air, and offered her his arm to assist her in walking thither.

"She accepted it with a smile, and they set out together from the cottage; the air was cool and sonorous: clouds of white smoke arose on the ridges of the mountains, furrowed here and there by the foam of the torrents, which were now drying up on every side.

"As for the garden, it was entirely destroyed by deep gutters; most of the fruit trees were torn up by the roots; immense heaps of sand covered the stripes of meadow-ground and completely choked up Virginia's bath: the two cocoa-trees however were still standing, and in full verdure: the bowers and the grassy turfs were no more, and the ear was no longer charmed with the warbling of the birds, except a few bengalis on the summit of the neighbouring rocks, which deplored with plaintive notes the loss of their young.

"At sight of this desolation Virginia said to Paul, 'You brought the birds hither, and the hurricane has destroyed them; you planted this garden, and it is now no more; every thing on earth perishes; Heaven alone is unchangeable.'

"Paul replied, 'Oh! then, that it were in my power to bestow some gift of Heaven upon you! but alas! I possess nothing now, even on the earth.'

"Virginia with a blush, returned: 'You have certainly the portrait of St. Paul, that you can call your own.'

"Scarcely had she pronounced these words, than Paul flew to his mother's cottage to seek for it.

"This portrait was a small miniature representing Paul the hermit.

"Margaret regarded it with singular devotion: while a girl she wore it continually round her own neck; but when she became a mother she suspended it round the neck of her child.

"It happened that when pregnant of him, and abandoned by all the world, from merely contemplating the image of this blessed recluse, the fruit of her womb contracted a strong resemblance to it: this determined her to bestow the same name on him; and likewise to give him for a patron, a Saint who had passed his life far from man, by whom he had been first abused and then deserted.

"Virginia on receiving this small portrait from the hands of Paul, said, with much emotion: 'My brother, while I live this shall never be taken from me, and I shall always remember that you gave me the only possession you had in the world.'

"On hearing those tones of cordiality, on this unexpected return of familiarity and tenderness, Paul was going to clasp her in his arms; but as nimbly as a bird she sprung away, leaving him quite confounded, and totally unable to account for a conduct so extraordinary.

"Meanwhile Margaret said to Madame de la Tour: 'Why should we not marry our children? Their passion for each other is extreme; my son, indeed, is not yet sensible of it; but when nature shall have begun to speak to him, to no purpose will we employ all our vigilance over them; every thing is to be feared.'

"Madame de la Tour, returned: 'They are too young, and too poor: what anxiety would it cost us should Virginia bring into the world unhappy children, whom perhaps she would not have strength to rear.'

'Domingo is very much broken; Mary is infirm; I myself, my dear friend, for these last fourteen years feel my health very much impaired.

'A person soon grows old in these hot countries, especially when that period is so greatly accelerated by sorrow.

'Paul is our only hope; let us wait till age has strengthened his constitution, and till he is able to support us by the labour of his hands.

'At present you well know we have hardly any thing more than a scanty supply from day to day.

'But if we send Paul to India for a short space of time, commerce will supply him with the means of purchasing some slaves. On his return hither we will marry him to Virginia; for I am well assured that no one can make my beloved daughter so happy as your son Paul.

'Let us mention the matter to our neighbour.'

'These ladies accordingly consulted me, and I approved of their plan.

'The seas of India are delightful,' said I to them; 'if we chuse a favourable season for going from hence to that country, the voyage outward is but six weeks at most, and as long to return; we will make up a small assortment of goods for Paul; for I have some neighbours who are very fond of him; were we but to provide him with a parcel of raw cotton, of which we can here make no use for want of mills to dress it; some ebony wood which is so common here that we use it for fuel; and several sorts of rosin, which go to waste in these woods; all of those commodities will find a market in India, though they are of no value at all here.'

'I took upon myself the charge of M. de la Bourdonaye's permission for this embarkation; but I thought it necessary, beforehand, to open the business to Paul.

"How was I astonished however when that young man said to me, with a good sense far above his years: 'Why would you have me quit my family for a visionary project of fortune? Can there be a more advantageous commerce in the world than the cultivation of a field, which sometimes yields fifty and a hundred fold?'

'If we wish to engage in trade, can we not do so by carrying our superfluities from hence to the city, without the necessity of my rambling to the Indies?'

'Our parents tell me that Domingo is old and worn out; but I am young, and daily acquiring fresh vigour.

'What if any accident should befall them during my absence, more especially to Virginia who even now suffers very severely? Ah! no! no! I can never bring myself to the resolution of quitting them.'

"His answer greatly embarrassed me; for Madame de la Tour had not concealed from me Virginia's condition, and the desire which she herself had of deferring their union till they were of a more mature age, by separating them from each other.

"I durst not as much as hint to Paul that such were her motives.

"Whilst these transactions were going on, a vessel newly arrived from France brought a letter to Madame de la Tour from her aunt.

"The fear of death, without which obdurate hearts would never soften, had appalled her.

"She had just recovered from a dangerous disorder, which produced a deep melancholy, and which age rendered incurable.

"She requested her niece to return to France: or if the state of her health were such as to prevent her taking so long a voyage, she enjoined her to send Virginia thither, on whom she intended to bestow a good education, a place at Court, and a bequest of all her possessions: the return of her favour, she

added, depended entirely on compliance with these injunctions.

"No sooner had this letter been read than it spread universal consternation in the family; Domingo and Mary began to weep; Paul, motionless, with astonishment, seemed ready to burst with rage; Virginia, her eyes stedfastly fixed on her mother, dared not to utter a syllable.

"Can you bring yourself to the resolution of quitting us?" said Margaret to Madame de la Tour.

"No, my friend, no, my children," replied Madame de la Tour; "I will never leave you; with you I have lived, and with you I mean to die: I never knew what happiness was till I experienced your friendship: if my health is impaired, ancient sorrows are the cause: my heart has been pierced by the harshness of my relations, and by the loss of my beloved husband: but since that period I have enjoyed more consolation and felicity with you, in these poor cottages, than ever the riches of my family gave me reason to expect, even in my native country."

"At these words tears of joy bedewed the cheeks of the whole household.

"Paul, folding Madame de la Tour in his arms, exclaimed: 'And I will never, never quit you, nor go from hence to the Indies; you shall experience no want, my dear mother, as long as we are able to work for you.'

"Of all the society, however, the person who testified the least joy, and who nevertheless felt it the most, was Virginia.

"A gentle cheerfulness appeared in her the remainder of the day, and the return of her tranquillity redoubled the general satisfaction.

"Next morning at sun-rise, as they were offering up their accustomed matin prayer which preceded breakfast, Domingo informed them that a gentleman on horseback was approaching the plantation, fol-

lowed by two slaves. It was M. de la Bourdonaye.

"He entered the cottage where the whole family were at table: Virginia was serving up, according to the custom of the country, coffee and boiled rice; there were likewise hot potatoes, and fresh bananas: the only dishes which they had were the halves of a gourd; and all their table-linen consisted of the leaves of the plaintain.

"The governor at first expressed some surprize at the meanness of their dwelling; then, addressing himself to Madame de la Tour, he said that his public situation sometimes prevented him from paying attention to individuals, but that she however had a title to claim his more immediate regard.

'You have, madam,' added he, 'an aunt at Paris, a lady of quality, and very rich, who designs to bestow her fortune upon you, but at the same time expects that you will attend her.'

"Madame de la Tour replied, that her unsettled state of health would not permit her to undertake so long a voyage.

'Surely then,' cried M. de la Bourdonaye, 'you cannot without injustice, deprive your young and beautiful daughter of so great an inheritance: I will not conceal from you, that your aunt has employed authority, to secure your daughter's compliance with her wish.

"The minister has written to me on the subject, authorizing me, if necessary, to exercise the hand of power; but my only aim in employing that, is to promote the happiness of the inhabitants of this colony; I expect therefore that you will, with cheerfulness submit to the sacrifice of a few years, on which depend the establishment of your daughter, and your own welfare for the remainder of life. For what purpose do people resort to these islands? Is it not in the view of making a fortune?

'Surely however it is far more agreeable to return and obtain one in our native country.'

'As he said these words, he placed upon the table a large bag of piastres, which one of his slaves had brought.

'This,' added he, 'is what your aunt has remitted to make the necessary preparations for the voyage of the young lady your daughter.'

'He then concluded with gently reproaching Madame de la Tour for not having applied to him in her necessities: at the same time applauding the noble firmness which she had displayed.

'Paul upon this broke silence, and thus addressed the governor.

'Sir, my mother did apply to you, and your reception was unkind to the last degree.'

'Have you then another child?' said M. de la Bourdonaye to Madame de la Tour.

'No Sir,' replied she; 'this is the son of my friend; but he and Virginia are our common property, and equally beloved by both.'

'Young man,' said the Governor, addressing himself to Paul, 'when you shall have acquired experience of the world, you will learn to what distresses people in place are exposed: you will discover how easy it is to prejudice them, and how often intriguing vice obtains from them what, in justice, should be bestowed on concealed merit.'

'M. de la Bourdonaye, on the invitation of Madame de la Tour, seated himself by her at the table. He breakfasted, as the Creoles do, upon coffee mixed with boiled rice.

'He was charmed with the order and neatness of the little cottage, with the union of the two happy families, and even with the zeal of their old domestics.

'Here,' said he 'is no furniture but what the

woods supply, but I see countenances serene, and hearts of gold.'

"Paul, delighted with the familiarity of the new governor, said to him: 'I desire your friendship, for you are an honest man.'

"M. de la Bourdonaye received this mark of insular cordiality with pleasure.

"He embraced Paul, and pressing him by the hand assured him that he might rely upon his friendship.

"After breakfast he took Madame de la Tour apart, and informed her that a favourable opportunity just now offered of sending her daughter into France, by means of a vessel on the point of sailing; and that he would recommend her to the care of a lady, a relation of his own who was going passenger in it; representing at the same time that it would be very wrong to sacrifice the prospect of an immense fortune, to the pleasure of her daughter's company for a few years.

'Your aunt,' added he, as he was departing, 'cannot hold out more than two years longer; her friends have assured me of it: consider the matter therefore seriously, I pray you; consult your own mind; surely every person of common sense must be of my opinion.'

"Madame de la Tour replied: 'As I desire nothing henceforward but the welfare of my daughter, the voyage to France shall be left entirely to her own disposal.'

"Madame de la Tour was not sorry at finding an opportunity of separating Paul and Virginia for a short time; but it was only in the view of securing their mutual happiness at a future period.

"She accordingly took her daughter aside, and said to her: 'My dear child, our domestics are growing old; Paul is still very young; age is stealing upon Margaret, and I myself am already infirm: should I happen to die, what will become of you in

the midst of these deserts? You will be left entirely alone with no person to assist you, and you will be obliged to procure yourself a livelihood by labouring incessantly in the ground, like a hireling: such an idea overwhelms me with grief."

"Virginia thus replied: 'God has doomed us to labour: you have taught me how to work, and to offer up daily thanksgiving to him.'

'Hitherto he has not abandoned us, nor will he abandon us now. His providence watches with peculiar care over the unhappy; you have told me so a thousand times, my dear mother! Oh, I shall never have resolution to quit you.'

"Madame de la Tour, much affected, returned, I have no other intention than that of rendering you happy, and of uniting you one day to Paul, who is not your brother: consider likewise that his fortune now depends entirely on you.'

"A young girl in love thinks that every one is ignorant of it.

"She spreads the same veil over her eyes which she wears on her heart; but when it is removed by the hand of a beloved friend, immediately the secret torments of her love transpire, as through an open barrier, and the gentle expansions of confidence succeed to the mysterious reserve in which she had enveloped herself.

"Virginia, sensibly alive to the new testimonies of her mother's kindness, freely related the many struggles which she had experienced within herself, and of which God alone had been the witness; that she perceived the hand of his providence in the consolation administered by a tender mother, who approved of her inclination, and who would direct her by wholesome counsel; and that now, resting entirely on her support, every thing operated as an inducement to remain where she was, without uneasiness for the present, or anxiety for the future.

‘Madame de la Tour, perceiving that her confidence had produced an effect entirely different from what she had expected, said to her: ‘My dear child, I have no wish to constrain your inclinations; consider the matter at your leisure; but conceal your love from Paul: when the heart of a young woman is gained, her lover has nothing more to ask of her.’

‘Toward the evening, while she was alone with Virginia, a tall man dressed in a blue cassock came in.

‘He was an ecclesiastical missionary of the island, and confessor to Madame de la Tour and Virginia, and had been sent thither by the Governor.

‘My children,’ said he, as he entered, ‘there is wealth in store for you, now, thanks to heaven! You have at length the means of gratifying your benevolent feelings, by administering assistance to the wretched.’

‘I well know what the governor has said to you, and also your reply.

‘My good madam, the state of your health obliges you to remain here; but as for you, young lady, you have no excuse.

‘We must obey the will of providence, in respect of our aged relations, however unjust they may have been to us. It is a sacrifice, I grant, but it is the command of the Almighty.

‘He devoted himself, for us, and it is our duty to devote ourselves for the welfare of our kindred.

‘Your voyage into France will finally come to a happy issue: can you possibly, my dear child, have any objection to go thither?’

‘Virginia, with her eyes cast down, and trembling as she spake, replied: ‘If it is the command of God that I should go I have nothing to say against it; the will of God be done,’ said she, bursting into tears.

"The missionary took his departure, and gave the governor an account of the success of his embassy.

"Madame de la Tour however sent a message to me by Domingo, intreating me to come over, and consult about Virginia's departure.

"It was my firm opinion that she ought not to be permitted to go.

"I maintain, as infallible principles of happiness, that the advantages of nature ought always to be preferred before those of fortune; and that we should never seek from abroad those blessings which we can find at home.

"I extend these maxims to all cases, without a single exception.

"But of what avail could my moderate counsels prove, against the illusions of an immense fortune, and my natural reason against the prejudices of the world, and against an authority held sacred by Madame de la Tour?

"This lady consulted me only out of politeness, for she no longer deliberated in her own mind after the decision of her confessor.

"Even Margaret, who, in spite of the advantages which she thought her son might derive from Virginia's fortune, had warmly opposed her departure, no longer made any objections.

"As for Paul, entirely ignorant of the resolutions which might be formed, and alarmed at the secret conversations of Madame de la Tour and her daughter, he abandoned himself to a gloomy sadness: 'Surely,' said he, 'they are contriving some mischief against me, from the mysteriousness of their conduct toward me.'

"A report meanwhile being soon circulated in the island, that fortune had visited these solitudes, merchants of every description might be seen scrambling up hither: they displayed, amidst these poor cottages, the richest stuffs of India; the superfine dimi-

ties of Goudelour; the handkerchiefs of Poulicat and Mazulipatam, the muslins of Decca, plains, striped, embroidered, and transparent as the day; the bastas of Surat, so beautifully white, also chintzes of all colours, and of the rarest sort, with a sable ground and green sprigs.

"They unrolled the magnificent silks of China; lampas pinked into transparency; satiny-white damasks, some of a meadow-green, others of a dazzling red; rose-coloured taffetas, satins in whole bales, Pekins soft as wool, white and yellow nankeens, and even the stuffs of Madagascar.

"Madame le la Tour gave her daughter permission to purchase whatever pleased her, carefully examining however the quality of the goods and their prices, lest the merchants should impose upon her.

"Virginia made choice of what she thought would be agreeable to her mother, to Margaret, and to Paul.

"This," said she, "will be useful for furniture, that for Domingo and Mary."

"In short, the bag of piastres was expended before the thought of her own wants. It became necessary to cull her portion out of the presents which she had divided among the household.

"Paul, overwhelmed with sorrow at the sight of these gifts of fortune, which presaged the departure of Virginia came to my house a few days afterwards; he said to me with a melancholy air:

"My sister is going to leave us; preparations are already made for her departure.

"Come over to our habitation I entreat you, and make use of your influence on the minds of her mother and of mine."

"I accordingly yielded to his importunity, though well assured that my representations would be ineffectual.

"If Virginia had appeared beautiful to me in her dress of blue Bengal cloth, with a red handkerchief tied round her head, how was she improved when I saw her habited like the ladies of this country! She was dressed in white muslin, lined with rose-coloured taffeta: her stays displayed her elegant and majestic shape to great advantage; and her beautiful flaxen hair, in long double tresses, adorned her virgin head; her fine blue eyes had assumed a cast of melancholy, and the agitation which her heart endured, by struggling with a smothered passion, gave a glowing tint to her complexion, and tones full of emotion to her voice.

"The very contrast of her elegant dress, which she seemed to wear against her will, rendered her languor still more affecting.

"No one could see or hear her without being moved.

"Paul's sadness was increased by it.

"Margaret, afflicted at her son's situation, took him apart, and thus addressed him:—

"Why, my son, do you feed yourself with false hopes, which only serve to render the disappointment of them more bitter?

"It is now time to disclose to you the secret of your life, and of my own.

"Mademoiselle de la Tour is related by her mother's side to a person of immense wealth, and of high rank.

"As to yourself, you are only the son of a poor low-born woman; and, what is still worse, you are a bastard."

"The word bastard greatly surprized Paul; he had never heard it made use of before, and he asked his mother the meaning of it: she replied, 'you had no legitimate father; when I was a girl, love betrayed me into a folly, of which you are the fruit.

My frailty deprived you of the family of your father and my repentance that of your mother

‘Unfortunate boy! I am the only relation you have in the world.’

“She concluded by bursting into a flood of tears. Paul, folding her in his arms, exclaimed: ‘Alas, my mother, since I have no other relation but you, I will love you still the more: but what a secret have you just divulged to me! I now plainly perceive the reason why Mademoiselle de la Tour has for these two months shunned me, and which has at length determined her to take her departure. Alas! without doubt she despises me!’

“However, the hour of supper came; each of the guests took a place at table, agitated with different passions; they ate little, and did not utter a single syllable.

“Virginia retired first, and came and seated herself on the spot where we now are.

“Paul soon followed, and placed himself by her side: a profound silence ensued for some time.

“It was one of those delightful nights, so common between the Tropics, and whose beauty baffles all description.

“The moon appeared in the middle of the firmament, enveloped with a cloudy curtain, which was gradually dissipated by her rays. Her light insensibly diffused itself over the mountains of the island, and over their peaks, which glittered with a silvery verdure. Not a breath of wind was to be heard.

“In the woods, at the bottom of the valley, and at the top of these rocks, the soft warblings and gentle murmurings of the birds, which were caressing each other in their nests, delighted with the beauty of the night, and the tranquillity of the air, stole on the ear.

“All, even to the very insects, were humming along the grass; the stars, twinkling in the Heavens,

reflected their trembling images on the surface of the ocean.

"As Virginia was surveying with wandering eyes, the vast and gloomy horizon, distinguishable from the shores of the island by the red fires of the fishermen, she perceived, at the entrance of the port, a light fixed to a large dark body; it was the lanthorn on the vessel in which she was to embark for Europe, and which, ready to set sail, only lay at anchor till the breeze should spring up.

"At this sight she was so deeply affected that she turned her head aside, lest Paul should perceive her tears.

"Madame de la Tour, Margaret and I, were seated a few paces from them, under the shade of the banana trees; and, owing to the stillness of the night, we distinctly heard their conversation, which I shall never forget.

"Paul said to her: 'I understand, madam, that you are to take your departure hence in three days: have you no apprehension at the thought of exposing yourself to the dangers of the sea; the sea at which you used to be so terrified?'

'It is my duty, you know,' replied Virginia, 'to obey the commands of my relations.'

'You are going, then,' said Paul, 'to quit our society for a female relation who lives far from hence, and whom you have never seen!'

'Alas!' returned Virginia, 'had I been permitted to follow my own inclination I should have remained here all the days of my life; but my mother is of a contrary opinion, and my confessor said it is the will of God that I should depart; that life is a state of probation: Alas! how severe that probation is!'

'How,' replied Paul, 'so many reasons to determine thee to leave us, and not one to induce thee to remain! Ah! of the former there is still one which you have not mentioned: the attractions which wealth

holds out are powerful. You will soon find, in a world entirely new to you, another person on whom to bestow the name of brother, by which you now no longer address me: you will find this brother among your equals, and such as have riches and high birth, which I can never offer you. But whither can you go to be more happy than where you are? On what land can you set your foot dearer to you than that which gave you being? Where can you find a society more amiable than that one of which you are entirely beloved? How can you exist without the caresses of your mother, to which you have been so long accustomed? What will become of your mother herself, already far advanced in life, when she no longer sees you by her side, at table, in the house, and in her walks, where you used to be her support? To what a state will my parent be reduced, who is as fondly attached to you as your own? What can I say to give them consolation, when I see them mourning your absence? Cruel girl! I say nothing of myself; but, what shall become of me, when in the morning I no longer enjoy your company, and when night comes on, without bringing us together again - and when I shall behold these palm-trees, planted at our birth, and which so long have been the witnesses of our mutual affection. Ah! since a new destiny attracts you; since you will seek other countries far from the spot where you was born, and other possessions than those which the labour of my hands has procured for you, allow me to accompany you in your voyage; I will encourage you during those tempests which caused such apprehensions in you while on shore. Thy head shall repose upon my bosom; I will clasp thee to my breast; and in France, whither thou art going in quest of fortune and of greatness, I will follow thee as thy slave; in the palaces where I shall behold thee served and adored, I will rejoice at thy happiness: even then I shall be rich enough

to offer thee the greatest of sacrifices, by dying at thy feet

His voice was entirely stifled with sobbing; we presently heard that of Virginia, who addressed him in these words, frequently interrupted by sighs.

‘It is for thy sake that I go away—for thee, whom I have daily seen bowed down to the ground, labouring to support two infirm families. If I have embraced this opportunity of acquiring wealth, it is only to return a thousand fold the good which thou hast done to us all. Can there be a fortune worthy of thy friendship? Why mention thy birth to me. Ah! were it even possible that another brother should be offered to me, could I choose any but thee? Oh, Paul! Paul! thou art far dearer to me than a brother. What a struggle hath it cost me to keep thee at a distance! I even wished thee to assist me in separating me from myself, till Heaven could bless our union. But now, I remain! I depart! I live! I die! Do what thou wilt with me; Oh, irresolute girl that I am! I had fortitude to repel thy caresses, but thy sorrow quite overpowers me.’

“At these words Paul took her in his arms, and holding her closely embraced, exclaimed with a terrible voice: ‘I am resolved to go with her, nor shall any thing shake my resolution.’

“We immediately flew toward him, and Madame de la Tour addressed him in these words:—

‘My son, should you go away what is to become of us?’

“He repeated these words shuddering: ‘my son, my son!’—

‘Dost thou,’ cried he, ‘act the part of a mother, thou, who separatest brother and sister? We both were nourished by thy milk: we both were nursed upon thy knees; from thee too we learnt to love each other; we have said so to each other a thousand times; yet now you are going to remove her from

me; you are not only sending her to Europe, that barbarous country which denied yourself shelter, but even to those cruel relations who abandoned you. You may say to me, you have no authority over her, she is not your sister: yes, she is every thing to me, my riches, my family, my birth, my all; I know no other blessing; we were brought up under the same roof, we reposed in the same cradle, and the same grave shall contain us. If she goes, I am resolved to follow. The Governor will prevent me! Can he prevent me from throwing myself into the sea? I will swim after her; the sea cannot be more fatal to me than the dry land. As I cannot live near her, I shall at least have the satisfaction of dying before her eyes, far, far from thee. Barbarous mother! pitiless woman! Oh, may that ocean, to the perils of which thou art going to expose her, never give her back to thy arms! May these billows bear my body back to thee, and casting it, together with her's, on this rocky shore, cause an eternal melancholy to settle on thee, by presenting to thy view the unhappy fate of thy two children.'

"While he spake I seized him in my arms, for I perceived that despair had overpowered his reason: his eyes sparkled; large drops of sweat ran down his inflamed countenance; his knees trembled, and I felt his heart beat with redoubled violence in his burning bosom.

"Virginia, terrified, said to him: 'Oh, my friend, I swear by the pleasures of our early age, by thy misfortunes and my own, and by all that ever could unite two unfortunate wretches, that if I remain here I will only live for thee; and if I depart I will one day return to be thine. I call you to witness all ye who have watched over my infant steps, you who have the disposal of my life, and who now behold the tears which I shed: I swear it, by high Heaven, which now hears me; by that ocean which I am

going to brave: by the air which I breathe, and which hitherto I have never polluted with a falsehood."

"As the heat of the sun dissolves and precipitates an icy rock from the summit of the Apennines, so did the impetuous rage of this young man subside at the voice of the beloved object. His lofty head drooped down, and a torrent of tears gushed from his eyes. His mother, mingling her own tears with his, held him locked in her arms, without the power of utterance. Madame de la Tour, quite distracted, said to me: 'I can contain myself no longer: my soul is torn with contending passions. This unfortunate voyage shall not take place. Do, my dear neighbour, endeavour to persuade my son to accompany you homewards: eight days have elapsed since any of us have enjoyed a single moment of sleep.'"

"I accordingly said to Paul: 'My good friend, your sister shall remain with us; to-morrow we will mention the matter to the Governor; meanwhile leave your family to repose, and come and pass the night at my habitation.'

"It is late, it is midnight: the cross of the south is directly over the horizon."

"He allowed me to conduct him in silence. After a very restless night he rose at day-break, and returned to his own home

"But wherefore should I continue the recital of this melancholy story to you any longer?

"There is only one agreeable side to contemplate in human life.

"Like the globe on which we revolve, our rapid career is only that of a day, and part of that day cannot receive illumination till the other be envolved with darkness."

"Father," said I to him, "I must entreat you to finish the account of what you have begun in a manner so affecting.

"Images of happiness delight the fancy, but the recital of misfortunes conveys instruction to the mind. I am anxious to learn what become of the unfortunate Paul."

"The first object which struck Paul, on his return to the plantation, was the negress Mary, who, mounted on a rock, had her eyes stedfastly fixed on the main ocean.

"The moment that he perceived her he exclaimed: 'Where is Virginia?'

"Mary turned her head toward her young master and burst into tears.

"Paul, in delirium, turned round, and flew to the port.

"He there learned that Virginia had embarked at day-break, that the vessel had set sail immediately, and was now no longer in sight.

"He directed his steps back to his place of habitation, and walked up and down in profound silence.

"Although this enclosure of rocks appears almost perpendicular behind us, those green flats which subdivide their heights are so many stages, by which you arrive, by means of some intricate paths, at the foot of that inclining and inaccessible cone of rocks, which is called the 'Thumb.'

"At the bottom of this rock is an esplanade, covered with great trees, but so lofty and so steep that they appear like a large forest in the air, surrounded with fearful precipices.

"The clouds which the summit of the 'Thumb' attracts continually around it, incessantly feed several cascades of water, which are precipitated to such a depth into the bottom of the valley, which is situate at the back of this mountain, that when you are at its top you no longer hear the noise of their fall.

"From this place a great part of the island is perceptible, as well as the peaks of several of its moun-

tains; among others, those of Piterboth, and of the Three Paps, and their valleys covered with forests; then the open sea, and the Island of Bourbon, which is forty leagues to the westward.

"From this elevation Paul perceived the vessel which bore away Virginia.

"He descried it at more than ten leagues distance, like a black speck in the middle of the vast ocean.

"He spent a considerable part of the day in contemplating it, and though it had actually disappeared from his sight, he still imagined that he perceived it; and when he had entirely lost it in the thick vapour of the horizon, he seated himself in this desolate spot, which is always agitated by the winds which blow incessantly on the tops of the palm-trees, and of the tatamaques.

"Their loud and hollow murmurs resemble the deep tones of an organ, and inspire a profound melancholy.

"There I found Paul, his head leaning against the rock, and his eyes rivetted to the ground. I had been seeking him since sun-rise, and it was with much difficulty that I could prevail on him to descend, and re-visit his family.

"At length however I brought him back to his habitation; but the moment he cast his eyes on Madame de la Tour, he began to reproach her bitterly for having so cruelly deceived him.

"She informed us, that a breeze having sprung up about three in the morning, and the vessel being in full trim to depart, the Governor, attended by his principal officers and the missionary, came with a palanquin to carry off Virginia; and in spite of her expostulations, her tears, and those of Margaret, all of them exclaiming that it was for their interest, had hurried away her daughter, who was almost expiring.

"Alas!" exclaimed Paul, 'if I had only enjoyed

the satisfaction of bidding her farewell, I should now have been happy.

‘I would have said to her; Virginia, if during the time that we have lived together, I have made use of any one word which may have given you offence, tell me that I have your forgiveness, before we part for ever.

‘I would have said; since fate has decreed an eternal separation, adieu my dear Virginia, adieu; may you live, far from hence, contented and happy.’

“Perceiving Madame de la Tour and his mother weeping: ‘Go,’ said he to them, ‘go, and seek some other hand than mine to wipe away your tears.’

“He then hastened from them, sighing deeply, and wandered up and down through the plantation.

“He went over all those places which had been the most favourite retreats of Virginia.

“He said to her goats, and to the kids, which followed him bleating: ‘What do you ask of me? Alas! you will never more see in my company the person whose hand used to feed you.’

“He then wandered to Virginia’s Rest, and at sight of the birds which fluttered around him, he exclaimed: ‘Unhappy songsters! No longer will you fly to meet her from whom you received your nourishment.’

“Perceiving Fidèle following the scent up and down, and ranging round, he sighed, and said to him: ‘Alas! thou wilt never find her more!’

“At length he went and seated himself on the rock where he had spoken to her the evening before; and at sight of the sea where he had perceived the vessel disappear, he wept bitterly.

“We followed him however step by step, fearing lest the agitation of his mind should take some fatal turn.

“His mother and Madame de la Tour entreated

him, by the most tender appellations, not to aggravate their affliction by his despair.

"At length the latter calmed him in some degree, by lavishing upon him the names which were most calculated to revive his hopes.

"She called him her son, her dear son, her son-in-law, the only person on whom she intended to bestow her daughter.

"She at length persuaded him to return to the house and take some nourishment.

"He seated himself at table with us, near the spot where the companion of his infancy used to place herself; and as if she had still occupied it, he addressed himself to her, and tendered that food which he knew was most agreeable to her; but, perceiving his error, he burst into tears.

"For some days following he collected every thing which she was accustomed to keep for her particular use; the last nosegay which she had worn, and a cup made of the cocoa-nut out of which she usually drank: and as if these reliques of his friend had been the most precious treasures in the world, he kissed them, and put them in his bosom.

"The ambergris does not shed so sweet a perfume as those things which have been touched by a beloved object.

"But Paul at length perceiving that his dejection only augmented that of his mother, and of Madame de la Tour, and likewise observing that the necessities of the family called for continual labour, he began with Domingo's help to repair the garden.

"In a short time this young man, before as indifferent as a Creole about what was passing in the world, entreated me to teach him to read and write, that he might be able to keep up a correspondence with Virginia.

"He afterwards seemed eager to be instructed in geography, in order to form an idea of the country

whither she was steering, and in history, that he might learn what were the manners of the people among whom she was going to live.

"Thus did he attain to perfection in agriculture, and in the art of disposing in order the most irregular spot of ground, merely by the sentiment of love.

"Doubtless, it is to the delights of this ardent and restless passion, that men must ascribe the origin of the generality of arts and sciences; and it is from its privations, that the philosophy derives its birth, which teaches us to console ourselves for every loss. Thus nature, having made love the bond of union to all created beings, has rendered it the grand moving principle of society, and the principal source of our illuminations and of our pleasures.

"Paul did not greatly relish the study of geography, which, instead of unfolding the nature of each country, only presents its political divisions.

"History, and especially modern history, did not interest him much more. It only presented to his mind general and periodical misfortunes, the reason of which it was impossible for him to penetrate; wars without a cause, and with no object in view; contemptible intrigues; nations destitute of character, and sovereigns without a principle of humanity.

"He even preferred to such reading, that of romance, which having only in view the feelings and the interests of man, sometimes displayed situations similar to his own.

"Accordingly, no book delighted him so much as *Telamachus*, from the pictures which it delineates of a country life, and of the passions which are natural to the human heart.

"He read to his mother and to Madame de la Tour, those passages which affected him the most: at times, mournful recollections striking his mind, he lost the power of utterance, and tears gushed from his eyes.

"He thought he could trace the dignity and the wisdom of Antiope, together with the misfortunes and the tenderness of Eucharis in his beloved Virginia.

"On the other hand, he was quite shocked at reading our fashionable romances, so full of licentious maxims and manners; and when he understood that these romances displayed a real picture of European nations, he feared, and not without reason, that Virginia might be there corrupted, and cast him from her remembrance.

"In truth near two years had elapsed before Madame de la Tour heard any intelligence of her aunt, or of her daughter: she had only been informed by the report of a stranger, that the latter had arrived safely in France.

"At length however she received, by a vessel on her way to India, a packet, together with a letter in Virginia's own hand-writing; and, notwithstanding the circumspection of her amiable and gentle daughter, she apprehended her to be very unhappy.

"This letter so well depicted her situation and her character, that I have retained it in my memory almost word for word:

'My dear and much-loved Mother,

'I have already written to you several letters, in my own hand; but as I have received no answer, I must suspect that they have never reached you. I hope this will be more fortunate, both from the precaution which I have taken to send you news of myself, and to receive your's in return.

'Many tears have I shed since our separation, I who scarcely ever before wept, except at the misfortunes of another!

'On my arrival, my grand-aunt was much surprised when on questioning me concerning my at

tainments, I informed her that I could neither read nor write.

'She asked me what I had been doing then since I came into the world; and when I told her that my whole study had been the care of a family, and obedience to you, she replied, that I had received the education of a menial servant.

'The day following, she placed me as a boarder in a large convent near Paris, where I had masters of every description; among other things, they instructed me in history, in geography, in grammar, in mathematics, and in horsemanship; but my inclination for all these sciences was so faint, that I profited very little by the lessons of the gentlemen who taught them.

'I feel that I am a poor creature, and of little spirit, as they interpret the word here.

'My aunt's kindness however does not diminish: she is continually giving me new dresses, according to the season: I have two women to attend me, who are habited as elegantly as ladies of quality.

'She has likewise made me assume the title of Countess, but has obliged me to relinquish the name of La Tour, which was as dear to me as to yourself, from the troubles which you have told me my poor father underwent, to obtain you in marriage.

'She has substituted your family name in its place, which I likewise esteem, because it was your's when a girl.

'As she has raised me to a situation so exalted, I entreated her to send you some supply: How can I repeat her answer?

'You however have always commanded me to speak the truth; this then was her reply, that a small matter would be of no use to you; and that, in the simple style of life which you lead, a great deal would only embarrass you.

'At first I attempted to communicate to you tidings

of my situation, by the hand of another as I was incapable of writing myself; but not being able to find, since my arrival here, a single person on whose fidelity I could rely, I applied myself night and day to the means of learning how to read and write; and by the assistance of Heaven I accomplished this in a very little time.

‘I entrusted the ladies who attend me with the dispatch of my former letters, but I have reason to suspect that they delivered them to my grand-aunt.

‘On the present occasion, I have had recourse to one of my friends, who is a fellow-boarder; and under her address, which I have subjoined, I must beg you to convey an answer.

‘My grand-aunt has prohibited all foreign correspondence, which might, as she alleges, oppose insurmountable obstacles to the splendid views which she entertains with regard to me. The only person, beside herself, who visits me at the grate, is an old nobleman of her acquaintance, who she informs me has taken a great liking to my person. To say truth, I have not the least for him, even were it possible I should conceive a partiality for any one whatever.

‘I live in the midst of gaudy wealth, and have not the disposal of a single farthing.

‘They tell me that if I had the command of money it might lead to dangerous consequences. My very gowns are the property of my waiting-women, who are disputing which shall have them even before I have left them off myself.

‘In the very bosom of riches I am much poorer than when I was with you, for I have nothing to give away.

‘When I found that the many magnificent accomplishments which I was destined to acquire, were not to procure me the power of doing the smallest good, I had recourse to my needle, in the use of which by good fortune, you had instructed me. : I

accordingly send you some pairs of stockings, of my own manufacture, for yourself and my mamma Margaret. a cap for Domingo, and one of my red handkerchiefs for Mary: I enclose you, likewise, in this packet, the kernals of the fruits of which our deserts are composed, together with the seeds of all kinds of trees, which I gathered during my hours of recreation in the garden of the convent. To these I also add the seeds of the violet, the daisy, the butterflower, the poppy, the blue bottle, and the scabious, which I have picked up in the fields.

‘In the meadows of this country the flowers are far more beautiful than in ours, but no one pays any regard to them. I am very well assured, that you and my mamma Margaret will be much better pleased with this bag of seeds, than with the bag of piastres which was the cause of our separation, and of the tears which I have since shed.

‘I shall feel the greatest pleasure, if one day you have the satisfaction of seeing apple-trees growing beside our bananas, and beech-trees mixing their foliage with that of the cocoas: you will fancy yourself in Normandy again, which you still love so much.

‘You enjoin me to communicate to you my joy and my sorrows; joy I can never experience when at a distance from you; and as for my sorrows, I soothe them by reflecting that I am in a situation where you thought proper to place me, in obedience to the will of Heaven.

‘My most cruel mortification is that not a single person here mentions your name to me, and that I am not allowed to talk of you to any one.

‘My waiting-women, or rather those of my grand-aunt, for they are her’s more than mine, tell me, when I attempt to converse about those objects which are so dear to me: Madam, remember that you are

now a Frenchwoman, and that you must forget the country of savages.

‘Ah! I shall sooner forget myself than forget the place where I was born, and where you still live! It is the country where I am, which to me is the country of savages, for I live alone, without a single person to whom I can communicate that love for you which I shall carry with me to the grave.

‘Dear and much-loved mother, I remain your obedient and affectionate daughter,

‘VIRGINIA DE LA TOUR.

‘I recommend to your kindest regards Mary and Domingo, who took such care of my infancy: stroke Fidèle for me, who found me again when I was lost in the woods.’

“Paul was much surprized that Virginia had not made the least mention of him; she who had not even forgotten the house-dog: he was entirely ignorant that be the letter of a female as long as it may, the fondest idea always comes in last.

“In a postscript Virginia particularly recommended to Paul two kinds of seeds, those of the violet and of the scabious.

“She gave him some information respecting the characters of these plants, and about the places in which it was most proper to sow them.

“The violet, she told him, produced a small flower of a deep purple hue, which delights to hide itself under the bushes, but is soon discovered by its delicious perfume. She desired him to plant it on the brink of the fountain, at the foot of her cocoa-tree. ‘The scabious,’ added she, ‘bears a pretty flower of a pale blue, and its bottom is black, interspersed with white spots. One would think it to be in mourning; it is likewise for this very reason called the

widow's flower. It flourishes best in places rugged and agitated by the winds.' She requested him to sow it on the rock where she had talked with him by night, for the last time, and to give that rock, for her sake, the name of 'Rock Farewel.'

"She had inclosed these seeds in a little purse, the embroidery of which was very simple, but which appeared inestimable to Paul, when he perceived a P and a V interwoven in it, and formed of hair, which he knew from its beauty to be that of Virginia.

"The letter of this sensible and virtuous young lady drew tears from the whole family.

"Her mother replied in the name of the rest, desiring her either to remain or return as she thought best, but assuring her that they had all lost the greatest portion of their happiness since her departure, and that for herself in particular she was quite inconsolable.

"Paul wrote her a very long letter, in which he assured her that he would render the garden worthy to receive her; and in like manner as she had interwoven their names in her purse, so would he mingle the plants of Europe with those of Africa

"He sent her some of the fruit of the cocoa-trees of her fountain, which had now arrived to perfect maturity. He added, that he would not send her any of the other seeds of the island, that the desire of seeing its productions once more might determine her to return thither immediately.

"He importuned her to do this without delay, and thus gratify the ardent wishes of their family, and his own more particularly, as henceforward he could taste no joy at a distance from her.

"Paul planted with the greatest care those European grains, and above all, those of the violet and of the scabious, the flowers of which seemed to have some analogy with the character and the situation of

Virginia, who had so particularly recommended them to him: but whether they had been corrupted on their passage, or whether, which is more probable, the climate of that part of Africa was not favourable to them, only a very small number of them sprung, and even these never attained a state of perfection.

"Envy meanwhile, which frequently even outruns the happiness of man, especially in the French Colonies, soon circulated reports all over the island which gave Paul the greatest uneasiness.

The people belonging to the vessel which had brought Virginia's letter asserted, that she was on the point of marriage.

"They went so far as to name the nobleman who was to obtain her hand.

"Nay some even declared that the affair was over, and that they had been witnesses of it.

"Paul at first despised these rumours, conveyed by a trading-vessel which often brings false reports from the places at which it touches on its passage; but as many of the inhabitants of the island, from a perfidious pity, officiously interposed to condole with him on this event, he began to give some credit to it.

"Besides in some of the romances which he had read he saw treachery treated with pleasantry, and as he knew that these books exhibited a faithful picture of the manners of Europe, he was apprehensive that the daughter of Madame de la Tour might have become corrupted, and have forgotten her earlier engagements.

"The light which he had acquired made him anticipate misery, and what gave a finish to his suspicions was, that several European vessels had arrived within the year, without bringing any news whatever of Virginia.

"That unfortunate young man, abandoned to all the agitations of a heart in love came frequently to

see me, in order to confirm or to dissipate his uneasiness, by my experience of the world.

"I live, as I have told you, about a league and a half from hence, on the bank of a small river which flows by Long Mountain. There I pass my life in solitude, without a wife, without children, and without slaves.

"Next to the rare felicity of finding a female partner perfectly suited to a man, the least unhappy situation is that of living alone.

"Every one who has had much reason to complain of mankind seeks for solitude. Nay it is very remarkable, that all nations rendered miserable by their opinions, their manners, or by their governments, have produced numerous classes of citizens entirely devoted to solitude and to celibacy.

"Such were the Egyptians in their decline, and the Greeks of the Lower Empire; and such are in our days the Indians, the Chinese, the modern Greeks, the Italians, and the greatest part of the eastern and southern nations of Europe.

"Solitude, in some degree, brings man back to his natural state of happiness, by removing the misfortunes of social life.

"In the midst of our societies, torn asunder by so many prejudices, the soul is in a state of perpetual agitation; it is continually revolving within itself a thousand turbulent and contradictory opinions, by which the members of an ambitious and miserable society are aiming at mutual subjection; but in solitude it lays aside those extraneous illusions which disturb it, and resumes the simple sentiment of itself, of nature, and of its author.

"Thus the muddy water of a torrent, which lays waste the country, spreading itself into some little bason remote from its current, sinks the miry particles to the bottom of its bed, recover its former limpidness, and having again become transparent, re-

fects, together with its own banks, the verdure of the earth and the light of the heavens.

“Solitude restores the harmony of the body as well as that of the soul.

“It is among solitary classes of people that we find persons who live to the greatest age. as amongst the Bramins of India.

“In short, I believe it so necessary to happiness, even in the commerce of the world, that I conceive it impossible to taste a durable pleasure in it, be the sentiment what it may, or to regulate our conduct by an established principle, unless we form an internal solitude, from which our own opinion seldom takes its departure, and into which that of another never enters.

“I do not however mean to assert that it is the duty of man to live entirely alone, for by his necessities he is united to the whole human race; he for that reason owes his labour to mankind, but he owes himself likewise to the rest of nature.

“As God has given to each of us organs exactly suited to the elements of the globe on which we live, feet to the soil, lungs to the air, eyes to the light, without the power of interchanging the use of these senses.

“He, who is the author of life, has reserved for himself alone the heart, which is its principal organ.

“I pass my days then remote from men, whom I have wished to serve, and who have repaid me with persecution.

“After having travelled over a great part of Europe, and several regions of America and of Africa, I am now settled in this island, poorly inhabited as it is, seduced by the mildness of the air, and by its enchanting solitudes.

“A cottage, which I have built in the forest at the foot of a tree, a little field cleared for cultivation by my own hands, and a river which flows before my

door, are fully adequate to all my wants, and all my pleasures.

"I add to these enjoyments a few good books, which teach me to become better: they even make the world, which I have quitted, still contribute to my happiness, by presenting me with pictures of those passions which render its inhabitants so miserable; and by the comparison which I make between their condition and my own, they procure for me a negative felicity.

"Like a man saved from shipwreck, seated on a rock I contemplate in my solitude, the storms which are raging in the rest of the world; nay my tranquillity is increased by the fury of the distant tempest. Since men stand no longer in my way, and as I am no longer in theirs, I have ceased to hate, and now I pity them.

"If I meet with any unfortunate wretch, I try to assist him by my counsels: as one passing along the brink of a torrent stretches out his hand to an unhappy creature drowning in it.

"I however have found innocence alone attentive to my voice.

"Nature to no purpose allures to herself the rest of mankind; each one forms in his mind an image of her, which he invests with his own passions. He pursues through the whole of life, the vain phantom which still misleads him; and he then complains to heaven of the illusion which he had practised upon himself.

"Amongst a great number of unfortunate wretches whom I have endeavoured to bring back to nature, I have not found a single one who was not intoxicated with his own miseries.

"They listened to me at first with attention, in hopes that I was going to assist them in acquiring either glory or fortune, but perceiving that I only meant to teach them to do without such things, they

looked upon me myself as a miserable wretch, because I did not pursue their wretched felicity: they condemned the solitary style of life which I led, pretended that they alone were useful to mankind, and endeavoured to draw me into their vortex.

"But though my heart is open to all the world, my opinions are biassed by no one. I frequently find enough within my own breast to make me serve as a lesson to myself.

"In my present calm I make a second passage through the agitations of my own past life, which I once prized so highly: the protections, the fortune, the reputation, the pleasures, and the opinions, which maintain a constant conflict all the world over.

"I compare those successive tribes of men, whom I have seen contending with so much fury about mere chimeras, and who are now no more, to the little waves of my rivulet, which dash themselves foaming against the rocks of its bed, and then disappear never more to return.

"For my own part, I quietly commit myself to the river of time, to be borne down toward the ocean of futurity, which is circumscribed with no shores, and by contemplating the actual harmonies of nature I raise myself toward its author, and thus console myself with the expectation of a destiny more happy in the world to come.

"Although the multiplicity of objects which from this elevation now strike our view, are not perceptible from my hermitage, which is situated in the centre of a forest, still the harmonies of that spot are very interesting, especially to a man who like me prefers retiring unto himself to ranging abroad.

"The river which flows before my door passes in a straight line across the woods, so that my eye is struck with a long canal, overshadowed with trees of variegated foliage; tatamaques, the ebony-tree, and what is here called apple-wood, olive-wood, and

the cinnamon; groves of palm trees here and there raise their long and naked columns more than a hundred feet high; on their tops clusters of palms grow, while they appear like one forest piled above another.

"There are likewise lianes of different coloured leaves, and which, shooting their branches from one tree to another, form here arcades of flowers, and there long festoons of verdure. Aromatic odours issue from most of these trees and their perfumes attach themselves so strongly to the very clothes, that the smell adheres to a person who has crossed the forest for several hours afterwards.

"In the season, when their flowers are in full bloom, you would think them half covered with snow.

"At the end of summer several kinds of foreign birds come, by an unaccountable instinct, from unknown regions beyond the boundless ocean, to pick up the seeds of the vegetables which this island produces, and oppose the brilliancy of their colours to the verdure of the trees, embrowned by the sun. Among others, different kinds of parroquets, and blue pigeons, which are here called the pigeons of Holland.

"Monkeys, the domesticated inhabitants of these forests, amuse themselves among the dusky branches from which they detach themselves by their gray and greenish hair, with their faces entirely black; some suspend themselves by the tail, balancing themselves in the air; others leap from branch to branch, carrying their young ones in their arms.

"Never has the murderous fusil scared these peaceful children of nature.

"Here nothing is heard but sounds of joy, the unknown warblings and the chirping of some southern birds, which repeat the echoes of these forests from afar.

"The river, which flows bubbling over a rocky bed through the trees, reflects here and there in its limpid stream, their venerable masses of verdure and of shade, as well as the gambols of the happy inhabitants: about a thousand paces from hence, it precipitates itself down different stories of the rock, and forms in its fall a smooth sheet of water as clear as crystal, which rolling down, breaks itself amidst billows of foam.

"A thousand confused noises proceed from these tumultuous waters, and when dispersed by the winds of the forest, they sometimes fly to a distance, and sometimes they rush on the ear all at once, and produce a stunning sound like that of the bells of a cathedral.

"The air, continually refreshed by the motion of this stream, keeps up upon the banks of the river, notwithstanding the burning heats of summer, a verdure and a coolness, which are seldom found in this island even on the mountain tops.

"At some distance from thence there is a rock, remote enough from the cascade to prevent your being deafened with the noise of its waters, and yet sufficiently near for you to enjoy the sight of their fall, their freshness, and their murmuring.

"During the excessive heats, Madame de la Tour, Margaret, Virginia, Paul, and I, sometimes dined under the shade of this rock.

"As Virginia always employed her minutest actions for the benefit of others, she never ate a fruit in the country without planting its seed or its kernel in the earth.

"Trees," said she "will spring from these, which may one day give their fruits to some traveller, or at least to some bird."

"Accordingly, once, when she had been eating part of a papaya at the foot of this rock, she planted the seeds of the fruit there soon afterwards several

papayas grew up, among which was a female plant, that is one that bears fruit.

"This tree, at Virginia's departure, was not so high as her knee, but as its growth is very rapid, it attained three years after to the height of twenty feet, and the higher part of its trunk was surrounded with several rows of ripe fruit.

"Paul having by chance wandered to this place, was greatly delighted at beholding such a large tree, grown from a seed which he had seen planted by the hand of his friend, but at the same time he sunk into a profound melancholy, on observing this testimony of her long absence.

"By objects which we habitually behold, we are unable to perceive with what rapidity our life passes away; they as well as ourselves grow old, with an imperceptible decay: but those which we suddenly see again after several years absence, admonish us of the swiftness with which the stream of our days flows on.

"Paul was as much surprised, and as sorrowful, at the sight of this large papaya, loaded with fruit, as a traveller is, who on his return to his native country after a long absence, finds those who were his contemporaries to be no more, and sees their children, whom he had left at the breast, themselves become fathers of families.

"Sometimes he was going to cut it down, as it made him too sensible of the length of time which had elapsed since Virginia's departure: at other times, considering it as a monument of her beneficence he kissed its trunk, and addressed to it these words, dictated by love and regret:

"O tree, whose prosperity still exists in our woods, I view thee with more concern and veneration than the triumphal arches of the Romans! May nature, which is daily destroying the monuments of the am-

bition of kings, multiply, in these forests, those of the beneficence of a young and unfortunate girl.'

"It was at the foot of this papaya-tree that I was certain of seeing Paul whenever he came to my habitation.

"I one day found him there plunged in melancholy, and I held a conversation with him, which I will repeat to you, unless I tire you by my long digressions; they however are pardonable in a person of my age, and more so as they have a reference to my late friendship.

"I will relate it in form of a dialogue, that you may judge of the excellent natural sense of this young man, and it will be easy for you to discover who is the speaker, by the meaning of his questions and by my answers.

"He said to me:

"I am very low spirited. Mademoiselle de la Tour has been gone these three years and a half; and for a year and a half past she has sent us no tidings of herself. She is rich, and I am poor: she has certainly forgotten me. My inclination prompts me strongly to embark for France; I will enter into the service of the king; I will make a fortune, and the grand-aunt of Mademoiselle de la Tour will give me her neice in marriage when I shall have become a great lord.'

"OLD MAN.—My good friend, have you not told me that your birth is ignoble.

"PAUL.—So my mother has told me; for my own part I do not so much as know the meaning of the word Birth. I never discovered that I was more deficient there than another, or that any other person possessed it more than I do.

"OLD MAN.—Deficiency in point of birth will, in France, effectually exclude you from any distinguished employment: what is more, no corps of any distinction will admit you.'

"PAUL.—You have often informed me that one of the chief causes of the present greatness of France was, that the lowest subject might obtain the highest posts; and you have given me many instances of celebrated men, who rising from a low condition, had done honour to their country. Do you mean to damp my courage.

"OLD MAN.—My son nothing is farther from my intention: I told you the truth, but it related to times past.

"The face of affairs in France is at present greatly altered; every thing there is now become venal; all is the hereditary property of a small number of families, or is divided among incorporated associations. The king is a luminary surrounded by the nobility, and by different corps, as by so many clouds, and it is hardly possible that one of his rays should fall upon you. Formerly, in an administration less complicated, such phenomena were to be seen. Then talents and merit were disclosed on every side, as the fresh grounds, which have just been cleared, are productive with all their rich juices. But great kings who know mankind, and how to make choice among them, are very rare. Kings in general allow themselves to be biassed by the grandees, and by the associations which surround them.

"PAUL.—But probably I shall find one of those great men, who will take me under his protection.

"OLD MAN.—The protection of the great is to be obtained only by serving either their ambition or their pleasure. You can never succeed with them, for your birth is mean, and your probity is untainted.

"PAUL.—But I will perform actions so daring, I will keep my promises so inviolate, I will so punctually fulfil the duties of my situation, I will be so zealous and so constant in my friendships, as to merit adoption from some of them which I have observed

to be the case in those ancient histories which you gave me to read.

"OLD MAN.—Ah, my good friend! among the Greeks and Romans, even in their decline, the higher orders of men always paid respect to virtue; we have indeed a great number of celebrated personages of all descriptions starting up from among the common people, but I do not know of a single one who has been adopted into a family of rank. Were it not for our kings, virtue would in France be condemned to an eternal plebeianism.

'As I have often told you, they sometimes honor virtue when they perceive it; but in the present day, the distinction which in justice it ought to obtain, is to be purchased only with money.'

'PAUL.—In case then I do not procure support from the great, I will endeavour to render myself useful to some corps. I will adopt its spirit and its opinions entirely; I will make myself to be beloved.'

"OLD MAN.—You will act then like other men! you will sacrifice your integrity to purchase fortune.

"PAUL.—Oh, no! the search of truth shall be my only aim.'

"OLD MAN.—Instead of making yourself to be beloved, you will most probably expose yourself to hatred. Beside, incorporated associations interest themselves very little in the discovery of truth. To the ambitious every opinion is indifferent, provided they domineer.'

'PAUL.—How unfortunate am I! I am discouraged on every side. I am doomed to pass my life in labour and obscurity, far from Virginia.' And he heaved a deep sigh.

"OLD MAN.—Let the Almighty be your only patron, and the human race your corps; be firmly attached both to the one and to the other. Families, associations, nations and kings, have their prejudices and their passions, and vice must often be committed,

in order to serve them as they desire. But to serve God and the human race, we have occasion to exercise virtue alone.

‘But why do you wish to be distinguished from the rest of mankind?’

‘It is an unnatural sentiment, for if it were universal, every man would be at war with his neighbour.’

‘Satisfy yourself with fulfilling the duties of that station in which providence has placed you: rejoice in your destiny, which allows you to maintain your integrity pure, and does not oblige you, in imitation of the great, to place your happiness in the opinion of the lower ranks; nor, in imitation of the lower, to cringe to superiors, in order to procure the means of subsistence.’

‘You are in a country, and in a situation, where you can find a living without any occasion to deceive, to flatter, or to debase yourself, as the generality of those are obliged to do who pursue fortune in Europe; in a situation, where your condition does not prohibit your exercising any virtue; where you can with impunity be good, faithful, sincere, intelligent, patient, temperate, chaste, indulgent, pious; and where no malignant sneer will interpose to blast your wisdom, which is still only in the bud.’

‘Heaven has bestowed on you liberty, health, a good conscience, and friends: kings, whose favour you are so ambitious of obtaining, are not near so happy.’

‘PAUL.—Alas! Virginia is still wanting to me: without her I have nothing; with her I should possess every thing. She alone is my birth, my glory, and my fortune: but her aunt must no doubt have bestowed her in marriage on a man of high reputation! By means of books and study however men may become learned and celebrated: I will acquire knowledge, by dint of intense application: I will

render an useful service to my country by my superior illumination, and will neither offend any one, nor be dependent on him; my fame will be illustrious, and the glory which I may obtain will be entirely my own.

“OLD MAN.”—My son, talents are still more rare than either birth or riches; and doubtless they are the most invaluable possessions, because nothing can deprive us of them, and because they universally conciliate public esteem. But they cost a man dear; they are to be obtained only by privations of every kind; by an exquisite sensibility, which renders us unhappy both at home and abroad, from the persecution of our contemporaries.

“In France, the lawyer does not envy the glory of the soldier, nor the soldier that of the sailor, but every body will thwart you there, because every body piques himself on his understanding.

“You will serve mankind you say. But the person who produces them a single sheaf of corn from the ground, does them a far more profitable service than he who gives them a book.”

“PAUL.” Oh! she who planted this papaya has given the inhabitants of these forests a much more useful and delightful present, than if she had given them a library.

“And as he spake he took the tree in his arms, and kissed it with transport.

“OLD MAN.”—The best book that ever was written, which inculcates only the doctrines of friendship, equality, humanity and concord, namely the gospel, has served, for many ages past, as a pretext for the ravages of European cruelty.

“How many public and private tyrannies are daily practised on the Earth in its name! After that who can flatter himself with the hope of being useful to mankind by a book?

‘Call to mind what has been the fate of most of those philosophers who preached up wisdom to man.

‘Homer, who clothed it in verses so beautiful, was reduced to beg his bread all his life long.

‘Socrates, who gave to the Athenians such excellent lessons of it, both by his discourses, and by his manners, was condemned to swallow poison, by the sentence of a court of justice.

‘His sublime disciple, Plato, was doomed to slavery by order of the very Prince who protected him; and before their time Pythagoras, who extended his humanity even to the brute creation, was burnt alive by the Crotonians.

‘What do I say?

‘The greatest part of these illustrious names have descended to us disfigured by some traits of satire which characterise them; for human ingratitude delights to lay hold on these: if however among the crowd, the glory of any one hath reached our ears, pure and untainted, it must have been such as have lived far from the society of their contemporaries; like those statues which are extracted entire out of the fields of Greece and Italy, and which, by being buried in the bosom of the earth, have escaped the fury of barbarians.

‘You see, then, that to acquire the tempestuous glory of literary fame, it is necessary to exercise much virtue, and to be ready to sacrifice life itself.

‘Besides, do you imagine that this glory interests wealthy people in France? They greatly caress literary men, whose learning does not raise them to any dignity in their country, nor to any situation under government, nor procure them admission at court. Persecution is little practised in this age, so indifferent as it is to every thing except fortune and pleasure; but knowledge and virtue seldom raise a person there to a distinguished rank, because every thing in the state is to be procured with money.

‘Formerly these qualities were sure of meeting a recompense, by places either in the church, in the magistracy, or in the administration; but at present they are only good for making books.

‘This fruit, however, so little prized by the men of the world, is ever worthy of its celestial origin. It is to these very books that the honour is reserved of bestowing lustre on obscure v^rtue, of consoling the unfortunate, of enlightening nations, and of declaring the truth even to kings.

‘It is undoubtedly the most sacred office with which heaven can invest a mortal on this earth.

‘Where is the man who has it not in his power to console himself for the injustice, or the contempt of those who have the disposal of fortune, when he reflects that his work will be handed down from age to age, from nation to nation, and will serve as a barrier against error and tyranny; and that, from the bosom of the obscurity in which he has lived, a glory may issue which shall eclipse that of the greatest part of kings, whose monuments sink into oblivion in spite of the flatterers who reared, and who extol them?’

‘PAUL. ‘—Ah! I should covet this glory, only to diffuse its lustre over Virginia, and to render her dear to all the world.’

‘But you, who have so much experience, tell me whether we shall ever marry. I wish to be a scholar at least to know what I am to expect in future.’

‘OLD MAN. ‘—Who would wish to live, my son, if he knew what was to befall him hereafter?’

‘A single foreseen calamity occasions a thousand vain anxieties: the certain prospect of a heavy affliction would embitter all the days which might precede it. Indeed it is not proper to enquire too deeply even into surrounding objects; heaven, which bestows reflection upon us that we may foresee our

necessities, has also given us necessities to set bounds to our reflection.'

"PAUL.—You tell me that in Europe, dignities and honours are to be purchased with money. I will go and acquire wealth in Bengal, and then direct my course toward Paris, and espouse Virginia. I will go and embark immediately.'

"OLD MAN.—How! will you leave her mother and your own?'

"PAUL.—Why you yourself advised my going India.'

"OLD MAN.—When I gave you that advice Virginia was here, but at present you are the only support of your mothers.'

"PAUL.—Virginia will send them the means of subsistence from the bounty of her rich relation.

"OLD MAN.—Rich people assist those only who pay homage to them in the world. They have relations much more to be pitied than Madame de la Tour, and who for want of support from them, sacrifice their liberty for the sake of bread, and pass their lives shut up in a convent.'

"PAUL.—What a dreadful country Europe is! Oh! Virginia must return hither. What occasion has she for a rich relation? How happy she once was under these lowly roofs, how beautiful and how charming, when her head was adorned with a red handkerchief or a wreath of flowers!

'O, Virginia! return, leave thy palaces and thy greatness; return to these rocks, to the shade of these woods, and to our cocoa-trees.

'Alas! perhaps at this very moment thou art miserable.'

"Saying this, he burst into tears.

'Father,' cried he, 'conceal nothing from me; if you are unable to tell me whether I shall ever marry Virginia, inform me at least whether she still loves

me, though surrounded by great men who talk to the king, and who visit her.'

"OLD MAN. '-Yes, my friend, I am convinced by many reasons that she loves you, but principally by this, that she is virtuous.'

"At these words he clasped me round the neck, transported with joy.

"PAUL. '-But do you believe European women to be so inconstant as they are represented on the stage and in those books which you have lent me? "

"OLD MAN. '-In those countries where men tyrannize, the women are always inconstant. Violence ever produces deceit.'

"PAUL. '-How is it possible for a man to exercise tyranny over a woman?'

"OLD MAN. '-By forcing women into a marriage without any regard to their own inclinations; a young girl to an old man, a woman of feeling to a man of insensibility.'

"PAUL. '-Why do they not rather unite those together who are more suitable to each other; the young with the young, and lovers with those on whom their affections are fixed.'

"OLD MAN. '-The reason is, that in France the generality of young men have not sufficient fortune to enable them to marry, and that they seldom acquire a competency till they are advanced in years. In youth they seduce the wives of their neighbours, and when old they are unable to secure the affections of their own wives. When young they deceived others, and when old, are in their turn themselves deceived.

"It is one of the re-actions of that universal justice which governs the world: one excess always balances another.

"Thus most Europeans pass their lives in a two-fold disorder, and this disorder is increased in a society proportionably as riches are accumulated on a smaller number of individuals.

‘The state resembles a garden, in which small trees are unable to arrive at perfection if others too great overshadow them; but there is this manifest difference, that the beauty of a garden may result from a small number of large trees, but the prosperity of a state ever depends on the multitude and equality of the subjects, and not on a small number who monopolizes its wealth.’

“PAUL.—But why is want of money a hindrance to marriage?”

“OLD MAN.—Because after a man has entered into that state, he wishes to pass his days in abundance, without the necessity of labouring?”

“PAUL.—And why not labour? I myself work very hard.”

“OLD MAN.—The reason is, that in Europe manual labour is deemed dishonourable. It is there called mechanical labour: nay that of cultivating the ground is esteemed the most despicable of all. There the artisan holds a far higher rank than the peasant.”

“PAUL.—How! the art which supplies man with food despised in Europe! I do not understand you.

“OLD MAN.—Oh! it is impossible for a man educated in a state of nature, to comprehend the depravity of a state of society. Though such a one is able to form in his own mind an exact idea of order, he cannot form one of disorder.

“Beauty, virtue and happiness have proportions; deformity vice and misery have none.”

“PAUL.—The rich then are very happy; no obstacle lies in their way; and on the objects of their love they can bestow pleasures without end.”

“OLD MAN.—They are for the most part insensible to any pleasure because the attainment of it costs them no trouble.

“Does not experience teach you that the enjoyment of repose is purchased by fatigue; that of eat-

ing, by hunger; that of drinking, by thirst? In like manner that of loving, and of being beloved, is only to be obtained by a multitude of privations and sacrifices.

‘Their wealth deprives rich people of all these pleasures, by outrunning their necessities.

‘Add, besides, to the disgust which always follows satiety, that pride which springs from their opulence, and which the least privation wounds, even when the greatest enjoyments have ceased to flatter it.

‘The perfume of a thousand roses only pleases for a single moment, but the pain inflicted by one of their thorns lasts a long time after the wound is received.

‘To the rich one misfortune in the midst of many enjoyments is a thorn surrounded by flowers; but, on the contrary, to the poor, one pleasure in the middle of many calamities, is a flower surrounded on every side by thorns. They find a poignant relish in their enjoyments.

‘Every effect is heightened by its contrast; nature has balanced all things equally.

‘Every thing considered then, which state do you conceive to be preferable, that of having almost nothing to hope for and all to fear, or that of having nothing to fear and every thing to hope? The first of these states is that of the rich; the second that of the poor.

‘These extremes however are equally difficult to be supported by man, whose happiness consists in mediocrity and virtue.’

“PAUL.—What do you understand by the word virtue?”

“OLD MAN.—My son, you who support your parents by the labour of your hands have no occasion for a definition of it. Virtue is an effort made upon

ourselves, for the good of others, in the view of pleasing God only.'

"PAUL?—O, how virtuous then is Virginia! Virtue was her aim when she wished to become rich, that she might exercise beneficence; virtue made her leave this island, and virtue will restore her to us."

"The idea of her speedy return kindling the young man's imagination, all his disquietude vanished in an instant.

"Virginia had not written because she was on the point of returning: so little time was necessary to sail from Europe, with a fair wind.

"He enumerated instances of vessels which had made this voyage of more than four thousand five hundred leagues in less than three months.

"The vessel in which she had embarked would not take more than two.

"The builders of the present day were so skilful, and the mariners so alert.

"He talked of the arrangements which he would make for her reception; of the new habitation which he intended to build; and of the pleasures and the agreeable surprise which he would contrive for her every day, when she became his wife; his wife—the idea ravished his senses.

"As for you, father," said he to me "you in future shall do nothing but enjoy yourself.

"Virginia possesses wealth, and we can purchase plenty of negroes, who will work for you. You shall be with us always, and nothing shall employ your mind but amusement and pleasure."

"Immediately he flew like one distracted, to communicate to his family the joy with which he himself was intoxicated.

"Excessive fears soon succeeded the most sanguine hopes.

"Violent passions always plunge the soul into contrary extremes. Frequently on succeeding morn-

ings Paul came to see me, overwhelmed with grief. He said to me, 'Virginia has not written to me: had she left Europe she would certainly have informed us of it.'

'Ah! the reports which have been circulated concerning her are but too well founded: her aunt has certainly married her to some nobleman.'

'The love of wealth has corrupted her, as is the case with so many others.'

'In those books which so well describe the character of the female sex, virtue is merely a subject for romance.'

'Had Virginia really possessed virtue she would not have quitted her own mother and me.'

'While I pass my life with my thoughts entirely fixed on her, she has cast me from her remembrance. I am tormenting myself, and she is lost in dissipation. Ah! that thought plunges me into despair. All labour disgusts me, and society becomes a burthen. Would to God that war would break out in India, I would hasten thither, and throw myself into the jaws of death.'

'My son,' replied I, 'that courage which makes us rush on to meet death, is the courage of only a single moment. It is often excited by the vain applause of man.'

'There is a species of courage more rare, and still more necessary, which enables us daily to support the misfortunes of life, without a witness, and without praise; what I mean is patience. It rests not on the opinion of another, nor on the impulse of our own passions, but on the will of God. Patience is the courage of virtue.'

'Ah then,' cried he, 'I have no virtue! every thing overwhelms me and sinks me into despair.'

'Virtue,' replied I, 'always equal, constant, and invariable, is not the portion of mankind. In the conflict of so many passions by which we are agitated,

our reason is troubled and obscured; but there are pharoses by which we can rekindle the flame; I mean Letters.

'Letters, my son, are an assistance sent to us from heaven. They are rays of that wisdom which governs the Universe, and which man, inspired by a celestial art, has learned to establish upon this earth. Like the rays of the sun, they enlighten, they comfort, they warm: it is a flame altogether divine.

'Like fire, they direct all nature to our use. By means of them, we unite around us, men and things, times and places.

'By them we feel ourselves recalled to the rules of human life.

'They calm the passions; they repress vice; they rouse virtue by the sacred example of those great men whom they celebrate, and whose honoured images they habitually present to us crowned with respect.

'They are the daughters of heaven, who descend to earth to soothe the misfortunes of the human race. The great writers whom they inspire, have always appeared in times the most difficult for human society to subsist, the times of barbarism and of depravity. My dear son, letters have afforded consolation to an infinite number of men, far more miserable than you are; Xenophon, banished from his country after having brought back to it ten thousand Greeks; Scipio Africanus, exhausted with the relentless calumny of the Roman people; Lucullus, sickened with their cabals; and Catinat, stung with the ingratitude of a French court.

'The ingenious Greeks assigned the several governments of our various intellectual powers to the several muses, who preside over letters: we ought therefore to resign to them the government of our passions, that they may direct and curb them.

'They ought, with regard to the faculties of the

soul, to perform the same functions, with the hours, which yoked and guided the horses of the sun.

'Apply yourself then, my son, to the study of books. Those wise men who have written before us, are travellers who have preceded us in the paths of calamity, who stretch out the hand toward us, and invite us to join their society, when every body else has abandoned us.

'A good book is a good friend.

'Ah!' cried Paul, 'I had no occasion to know how to read when Virginia was here: she had studied no more than I had done, but when she looked upon me, calling me her friend, it was impossible for me to know what sorrow meant.'

'Doubtless,' said I to him, 'there can be no friend so agreeable as a mistress who loves reciprocally.

'There is besides in woman a lively gaiety, which dissipates the pensiveness of man. Her graces make the dark phantoms of reflection to fly away. On her countenance are depicted the gentle attraction of confidence.

'What joy is not heightened by her joy? What forehead is not smoothed when she smiles? What wrath can repel her tears?

'Virginia will return with more philosophy than you possess; she will be greatly surprised at not finding the garden entirely restored, she, whose thoughts are fixed on embellishing it, in spite of the persecutions of her relation, while far from her mother, and far from you.'

'The idea of the approaching return of Virginia renovated the courage of Paul, and brought him back to his rural occupations. Happy in the midst of his perturbation, in proposing to his exertions an end congenial to his predominant passion.

'One morning at day-break, it was the 24th of December, 1752, Paul on rising perceived a white

flag hung out on Mount Discovery. This flag was the signal that a vessel was descried at sea.

"He immediately flew to the city, to learn if it brought any intelligence of Virginia.

"He remained there till the return of the pilot of the port, who, according to custom, had gone out to reconnoitre her.

"This man did not come back till the evening. He reported to the governor, that the vessel which they had hailed was the Saint Gerard, of about seven hundred tons burthen, commanded by a captain named M. Aubin; that she was four leagues distant at most, and that she could not come to her moorings off Port Louis, till the next day in the afternoon, if the wind was fair. It was then a dead calm.

"The pilot then delivered to the governor the letters which the vessel had brought from France. Among others there was one in Virginia's hand-writing for Madame de la Tour.

"Paul seized it immediately, and having kissed it with transport, put it in his bosom, and flew to the plantation.

"As soon as he could perceive the family from afar, who were waiting his return on Rock Farewel, he raised the letter into the air, without the power of uttering a syllable: immediately the whole family assembled round Madame de la Tour to hear it read.

"Virginia informed her mother that she had experienced very harsh treatment from her grand-aunt, who had attempted to force her into marriage, had afterwards disinherited her, and then turned her away, at a time which would not permit her to arrive at the Isle of France till the hurricane season: that she had to no purpose endeavoured to soften her, by representing what she owed to her mother, and to the connections of her early life; that she had been treated by her as a girl whose head was turned by reading romances; that at present her only wish was

once more to see and embrace her dear family, and that she would have gratified this ardent wish that very day, if the captain would have allowed her to embark in the pilot-boat, but that he had opposed her departure, on account of the distance of the shore, and of a heavy swell at sea in the offing, notwithstanding the stillness of the wind.

"No sooner was this letter read, than the whole family transported with joy, cried out: 'Virginia is arrived.'

"Masters and servants embraced each other by turns.

"Madame de la Tour said to Paul: 'My son, go and inform our neighbour of Virginia's arrival.'

"Domingo immediately lighted a flambeau of round-wood, and then in company with Paul directed his course toward my habitation.

"It might be about ten o'clock at night: I had just extinguished my lamp, and had lain down to sleep, when I perceived through the pallisades of my cottage a light in the woods.

"Soon after I heard the voice of Paul calling me by name.

"I immediately arose, and was scarcely dressed, when Paul, almost distracted and breathless, clasped me round the neck, saying: 'Come, come along, Virginia is arrived.'

'Let us hasten to the port, the vessel will anchor there by day-break.'

"We immediately bent our course thitherward. As we were crossing the woods of the Long Mountain, and already on the road which leads from Pamplémousses to the port, I heard the sound of some one walking behind us. It was a negro hurrying on with his utmost speed.

"As soon as he had overtaken us, I asked him whence he came, and whither he was going with such expedition.

"He replied: 'I come from that quarter of the island which is called Gold Dust, and am dispatched to inform the governor, that a vessel from France has just cast anchor under Amber Island. She is firing guns in token of distress, for the sea is very boisterous.'

"The man having thus spoken, immediately hastened forwards.

"I then said to Paul: "Let us go toward Gold Dust, to meet Virginia; it is only three leagues from hence."

"We accordingly directed our steps toward the northern part of the island.

"The heat was stifling: the moon had just arisen; three black circles surrounded her.

"A frightful darkness overspread the whole face of heaven.

"By the frequent flashes of lightning we discovered long streamers of thick clouds, gloomy and lowering at no great height, piled one above another toward the middle of the island, which rushed from the sea with an amazing rapidity, although on land not the least breath of wind was stirring.

"Hastening onwards, we thought we heard the roaring of thunder, but on listening more attentively we discovered it to be the report of cannon, reverberated by the echoes.

"The noise of the distant firing, joined to the tempestuous appearance of the heavens, made me shudder.

"I had no doubt that it was a signal of distress from some vessel on the point of foundering. About half an hour afterwards the first ceased, and this silence struck me as much more awful than the mournful sounds which had preceded it.

"We quickened our pace without saying a word, not daring to communicate our uneasiness to each other.

"Toward midnight we arrived in a violent heat on the sea-shore, at the quarter called Gold Dust. The waves dashed themselves against it with a fearful noise.

"The foam, of a dazzling whiteness, and sparkling like fire, covered the rocks and shores. Notwithstanding the darkness, we could distinguish, by these phosphoric lights, the canoes of the fishermen, which they had long before drawn a great way up on the strand.

"At some distance from thence, at the entrance of the wood, we descried a fire, round which several of the planters were assembled.

"We went thither to rest ourselves, and to wait for the return of day.

"Whilst we sat by the fire, one of the planters told us, that the preceding afternoon he had seen a vessel at sea, borne toward the island by the currents; that the shades of night had concealed her from his view, and that two hours after sun-set he had heard the firing of cannon, as a signal calling for assistance, but that the sea ran so high, no one could send out a boat to her relief: that soon after, he could perceive their lanterns lighted up, and in that case he was afraid the vessel having come so near the shore, might have passed between the main land and the little Isle of Amber, mistaking the latter for Mire Point, near which the vessels arriving at Port Louis are accustomed to pass; that if it were so, which however he could not absolutely affirm, the vessel must be in the greatest danger.

"Another planter then spake, and told us that he had several times passed through the channel which separates the Isle of Amber from the coast; that he had sounded it, and found that the mooring and anchoring ground were excellent; and that the vessel would be as safe there as in the most secure harbour.

"I would risk my whole fortune in her," added he

'and could sleep as soundly as if I were on dry land.'

"A third person asserted that it was impossible for a vessel of that size to enter the channel, as even boats could with difficult navigate it.

"He said that he had seen her anchor beyond the Isle of Amber, so that if the breeze sprung up in the morning, she would have it in her power either to put to sea again, or to gain the harbour. Other planters delivered various opinions.

"Whilst they were disputing among themselves, as is very customary with idle Creoles, Paul and I kept a profound silence.

"We remained there till peep of dawn, but then there was too little light in the heavens to admit of our distinguishing any object at sea, which besides was covered with a thick fog; we could only descry to windward a dusky cloud, which they told us was the Isle of Amber, situated at a quarter of a league, distance from the coast.

"We perceived no object by this gloomy light but the point of land where we were, and the peaks of some of the mountains of the interior of the island, appearing from time to time in the midst of the clouds which floated around them.

"About seven in the morning we heard the sound of drums in the woods; it was the governor, M. de la Bourdonaye, who came on horseback, attended by a detachment of soldiers armed with muskets, and by a great number of planters and negroes.

"He drew up the soldiers on the beach, and ordered them to fire a volley.

"Scarcely had they done so, when we perceived on the sea a flash of light, almost immediately succeeded by the report of a cannon.

"We concluded that the vessel was at no great distance from us, and we all flew to that quarter where we had seen her signal.

"We then discerned through the mist the hull and sail-yards of a large vessel.

"We were so close to her that notwithstanding the roaring of the sea, we distinctly heard the boat-swain's whistle, and the voices of the sailors, who gave three cheers of Long live the King: for this is the exclamation of Frenchmen, when in extreme danger, as well as amidst their greatest rejoicings; as if they meant to call their Prince to their assistance in perilous seasons, or as if they intended even then to declare, that they were ready to meet death for his sake.

"From the moment that the Saint Gerard perceived we were within reach of giving her assistance, she went on firing a gun every three minutes.

"M. de la Bourdonaye ordered large fires to be kindled here and there along the strand, and sent to all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood in quest of provisions, planks, cables, and empty casks.

"A multitude soon arrived, accompanied by their negroes, loaded with provisions and cordage, who came from the plantations of Gold Dust, the quarter of the Marsh, and from Rampart River.

"One of the oldest of those planters approached the Governor, and thus addressed him: 'Sir, deep sounds have all night long been heard in the mountain. In the woods the leaves are violently agitated, though there is not a breath of wind stirring. The sea birds are flocking in crowds to take refuge on the land; surely all these signs announce the approach of a hurricane.'

'Well, my friend,' replied the Governor, 'we are well prepared for it, and surely the vessel is so likewise.'

"In truth the whole appearance of nature presaged an approaching tempest.

"The clouds distinguishable in the zenith, were

at their centre awfully black, and their edges of a copper colour.

"The air resounded with the screams of the pailençu, the frigate, the water-cutter, and a multitude of other fowls, which notwithstanding the gloom of the atmosphere flocked from all points of the horizon to seek a shelter in the island.

"Toward nine o'clock in the morning, fearful noises were heard from the sea, as if torrents of water mingled with the roaring thunder, were rushing from the mountain-tops.

"The whole company exclaimed: 'There's the hurricane!' and at the same moment, an awful whirlwind carried off the fog which overspread the Isle of Amber and its channel.

"The Saint Gerard was then plainly descried, her deck crowded with people, her yards and round-tops lowered, her flag hoisted, four cables on her fore-castle, and one to keep her fast a-stern. She had anchored between the Isle of Amber and the main land, within the shelvy enclosure which surrounds the Isle of France, and which she had weathered through a channel that no vessel had ever passed before.

"She presented her bows to the billows, which rolled on from the main ocean; and at every surge which forced it's way into the channel, her prow was elevated to such a height that her keel was perceptible in the air; but by this motion, her stern plunging downward, disappeared from view to its very carved work, as if it had been entirely swallowed up. In this situation, in which the winds and the waves were driving her toward the shore, it was equally impossible to return through the track by which she had entered, or by cutting her cables, to run a-ground upon the shore, from which she was separated by a deep bottom, sown thick with shelving rocks.

"Every billow which broke against the coast, rushed on roaring to the very bottom of the bay, and tossed the pebbles more than fifty feet up the shore; then retiring backwards discovered a great part of its bed, the stones of which were dashed backward and forward with a rough and horrible noise.

"The sea, swelled by the winds increased every moment, and the whole channel between this island and the Isle of Amber, appeared to be an immense sheet of white foam, hollowed into deep and dusky waves.

"This foam collected itself at the bottom of the creeks to the height of more than six feet, and the winds, which brushed along its surface, carried it beyond the steep cliffs of the shore more than half a league into the island.

"At sight of these innumerable white flakes, which were driven in a horizontal direction to the very foot of the mountains, you would have thought that hills of snow were rushing from the sea.

"The horizon presented every symptom of a lengthened tempest: the heavens and the sea seemed to be confounded in it with each other.

"There were incessantly detached from it clouds of a fearful appearance, which flew along the zenith with the velocity of birds; whilst others appeared in it immoveable like enormous rocks.

"Not a single spot of azure was perceptible in the whole firmament; a pale and olive-coloured glare was all that illuminated the objects on the earth, on the sea, and in the heavens.

"By the violent straining of the vessel, what we feared at length took place.

"The cables on her bows snapped; and as she then rode by a single hawser, she was dashed upon the rocks half a cable's length from the shore. One scream of grief burst from every breast.

"Paul was hastening to throw himself into the sea, when I seized him by the arm. 'My son,' said I to him, 'are you determined to destroy yourself?'"

"Oh! let me go to her assistance," cried he, "or let me die!"

"As despair had overpowered his reason, Domingo and I, to prevent his destruction, tied round his middle a long cord, one of the extremities of which we held fast.

"Paul then advanced toward the Saint Gerard, sometimes swimming, sometimes walking on the shallows.

"Sometimes he had the hope of getting on board, for the sea, in these irregular movements, left the vessel nearly dry, so that you might almost walk round and round her: but presently returning with renovated fury, it covered her with enormous arches of water, which carried away the whole fore-part of her bottom, and dashed the unhappy Paul a great way up the shore, his legs bleeding, his chest bruised, and himself half-drowned.

"Scarcely had this young man recovered the use of his senses, when he got up again, and returned with redoubled ardour toward the ship, which the sea meanwhile had torn asunder with unremitting attacks.

"Upon this, the whole crew despairing of safety, threw themselves in crowds into the sea; some on masts, on planks, on hen-coops, on tables, and on casks.

"Then appeared an object worthy of eternal regret; a young lady was seen on the stern-gallery of the Saint Gerard, stretching out her arms toward him who was making so many fruitless efforts to join her.

"It was Virginia. She soon discovered her lover by his intrepidity.

"At sight of this amiable girl, exposed to perils so dreadful, we were overwhelmed with sorrow and despair.

"As for Virginia, with a noble and dignified air she waved her hand toward us, as if to bid us an eternal farewell.

"The sailors had all thrown themselves into the ocean. One alone remained on the deck, who was entirely naked, and strong as Hercules.

"He approached Virginia respectfully: we saw him throw himself at her knees, and even endeavour to persuade her to pull off her clothes; but she, repelling him with dignity, turned her face the other way. The air resounded with these redoubled cries of the spectators: 'Save her! oh, save her! do not, do not quit her!'

"But at the same moment, a mountain of water of an enormous size, engulphed itself between the Isle of Amber and the coast, and advanced roaring toward the vessel, which it menaced with its dusky sides and foaming summits.

"At this awful spectacle, the sailor flung himself alone into the sea, and Virginia perceiving death inevitable, placed one hand on her clothes, and the other on her heart; then raising her placid eyes toward heaven, she seemed an angel going to take flight toward the celestial regions.

"Oh, day of horror! Alas! all was swallowed up. The surge dashed far up the shore a part of the spectators, whom an emotion of humanity had prompted to advance toward Virginia, as well as the sailor who had attempted to preserve her by swimming.

"This man, escaped from almost certain death, kneeled down upon the strand, saying: 'Oh, my God, thou hast preserved my life; but I would have sacrificed it willingly to save that of the excellent young lady, who, with all my persuasion, would not be prevailed on to undress herself as I did.'

"Domingo and I drew out from the waves the unfortunate Paul, entirely deprived of recollection, whilst the blood gushed from his mouth and ears. The governor put him under the care of surgeons, while he traversed the sea-shore to see whether the billows had not borne the body of Virginia thither; but the wind having suddenly changed, as is very customary in the case of hurricanes, we had the mortification of reflecting that we should not have it in our power to render this unfortunate young woman even the rites of sepulture.

"We hastened from the spot overwhelmed with sorrow, our minds entirely engrossed with the loss of one person, in a shipwreck where so many had perished; the greater part doubting, from an end so disastrous befalling a young woman of such exalted virtue, whether a providence existed at all; for there are calamities so dreadful, and so unmerited, that the confidence even of the wisest is frequently staggered.

"Meanwhile they had placed Paul, who now began to recover the use of his senses, in an adjoining house, till his situation permitted him to be carried to his own home.

"As for me, I was returning with Domingo, in order to prepare Virginia's mother, and her friend, for this calamitous event, when on our arrival at the entrance of the valley of the river of the Lataniers, some negroes informed us, that the sea was driving a great deal of the wreck of the vessel up the opposite bay.

"We descended thither, and one of the first objects which we descried upon the shore was the body of Virginia.

"It was half covered with sand, and in the very attitude in which we had seen her perish.

"There was no sensible alteration in her features. Her eyes were closed, but serenity sat upon her fore-

head; only the pale violet of death blended itself upon her cheeks with the rose of modesty.

"One of her hands lay upon her clothes; the other which clung to her breast, was firmly closed and stiff. I disengaged from it, with much difficulty, a little casket; but how was I astonished when I perceived in it the portrait which Paul had given her, and which she had promised him never to part with while she lived.

"At this last token of the constancy and the love of this unhappy maid, I wept bitterly.

"Domingo, beating his breast, pierced the air with his mournful cries.

"We then carried the body to a fisherman's hut, where we gave it in charge to some poor Malabar women, who washed it carefully.

"Whilst they were performing this sad office, we ascended trembling toward the plantation.

"We there found Madame de la Tour and Margaret at prayer, in expectation of news concerning the vessel.

"As soon as the former perceived me, she exclaimed: 'Where is my daughter? my beloved Virginia? my child?'

"As my silence and my tears but too well informed her of the calamity which had happened, she was suddenly seized with a suffocation and agonizing spasms; her voice could be distinguished only in sighs and sobbing.

"Margaret exclaimed: 'Where is my son? I do not see my son;' and fainted away.

"We hastened to her, and having brought her to herself, I assured her that Paul was alive, and that the governor had taken proper care of him. She recovered the use of her senses only to devote her attention to the assistance of her friend, who from time to time fell into long fainting fits.

"Madame de la Tour passed the night in these cruel paroxysms, and by the length of their duration I have judged that nothing equals the sorrow of a mother.

"When she recovered her reason, she fixed her mournful eyes stedfastly toward heaven.

"In vain did Margaret and I press her hands between ours, in vain did we address her by the most tender appellations; to all these testimonies of our ancient affection she appeared totally insensible, and nothing but deep groans proceeded from her oppressed bosom.

"The next morning they brought Paul home, stretched along in a palanquin.

"Reason had resumed its empire, but his voice was entirely lost. His interview with his mother and Madame de la Tour, which at first I had been apprehensive of, produced a better effect than all the care which I had hitherto taken. A ray of comfort beamed on the countenances of these unhappy mothers. They both approached him, clasped him in their arms, kissed him; and those tears which had been till then restrained through excess of sorrow, now began to flow.

"Paul soon mingled his with theirs. Nature being thus disburdened in these three unhappy beings, a languid oppression succeeded to the convulsions of their grief, and procured for them a lethargic repose, which bore in truth a strong resemblance to death.

"Meanwhile M. de la Bourdonaye sent a messenger to me privately, informing me that the body of Virginia had by his order been conveyed to the city, and that from thence he meant to have it carried to the church of Pamplémousses.

"I immediately went down to Port Louis, where I found the inhabitants assembled from all parts to assist at the funeral, as if the island had lost the most precious treasure which it contained.

"In the port, the ships had their sail-yards laid across, their flags half hoisted up, and they were firing minute guns.

"The grenadier company opened the funeral procession. They carried their arms inverted, their drums, covered with long pieces of crape, emitted only sounds of woe: grief sat strongly depicted on the countenances of those warriors, who had a thousand times braved death in the field with undaunted courage.

"Eight young ladies of the most considerable rank in the island, clothed in white, and holding palm-boughs in their hands, bore the body of their virtuous companion, strewed over with flowers. A choir of little children followed it, chanting hymns: then after them the officers of higher rank, and the principal inhabitants of the island, and last of all the governor himself, followed by a crowd of the common people.

"Thus far had government interposed, in ordering that some honours might be rendered to the virtues of Virginia.

"But when the body had arrived at the foot of this mountain, at the sight of those very huts the happiness of which she had so long constituted, and which her death had filled with sorrow, the whole funeral ceremony was deranged; the hymns and the chanting ceased; nothing was now to be heard in the plain but sighs and sobs.

"Crowds of young girls, belonging to the neighbouring plantations, hastened to spread over the coffin of Virginia handkerchiefs, chaplets, and wreaths of flowers, invoking her as if she had been a saint. Mothers prayed heaven to bestow on them daughters like her; the young men mistresses as constant; the poor a friend as affectionate, and the slaves a mistress as kind.

"When they had arrived at the place destined for her interment, the negresses of Madagascar, and the

Cafres of Mosambique, placed baskets of fruit around her body, and suspended pieces of stuff on the neighbouring trees, according to the custom of their country.

"The Indians of Bengal, and those of the coast of Malabar, brought cages of birds, which they set at liberty over her corpse; to such a degree does the loss of a beloved object interest all nations, and such a power does unfortunate virtue possess, seeing it attracts and unites all religions around its tomb.

"It was necessary to place a guard near her grave, to keep back some of the daughters of the poor inhabitants who were rushing to throw themselves into it, declaring that in this world their sorrow would admit of no consolation, and that nothing now remained for them but to die with her who had been their only benefactress.

"She was interred near the church of Pamplemousses, on its western side, at the foot of a tuft of bamboos, where in going to mass with her mother and Margaret, she delighted to repose, seated by the side of him whom she then used to call brother.

"On returning from the funeral ceremony, M de la Bourdanaye ascended this mountain, followed by a part of his numerous retinue.

"He tendered to Madame de la Tour and her friend all the assistance in his power.

"He expressed himself in few words, but with great indignation, against her unnatural relation: approaching Paul, he said every thing which he thought could have a tendency to console him.

"I was anxious to contribute to your happiness, and that of your family," said he; "heaven is witness of my sincerity.

"My friend, you must go to France; I will procure you employment there. During your absence I will take as much care of your mother as if she were my own."

"At the same time he held out his hand to him; but Paul drew back his, and turned his head aside that he might not see him.

"As for myself, I remained in the dwelling of my unfortunate friends, administering to them, as well as to Paul, all the assistance I could.

"At the end of three weeks he was able to walk; but mental depression seemed to increase in proportion as his body grew stronger. He was insensible to every thing; his looks were languid, and he did not answer a syllable to all the questions which were put to him.

"Madame de la Tour, who was in a dying condition, frequently said to him: 'My son, so long as I see you, I think I behold my dear Virginia.'

"At the name of Virginia he started up and hastened from her, in spite of the entreaties of his mother, who called him back to her friend. He wandered alone to the garden, and seated himself at the foot of Virginia's cocoa-tree, with his eyes stedfastly fixed on her fountain.

"The governor's surgeon who had taken the greatest care of him and of the ladies, told us, that in order to remove the gloomy melancholy which had settled on his mind, we ought to allow him to do every thing that he pleased, without contradicting him in any respect; for this was the only means of vanquishing that silence which he so obstinately preserved.

"I resolved to follow his advice. As soon as Paul felt his strength in some degree restored, the first use which he made of it was to retire from the plantation.

"As I did not wish to lose sight of him, I walked behind, and desired Domingo to bring some provisions, and to accompany us. In proportion as the young man descended from this mountain, his joy and his strength seemed to revive. He at first bent

his course towards Pamplemousses, and when he had arrived at the church, in the bamboo-alley, he went directly to the spot where he saw the earth had been newly dug up: there he kneeled down, and raising his eyes to heaven offered up a long prayer.

"This action appeared to me a happy presage of returning reason, as this mark of confidence in the Supreme Being was a proof that his soul began to resume its natural functions.

"Domingo and I fell down on our knees after his example, and prayed with him. At length he arose and walked to the northern part of the island, without paying much attention to us.

"As I knew that he was entirely ignorant, not only where the body of Virginia was deposited, but also whether or not it had been saved from the sea, I asked him why he had been praying to God at the foot of the bamboos.

"He replied: 'We have been there together so often!'

"He continued his journey to the entrance of the forest, where night overtook us. There I persuaded him by my example to take some nourishment; we then reposed ourselves upon the grass at the foot of a tree.

"The next day I was in expectation that he would direct his steps homewards again. In truth, he fixed his eyes for some time from the plain, on the church of Pamplemousses, with its long rows of bamboos, and made some movements to return thither; but he suddenly buried himself in the forest, always directing his course toward the north.

"I penetrated his intention, and in vain endeavoured to dissuade him from it.

"We arrived about mid-day at Gold Dust. He hastily descended to the sea-shore, exactly opposite to the place where the Saint Gerard had perished.

"At sight of the Isle of Amber and its channel, then as smooth as a mirror, he exclaimed: 'Virginia! oh, my beloved Virginia!' and then fell down in a swoon.

"Domingo and I carried him to the interior of the forest, where we with much difficulty brought him to himself.

"When he had recovered his senses, he was preparing to return to the sea-shore; but I entreated him not to renew his own grief and ours by such cruel recollections, and he took another road. In short, for eight days together he rambled to all those places which he was accustomed to frequent with the companion of his infancy. He wandered along the path through which she had gone to ask pardon for the slave of the Black River, he then visited the borders of the river of the Three Paps, where she sat down when unable to walk any farther, and that part of the wood in which she had been lost.

"Every place that recalled to his mind the inquietudes, the sports, the repasts, and the beneficence of his much-loved Virginia; the river of the Long-Mountain, my little habitation, the neighbouring cascade, the papaya which she had planted, the mossy ground where she delighted to run, and the cross-paths of the forest where she loved to sing, each by turns caused his tears to flow: the very echoes which had so often repeated the sounds of their mutual joy, now resounded with nothing but these mournful cries, 'Virginia! Oh, my beloved Virginia!'

"In this wild and wandering way of life, his eyes grew hollow, his colour faded, and his health gradually, but perceptibly, declined.

"Being firmly persuaded that the sentiment of our misfortunes is redoubled by the remembrance of the pleasures which we once enjoyed, and that solitude only gives an edge to the passions, I resolved to remove my unfortunate friend from the places which

excited the recollection of his loss, and to convey him to some part of the island where there were objects to dissipate his melancholy.

"For this purpose I conducted him to the inhabited heights of William's-quarter, where he had never been before.

"Agriculture and commerce then spread much bustle and variety over this island.

"There were many companies of carpenters who squared the trees into logs, and others, who were sawing them into planks: carriages came and went along the roads: large flocks of oxen and horses fed in the extensive pastures, and the fields were filled with habitations.

"The depth of the soil, in several places, admitted of the cultivation of many kinds of European vegetables.

"You might see here and there harvests of corn in the plain, beds of strawberries in the openings of the woods, and hedges of rose-trees along the highway.

"The coldness of the air, by giving tension to the nerves, was even favourable to the health of the whites.

"From these heights, situated in the middle of the island, and surrounded with thick woods, you can discover neither the sea, nor Port Louis, nor the church of Pamplémousses, nor any thing which could recal to Paul's mind the remembrance of Virginia

"The very mountains, which present different branches on the side of Port Louis, offer nothing to view on the side of William's Plain but a long promontory, in a straight and perpendicular line, out of which many lofty pyramids of rocks elevate themselves, and collect the clouds around their peaks.

"It was to these plains accordingly that I conducted Paul.

"I kept him continually in action, walking with him in sun-shine and in rain, by day and by night, leading him into the woods, and over the fresh ploughed ground and the fields, in order to amuse his mind by the fatigue of his body; and to deceive his reflections by ignorance of the place where we were, and of the road which we had left.

"But the mind of a lover finds every where traces of the beloved object. The night and the day, the calm of solitude and the noise of habitation, nay time itself, which erases so many recollections, brought no relief to his mind.

"Like the needle touched by the magnet, which is to no purpose agitated, for as soon as it recovers a state of rest, it points to the pole which attracts it: so when I asked Paul, as we wandered about in William's Plain, 'Whither shall we go now?' he turned toward the north, and said: 'These are our mountains, let us return thither.'

"I clearly perceived, that all the methods by which I had endeavoured to divert his mind, were ineffectual, and that the only resource now left was to attack the passion in itself, by employing to this purpose the whole strength of my feeble reason.

"I accordingly replied: 'Yes, these are the mountains where your beloved Virginia once lived, and there is the portrait which you gave her, and which in death she pressed to her heart, the last emotions of which were devoted to thee.'

"I then presented to Paul the little portrait which he had given Virginia on the banks of the fountain of the cocoa-trees.

"At sight of this a gloomy joy overspread his countenance.

"He eagerly seized the portrait with his feeble hands, and pressed it to his lips.

"Immediately his breast became oppressed, and

to his blood-shot eyes the tears started, but were unable to flow.

"I said to him: 'My son, attend to the words of one who is your friend, who was so to Virginia, and who, in the ardor of your expectations, has frequently endeavoured to fortify your reason against the unforeseen calamities of human life. What is it you deplore with so much bitterness of soul? Is it the misfortune which has befallen yourself? Is it that which has befallen Virginia?'

"The misfortune which has befallen yourself—yes, I grant you it has been very severe. You have lost the most amiable of young women, who would have made the most virtuous of wives, she had sacrificed her own interests to your's, and preferred you to fortune, as the only recompense worthy of her virtue.

"But how do you know whether the object from whom you expected happiness so pure, might not have proved to you the source of sorrows innumerable? She was dowerless and disinherited. You would have nothing in future to share with her, but what the labour of your hands produced.

"Rendered more delicate by her education, and more courageous by her very misfortunes, you would have seen her daily sinking under the weight of the fatigues which she exerted herself to divide with you. In the event of bringing you children, her troubles and your own would have been greatly increased, by the difficulty of supporting with you alone, your aged parents, and a growing family.

"You may say," the governor would have assisted us: "but how do you know whether, in a colony which so often changes its rulers, you would have always found such men as M. de la Bourdonaye? Whether some governor might not have been sent hither, unpolished and unprincipled? Or whether your wife, to obtain some miserable pittance, might not have been obliged to cringe to such a man? Ei-

that she would have become frail, and you would have been an object of pity, or she would have maintained her honour, and you must have remained under the pressure of poverty; happy if, on account of her beauty and virtue, you had not been persecuted by those very persons from whom you solicited protection.

'You may say, I might have enjoyed happiness independent of fortune, by protecting the beloved object who was attached to me, in proportion to her very weakness; by consoling her with my own inquietudes, by making her rejoice even in my dejection, and thus causing our love to increase by our mutual sorrows.

'Doubtless virtue and love do delight in these bitter pleasures.

'But she is now no more; there still remains to you however what next to yourself she loved most, namely her own mother and your's, whom by your inconsolable affliction, you are bringing down to the grave. Make it your happiness to succour them, as it was her's.

'My son, beneficence is the happiness of virtue; there is none greater or more certain on the earth. Projects of pleasures, of repose, of enjoyments, of abundance, and of glory, are not made for feeble man who is only a traveller and a passenger through this world.

'Behold how a single step toward fortune has precipitated us from one abyss into another? You opposed it, I grant; but who of us did not believe, that the voyage of Virginia would terminate in her own happiness and in your's?

'The invitations of a rich and old relation; the advice of a sensible governor; the approbation of a whole colony; the exhortations and the authority of an ecclesiastic, have all concurred in deciding the fate of Virginia.

‘Thus we rush on to our own destruction, deceived by the very prudence of those who govern us. It would doubtless have been better had we not believed them, nor trusted to the opinions and the expectations of a deceitful world.

‘But after all, of so many men whom we see thus busily employed in these plains; of so many others who go in quest of fortune to the Indies, or who, without leaving their own homes, enjoy at their ease in Europe the fruit of the labours of the people here, there is not so much as one but who is destined to lose some day, that which he holds most dear; greatness, fortune, wife, children, friends. Most of them have superadded to their loss, the reflection of their own imprudence.

‘But as for you, when you retire within yourself, you find nothing to reproach yourself with. You have maintained unshaken fidelity; in the flower of youth you have possessed the prudence of a sage in not departing from the sentiment of nature. Your views alone were perfectly legitimate, because they were pure, simple and disinterested, and because you had sacred rights over Virginia, which no fortune could compensate.

‘You have lost her, but it is not your imprudence, nor your avarice, nor your false wisdom, which occasioned that loss; it is God himself, who has employed the passions of another, to deprive you of the object of your love; that God from whom you receive every thing, who sees what is proper for you, and whose wisdom has not left you in any place for the repentance and despair which ever follow in the train of those evils which we have brought upon ourselves.

‘This is what you can say to yourself, under the pressure of your affliction: I have not merited it. Is it then the misfortune which hath befallen Virginia, her end, her present condition, that you deplore?

She has submitted to the decision reserved for birth, for beauty, and even for empires themselves.

'The life of man, with all its projects, rears itself like a little tower, to which death applies the finishing stroke.

'The moment she was born she was condemned to die.

'Happy in having resigned her life before her mother, before your's, and before yourself; that is, in not having suffered many deaths before the final one.

'Death, my son, is a blessing to all mankind. It is the evening of that restless day which we call life. It is in the sleep of death that the diseases, the griefs, the vexations, and the fears, which incessantly agitate unhappy mortals, repose for ever.

'Examine those men who appear the most happy, and you will find that they have purchased their pretended enjoyments very dearly; public respectability by domestic distresses; fortune by the loss of health; the real pleasure of being beloved by continual sacrifices; and, often, at the close of a life devoted to the interests of another, they see nothing around them but false friends, and ungrateful relations.

'But Virginia was happy to the last moment of her's. She was so whilst among us, by those blessings which nature bestows; at a distance from us by those of virtue: even in that dreadful moment when we saw her perish, she was still happy: for whether she cast her eyes on a colony in which she was going to cause universal desolation, or upon you who rushed with such intrepidity to her assistance, she clearly perceived how dear she was to us all.

'She was prepared to meet the future, by reflecting on the innocence of her past life, and she then received the reward which heaven reserves for vir-

tue, a courage superior to danger. She encountered death with a serene countenance.

‘My son, the Almighty has decreed to virtue the power of supporting all the events of human life, to let us see that it alone can make the proper use of them, and find in them felicity and glory. When he reserves for it an illustrious reputation, he elevates it on a great theatre, and sets it a conflicting with death: then its courage serves as an example, and the remembrance of its misfortunes receives a tribute of tears from posterity which lasts for ever. This is the immortal monument reserved for it, upon a globe where every thing passes away, and where even the memory of the generality of kings is speedily buried in everlasting oblivion.

‘But Virginia exists still. Observe, my son, how every thing on the earth changes, and yet that nothing is lost: no human skill can annihilate the smallest particle of matter; and could that which was rational, sensible, susceptible of love, virtuous, religious, have perished, when the elements with which it was invested are not liable to destruction.

‘Ah! if Virginia enjoyed happiness once in our society, how much more does she enjoy now!

‘There is a God, my son; all nature announces it; there is no occasion to prove it to you. Nothing but the wickedness of men could make them deny a justice which they contemplate with terror.

‘A sentiment of him is in your heart, just as his works are before your eyes.

‘Can you believe then that he will leave Virginia without a recompense?

‘Can you believe that the same power which clothed a soul so noble, in a form so beautiful, in which such divine skill was clearly perceptible, was not able to have saved her from the waves? that he, who has arranged the actual happiness of man by laws of which you are entirely ignorant could not

prepare another for Virginia, by laws equally unknown to you?

‘Before we were created, if we had possessed the faculty of thinking, could we have formed any idea of our future being? And now that we are in this dark and fugitive existence, can we foresee what is beyond death, through which we must make our transition from it?’

‘Has the Almighty occasion, like man, for this little globe of earth, to serve as the theatre of his wisdom and goodness, and is he capable of propagating human life only in the plains of death? There is not a single drop of water in the ocean but what is filled with living creatures, which have all a reference to us; and does nothing exist for us among all those stars which revolve over our heads! What, is there no supreme intelligence and divine goodness in any spot but precisely that where we are; and in those radiant and innumerable globes, in those vast plains of light which surround them, and which are never obscured by darkness or tempest, do you believe there is nothing but empty space, and an eternal non-existence!’

‘If we, who could give nothing to ourselves, durst set bounds to that power from whom we have received every thing, we might believe ourselves to be stationed here upon the limits of his empire, where life is ever struggling with death, and innocence with tyranny.’

‘Without doubt there is somewhere a place in which virtue receives its reward.’

‘Virginia now is happy. Ah! if from the abode of angels she could communicate to you her thoughts she would say, as she did in her last farewell: “Oh, Paul, life is only a state of probation. I have been found faithful to the laws of nature, of love, and of virtue. I crossed the seas in obedience to my relations; I renounced riches to preserve my fidelity;

and I have preferred death to the violation of modesty. Heaven has decreed that the career of my earthly existence has been sufficiently filled up. I have for ever made escape from poverty, from calumny, from tempests, and from the painful spectacle of the woes of others. None of those ills which terrify mankind can ever in future affect me; and yet you still pity me! I am pure, and unsusceptible of change, as a particle of light; and you wish to recal me to the gloomy night of life! Oh, Paul! Oh, my friend! call to mind those days of happiness, when in the morning we enjoyed the beauty of the heavens, rising with the sun on the peaks of these rocks, and diffusing itself with its radiations over the bosom of our forests. We experienced a felicity the cause of which we were unable to comprehend. In our innocent desires, we wished to be all eye, in order to enjoy the rich colours of Aurora; all smell, to inhale the perfume of our flowers; all ear, to listen to the warbling of our birds; all gratitude, to acknowledge these blessings. Now at the source of beauty, whence flows all that is delightful on the earth, my soul immediately tastes, hears, touches, what it could then perceive only through feeble organs. Ah! what language is capable of describing these regions of an eternal morning which I inhabit for ever. Every thing that omnipotence and celestial goodness could create, in order to administer consolation to an unfortunate being; all the harmony which the friendship of an infinite number of beings partaking of the same felicity, mingles in our common transports, I now experience without alloy. Support thyself then in thy state of probation, that thou mayest increase the happiness of thy Virginia, by a love which knows no bounds, and by a marriage the torches of which can never be extinguished. There, I will calm thy sorrows; there, I will wipe away thy tears. Oh, my friend! my young husband! elevate thy soul to-

ward infinity, in order to support the miseries of a moment.'

"My own emotion entirely stifled my voice. As for Paul, regarding me stedfastly he exclaimed: 'She is no more! she is no more!'

"A long languid oppression succeeded these mournful words; then, returning to himself, he said: 'Since death is a blessing, and Virginia is happy, I will die also that I may again be united to her.'

"Thus the consolation which I endeavoured to administer, only served to aggravate his despair. I was like a person who wishes to save his friend when sinking to the bottom of a river, without his making any effort to swim. Sorrow had entirely overwhelmed him.

"Alas! the misfortunes of our early age prepare man for entering into life, and Paul had never experienced them.

"I conducted him back to his habitation, and I there found his mother and Madame de la Tour in a very languishing state, which had greatly increased since I left them.

"Margaret was the most broken down. Lively characters, over whom slight troubles slide easily away, are the least able to withstand heavy calamities.

"She said to me: 'Oh, my kind neighbour! I dreamt to-night that I saw Virginia, clothed in white, in the midst of bowers and delicious gardens. She said to me: I enjoy a felicity greatly to be envied. Then she approached Paul with a joyful air, and carried him away with her. As I was endeavouring to retain my son, I felt as if I was quitting the earth myself, and that I followed him with a pleasure inexpressible. Upon that I wished to bid farewell to my friend, but I perceived her coming after us, accompanied by Mary and Domingo. But what is still more singular, Madame de la Tour has had this very

night a dream attended with exactly similar circumstances.'

"I replied: 'My friend, I believe that nothing happens in the world without the permission of God. Dreams sometimes announce truth.'

"Madame de la Tour related to me a dream entirely resembling this, which she had that same night. I never observed that these two ladies were in the least inclined to superstition. I was therefore struck with the coincidence of their dreams, and I had not the least doubt in my own mind that they would soon be realized.

"The opinion, that truth is sometimes conveyed to us in sleep, is universally propagated over all the nations of the earth. The greatest men of antiquity have adopted it; among others, Alexander, Cæsar, the Scipios, the two Catos, and Brutus, who were none of them men of weak minds.

"The Old and New Testament have furnished us with many instances of dreams which were verified. For my own part, I have no occasion for any higher proof on the subject than my own experience; and I have found, oftener than once, that dreams are sometimes warnings, which give us information very interesting to ourselves. But if any person shall pretend to attack or defend by argument, things which transcend the powers of human understanding, he undertakes an impossibility.

"However, if the reason of man is only an image of that of the Almighty; since man is capable of conveying his thoughts to the extremities of the world by secret and concealed means, why should not that intelligence which governs the world, employ similar methods of accomplishing the same purpose?

"One friend consoles another by a letter, which travels through a multitude of kingdoms, which circulates amidst the hatred of nations, and communicates joy and hope to one single individual; why

then may not the sovereign protector of innocence come, by some secret means, to the relief of a virtuous soul which reposes confidence in him alone? Has he occasion to employ any exterior sign to execute his will; he who acts continually in all his works by an internal impulse?

"Wherefore doubt of the intimations given in dreams? Life, filled with so many vain and transitory projects, what is it but a dream!

"However that may be, those of my unfortunate friends were soon realized.

"Paul died two months after his beloved Virginia, whose name he incessantly repeated.

"Margaret expired eight days after her son, with a joy which it is bestowed only on virtue to taste. She took the most tender farewel of Madame de la Tour, 'in the hope,' said she, 'of a sweet and eternal re-union.'

"Death is the greatest of blessings,' added she, 'it is highly desirable. If life be a punishment we ought to wish for its termination, if it be a state of probation, we ought to wish it shortened.'

"Government took care of Domingo and Mary, who were no longer in a condition for service, and who did not long survive their mistress.

"As for poor Fidèle, he drooped to death nearly about the same time with his master.

"I conducted Madame de la Tour to my habitation; she supported herself, in the midst of losses so terrible, with a greatness of soul altogether incredible. She administered consolation to Paul and Margaret to the very last moment, as if she had no distress but theirs to support.

"When they were no more, she spake to me of them every day, as if they had been beloved friends still in the neighbourhood. She survived them however only a month.

"With regard to her aunt, far from reproaching

her with these misfortunes, she prayed God to forgive her, and to appease the dreadful horrors of mind with which, we heard, she had been seized immediately after she had dismissed Virginia with so much barbarity.

"This unnatural relation soon met with the punishment due to her cruelty. I heard, by the successive arrival of several vessels, that she was tormented by the vapours, which rendered life and death equally insupportable. Sometimes she reproached herself with the premature death of her grand-niece, and that of her mother which soon followed it.

"At other times she applauded herself for having discarded two unhappy wretches who had disgraced her family by the meanness of their inclinations. Frequently flying into a passion at sight of the great number of miserable people, with which Paris is filled, she exclaimed: 'Why do they not send these idle wretches to perish in our colonies?'

"She added, that the ideas of virtue, of humanity, and of religion, adopted by all nations, were nothing but the political inventions of their princes. Then, suddenly plunging into the opposite extreme, she abandoned herself to superstitious terrors, which filled her with mortal apprehensions.

"She ran about, carrying with her vast sums, which she bestowed on the rich monks who were her ghostly directors, and entreated them to appease the Deity by the sacrifice of her fortune; as if that wealth which she had denied to the miserable, could be acceptable to the father of mankind! Her imagination was frequently haunted by deluges of fire, burning mountains, or hideous spectres wandering before her, and calling her by name, with horrible screams.

"She threw herself at the feet of her directors, and formed, in her own mind, the tortures and punishments which were preparing for her; for heaven,

just heaven, sends fearful visions to harrow up the souls of the unmerciful.

"Thus she passed several years, by turns an atheist and a devotee, equally in horror of life and death. But what terminated an existence so deplorable was the very thing to which she had sacrificed the sentiments of nature.

"She had the mortification to reflect that her riches would, after her death, descend to relations whom she hated.

"In order to prevent this she endeavoured to alienate the greatest part of her fortune; but they, availing themselves of the frequent paroxysms of spleen to which she was subject, had her shut up as a lunatic, and her estates were put in trust for her heirs.

"Thus her very riches put the finishing stroke to her destruction; and as they had hardened the heart of her who possessed them, so they, in like manner, extinguished natural affection in the breasts of those who coveted them.

"She accordingly died; and what filled up the measure of her woe, with so much use of her reason left, as to know that she had been plundered and despised by those very persons whose opinion had directed her all her life long.

"By the side of Virginia, and at the foot of the same bamboos, her friend Paul was laid; around them their tender mothers and their faithful servants.

"No marble raises itself over their humble graves; no engraved inscriptions, recording their virtues: but their memory will never be effaced from the hearts of those whom they had laid under obligations to them.

"Their shades have no need of that lustre which they shunned all their life-time; but if they still interest themselves in what is passing on the earth,

they doubtless take delight in wandering under the straw-covered roofs, where industrious virtue resides; in consoling poverty discontented with its lot; in encouraging in youthful lovers a lasting flame, a relish for the blessings of nature, a love of labour, and a dread of riches.

"The voice of the people, which is silent respecting the monuments reared to the glory of kings, has bestowed on several parts of this island names which still eternalize the loss of Virginia.

"You may see, near the Isle of Amber, in the middle of the shelves, a place called 'The Saint Gerard's Pass,' from the name of the vessel which perished there in returning from Europe.

"The extremity of that long point of land, which you see about three leagues from hence, half covered with the waves of the sea, which the Saint Gerard could not double the evening of the hurricane, in order to make the harbour, is named 'Cape Misfortune;' there, just before you, at the bottom of this valley, is 'Tomb Bay,' where the body of Virginia was found buried in the sand, as if the sea had intended to bear her back to her family, and to render the last duties to her modesty, upon the same shores which she had honoured with her innocence.

"Young people so tenderly united! Unfortunate mothers! Dearly beloved family!

"These woods which gave you shade, these fountains which flowed for you, those rocks upon which you reposed together, still lament your loss.

"No one after you has dared to cultivate this desolate spot, nor rear again these humble cottages.

"Your goats have become wild; your orchards are destroyed; your birds have flown away; nothing is now to be heard but the cries of the hawk, flying around the top of this basin of rocks.

"For my part, since I behold you no longer, I am

like a friend stripped of his friends, like a father who has lost his children, like a traveller wandering through the earth, where I remain in gloomy solitude."

As he uttered these words, the good old man walked away, melting into tears, and mine had flowed more than once during this melancholy relation.



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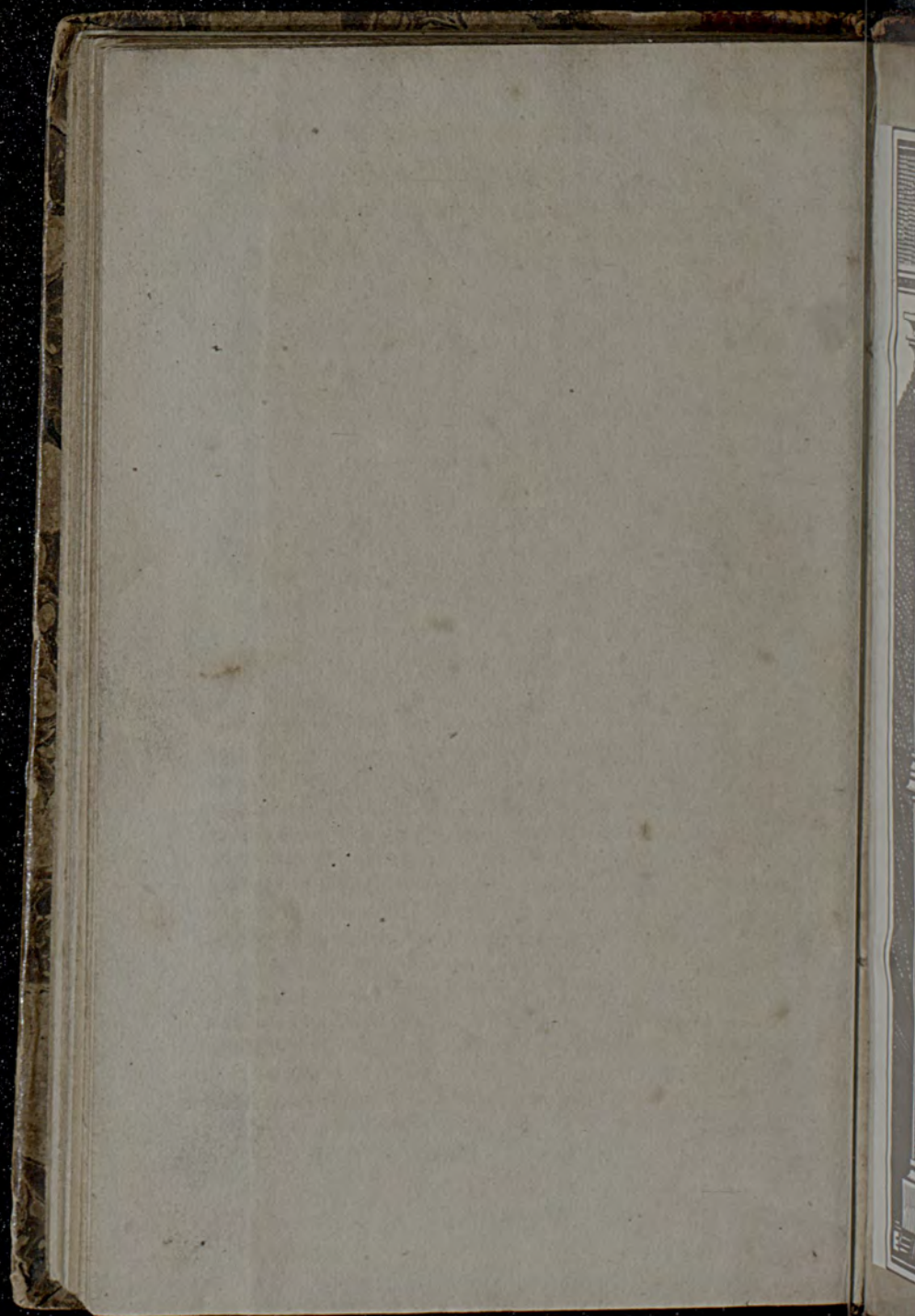
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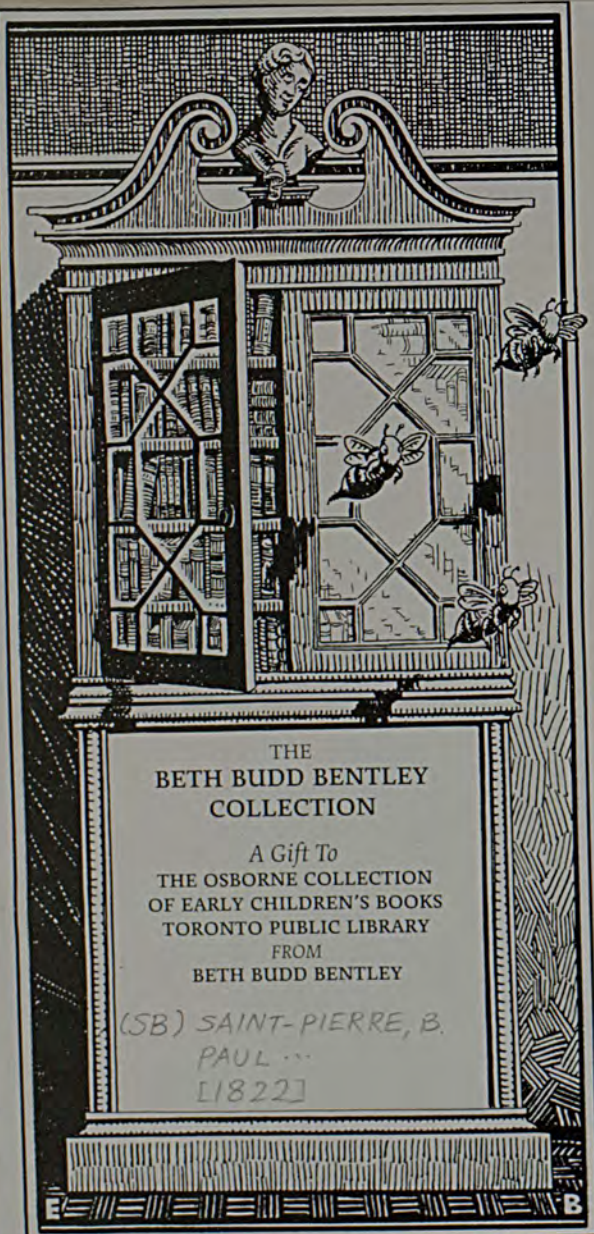
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