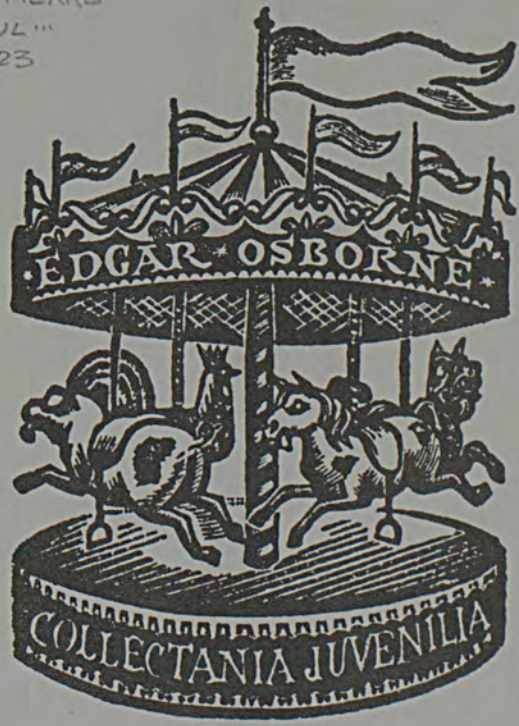
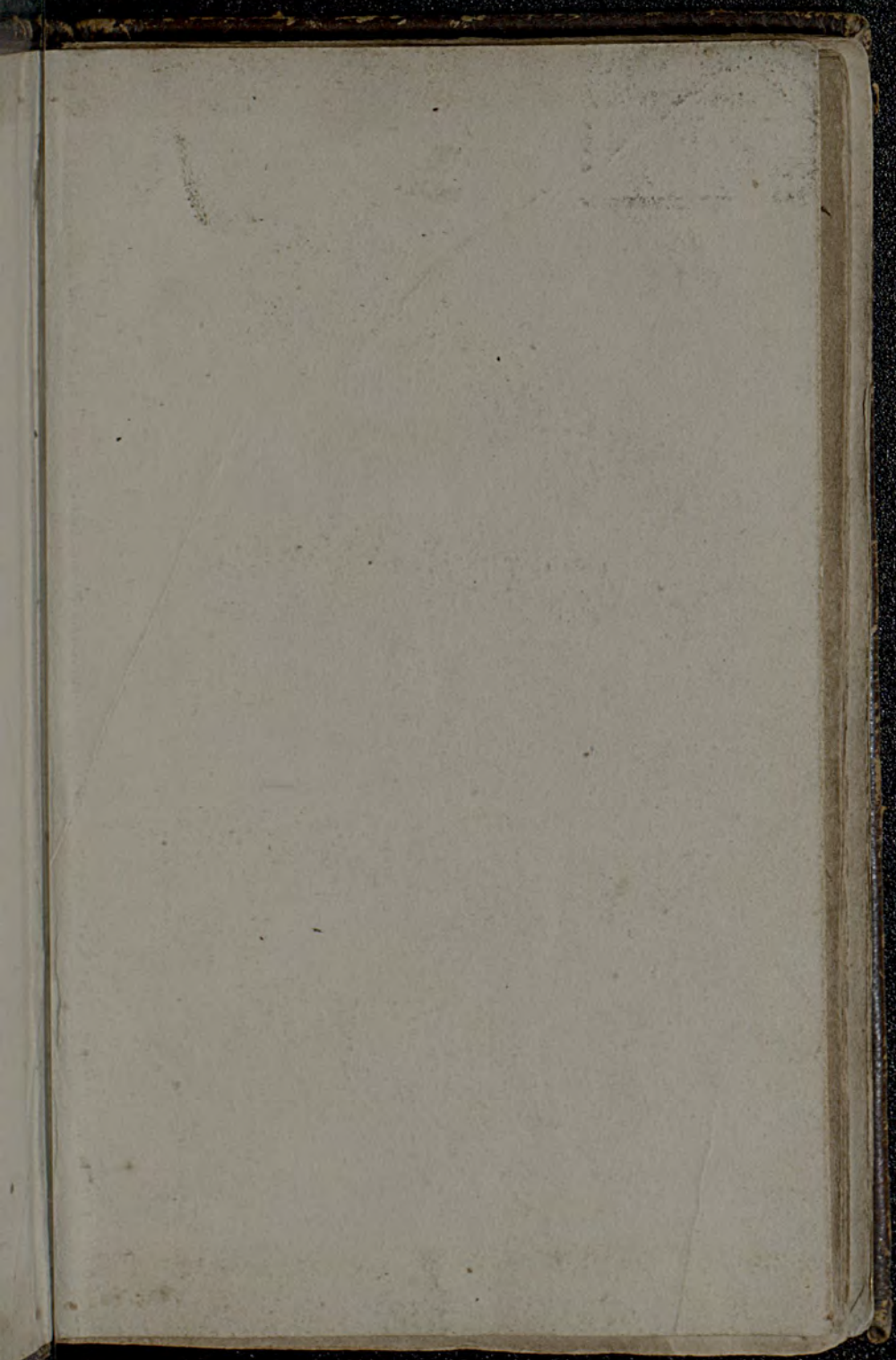


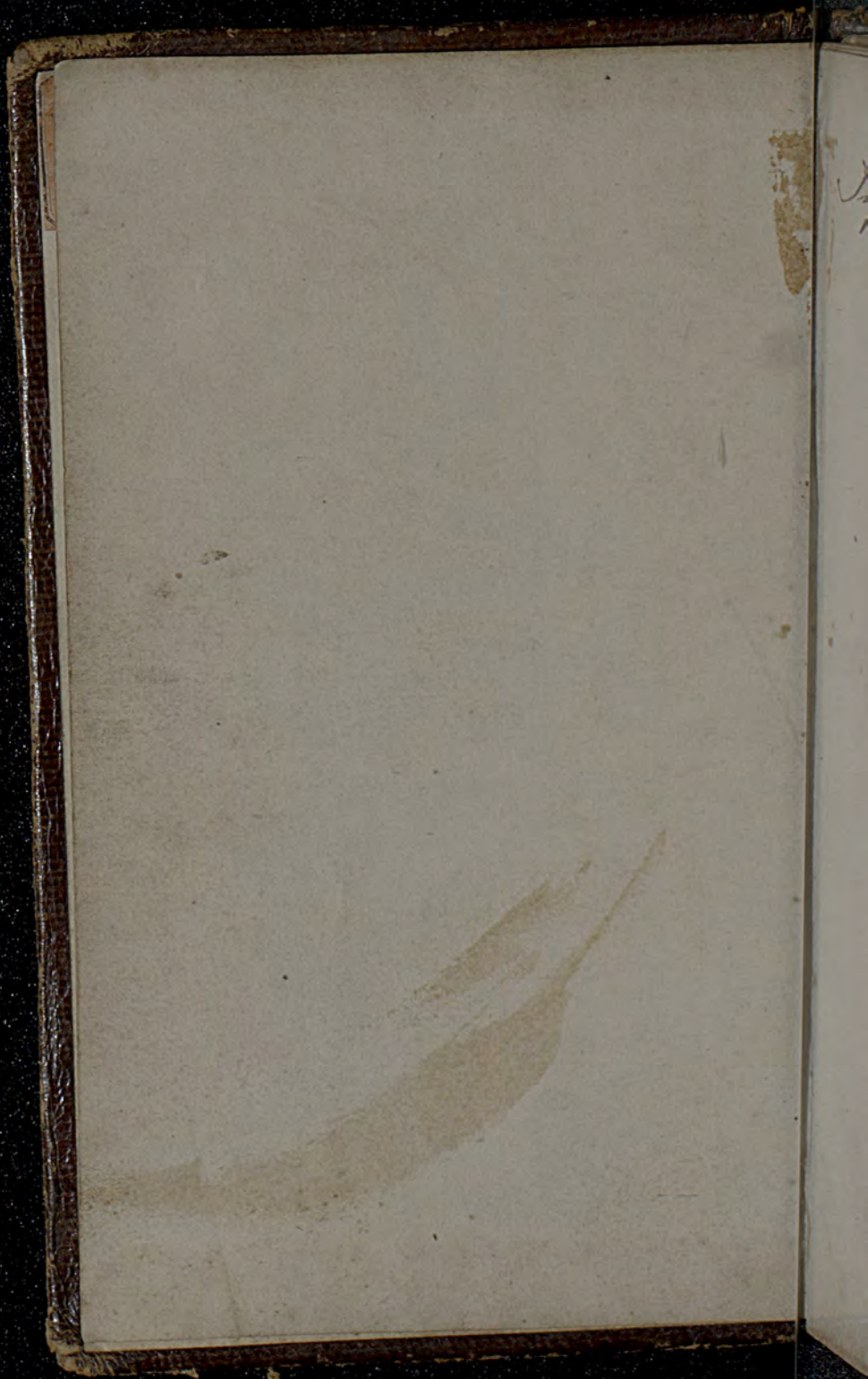
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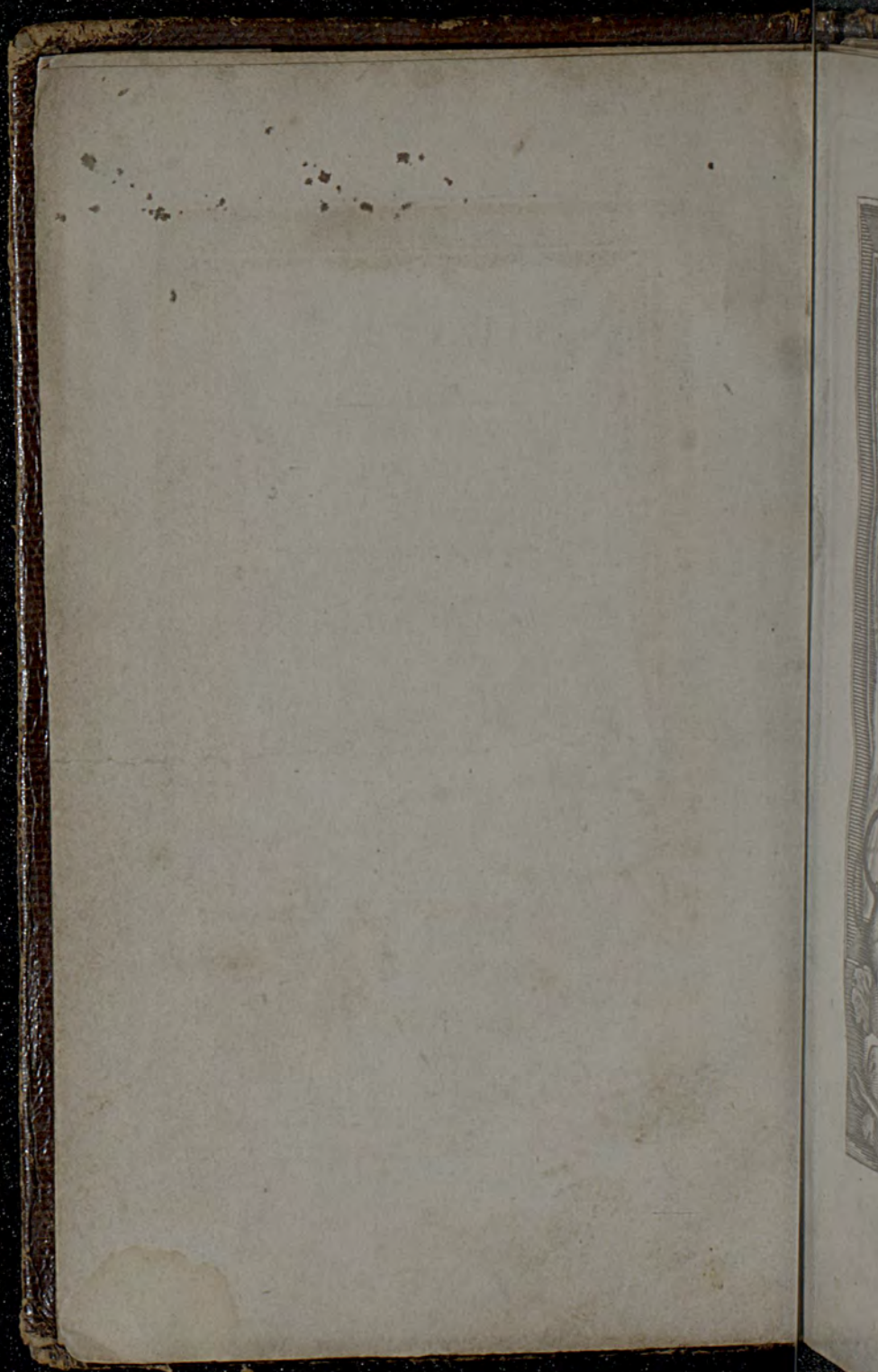


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Sophia L. Good



PAUL

— and —

VIRGINIA.

by Jacques-Bernardin-Henri

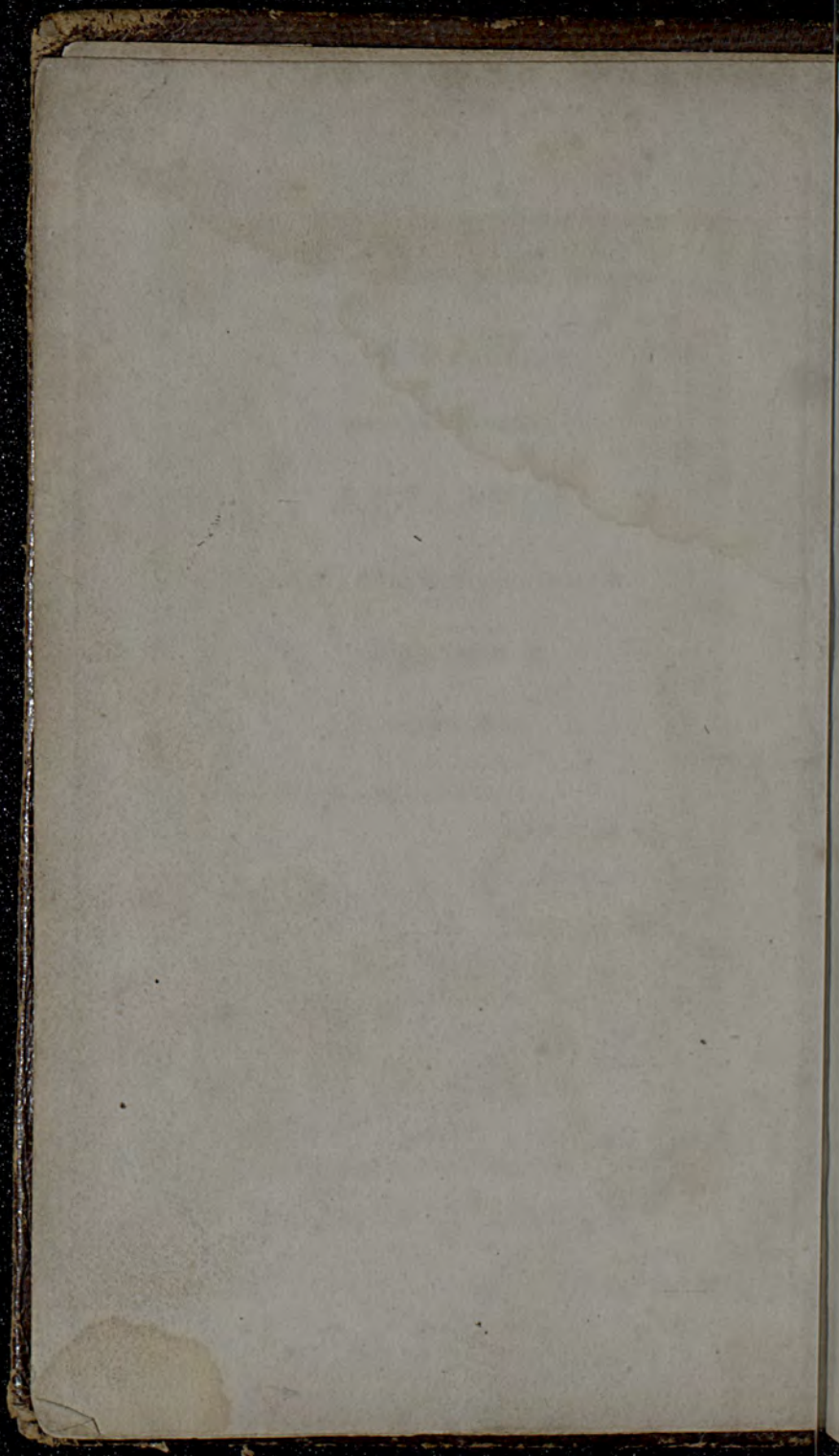
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with Plates.

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PAUL AND VIRGINIA:

FROM

THE FRENCH OF SAINT PIERRE.



With a New Preface,

AND INTERSPERSED WITH ORIGINAL SONNETS, AND OTHER
POETICAL FRAGMENTS.



LONDON:

PRINTED BY AND FOR HODGSON & CO.

JUVENILE PRESS, 10, NEWGATE-STREET.

1823.

SALE AND VIRGINIA

THE HISTORY OF

1700

THE HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN

By Mr. Hume

Vol. 1

Printed by A. Millar, in Strand

1700

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PREFACE.

There are some books of which the editions can never be too greatly multiplied; whilst of others, as of monstrous births, it may be considered a merciful dispensation, that they, as some one has expressed it, “drop still-born from the Press.” But what reader, possessing the slightest relish for the beauties of nature, will rank amongst books of this latter description, the simple yet sublime—the unvarnished, yet affecting, story of Paul and Virginia?

Here we have a beautiful picture of unsophisticated nature, drawn by a masterly hand, in the genuine history of two children, who, as it were

Warm from their Creator's hand,

appear worthy of their Divine Maker.

The present version, will be found, in one respect, to differ materially from all others. As in one edition, the idea of enlivening the narrative with several sonnets, interspersed throughout the work; and supposed to come from the pen of Madame de la Tour; or in other words, from that of M. de St. Pierre, has met with the

public approbation, a similar plan has been adopted in this edition; and the editor (with what success it does not become him to say,) has attempted several original sonnets, and other verses; some on the same subjects as those adopted in the translation alluded to; and others on such new topics as struck his fancy in preparing the copy for the press. This has not been done with any view of being able to produce more agreeable sonnets than the former ones; but because the author, however slender may be his pretensions to pleasing versification, would not have felt himself justified either in taking the poetry above mentioned, or in dressing up his edition in the borrowed plumes of others. Such as these sonnets are, they belong to no one besides the present author: should they be found to give satisfaction he will himself be gratified;—but if he shall have failed in his wishes and his endeavours to please, he can only feel regret that he should have attempted it; and must content himself with the consciousness of having done his best, to exhibit the pleasing, the useful, and most affecting narrative of Paul and Virginia in a new and still more interesting light.

PAUL AND VIRGINIA.

NEAR the Eastern side of a mountain, rising above, and a little behind, Port Louis in the isle of France, on a plot of ground bearing evident marks of having been formerly in a state of cultivation, are still perceptible the remains of two little cottages.

These ruins are situate near the middle of a valley formed by large rocks, having only one opening, and that towards the North. From this opening may be seen Mount Discovery; from whence the eye first catches the signals of distant vessels, as they make for the Island.

At the foot of this mountain stands the town of Port Louis; and on the right, lies the road from thence to a small district, called Pamplemousses, remarkable chiefly for its church, surrounded by avenues of bamboo, in the centre of a great plain. This prospect terminates in a forest, extending to the furthest extremities of the island.

On the coast, directly in front, is seen Tomb Bay; and, a little on the right, Cape Misfortune.

Beyond all this rolls along, in majestic grandeur, the expansive ocean, from whence may be discovered, as if rising from its surface, a few small uninhabited Islands; amongst which is Endeavour, or Mitre Point, resembling a bastion erected on the bosom of the Sea.

At the entrance of the valley, the echoes of the mountain incessantly repeat the hollow murmurs of the winds that shake the neighbouring forests, and the tumultuous dashing of the waves, breaking at a distance upon the rough and rocky cliffs. But near the ruined cottages all is calm and still, and the only objects which there meet the eye are rude steep rocks, rising like a surmounting rampart. Large

clumps of trees grow at their foot, on their rifted sides, and even on their majestic tops, upon which the clouds seem to repose. The showers, attracted by their high projecting points, often paint the vivid colours of the rainbow on their green and brown declivities, and swell the sources of the little river, which flows at their feet, called the river of *Latanier*, or *Fan-Palms*.

The most profound silence reigns within this inclosure. All the elements are at peace. Scarcely does the echo repeat the whispers of the palm-trees, spreading their broad leaves, whose long points are gently balanced by the winds. A soft light illuminates the bottom of this deep valley, on which the sun only shines when at his meridian. But even at break of day the rays of light are thrown on the surrounding rocks, and their sharp peaks, rising above the shadows of the mountain, appear like tints of gold and purple gleaming upon the azure sky.

I frequently visited this enchanting spot, that I might enjoy at once the riches of the extensive landscape, and the charms of uninterrupted solitude. One day, when I was seated at the foot of the cottages, contemplating their ruins, a man, advanced in years, passed near the place where I rested. He was dressed in the ancient garb of the island; his feet were bare, and he leaned upon a staff of ebony: his hair was white, and the expression of his countenance was dignified and interesting. I bowed to him with respect; he returned the salutation; and, after looking at me with some earnestness, came and placed himself upon the hillock where I was seated. Encouraged by this confidence, I thus addressed him:

“Father, can you tell me to whom those cottages once belonged?” “My son,” replied the old man, “those heaps of rubbish, and that untilled land, were, twenty years ago, the property of two families, who then found happiness in this solitude. Their history is affecting; but what European, pursuing his way to the Indies, will pause one moment, to interest himself in the fate of a few poor obscure individuals? What European can picture happiness to his imagination amidst poverty and neglect? The curiosity of mankind is only attracted by the history of the great; and yet from that knowledge little use can be derived.”—“Father,” I rejoined, from your manner and your observa-

tions, I perceive that you have acquired much experience of human life. If you have leisure, pray relate to me the history of the ancient inhabitants of this desert; for be assured, that even the men who are most perverted by the prejudices of the world, find a soothing pleasure in contemplating that happiness which belongs to simplicity and virtue."

The old man, after a short pause, during which he leaned his face upon his hands, as if he were trying to recall the images of the past, proceeded nearly as follows:—

Monsieur de la Tour, a young man, and a native of Normandy, after having in vain solicited a commission in the French army, or some support from his own family, at length determined to seek his fortune in this island, where he arrived in 1735. He brought hither a young woman, whom he loved tenderly, and by whom he was no less tenderly beloved. She belonged to a rich and ancient family of the same province; but he had married her without fortune, and in opposition to the will of her relations, who refused their consent, because he was descended from parents who had no claims to nobility.

Monsieur de la Tour, leaving his wife at Port Louis, embarked for Madagascar, in order to purchase a few slaves, to assist him in forming a plantation in this island. He landed at that unhealthy season which commences about the middle of October; and soon after his arrival died of the pestilential fever which prevails in that country six months in the year, and which will for ever baffle the attempts of the European nations to form establishments on that fatal soil. His effects were seized upon by the rapacity of strangers; and his wife, who was pregnant, found herself a widow in a country where she had neither credit nor recommendation, and no earthly possession, or rather support, but one negro woman. Too delicate to solicit protection or relief from any other man, after the death of him whom alone she loved, misfortune armed her with courage, and she resolved to cultivate with her slave a little spot of ground, and procure for herself the means of subsistence. In an island almost a desert, and where the ground was left to the choice of the settler, she avoided those spots which were most fertile and most favourable to commerce; and seeking some nook of the mountain, some

secret asylum, where she might live solitary and unknown she bent her way from the town towards those rocks, where she wished to shelter herself as in a nest. All suffering creatures, from a sort of common instinct, fly for refuge, amidst their pains, to haunts the most wild and desolate; as if rocks could form a rampart against misfortune; as if the calm of nature could hush the tumults of the soul. That Providence, which lends its support when we ask but the supply of our necessary wants, had a blessing in reserve for Madame de la Tour, which neither riches nor greatness can purchase; this blessing was a friend.

The retirement chosen by Madame de la Tour had been inhabited during the past year by a young woman of a lively, good-natured, and affectionate disposition. Margaret, for that was her name, was born in Brittany, of a family of peasants, by whom she was cherished and beloved, and with whom she might have passed life in simple rustic happiness, if, misled by the weakness of a tender heart, she had not listened to the passion of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who promised her marriage. He soon abandoned her; and, adding inhumanity to seduction, refused to ensure a provision for the child of which she was pregnant. Margaret then determined to leave for ever her native village, and go, where her fault might be concealed, to some colony distant from that country where she had lost the only portion of a poor peasant girl, her reputation. With some borrowed money she purchased an old negro slave, with whom she cultivated a little spot of this canton. Here Madame de la Tour, followed by her negro woman, found Margaret suckling her child. Soothed by the sight of a person in a situation somewhat similar to her own, Madame de la Tour related, in a few words, her past condition, and her present wants. Margaret was deeply affected by the recital; and, more anxious to excite confidence than esteem, she confessed, without disguise, the errors of which she had been guilty. 'As for me,' said she, 'I deserve my fate: but you, madam—you! at once virtuous and unhappy—' And, sobbing, she offered Madame de la Tour her hut and her friendship. That lady, affected by this tender reception, pressed her in her arms, and exclaimed, 'Ah, surely Heaven will put an end to my misfortunes, since it inspires you, to whom I am a

stranger, with more goodness towards me than I have ever experienced from my own relations!

Margaret and I had become acquainted, for although my habitation is a league and a half from hence, in the woods behind that sloping mountain, I considered myself as her neighbour. In the cities of Europe, a street, sometimes even a less distance, separates families whom nature had united; but in new colonies we consider those persons as neighbours, from whom we are divided only by woods and mountains: and, above all, at that period when this island had little intercourse with the Indies, neighbourhood alone gave a claim to friendship, and hospitality towards strangers seemed less a duty than a pleasure. No sooner was I informed that Margaret had found a companion, than I hastened thither, in the hope of being useful to my neighbour and her guest.

Madame de la Tour possessed all those melancholy graces which give beauty additional power, by blending sympathy with admiration. Her figure was interesting, and her countenance expressed at once dignity and dejection.

She appeared to be in the last stage of her pregnancy. I told them that, for the future interests of their children, and to prevent the intrusion of any other settler, it was necessary they should divide between them the property of this wild sequestered valley, which is nearly twenty acres in extent. They confided that task to me, and I marked out two equal portions of land. One includes the higher part of this inclosure, from the peak of that rock buried in clouds, whence springs the rapid river of *Latanier*, to that wide cleft which you see on the summit of the mountain, and which is called the *Embrasure*, from the resemblance in its form to the parapet of a battery. It is difficult to find a path along this wild portion of the inclosure, the soil of which is encumbered with fragments of rock, or worn into channels formed by torrents; yet it produces noble trees, and innumerable fountains and rivulets. The other portion of land is comprised in the plain extending along the banks of the river of *Latanier*, to the opening where we are now seated, from whence the river takes its course between those two hills, until it falls into the sea. You may still trace the vestiges of some meadow-land;

and this part of the common is less rugged, but not more valuable, than the other; since in the rainy season it becomes marshy, and in dry weather is so hard and unbending, that it will yield only to the stroke of the hatchet. When I had thus divided the property, I persuaded my neighbours to draw lots for their separate possessions. The higher portion of land became the property of Madame de la Tour; the lower, of Margaret; and each seemed satisfied with their respective shares. They intreated me to place their habitations together, that they might at all times enjoy the soothing intercourse of friendship, and the consolation of mutual kind offices. Margaret's cottage was situate near the centre of the valley, and just on the boundary of her own plantation. Close to that spot I built another cottage, for the dwelling of Madame de la Tour; and thus the two friends, while they possessed all the advantages of neighbourhood, lived on their own property. I myself cut palisades from the mountain, and brought leaves of the *Latanier*, or Fan-Palm, from the sea shore, in order to construct those two cottages, of which you can now discern neither the entrance nor the roof. Yet, alas! there still remain but too many traces for my remembrance! Time, which so rapidly destroys the proud monuments of empires, seems in this desert to spare those of friendship, as if to perpetuate my regrets till the last hour of my existence.

Her cottage was scarcely finished, when Madame de la Tour was delivered of a girl. I had been the godfather of Margaret's child, who was christened by the name of Paul. Madame de la Tour desired me to perform the same office for her child also, together with her friend, who gave her the name of Virginia. 'She will be virtuous,' cried Margaret, 'and she will be happy. I have only known misfortune by wandering from virtue.'

When Madame de la Tour was recovered, those two little territories had begun to yield some produce, perhaps in a small degree owing to the care which I occasionally bestowed on their improvement, but far more to the indefatigable labours of the two slaves. Margaret's slave, who was called Domingo, was still healthy and robust, although advanced in years: he possessed some knowledge, and a good natural understanding. He culti-

vated indiscriminately on both settlements such spots of ground as were most fertile, and sowed whatever grain he thought most congenial to each particular soil. Where the ground was poor, he strewed maize; where it was most fruitful, he planted wheat; and rice in such spots as were marshy. He threw the seeds of gourds and cucumbers at the foot of the rocks, which they loved to climb and decorate with their luxuriant foilage. In dry spots he cultivated the sweet potatoe; the cotton-tree flourished upon the heights, and the sugar-cane grew upon the clayey soil. He reared some plants of coffee on the hills, where the grain, although small, is excellent. The plaintain-trees, which spread their grateful shade on the banks of the river and encircled the cottage, yielded fruit throughout the year. And, lastly, Domingo cultivated a few plants of tobacco, to charm away his own cares. Sometimes he was employed in cutting wood for firing from the mountains, sometimes in hewing pieces of rock within the inclosure, in order to level the paths. He was much attached to Margaret, and not less to Madame de la Tour, whose negro-woman, Mary, he had married at the time of Virginia's birth; and he was passionately fond of his wife. Mary was born at Madagascar, from whence she had brought a few arts of industry: she could weave baskets, and a sort of stuff, with long grass that grows in the woods. She was active, cleanly, and above all faithful. It was her care to prepare their meals, to rear the poultry, and go sometimes to Port Louis, and sell the superfluities of these little plantations, which were not very considerable. If you add to the personages I have already mentioned, two goats, which were brought up, with the children, and a great dog who kept watch at night, you will have a complete idea of the household, as well as of the revenue, of those two little farms.

Madame de la Tour and her friend were employed from the morning till the evening in spinning cotton for the use of their families. Destitute of all those things, which their own industry could not supply, they walked about their habitations with their feet bare, shoes being a convenience reserved for Sunday, when, at an early hour, they attended mass at the church of Pamplemousses which you see yonder: the church is far more distant than

Port Louis; yet they seldom visited the town, lest they should be treated with contempt, because they were dressed in the coarse blue linen of Bengal, which is usually worn by slaves. But is there in that external deference which fortune commands, is there a compensation for domestic happiness? If they had something to suffer from the world this served but to endear their humble home. No sooner did Mary and Domingo perceive them from this elevated spot, on the road of Pamplemousses, than they flew to the foot of the mountain, in order to help them to ascend. They discerned in the looks of their domestics that joy which their return inspired. They found in their retreat, neatness, independence, all those blessings which are the recompense of toil, and received those services which have their source in affection. United by the tie of similar wants, and the sympathy of similar misfortunes, they gave each other the tender names of companion, friend, sister,—they had but one will, one interest, one table; all their possessions were in common. And if sometimes a passion more ardent than friendship, awakened in their hearts the pang of unavailing anguish, a pure religion, united with chaste manners, drew their affections towards another life; as the trembling flame rises towards heaven, when it no longer finds any aliment on earth.

How frequently did it happen, that Madame de la Tour, when no urgent domestic cares or employment demanded her presence at the Cottage, would wander through these sylvan shades; and there, with no auditor save the feathered visitants, and no messenger of her compliments beside the soft, and almost breathless zephyr, indulge in those pensive reflections, and the utterance of those plaintive expressions, which oftentimes afford relief to the burthened heart!

Such seasons as these, as they are the fittest to inspire, so do they frequently call forth the strains of poesy. The fruits of these sadly-pleasing rambles still partially exist. A few of them I have carefully preserved; not, indeed, as specimens of poetic excellence, but as the artless breathings of a bosom seeking and finding a temporary relief in solitude, and in an imaginary converse with the world of spirits and of Fancý. I will repeat to you one of them, which I happen at this moment to have fresh in my recollection. It is a simple soliloquy, in the form of,

A SONNET TO LOVE.

Time was, when through the unfrequented grove,
 (But that was ere I knew the pangs of Love,)
 My peaceful footsteps I did slowly bend,
 And find in every bird a social friend.
 Not calmer is yon solitary glade;
 Nor yet more cheerful this refreshing shade,
 To those untainted, harmless, characters,
 Or artless, unsuspecting, foresters,
 Who oftimes seek, amid the noontide hour,
 A shelter from the sun's meridian power,
 Than was my guileless and unsullied mind,
 When I in solitude could comfort find——
 Nay more than comfort:—'twas unmix'd delight,
 Till Love involv'd the scene in endless night!

In perfect unison with these feelings of wretchedness, I will repeat to you another of that unhappy lady's poetical effusions, composed, I conceive, about the same time with the one you have just heard. It is entitled,

AN ADDRESS TO DESPAIR.

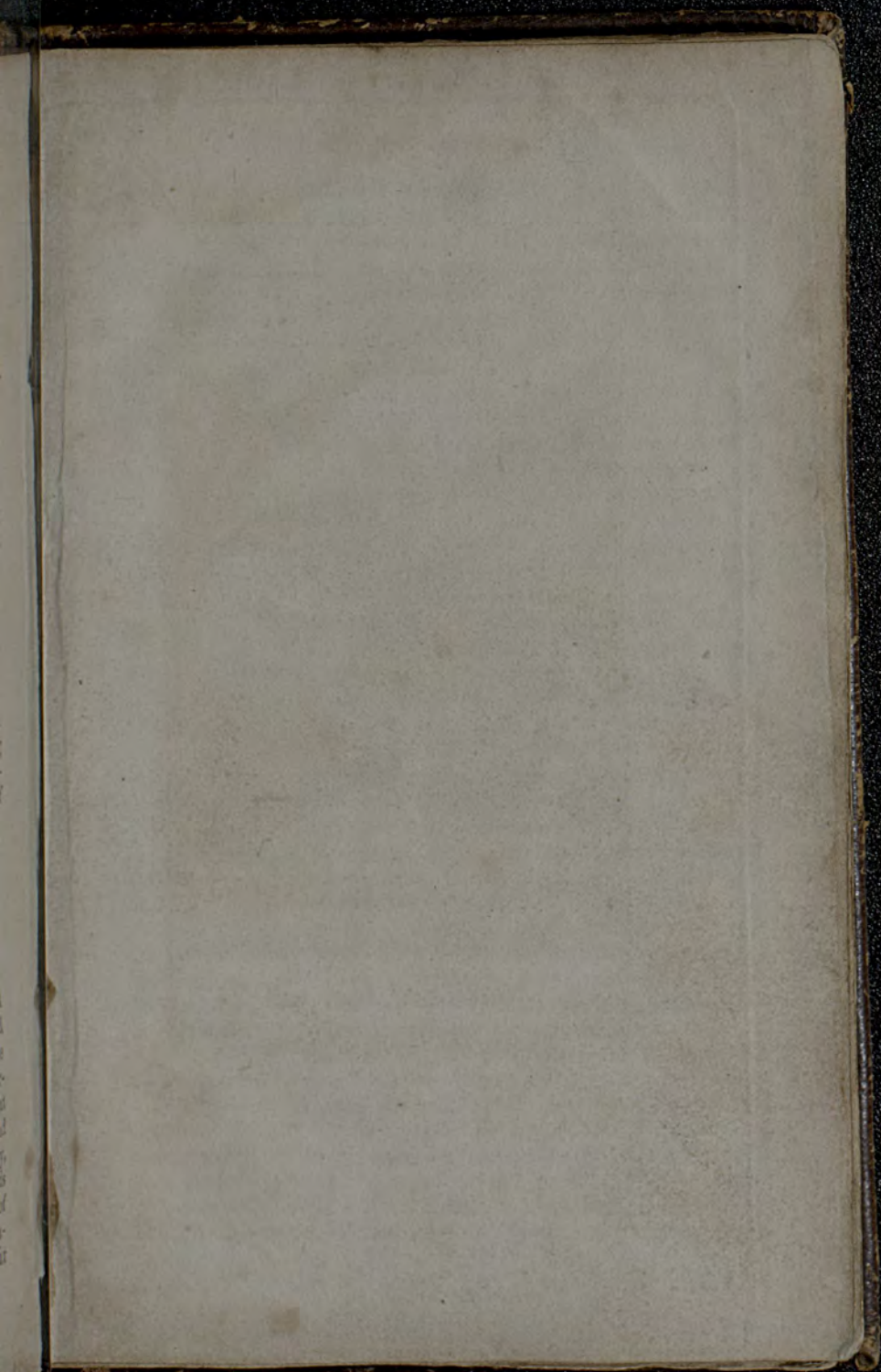
Grim monster of Tartarean birth—DESPAIR!

I almost give thee welcome to this breast,
 Which cannot, must not, hope, henceforth to rest,
 Except where misery dwells, and gnawing care.
 Whilst one small glimmering ray of light remain'd,
 Alas! it but enabled me to see
 More clear the frightful doom which threaten'd me;
 The everlasting dread and misery
 With which my future destiny was stain'd.
 But now, black fiend—foul, hellish, as thou art—
 At least from Disappointment I am free,
 Since thou hast full possession of my heart:
 There's nothing more I have to dread from thee—
 No hope deferr'd my soul shall sicken more,
 No sudden torment curdle my heart's gore.

Those soft and sacred duties, which nature imposed,
 became a source of additional happiness to those affec-

tionate mothers, whose mutual friendship acquired fresh strength at the sight of their children, alike the offspring of unhappy love. They delighted to place their infants together in the same bath, to nurse them in the same cradle, and sometimes changed the maternal bosom at which they received nourishment, as if to blend with the ties of friendship that instinctive affection which this act produces. 'My friend,' cried Madame de la Tour, 'we shall each of us have two children, and each of our children will have two mothers.' As two buds, which remain on two trees of the same kind after the tempest has broken all their branches, produce more delicious fruit, if each, separated from the maternal stem, be grafted on the neighbouring tree, so those two children, deprived of all other support, imbibed sentiments more tender than those of son and daughter, brother and sister, when exchanged at the breast of those who gave them birth. While they were yet in the cradle, their mothers talked of their marriage; and this prospect of conjugal felicity, with which they soothed their own cares, often called forth the tears of bitter regret. The misfortunes of one mother had arisen from having neglected marriage, those of the other from having submitted to its laws: one had been made unhappy by attempting to raise herself above her humble condition of life, the other by descending from her rank. But they found consolation in reflecting, that their more fortunate children, far from the cruel prejudices of Europe, those prejudices, which poison the most precious sources of our happiness, would enjoy at once the pleasure of love and the blessings of equality.

The attachment of these two children of nature to each other could not be exceeded. If Paul complained his mother pointed to Virginia; and at that sight he smiled and was appeased. If any accident befel Virginia, the cries of Paul gave notice of the disaster; and then Virginia would suppress her complaints when she found that Paul was unhappy. When I came hither, I usually found them quite naked, which is the custom of this country, tottering in their walk, and holding each other by the hands and under the arms, as we represent the constellation of the Twins. At night the infants often refused to be separated, and were found lying in the same cradle; their





Paul and Virginia.

Published by Hodgson & Co. 10. Nongate Street.

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hands thrown round each other's neck, and sleeping locked in one another's arms.

As soon as they could speak, the first names they learned to give each other were those of brother and sister; and childhood knows no softer appellation. Their education served to augment their early friendship, by directing it to the supply of their reciprocal wants. In a short time, all that regarded the household economy, the care of preparing their rural repasts, became the task of Virginia, whose labours were always crowned with the praises and kisses of her brother. As for Paul, always in motion, he dug the garden with Domingo, or followed him with a little hatchet into the woods, where, if he espied a beautiful flower, fine fruit, or a nest of birds, even at the top of a tree, he climbed up and brought it home to his sister.

If you met with one of those children, you might be certain the other was not far distant. One day, coming down that mountain, I saw Virginia at the end of the garden, running towards the house, with her petticoat thrown over her head, in order to screen herself from a shower of rain. At a distance I thought she was alone; but, as I hastened towards her, in order to help her on, I perceived that she held Paul by the arm, who was almost entirely enveloped in the same canopy, and both were laughing heartily at being sheltered together under an umbrella of their own invention. Those two charming faces, placed within the petticoat, swelled by the wind, recalled to my mind the children of Leda, inclosed within the same shell.

They appeared to study nothing so much as how to please and assist each other; for of all other things they were ignorant, and knew neither how to read or write. They were never disturbed by researches into past times, nor did their curiosity extend beyond the bounds of that mountain. They believed the world ended at the shores of their own island, and all their ideas and affections were confined within its limits. Their mutual tenderness, and that of their mothers, employed all the activity of their souls. Their tears had never been called forth by long application to useless sciences. Their minds had never been wearied by lessons of morality, superfluous to bosoms unconscious of ill. They had never been taught that they must not steal, because every

thing with them was in common ; or be intemperate, because their simple food was left to their own discretion ; or false, because they had no truth to conceal. Their young imaginations had never been terrified by the idea that God has punishments in store for ungrateful children ; since with them, filial affection arose naturally from maternal fondness. All they had been taught of religion was to love it : and if they did not offer up long prayers in the church, wherever they were, in the house, in the fields, in the woods, they raised towards heaven their innocent hands, and their hearts purified by virtuous affections.

In this manner passed their early childhood, like a beautiful dawn, the prelude of a bright day. Already they partook with their mothers, the cares of the household. As soon as the cry of the wakeful cock announced the first beam of the morning, Virginia arose, and hastened to draw water from a neighbouring spring ; then returning to the house, she prepared the breakfast. When the rising sun lighted up the points of those rocks, which overhang this inclosure, Margaret and her child went to the dwelling of Madame de la Tour, and they offered up together their morning prayer. This sacrifice of thanksgiving always preceded their first repast, which they often partook before the door of the cottage, seated upon the grass, under a canopy of plaintain ; and, while the branches of that delightful tree afforded a grateful shade, its solid fruit furnished food ready prepared by nature ; and its long glossy leaves, spread upon the table, supplied the want of linen.

Abundant and wholesome nourishment gave early growth and vigour to the persons of those children, and their countenances expressed the purity and the peace of their souls. At twelve years of age the figure of Virginia was in some degree formed : a profusion of light hair shaded her face, to which her blue eyes and coral lips gave the most charming brilliancy. Her eyes sparkled with vivacity when she spoke ; but when she was silent, her look had a cast upwards, which gave it an expression of extreme sensibility, or rather of tender melancholy. Already the figure of Paul displayed the graces of manly beauty. He was taller than Virginia ; his skin was of a darker tint, his nose was aquiline ; and his black eyes would have been too

piercing, if the long eyelashes, by which they were shaded, had not given them a look of softness. He was constantly in motion, except when his sister appeared; and then, placed at her side, he became quiet. Their meals often passed in silence; and, from the grace of their attitudes the beautiful proportions of their figures, and their naked feet, you might have fancied you beheld an antique group of white marble, representing some of the children of Niobe; if those eyes which sought to meet those smiles, and which were answered by smiles of the most tender softness, had not rather given you the idea of those happy celestial spirits, whose nature is love, and who are not obliged to have recourse to words for the expression of that intuitive sentiment. In the mean time, Madame de la Tour, perceiving every day some unfolded grace, some new beauty, in her daughter, felt her maternal anxiety increase with her tenderness. She often said to me, "If I should die, what will become of Virginia without fortune?"

She had an aunt in France, who was a woman of quality; rich, old, and a great bigot. She had behaved towards her niece with so much cruelty upon her marriage, that Madame de la Tour had determined, that no distress or misfortune should ever compel her to have recourse to her hard-hearted relation. But when she became a mother, the pride of resentment was stifled in the stronger feelings of maternal tenderness. She wrote to her aunt, informing her of the sudden death of her husband, the birth of her daughter, and the difficulties in which she was involved at a distance from her own country, without support, and burthened with a child. She received no answer; but, notwithstanding that high spirit, which was natural to her character, she no longer feared exposing herself to mortification and reproach; and, although she knew her relation would never pardon her for having married a man of merit, but not of noble birth, she continued to write to her by every opportunity, in the hopes of awakening her compassion for Virginia. Many years, however, passed, during which she received not the smallest testimony of her remembrance.

It was not till the year 1746, that Madame de la Tour was informed, that the governor had a letter to give her from her aunt. She flew to Port Louis, careless on

this occasion of appearing in her homely garment. Maternal hope and joy subdued all those little considerations which are lost, when the mind is absorbed by any powerful sentiment. Monsieur de la Bourdonnais delivered to her a letter from her aunt, who informed her, that she deserved her fate, for having married an adventurer and a libertine; that, misplaced passions brought along with them their own punishment, and that the sudden death of her husband must be considered as a visitation from Heaven: that she had done well in going to a distant island, rather than dishonour her family by remaining in France; and that, after all, in the colony where she had taken refuge, every person grew rich except the idle. Having thus lavished sufficient censure upon the conduct of her niece, she finished by an eulogium on herself. To avoid, she said, the almost inevitable evils of marriage, she had determined to remain in a single state. In truth, being of a very ambitious temper, she had resolved only to unite herself to a man of high rank; and although she was very rich, her fortune was not found a sufficient bribe, even at court, to counterbalance the malignant dispositions of her mind, and the disagreeable qualities of her person.

In a postscript she added, that after mature deliberation, she had strongly recommended her niece to Monsieur de la Bourdonnais. This she had indeed done; but in a manner of late too common, and which renders a patron perhaps even more formidable than a declared enemy; for in order to justify herself, she had cruelly slandered her niece, while she affected to pity her misfortunes.

Notwithstanding no unprejudiced person could have seen Madame de la Tour without feeling sympathy and respect, she was received with the utmost coolness by Monsieur de la Bourdonnais; and when she painted to him her own situation, and that of her child, he replied, 'We will see what can be done—there so many to relieve—why did you affront so respectable a relation?—You have been much to blame.'

She returned to her cottage, her bosom throbbing with all the bitterness of disappointment. When she arrived, she threw herself on a chair; and then flinging her aunt's letter on the table, exclaimed to her friend, 'This is the recompence of eleven years of patient expect-

tation!' As Madame de la Tour was the only person in the little circle who could read, she again took up the letter, which she read aloud. Scarcely had she finished, when Margaret exclaimed, 'What have we to do with your relations? Has God then forsaken us? He only is our father. Have we not hitherto been happy? Why then this regret? You have no courage.' Seeing Madame de la Tour in tears, she threw herself upon her neck, and pressing her in her arms, 'My dear friend,' cried she, 'my dear friend.'—But her emotion choked her utterance.

Virginia burst into tears, on seeing the affliction of her mother, and pressed her hand and Margaret's alternately to her lips, and to her heart; while Paul, with his eyes inflamed with anger, cried, clasped his hands together, and stamped with his feet, not knowing whom to blame for this scene of misery. The noise soon led Domingo and Mary to the spot; and the little habitation resounded with the cries of distress. 'Ah, Madame!—My good mistress!—My dear mother!—Do not weep!'

Madame de la Tour's sorrow, soothed by these tender proofs of affection was at length dispelled. She took Paul and Virginia in her arms, and, embracing them, cried, 'You are the cause of my affliction, and yet my only source of delight! Yes, my dear children, misfortune has reached me from a distance, but surely I am surrounded by happiness.' Paul and Virginia did not understand this reflection; but, when they saw that she was calm, they smiled, and continued to caress her.

It was, I think, on this occasion, that Madame de la Tour composed the following sonnet: I know it was not long after the cruel reception, she had met with, and which I have just described to you, that I received one or two of those effusions of her muse, in which she was wont so frequently to seek a temporary composure of her sorrows.

SONNET TO DISAPPOINTMENT.

Should some faint ray of hope inspire my breast,
 However transient, evanescent, slight,
 I hail the casual messenger of light,
 Though yielding but a momentary rest,
 And fancy for that moment I am bless'd;

Till Disappointment, envious of the sight,
 Destroys the illusive flame by her fell blight ;
 Then, spreading o'er me her funereal vest,
 Again involves me in the shades of night.
 What, though I see thee not, yet doom'd to feel
 The chilly pressure of thy hand of steel,
 I bow, reluctant, to thy tyrant sway,
 And, at thy bidding, banish far away,
 Whatever glads mine eyes, or wears the form of day.

The amiable disposition of these children of nature unfolded itself daily. On a Sunday, their mothers, having gone at break of day to mass, at the church of Pamplemousses, the children perceived a negro-woman beneath the plaintains which shaded their habitation. She appeared almost wasted to a skeleton, and had no other garment than a shred of coarse cloth thrown across her loins. She flung herself at Virginia's feet, who was preparing the family breakfast, and cried, ' My good young lady, have pity on a poor slave. For a whole month I have wandered amongst these mountains, half dead with hunger, and often pursued by the hunters and their dogs. I fled from my master, a rich planter of the Black River, who has used me as you see ;' and she shewed her body, marked by deep scars from the lashes she had received. She added, ' I was going to drown myself ; but hearing you lived here, I said to myself, since there are still some good white people in this country, I need not die yet.'

Take courage, unfortunate creature!" replied Virginia, " here is food," and she gave her the breakfast she had prepared, which the poor slave in a few minutes devoured. When her hunger was appeased, Virginia said to her, ' Unhappy woman, will you let me go and ask forgiveness for you of your master? Surely the sight of you will touch him with pity—Will you show me the way?'—' Angel of Heaven!' answered the poor negro-woman, ' I will follow you where you please.' Virginia called her brother, and begged him to accompany her. The slave led the way, by winding and difficult paths, through the woods, over mountains, which they climbed with difficulty, and across rivers, through which they were obliged to wade. At length they reached the foot of a precipice

upon the borders of the Black River. There they perceived a well-built house, surrounded by extensive plantations, and a great number of slaves employed at their various labours. Their master was walking amongst them, with a pipe in his mouth, and a switch in his hand. He was a tall thin figure, of a brown complexion; his eyes were sunk in his head, and his dark eye-brows were joined together. Virginia, holding Paul by the hand, drew near, and with much emotion, begged him for the love of God to pardon his poor slave, who stood trembling a few paces behind. The man at first paid little attention to the children, who, he saw, were meanly dressed. But when he observed the elegance of Virginia's form, and the profusion of her beautiful light tresses, which had escaped from beneath her blue cap; when he heard the soft tone of her voice, which trembled, as well as her whole frame, while she implored his compassion; he took the pipe from his mouth, and lifting up his stick, swore, with a terrible oath, that he pardoned his slave, not for the love of Heaven, but of her who asked his forgiveness. Virginia made a sign to the slave to approach her master, and instantly sprung away, followed by Paul.

With some difficulty they climbed up the precipice they had before descended; and, having gained the summit, seated themselves at the foot of a tree, overcome with fatigue, hunger and thirst. They had left their cottage fasting, and had walked five leagues since break of day. Paul said to Virginia, 'My dear sister, it is past noon, and am sure you are thirsty and hungry: we shall find no dinner here: let us go down the mountain again, and ask the master of the poor slave for some food.'—'Oh, no,' Virginia; 'he frightens me too much. Remember what mamma sometimes says, the bread of the wicked is like stones in the mouth.'—'What shall we do then?' said Paul: 'these trees produce no fruit; and I shall not be able to find even a tamarind or a lemon to refresh you.' Scarcely had he pronounced these words, when they heard the dashing of waters which fell from a neighbouring rock. They ran thither; and having quenched their thirst at this crystal spring, they gathered a few cresses which grew on the border of the stream. While they were wandering in the woods in search of more solid

nourishment, Virginia spied a young palm-tree. The kind of cabbage, which is found at the top of this tree enfolded within its leaves, forms an excellent sustenance; but although the stalk of the tree was not thicker than a man's leg, it was above sixty feet in height. The wood of this tree is composed of fine filaments; but the bark is so hard that it turns the edge of the hatchet; and Paul was not even furnished with a knife. At length he thought of setting fire to the palm-tree: but a new difficulty occurred; he had no steel with which to strike fire; and, although the whole island is covered with rocks, I do not believe it is possible to find a flint. Necessity, however, is fertile in expedients, and the most useful inventions have arisen from men placed in the most destitute situations. Paul determined to kindle a fire in the manner of the negroes. With the sharp end of a stone he made a small hole in the branch of a tree that was quite dry, which he held between his feet; he then sharpened another dry branch of a different sort of wood, and afterwards placing the piece of pointed wood in the small hole of the branch which he held with his feet, and turning it rapidly between his hands. In a few minutes smoke and sparks of fire issued from the points of contact. Paul then heaped together dried grass and branches, and set fire to the palm-tree, which soon fell to the ground. The fire was useful to him in stripping off the long, thick, and pointed leaves, within which the cabbage was inclosed.

Virginia and her faithful companion ate part of the cabbage raw, and part dressed upon the ashes, which they found equally palatable. They made this frugal repast with delight, from the remembrance of the benevolent action they had performed in the morning; yet their joy was embittered by the thoughts of that uneasiness which their long absence would give their mothers. Virginia often recurred to this subject; but Paul, who felt his strength renewed by their meal, assured her that it would not be long before they reached home.

After dinner they recollected that they had no guide, and that they were ignorant of the way. Paul, whose spirit was not subdued by difficulties, said to Virginia, 'The sun shines full upon our huts at noon; we must pass as we did this morning, over that mountain with its three

points, which you see yonder. Come, let us go.' This mountain is called the Three Peaks or Paps. Paul and Virginia descended the precipice of the Black River, on the northern side; and arrived, after an hour's walk, on the banks of a large stream.

The river, on the banks of which our young travellers stood, rolls foaming over a bed of rocks. The noise of the water frightened Virginia, and she durst not wade through the stream: Paul, therefore, took her up in his arms, and went thus loaded over the slippery rocks, which formed the bed of the river, careless of the tumultuous noise of its waters. 'Do not be afraid,' cried he to Virginia; 'I feel very strong with you. If the inhabitant of the Black River had refused you the pardon of his slave, I would have fought with him.'—'What,' answered Virginia, 'with that great wicked man? To what have I exposed you? Gracious Heaven! How difficult it is to do good! and how easy it is to do wrong!'

Having crossed the river, Paul wished to continue his journey, carrying his sister, and believed he was able to climb in that way the mountain of the Three Peaks, which was still at the distance of half a league; but his strength soon failed, and he was obliged to set down his burthen, and to rest himself by her side. Virginia then said to him, 'My dear brother, the sun is going down; you have still some strength left, but mine has quite failed: do leave me here, and return home alone to ease the fears of our mothers.'—'Oh, no,' said Paul, 'I will not leave you. If night surprise us in this wood, I will light a fire, and bring down another palm-tree: you shall eat the cabbage; and I will form a covering of the leaves to shelter you.' In the mean time Virginia, being a little rested, pulled from the trunk of an old tree, which hung over the bank of the river, some long leaves of hart's tongue, which grew near its root. With those leaves she made a sort of buskin, with which she covered her feet, that were bleed from the sharpness of the stony paths; for in her eager desire to do good, she had forgot to put on her shoes. Feeling her feet cooled by the freshness of the leaves, she broke off a branch of bamboo, and continued her walk, leaning with one hand on the staff, and with the other on Paul.

In this manner they walked on slowly through the woods; but from the height of the trees, and the thickness of their foliage, they soon lost sight of the mountain of the Three Peaks, by which they had directed their course, and even of the sun, which was now setting. At length they wandered, without perceiving it, from the beaten path in which they had hitherto walked, and found themselves in a labyrinth of trees and rocks, which appeared to have no opening. Paul made Virginia sit down, while he ran backwards and forwards, half frantic, in search of a path which might lead them out of this thick wood; but all his researches were in vain. He climbed to the top of a tree, from whence he hoped at least to discern the mountain of the Three Peaks; but all he could perceive around him were the tops of trees, some of which were gilded by the last beams of the setting sun. Already the shadows of the mountains were spread over the forests in the valleys. The wind ceased as it usually does, at the evening hour. The most profound silence reigned in those awful solitudes, which was only interrupted by the cry of the stags, who came to repose in that unfrequented spot. Paul, in the hope that some hunter would hear his voice, called out, as loud as he was able, 'Come, come to the help of Virginia.' But the echoes of the forests alone answered his call, and repeated again and again, 'Virginia! Virginia!' Paul at length descended from the tree, overcome with fatigue and vexation, and reflected how they might best contrive to pass the night in that desert. But he could find neither a fountain, a palm-tree, nor even a branch of dry wood to kindle a fire. He then felt, by experience, the sense of his own weakness, and began to weep. Virginia said to him, 'Do not weep, my dear brother, or I shall die with grief. I am the cause of all your sorrow, and of all that our mothers suffer at this moment. I find we ought to do nothing, not even good, without consulting our parents. Oh, I have been very imprudent!' and she began to shed tears. She then said to Paul, 'Let us pray to God, my dear brother, and he will hear us.'

They had no sooner ended their prayer, than they heard the barking of a dog. 'It is the dog of some hunter,' said Paul, 'who comes here at night to lie in wait for the stags.' Soon after, the dog barked again, with

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*Paul and Virginia requesting an
Inhabitant to pardon his Slave.*

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more violence. 'Surely,' said Virginia, 'it is Fidèle, our own dog; yes, I know his voice. Are we then so near home? at the foot of our own mountain? A moment after Fidèle was at their feet, barking, howling, crying, and devouring them with his caresses. Before they had recovered their surprise, they saw Domingo running towards them. At the sight of this good old negro, who wept with joy, they began to weep too, without being able to utter one word. When Domingo had recovered himself a little, 'Oh, my dear children,' cried he, 'how miserable have you made your mothers! How much were they astonished, when they returned from mass, where I went with them, at not finding you! Mary, who was at work at a little distance, could not tell us where you were gone. I ran backwards and forwards about the plantation, not knowing where to look for you. At last I took some of your old clothes, and, shewing them to Fidèle, the poor animal, as if he understood me, immediately began to scent your path, and conducted me, continually wagging his tail, to the Black River. It was there a planter told me that you had brought back a negro-woman, his slave, and that he had granted her pardon. But what pardon! he shewed her to me with her feet chained to a block of wood, and an iron collar with three hooks fastened round her neck!

Fidèle, still on the scent, then led me up the precipice of the Black River, where he again stopped, and barked with all his might. This was on the brink of a spring, near a fallen palm-tree, and close to a fire which was still smoking. At last he led me to this very spot. "We are at the foot of the mountain of the Three Peaks, and still four leagues from home. Come, eat, and gather strength." He then presented them with cakes, fruits, and a very large gourd, filled with a liquor composed of wine, water, lemon juice, sugar, and nutmeg, which their mothers had prepared. Virginia sighed at the recollection of the poor slave, and at the uneasiness which they had given their mothers. She repeated several times, 'Oh, how difficult it is to do good!'

During the time that she and Paul were taking refreshment, Domingo kindled a fire; and having sought among the rocks for a particular kind of crooked wood, which burns when quite green, he made a torch, which

he lighted, it being already night. But when they prepared to continue their journey, a new difficulty occurred: Paul and Virginia could no longer walk, their feet being violently swelled and inflamed. Domingo knew not whether it were best to leave them, and go in search of help, or remain and pass the night with them on that spot. 'What is become of the time,' said he, 'when I used to carry you both together in my arms? But now you are grown big, and I am grown old.' While he was in this perplexity, a troop of Maroon negroes appeared at the distance of twenty paces. The chief of the band, approaching Paul and Virginia, said to them, 'Good little white people, do not be afraid. We saw you pass this morning, with a negro-woman of the Black River. You went to ask pardon for her of her wicked master, and we, in return for this, will carry you home upon our shoulders.' He then made a sign, and four of the strongest negroes immediately formed a sort of litter with the branches of trees and lianas, in which having seated Paul and Virginia, they placed it upon their shoulders. Domingo marched in front, carrying his lighted torch, and they proceeded, amidst the rejoicings of the whole troop, and overwhelmed with their benedictions. Virginia, affected by this scene, said to Paul, with emotion, 'Oh, my dear brother! God never leaves a good action without reward.'

Midnight was fast approaching when they arrived at the foot of the mountain, on the ridges of which several fires were lighted, and they heard voices crying out, 'Is it you, my children?' They answered, together with the negroes, 'Yes, it is us;' and soon after perceived their mothers and Mary coming towards them with lighted pieces of wood in their hands. 'Unhappy children!' cried Madame de la Tour, 'from whence do you come? What agonies you have made us suffer!' 'We come,' said Virginia, 'from the Black River, where we went to ask pardon for a poor female slave, to whom I gave our breakfast this morning, because she was dying of hunger; and these negroes have brought us home.'—Madame de la Tour embraced her daughter, without being able to speak; and Virginia, who felt her face wet with her mother's tears, exclaimed, 'You repay me for all the hardships I have suffered.' Margaret, in a transport of delight pressed Paul in her arms, crying, 'And you also,

my dear child! have done a good action.' When they reached the hut with their children, they gave plenty of food to the negroes, who returned to their woods, after praying that the blessing of Heaven might descend on those good white people.

Each returning day was to these families one of peace and of happiness. Neither ambition nor envy disturbed their repose. In this island, where, as in all European colonies, every malignant anecdote is circulated with avidity, their virtues and even their names were unknown. Only when a traveller on the road to Pamplémousses, inquired of any of the inhabitants of the plain, 'Who lives in those two cottages above?' he was always answered, even by those who did not know them, 'They are good people.' Thus the modest violet, concealed beneath the thorny bushes, sheds its fragrance, whilst itself remains unseen.

To do good appeared to those amiable families to be the chief purpose of life. Solitude, far from having blunted their benevolent feelings, or rendered their dispositions morose, had left their hearts open to every tender affection. The contemplation of nature filled their minds with enthusiastic delight. They adored the bounty of that Providence which had enabled them to spread abundance and beauty amidst those barren rocks, and to enjoy those pure and simple pleasures, which are ever grateful and ever new.

About this period, I received from Madame de la Tour the following Sonnet, written, I conceive, during one of those periods of repose, and pleasing reflection :

SONNET TO SIMPLICITY.

Nymph of the sylvan shade, and silent grove!
 Fair messenger of peace and faithful love!
 Far from an artificial world, with thee
 I love to wander, sweet Simplicity!
 No meretricious trappings deck thy form;
 No passions raise within thy breast a storm;
 A stranger thou to man's delusive wiles,
 No cunning foresight lurks beneath thy smiles.
 The snakes of envy wither in thy sight;
 And dark suspicion shuns thine aspect bright;

At thy approach tumultuous clamours cease,
 And all around is lull'd to rest and peace.
 On thy soft bosom may I still repose,
 And there forget the world and all its woes!

Although only twelve years of age, Paul was stronger and more intelligent than Europeans are at fifteen, and had embellished the plantation which Domingo had only cultivated. He had gone with him to the neighbouring woods, and rooted up young plants of lemon-trees, oranges, and tamarinds, the round heads of which are of so fresh a green, together with date palm trees, producing fruit filled with a sweet cream, which has the fine perfume of the orange flower. Those trees, which were already of a considerable size, he planted round this little inclosure. He had also sown the seeds of many trees which the second year bear flowers or fruit. The agathis, encircled with long clusters of white flowers, which hang upon it like the crystal pendants of a lustre. The Persian lilac, which lifts high in air its grey flax-coloured branches. The pappaw-tree, the trunk of which, without branches, forms a column set round with green melons, bearing on their heads large leaves like those of the fig-tree.

The kernels and seeds of the gum-tree, terminalia, mangoes, alligator pears, the guava, the bread-tree, and the narrow-leaved eugenia were planted with profusion; and the greater number of those trees already afforded to their young cultivator both shade and fruit. His industrious hands had diffused the riches of nature even on the most barren parts of the plantation. Several kinds of aloes, the common Indian fig, adorned with yellow flowers spotted with red, and the thorny five-angled touch-thistle, grew upon the dark summits of the rocks, and seemed to aim at reaching the long lianas, which, loaded with blue or crimson flowers, hung scattered over the steepest part of the mountain. Those trees were disposed in such a manner that you could command the whole at one view. He had placed in the middle of this hollow the plants of the lowest growth: behind grew the shrubs; then trees of an ordinary height; above which rose majestically the venerable lofty groves which border the circumference. Thus from its centre this extensive inclosure appeared like a verdant au-

phitheatre spread with fruits and flowers, containing a variety of vegetables, a chain of meadow land, and fields of rice and corn. In blending those productions to his own taste, he followed the designs of Nature. Guided by her suggestions, he had thrown upon the rising grounds such seeds as the winds might scatter over the heights, and near the borders of the springs, such grains as float upon the waters. Every plant grew in its proper soil, and every spot seemed decorated by her hands. The waters, which rushed from the summits of the rocks, formed in some parts of the valley limpid fountains, and in other parts were spread into large clear mirrors, which reflected the bright verdure, the trees in blossom, the bending rocks, and the azure heaven.

Most of these plantations were of easy access, Notwithstanding the great irregularity of the ground, We had, indeed, all given him our advice and assistance, in order to accomplish this end. He had formed a path which winded round the valley, and of which various ramifications led from the circumference to the centre. He had drawn some advantage from the most rugged spots; and had blended, in harmonious varieties smooth walks with the asperities of the soil, and wild with domestic productions. With that immense quantity of rolling stones which now block up those paths, and which are scattered over most of the ground of this island, he formed here and there pyramids; and at their base he laid earth, and planted the roots of rose bushes, the Barbadoes flower-fence, and other shrubs which love to climb the rocks. In a short time those gloomy shapeless pyramids were covered with verdure, or with the glowing tints of the most beautiful flowers. The hollow recesses of aged trees, which, bent over the borders of the stream, formed vaulted caves impenetrable to the sun, and where you might enjoy coolness during the heats of the day. That path led to a clump of forest trees, in the centre of which grew a cultivated tree, loaded with fruit. Here was a field of ripe corn, there an orchard. From that avenue you had a view of the cottages; from this of the inaccessible summit of the mountain. Beneath that tufted bower of gum-trees, interwoven with lianas, no object could be discerned even at noon; while the point of the neighbouring rock, which projects from the mountain,

commanded a view of the whole inclosure, and of the distant ocean, where sometimes we spied a vessel coming from Europe, or returning thither. On this rock the two families assembled in the evening, and enjoyed, in silence, the freshness of the air, the fragrance of the flowers, the murmurs of the fountain, and the last blended harmonies of light and shade.

Scarcely any thing could be more pleasing than the names which were given to some of the charming retreats of this labyrinth. That rock, of which I was speaking, and from which my approach was discerned at a considerable distance, was called the Discovery of Friendship. Paul and Virginia, amidst their sports had planted a bamboo on that spot; and whenever they saw me coming, they hoisted a little white handkerchief, by way of signal of my approach, as they had seen a flag hoisted on the neighbouring mountain at the sight of a vessel at sea. The idea struck me of engraving an inscription upon the stalk of this reed. Whatever pleasure I have felt, during my travels, at the sight of a statue, or monument of antiquity, I have felt still more in reading a well-written inscription. It seems to me as if a human voice issued from the stone; and, making itself heard through the lapse of ages, addressed man in the midst of a desert, and told him that he is not alone; that other men, on that very spot, have felt, and thought, and suffered, like himself. If the inscription belongs to an ancient nation, which no longer exists, it leads the soul through infinite space, and inspires the feeling of its immortality, by shewing that a thought has survived the ruins of an empire.

On the little mast of Paul and Virginia's flag, I inscribed the following lines from Horace:—

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

May Helen's brothers, radiant, stars like you,
And the wind's sire conduct you safely through!
Let no rude blast your tender forms assail,
Fann'd only by the Zephyr's cheering gale!

Paul was accustomed to seat himself under the shade of a gum-tree, and there contemplate the swelling rages of the sea, as they foamed from its rough and boisterous surface. Upon the back of this tree I engraved the following line from Virgil :

‘Fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agrestes!’

Happy art thou, of all the gods below,
None but the pastoral deities to know!

Over the door of Madame de la Tour’s cottage, in which the two families were wont to associate, I wrote—

At *secura quies, et nescia fallere vita.*

Here conscience dwells, and wears a constant smile,
For, hence are banish’d all deceit and guile.

Virginia did not approve of my Latin: she said that what I had placed at the foot of her weather-flag was too long and too learned. ‘I should have liked better,’ added she, ‘to have been inscribed, *Always agitated, yet ever constant.*’ That, said I, would have been better adapted to virtue: Virginia blushed.

The benevolence of those happy families extended itself to every thing around them. They had given names the most tender to objects in appearance the most indifferent. A border of oranges, plantain, and bread trees, planted round a green-sward where Virginia and Paul sometimes danced, was called “*The Concord.*” An old tree, beneath the shade of which Madame de la Tour and Margaret used to relate their misfortunes, was called “*The tears wiped away.*” They gave the names of Brittany and Normandy to little portions of ground, where they had sown core, strawberries, and peas. Domingo and Mary, wishing, in imitation of their mistresses, to recall the places of their birth in Africa, gave the names of Angola and Foodlepointe to the spots where grew the herb with which they wove baskets, and where they had planted a calabassia-tree. Thus, with the productions of their respective climates, those exile families cherished the dear illusions which bind us to our native country, and softened their regrets in a foreign land. Alas! I have seen, animated by a thousand soothing appellations,

those trees, those fountains, those stones, which now, like the plains of Greece, present nothing but ruins and affecting recollections.

While the luxurious fruits of this climate gratified the taste of her family, Madame de la Tour delighted to rear those which were more grateful, only because they were the productions of her early home. Among other little pieces, addressed to flowers and fruits of northern climes, I found the following

SONNET TO THE COWSLIP.

Oh! could I place in this luxuriant soil,
 Some flower, my native woodlands to recall;
 Some plant of northern growth; however small;
 Then should the Cowslip claim my daily toil;
 Sweet promise of the Spring's returning smile,
 Which, 'neath the Summer's sun is seen to fall,
 Leaning its withering petals 'gainst the wall;
 And from his radiant glories swift recoil.
 Thus, whilst through distant fields and groves I roam,
 I should behold, sweet modest flower, in thee,
 Some daily recollection of a home
 From which my destiny has bid me flee.
 In thee I'd see life's glories pass away;
 Bloom with the morn, and perish with the day.

Perhaps the most charming spot of this inclosure was that which was called "*The Repose of Virginia*." At the foot of the rock, which bore the name of "*The Discovery of Friendship*," is a nook, from whence issues a fountain, forming, near its source, a little spot of marshy soil in the midst of a field of rich grass. At the time Margaret was delivered of Paul, I made her a present of an Indian cocoa which had been given me, and which she planted on the border of this fenny ground, in order that the tree might one day serve to mark the epocha of her son's birth. Madame de la Tour planted another cocoa, with the same view, at the birth of Virginia. Those fruits produced two cocoa trees, which formed all the records of the two families: one was called the tree of Paul, the other the tree of Virginia. They grew in the same proportion as the two young persons, of an un-

equal height; but they rose, at the end of twelve years above the cottages. Already their tender stalks were interwoven, and their young branches of cocoas hung over the basin of the fountain. Except this little plantation, the nook of the rock had been left as it was decorated by Nature. On its brown and humid sides large plants of maiden-hair glistened with their green and dark stars; and tufts of wave-leaved hartstongue, suspended like long ribands of purpled green, floated on the winds. Near this grew a chain of the Madagascar periwinkle, the flowers of which resemble the red gilliflower; and the long-podded capsacum, the cloves of which are of the colour of blood, and more glowing than coral. The herb of balm, with its leaves within the heart, and the sweet basil, which has the odour of the gilliflower, exhaled the most delicious perfumes. From the steep summit of the mountain hung the graceful lianas, like a floating drapery, forming magnificent canopies of verdure upon the sides of the rock. The sea birds, allured by the stillness of those retreats, resorted thither to pass the night. At the hour of sun-set, we perceived the curlew and the stint skimming along the sea shore; the cardinal poised high in air; and the white bird of the tropic, which abandons, with the star of day, the solitudes of the Indian ocean. Virginia loved to repose upon the border of this fountain, decorated with wild and sublime magnificence. She often seated herself beneath the shade of the two cocoa-trees, and there she sometimes led her goats to graze. While she prepared cheeses of their milk, she loved to see them browse on the maiden-hair which grew upon the steep sides of the rock, and hang suspended upon one of its cornices, as on a pedestal. Paul, observing that Virginia was fond of this spot, brought thither, from the neighbouring forest, a great variety of birds-nests. The old birds, following their young, established themselves in this new colony. Virginia, at stated times, distributed amongst them grains of rice, millet, and maize. As soon as she appeared, the whistling blackbird, the amadavit-bird, the note of which is so soft, the cardinal, the black frigate bird, with its plumage the colour of flame, forsook their bushes; the paroquet, green as an emerald, descended from the neighbouring fan palms; the partridge ran along the grass; all advanced promiscuously towards her, like a brood of chickens; and she and

Paul delighted to observe their sports, their repasts, and their loves.

Amiable children! thus passed your early days, in innocence, and in the exercise of benevolence. How many times, on this very spot, have your mothers, pressing you in their arms, blessed Heaven for the consolations your unfolding virtues prepared for their declining years, while already they enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing you begin life under the most happy auspices! How many times, beneath the shade of these rocks, have I partaken with them of your rural repasts, which cost no animal its life! Gourds filled with milk, fresh eggs, cakes of rice placed upon plantain leaves, baskets loaded with mangoes, oranges, dates, pomegranates, pine apples, furnished at the same time the most wholesome food, the most beautiful colours, and the most delicious juices.

Sweet and innocent as their repasts were, the conversations of these delightful children of nature, were not less so. Paul often talked of the labours of the day, and those of the morrow. He was continually forming some plan of accommodation for their little society. Here he discovered that the paths were rough; there, that the family circle was ill seated; sometimes the young arbours did not afford sufficient shade, and Virginia might be better pleased elsewhere.

During the day, in the rainy season, the two families assembled together in the hut, and employed themselves in weaving mats of grass, and baskets of bamboo. Rakes, spades, and hatchets, were ranged along the walls in the most perfect order; and near those instruments of agriculture were placed those productions which were the fruits of their labour: sacks of rice, sheaves of corn, and baskets of the plantain fruit. Some degree of luxury is usually united with plenty; and Virginia was taught by her mother and Margaret to prepare sherbert and cordials from the juice of the sugar-cane, the orange, and the citron.

As night came, the families supped together by the light of a lamp; after which, Madame de la Tour or Margaret related histories of travellers lost during the night in such of the forests of Europe as are infested with banditti; or told a dismal tale of some shipwrecked vessel, thrown by the tempest upon the rocks of a desert island. To these recitals their children listened with eager sensibility, and ear

nestly begged that Heaven would grant they might one day have the joy of shewing their hospitality towards such unfortunate persons. At length the two families separated and retired to rest, impatient to meet again next morning. Sometimes they were lulled to repose by the beating rains, which fell in torrents upon the roofs of their cottages; and sometimes by the hollow winds, which brought to their ear the distant murmur of the waves breaking upon the shore. They blessed God for their personal safety, of which their feeling became stronger from the idea of remote danger.

It was the custom of Madame de la Tour, occasionally to read some affecting portion of the history of the Old or New Testament. Her auditors reasoned but little upon those sacred books, for their theology consisted in sentiment, like that of nature; and their morality in action, like that of the Gospel. They had no particular days devoted to pleasure, and others to sadness: for every day was to them a holiday, and all which surrounded them one holy temple, where they for ever adored an Infinite Intelligence, the friend of the human kind. A sentiment of confidence in his supreme power filled their minds with consolation under the past, with fortitude for the present, and with hope for the future. Thus, compelled by misfortune to return to a state of nature those women had unfolded in their own bosoms, and in those of their children, the feelings which are most natural to the human mind, and which are our best support under evil.

But as clouds sometimes arise, which cast a gloom over the best regulated tempers, whenever melancholy took possession of any member of this little society, the rest endeavoured to banish painful thoughts rather by sentiment than by argument. Margaret exerted her gaiety; Madame de la Tour employed her mild theology; Virginia her tender caresses; Paul his cordial and engaging frankness. Even Mary and Domingo hastened to offer their succour, and to weep with those that wept. Thus weak plants are interwoven, in order to resist the tempests.

During the fine season, they went every Sunday to the church of Pamplémousses, the steeple of which you see yonder upon the plain. After service, the poor often came to require some kind office at their hands. Sometimes an unhappy creature sought their advice; sometimes a child led

them to its sick mother in the neighbourhood. They always took with them remedies for the ordinary diseases of the country, which they administered in that soothing manner, which stamps so much value upon the smallest favours. Above all, they succeeded in banishing the disorders of the mind, which are so intolerable in solitude, and under the infirmities of a weakened frame. Madame de la Tour spoke with such sublime confidence of the Divinity, that the sick, while listening to her, believed that he was present. Virginia often returned home with her eyes wet with tears, and her heart overflowing with delight, having had an opportunity of doing good. After those visits of charity, they sometimes prolonged their way by the sloping mountain, till they reached my dwelling, where I had prepared dinner for them, upon the banks of the little river, which glides near my cottage. I produced on those occasions some bottles of old wine, in order to heighten the gaiety of our Indian repast by the cordial productions of Europe. Sometimes we met upon the sea-shore, at the mouth of the little rivers, which are here scarcely larger than brooks. We brought from the plantation our vegetable provisions, to which we added such as the sea furnished in great variety. Seated upon a rock, beneath the shade of the velvet tree, a species of sun-flower, we heard the mountain billows break at our feet with a dashing noise.

These scenes were viewed by Madame de la Tour with peculiar interest; and on one of these occasions she gave me the following

SONNET ON THE OCEAN.

That restless part of this terraqueous globe—
 That mighty mass of congregated waves,
 Now deck'd in green—now in a fiery robe—
 Proud ocean, rolls:—the sloping beach he laves,
 Or 'gainst the stubborn rocks in fury raves.
 Then his aquatic banners are unfurl'd,
 Swelling in awful grandeur, o'er the world!
 But, ah! a fruitless war he thus doth wage,
 Against the earth; for ONE a law hath made,
 Which saith, amidst his most impetuous rage,
 "Here, ocean, shall thy proudest waves be staid."

Our repasts were succeeded by the songs and dances of the two young people. Virginia sang the happiness of pastoral life, and the misery of those who were impelled by avarice, to cross the furious ocean, rather than cultivate the earth, and enjoy its peaceful bounties. Sometimes she performed a pantomime with Paul, in the manner of the negroes. The first language of man is pantomime; it is known to all nations, and is so natural and so expressive, that the children of the European inhabitants catch it with facility from the negroes. Virginia, recalling, amongst the histories which her mother had read to her, those which had affected her most, represented the principal events with beautiful simplicity. Sometimes at the sound of Domingo's tam-tam she appeared upon the green-sward, bearing a pitcher upon her head, and advanced with a timid step towards the source of a neighbouring fountain, to draw water. Domingo and Mary, who personated the shepherds of Midian, forbade her to approach, and repulsed her sternly. Upon which Paul flew to her succour, beat away the shepherds, filled Virginia's pitcher, and placing it upon her head, bound her brows at the same time with a wreath of the red flowers of the Madagascar periwinkle, which served to heighten the delicacy of her skin. Then joining their sports, I took upon me the part of Raguel, and bestowed upon Paul my daughter Zephora in marriage.

Sometimes Virginia represented the unfortunate Ruth, returning poor and widowed to her own country, where, after so long an absence, she found herself in a foreign land. Domingo and Mary personated the reapers. Virginia followed their steps, gleaning here and there a few ears of corn. She was interrogated by Paul with the gravity of a patriarch, and answered, with a faltering voice, his questions. Soon touched with compassion he granted an asylum to innocence, and hospitality to misfortune. He filled Virginia's lap with plenty; and, leading her towards us, as before the old men of the city, declared his purpose to take her in marriage. At this scene, Madame de la Tour, recalling the desolate situation in which she had been left by her relations, her widowhood, the kind reception she had met with from Margaret, succeeded by the soothing hope of a speedy union between their children, could not forbear weeping; and the sensations which such recollections ex-

cited, led the whole audience to pour forth those luxurious tears, which have their mingled source in sorrow and in joy.

These dramas were performed with such an air of reality, that you might have fancied yourself transported to the plains of Syria or of Palestine. We were not unfurnished with either decorations, lights, or an orchestra, suitable to the representation. The scene was generally placed in an opening of the forest, where such parts of the wood as were penetrable, formed around us numerous arcades of foliage, beneath which we were sheltered from the heat during the whole day: but when the sun descended towards the horizon, its rays, broken upon the trunks of the trees, diverged amongst the shadows of the forest in long lines of light, which produced the most sublime effect. Sometimes the whole of its broad disk appeared at the end of an avenue, spreading one dazzling mass of brightness. The foliage of the trees, illuminated from beneath by its saffron beams, glowed with the lustre of the topaz and the emerald. Their brown and mossy trunks appeared transformed into columns of antique bronze; and the birds, which had retired in silence to their leafy shades to pass the night, surprised to see the radiance of a second morning, hailed the star of day with innumerable carols.

Often amidst these rural entertainments, we were surprised by the almost sudden approach of night; for in this part of the globe we have very little of the twilight, observed in the European Continent, a circumstance often much regretted by Madame de la Tour. On one occasion, when expressing this regret, she presented me with the following

SONNET TO TWILIGHT.

Hail! gentle twilight! harbinger of day!
 Forerunner of the morning's goddess, hail!
 With thee, on early sweets I would regale.
 At thy approach, the shadows slide away,
 And half the globe assumes an aspect gay;
 Night's vapours flit along the opening vale,
 And Philomel concludes her plaintive tale;
 Whilst vice alone desires thee to delay.

But, ah! in this luxuriant, busy clime,—
 Gentle gradations of approaching light—
 I find you not: for here, alas! what time
 The sun has sunk to rest, then instant night
 Hides from the ravish'd eye those scenes sublime,
 Which erst had rush'd, impetuous, on the sight.

The purity of the air, and the great mildness of the climate in the Isle of France, admitted of our sleeping in the woods, secure from the injuries of the weather, feeling ourselves secure from the molestation of robbers.

At our return the following day to our respective habitations, we found them exactly in the same state in which they had been left. In this island, which then had no commerce, there was so much simplicity and good faith, that the doors of several houses were without a key, and a lock was an object of curiosity to many Creoles.

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 shadows 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.

If at any time she was asked her age, or that of Paul, she would reply—"My brother is the same age as the great cocoa-tree of the fountain; and I am as old as the little tree. The mangoes have borne fruit twelve times, and the orange-trees have borne flowers four-and-twenty times, since I came into the world." Their lives seemed linked to the trees, like those of Fauns or Dryads. They knew no other historical epochas than that of the lives of their mothers, or other chronology than that of their orchards,

and no other philosophy than that of doing good and resignation to the Divine will.

In this manner grew up these children of nature. No care had troubled their peace, no intemperance had corrupted their blood, no misplaced passion had depraved their hearts. Love, innocence, and piety, possessed their souls; and those intellectual graces unfolded themselves in their features, their attitudes, and their motions. Still in the morning of life, they had all its blooming freshness; and surely such in the garden of Eden appeared our first parents, when, coming from the hands of God, they first saw, approached, and conversed together, like brother and sister. Virginia was gentle, modest, and confiding as Eve; and Paul, like Adam, united the figure of manhood with the simplicity of infancy and childhood.

A thousand times has he told me, that sometimes being alone with her, on his return from labour, he has 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 rosebud in the midst of our orchards; when thou walkest towards the dwelling of our mothers, the partridge which trips along to its young ones, 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 benevo-

lence ; 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 gathered 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 how 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 reiterated kisses.

For some time past, however, Virginia had felt her heart agitated by new sensations. Her fine blue eyes lost their lustre, her cheek its freshness, and her frame was seized with universal languor. Serenity no longer sat upon her brow, nor smiles played upon her lips. She became suddenly gay without joy, and melancholy without vexation,

She fled her innocent sports, her gentle labours, and the society of her beloved family; wandering along the most unfrequented parts of the plantation, and seeking every where that rest which she could no where find. Sometimes at the sight of Paul she advanced sportively towards him; and, when going to accost him, was seized with sudden confusion: her pale cheeks were overspread with blushes, and her eyes no longer dared to meet those of her brother. Paul said to her, "The rocks are covered with verdure, our birds begin to sing when you approach, every thing around you is gay, and you only are unhappy." He endeavoured to soothe her by his embraces; but she turned away her head, and fled trembling towards her mother. The caresses of her brother excited too much emotion in her agitated heart. Paul could not comprehend the meaning of those new and strange caprices. Misfortunes seldom come singly.

It was near the end of December, when the sun in Capricorn darts over the Isle of France; and the south-east wind, which prevails there nearly the whole of the year, ceased to blow during the space of three weeks its vertical fires. 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 *Cafre* 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.

On one of these sultry nights Virginia, restless and unhappy, arose, then went again to rest, but could find in

no attitude either slumber or repose. At length she bent her way, by the light of the moon, towards her fountain, and gazed at its spring, which, notwithstanding the drought, still flowed like silver threads down the brown sides of the rock. She flung herself into the bason; its coolness re-animated her spirits, and a thousand soothing remembrances presented themselves to her mind. She recollected that in her infancy her mother and Margaret amused themselves by bathing her with Paul in this very spot; that Paul afterwards, reserving this bath for her use only, had dug its bed, covered the bottom with sand, and sown aromatic herbs around the borders. She saw, reflected through the water upon her naked arms and bosom, the two cocoa-trees which were planted at her birth and that of her brother, and which interwove about her head their green branches and young fruit. She called to recollection the friendship of Paul, sweeter than the odours, purer than the waters of the fountain, stronger than the intertwining palm-trees; and she sighed. Reflecting upon the hour of the night, and the profound solitude, her imagination again grew disordered. Suddenly she flew affrighted from those dangerous shades, and those waters which she fancied hotter than the torrid sun-beam, and run to her mother, in order to find a refuge from herself. Often wishing to unfold her sufferings, she pressed her mother's hand within her own; often she was ready to pronounce the name of Paul; but her oppressed heart left not her lips the power of utterance; and, leaning her head on her mother's bosom, she could only bathe it with her tears.

Madame de la Tour, though she easily discerned the source of her daughter's uneasiness, did not think proper to speak to her on that subject. "My dear child," said she, "address yourself to God, who disposes, at his will, of health and of life. He makes trial of your virtue to-day, only 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 those 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 most 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 the evening the rains ceased, the trade-winds of the south pursued their ordinary course, the tempestuous clouds were thrown towards the north-east, and the setting sun appeared in the horizon.

Virginia's first wish was to visit the spot called her *Repose*. Paul approached her with a timid air, and offered her the assistance of his arm, which she accepted, smiling, and they left the cottage together. The air was fresh and clear; white vapours arose from the ridges of the mountains, furrowed here and there by the foam of the torrents, which were now becoming dry. The garden was altogether destroyed by the hollows which the floods had worn, the roots of the fruit-trees were for the most part laid bare, and vast heaps of sand covered the chain of meadows, and choked up Virginia's bath. The two cocoa-trees, however, were still erect, and still retained their freshness; but they were no longer surrounded by turf, or arbours, or birds, except a few amadavid-birds, who, upon the points of the neighbouring rocks, lamented, in plaintive notes, the loss of their young.

At the sight of this general desolation, Virginia exclaimed

to Paul, "You brought birds hither, and the hurricane has killed them. You planted this garden, and it is now destroyed. Every thing then upon earth perishes, and it is only Heaven that is not subject to change."—"Why," answered Paul, "why cannot I give you something which belongs to Heaven? but I am possessed of nothing even upon earth." Virginia, blushing, resumed, "You have the picture of St. Paul." Scarcely had she pronounced the words, when he flew in search of it to his mother's cottage. This picture was a small miniature, representing Paul the Hermit, and which Margaret, who was very pious, had long worn hung at her neck when she was a girl, and which, since she became a mother, she had placed round the neck of her child. 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 can 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."

Accordingly they asked my advice; and I was of their opinion. "The Indian seas," I observed to them, "are calm, and in choosing a favourable season, the voyage is seldom longer than six weeks. We will furnish Paul with a little venture in my neighbourhood, where he is much beloved. If we were only to supply him with some raw cotton, of which we make no use, for want of mills to work it, some ebony, which is here so common that it serves us for firing, and some rosin, which is found in our woods; all those articles will sell advantageously in the Indies, though to us they are so useless."

I undertook to obtain permission from Monsieur de la Bourdonnais to undertake this voyage; but I determined previously to mention the affair to Paul: and my surprise was great, when this young man said to me, with a degree of good sense above his age, "And why do you wish me to leave my family for this precarious pursuit of Fortune? Is there any commerce more advantageous than the culture of the ground, which yields sometimes fifty or a hundred fold? If we wish to engage in commerce, we can do so by carrying our superfluities to the town, without my wandering to the Indies. Our mothers tell me, that Domingo is old and feeble, but I am young, and gather strength every day. If any accident should happen during my absence, above all, to Virginia, who already suffers—Oh, no, no!—I cannot resolve to leave them."

I was thrown into great perplexity by this answer, for Madame de la Tour had not concealed from me the situation of Virginia, and her desire of separating those young persons for a few years. These ideas I did not dare to hint to Paul.

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 hither, 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 on compliance with these injunctions. The perusal of this letter spread general consternation through the family. Domingo and Mary began to weep. Paul, motionless with surprise, appeared as if his heart was ready to burst with indignation; while Virginia, fixing her eyes upon her mother, had not power to utter a syllable.

“Can you now leave us?” cried Margaret to Madame de la Tour.—“No, my dear friend; no, my beloved children,” replied Madame de la Tour; “I will not leave you. I have lived with you, and with you I will die. I have known no happiness but in your affection. If my health be deranged, my past misfortunes are the cause. My heart, deeply wounded by the cruelty of a relation and the loss of my husband, has found more consolation and felicity with you beneath these humble huts, than all the wealth of my family could now give me in my native country.”

At this soothing language every eye overflowed with tears of delight. Paul pressed Madame de la Tour in his arms, exclaiming, “Neither will I leave you! I will not go to the Indies. We will all labour for you, my dear mother; and you shall never feel any wants with us.” But of the whole society, the person who displayed the least transport, and who probably felt the most, was Virginia; and, during the remainder of the day, that gentle gaiety which flowed from her heart, and proved that her peace was restored, completed the general delight.

On the following morning, as this amiable family were presenting their accustomed offering of prayer and praise, before breakfast, Domingo informed them that a gentleman

on horseback was approaching the cottage, followed by two slaves. It was M. de la Bourdonnais.

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 plantain.

The governor at first expressed some surprise 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 Bourdonnais, "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?"

He then placed a great bag of piasters, which had been brought hither by one of his slaves, upon the table. "This," added he, "is allotted by your aunt for the preparations necessary for the young lady's voyage." Gently reproaching Madame de la Tour for not having had recourse to him in her difficulties, he extolled, at the same time, her noble fortitude. Upon this Paul said to the governor, "My mother did address herself to you, sir, and you received her ill."—"Have you another child, madam?" said Mon-

sieur de la Bourdonnais to Madame de la Tour.—“No, sir,” she replied: “this is the child of my friend; but he and Virginia are equally dear to us.”—“Young man,” said the governor to Paul, “when you have acquired a little more experience of the world, you will know, that it is the misfortune of people in place to be deceived, and thence to bestow upon intriguing vice, that which belongs to modest worth.”

At the request of Madame de la Tour, M. de la Bourdonnais seated himself next to her at table: and breakfasted with them according to the manner of the Creoles, upon coffee, mixed with boiled rice.

He was delighted with the order and neatness which prevailed in the little cottage, the harmony of the two interesting families, and the zeal of their old servants. “Here,” said he, “I see 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.”

The governor 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 one to assist you; and you will be compelled to seek a living by working, like a hireling, without ceasing. This fills me with great sorrow."

"God," replied Virginia, "has ordained us to labour; I have learnt from you to work, and to be grateful to Almighty God. He never has forsaken us: He never will forsake us. His providence watches over the unfortunate: you have told me this yourself very often, my dear mother. I cannot resolve to leave you."

Madame de la Tour replied, with much emotion, "I have no other aim than to render you happy, and to marry you one day to Paul, who is not your brother. Reflect at present that his fortune depends upon you."

A young girl, who loves, believes that all the world is ignorant of her passion; she throws over her eyes the veil which she has thrown over her heart: but when it is lifted up by some cherishing hand, the secret inquietudes of passion suddenly burst their bounds, and the soothing overflowings of confidence succeed that reserve and mystery with which the oppressed heart had enveloped its feelings. Virginia, deeply affected by this new proof of her mother's tenderness, related to her how cruel had been those struggles which Heaven alone had witnessed; declared that she saw the succour of Providence in that of an affectionate mother, who approved of her attachment, and would guide her by her counsels; that, being now strengthened by such support, every consideration led her to remain with her mother, without anxiety for the present, and without apprehension for the future.

Madame de la Tour, perceiving that her confidential conversation 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 minister went away, and informed the governor of the success of his mission. In the mean time Madame de la Tour sent Domingo to desire I would come hither, that she might consult me upon Virginia's departure. I was of opinion that she ought not to go. I consider it as a fixed principle of happiness that we ought to prefer the advantages of nature to those of fortune; and never go in search of that at a distance, which we may find in our own bosoms. But what could be expected from my moderate counsels, opposed to the illusions of a splendid fortune; and my simple reasoning, contradicted by the prejudices of the world, and an authority which Madame de la Tour held sacred? This lady had only consulted me from a sentiment of respect; and had, in reality, ceased to deliberate since she had heard the decision of her confessor. Margaret herself, who, notwithstanding the advantages she hoped for her son from the possession of Virginia's fortune, had hitherto opposed her departure; made no further ob-

jections. As for Paul, ignorant of what was decided, and alarmed at the secret conversation which Madame de la Tour held with her daughter, he abandoned himself to deep melancholy. "They are plotting something against my peace," cried he, "since they are so careful of concealment."

A report having spread through the island, that these cottagers had been favoured by some extraordinary good fortune, merchants of every description ran with eagerness to lay before them their various tempting commodities. They might be seen displaying to those simple cottagers the richest stuffs of India; the dimities of Goudelour; the handkerchiefs of Poulicat and Mazulipatam, the muslins of Decca, plain, 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 de 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 she 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; and 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 looked 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 in the rich dress of the ladies of this country! She was dressed in white muslin, lined with rose-coloured taffeta. Her small and elegant shape was displayed to advantage by her corset, and the lavish profusion of her light tresses were carelessly blended with her simple head-dress. Her fine blue eyes were filled with an expression of melancholy; and the struggles of passion, with which her heart was agitated, flushed her cheek, and gave her voice a tone of emotion. The contrast between her pensive look and her gay habiliments rendered her more interesting than ever; nor was it possible to see or hear her unmoved. Paul became more and more melancholy. At length Margaret, distressed by the situation of her son, took him aside, and said to him, "Why, my dear son, will you cherish vain hopes, which will only render your disappointment more bitter? It is time that I should make known to you the secret of your life and of mine: Mademoiselle de la Tour belongs by her mother to a rich and noble family, while you are but the son of a poor peasant girl; and what is worse, you are a natural child." An expression which Paul had never heard before, and concerning which he inquired with eagerness its meaning.

His mother replied, "you had no legitimate father. When I was a girl, seduced by love, I was guilty of a weakness, of which you are the offspring. My fault deprived you of the protection of a father's family, and my flight from home of that of a mother's family. Unfortunate child! you have no relation in the world but me!" and she shed a flood of tears. Paul, pressing her in his arms, exclaimed, "Oh! my dear mother! since I have no relation in the world but you, I will love you still more! But what a secret have you disclosed to me! I now see the reason why Mademoiselle de la Tour has estranged herself from me for two months past, and why she has determined to go. Ah! I perceive too well that she despises me!"

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.

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 lantern 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 opi-

nion, and my confessor said it is the will of God that I should depart; and that life is a state of probation: Alas! how severe that probation is!"

"What!" exclaimed Paul, "you have found so many reasons then for going, and not one for remaining here! Ah; there is one reason for your departure which you have not mentioned. Riches have great attractions. You will soon find in the new world, to which you are going, another, to whom you will give the name of brother, which you will bestow on me no more. You will choose that brother from amongst persons who are worthy of you by their birth, and by a fortune which I have not to offer. But where will you go in order to be happier? On what shore will you land which will be dearer to you than the spot which gave you birth? Where will you find a society more interesting to you than this by which you are so beloved? How will you bear to live without your mother's caresses, to which you are so accustomed? What will become of her, already advanced in years, when she will no longer see you at her side at table, in the house, in the walks where she used to lean upon you? What will become of my mother who loves you with the same affection? What shall I say to comfort them when I see them weeping for your absence? Cruel! I speak not to you of myself; but what will become of me, when in the morning I shall no more see you; when the evening will come, and will not re-unite us! When I shall gaze on the two palm-trees, planted at our birth, and so long the witness of our mutual friendship? Ah! since a new destiny attracts you, since you seek in a country, distant from your own, other possessions than those which were the fruits of my labour, let me accompany you in the vessel in which you are going to embark. I will animate your courage in the midst of those tempests, at which you are so terrified even on shore; I will lay your head on my bosom; I will warm your heart upon my own; and in France, where you go, in search of fortune and of grandeur, I will attend you as your slave. Happy only in your happiness, you will find me in those palaces, where I shall see you happy and noble, and will there offer to you the greatest of sacrifices by dying at your feet!"

He could no longer articulate distinctly : his voice was stifled with throbbing.

We then heard Virginia thus address him, although frequently her voice was interrupted by deep and heavy sighs :—" For thy sake alone it is 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 towards 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 ; and now you would separate her from me ! You send her to Europe, that barbarous country which refused you an asylum, and to relations by whom you were abandoned. You will tell me that I have no right over her, and that she is not my sister. She is every thing to me, riches, birth, family, my sole good ! I know no other. We have had but one roof, one cradle, and we will have but one grave. If she goes, I will follow her. The governor will prevent me ! Will he prevent me from flinging myself into the sea ? Will he prevent me from

following her by swimming? The sea cannot be more fatal to me than the land. Since I cannot live with her, at least I will die before her eyes; far from you, inhuman mother! woman without compassion! May the ocean, to which you trust her, restore her to you no more! May the waves, rolling back our corpses amidst the stones of the beach, give you, in the loss of your two children, an eternal subject of remorse!"

As despair had evidently deprived him of reason, I seized him in my arms; his eyes flashed fire, big drops of sweat hung upon his face, his knees trembled, and I felt his heart beat violently against his burning bosom.

The affrighted Virginia said to him, "Oh my friend, I call to witness the pleasures of our early age, your sorrow and my own, and every thing that can for ever bind two unfortunate beings to each other, that if I remain, I will live but for you; that if I go, I will one day return to be yours. I call you all to witness, you who have reared my infancy, who dispose of my life, who see my tears; I swear by that Heaven which hears me, by the sea which I am going to pass, by the air I breathe, and which I never sullied by a falsehood."

Like as the sun-beams dissolve an icy rock on the summit of the Apennines, did the tumultuous rage of this young man subside, when he heard the voice of his beloved Virginia. He dropped his head upon his breast, and gave vent to a flood of tears.

His afflicted mother mingling her own tears with his, but totally incapable of utterance, held him fast locked in her arms.

The mother of Virginia, in the utmost distraction of mind, now said to me: "I can support this no longer; my soul is torn by conflicting and contending passions; this projected and unfortunate voyage must not take place. Pray, my good neighbour, try to persuade Paul to accompany you homewards. Eight days have now elapsed since any of us have enjoyed a moment's repose!"

Accordingly, I said to Paul, "My dear friend, your sister shall remain with us; we will mention the matter to the governor. In the mean time, pray allow your family to have some rest, and do you come and remain with me at my habitation this night. It is now past

midnight: the cross of the south is immediately over the horizon."

Paul then allowed me to conduct him in silence to my cottage, where he spent a very restless night. He rose at break of day, and then returned to his own dwelling.

Why should I pursue this melancholy story? In human life there is one agreeable side to contemplate. Like the globe which we inhabit, and on which we revolve, our rapid career is only that of a day; and one part of that day can receive no illumination, until the other be involved in darkness.

"Let me intreat you, father," said I, "to conclude a narrative which you have begun and continued in such an affecting manner. Whilst images of mere happiness give delight to the fancy, the recital of misfortunes conveys instruction. Besides, I am very anxious to know what became of this distracted and unfortunate young man."

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 towards 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 green 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 mountains; among others, those of Piterboth, and of the Three Paps, or Peaks, 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 even after it had actually disappeared from his sight, he imagined that he perceived it; and when he had entirely lost it in the thick vapour of the horizon, he seated himself on 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.

Madame de la Tour told us, that a favourable wind having arisen at three o'clock in the morning, and the vessel being ready to set sail, the governor, attended by his general officers and the missionary, had come with a palanquin in search of Virginia; and that, notwithstanding her own objections, her tears, and those of Margaret, all the while exclaiming that it was for the general welfare, they had carried away Virginia, almost dying.

"At least," cried Paul, "if I had bid her farewell, I should now be more calm. I would have said to her, 'Virginia, if, during the time we have lived together, one word may have escaped me which has offended you, before you leave me for ever, tell me that you forgive me.' I would have said to her, 'Since I am destined to see you no more, farewell, my dear Virginia, farewell! Live, far from me, contented and happy!'"

Observing his mother and Madame de la Tour weeping, "You must now," said he, "seek some other than me to

wipe away your tears: and then, rushing out of the house, he wandered up and down the plantation. He flew eagerly to those spots which had been most dear to Virginia. He said to the goats and their kids, which followed him bleating, "What do you ask of me? You will see her no more, who used to feed you with her own hand." He went to the bower, called Virginia's Repose; and, as the birds flew around him, exclaimed, "Poor little birds! you will fly no more to meet her who cherished you!" And observing Fidèle running backwards and forwards in search of her, he heaved a deep sigh, and cried, "Ah! you will never find her again." At length he went and seated himself upon the rock where he had conversed with her the preceding evening; and at the view of the ocean, upon which he had seen the vessel disappear which bore her away, he wept bitterly.

Apprehending some fatal consequence from the violent agitation of his mind, we continually watched his motions.

His mother and Madame de la Tour conjured him, in the most tender manner, not to increase their affliction by his despair.

At length she soothed his mind, by lavishing upon him such epithets as were best calculated to revive his hopes. She called him her son, her dear son, whom she destined for her daughter. She prevailed with him to return to the house, and receive a little nourishment. He seated himself with us at table, next the place which used to be occupied by the companion of his childhood; and, as if she had still been present, he spoke to her, and offered whatever he knew was most agreeable to her taste; and then starting from this dream of fancy, he began to weep. For some days he employed himself in gathering together every thing which had belonged to Virginia; the last nosegays she had worn, the cocoa-shell in which she used to drink; and, after kissing a thousand times those relics of his friend, to him the most precious treasures which the world contained, he hid them in his bosom.

The spreading perfumes of the amber are not so sweet as the objects which have belonged to those we love. At length, perceiving that his anguish increased that of his mother and Madame de la Tour, and that the wants of the family required continual labour, he began, with the assist-

ance of Domingo, to repair the garden. This young man, till now indifferent as a Creole with respect to what was passing in the world, now desired I would teach him to read and write, that he might carry on a correspondence with Virginia. He then wished to be instructed in geography, that he might have some 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. No book delighted him so much as *Telemachus*, 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.

Nearly 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 dearly beloved mother, I have already sent you several letters, written with my own hand; but, having received no answer, I fear they have not reached you. I have better hopes for this, from the means I have now taken of sending you tidings of myself, and of hearing from you. I have shed many tears since our separation; I, who never used to weep, but for the misfortunes of others! My aunt was much astonished, when having, upon my arrival, inquired what accomplishments I possessed, I told her that I could neither read nor write. She asked me what then I had learned since I came into the world; and when I answered that I had been taught to take care of the household affairs, and obey your will, she told me, that I had received the education of a servant. The next day she placed me as a boarder in a great abbey near Paris, where I have masters of all kinds; who teach me, among other things, history, geography, grammar, mathematics and riding. But I have so little capacity for all those sciences, that I make but small progress with my masters.

"The kindness of my aunt, however, does not abate towards me. She gives me new dresses for each season; and she has placed two waiting-women with me, who are both dressed like fine ladies. She has made me take the title of countess; but has obliged me to renounce the name

of La Tour, which is as dear to me as it is to you, from all you have told me of the sufferings my father endured in order to marry you. She has replaced your name by that of your family, which is also dear to me, because it was your name when a girl. Seeing myself in so splendid a situation, I implored her to let me send you some assistance. But how shall 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 intrusted 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, besides 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 the 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 send several pairs of stockings of my own making for you and my mamma Margaret, a cap for Domingo, and one of my red handkerchiefs for Mary. I also send with this packet some kernels, and seeds of various kinds of fruits, which I gathered in the fields. There are much more beautiful flowers in the meadows of this country than in ours; but nobody cares for them. I am sure that you and my mamma Margaret will be better pleased with this bag of seeds, than you were with the piasters, which was the cause of our separation, and of my tears. It will give me great delight if you should one day see apple trees growing at the side of the plantain, and elms blending their foliage with our cocoa trees. You will fancy yourself in Normandy, which you love so much.

“ You desired me to relate to you my joys and my griefs. I have no joys far from you. As for my griefs, I endeavour to soothe them by reflecting that I am in the situation in which you placed me by the will of God. But my greatest affliction is, that no one here speaks to me of you, and that I must speak of you to no one. My waiting women, or rather those of my aunt, for they belong more to her than to me, told me the other day, when I wished to turn the conversation upon the objects most dear to me, ‘ Remember, madam, that you are a French woman, and must forget that country of savages.’ Ah! sooner will I forget myself, than forget the spot on which I was born, and which you inhabit! It is this country which is to me a land of savages; for I live alone, having no one to whom I can impart those feelings of tenderness for you which I shall bear with me to the grave.

“ I am, my dearest and beloved mother,

“ Your affectionate and dutiful daughter,

“ VIRGINIA DE LA TOUR.”

Paul was much surprised that Virginia had not made the least mention of him; she who had not even forgotten the house-dog: he was entirely ignorant, that he 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 Farewell."

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 as for herself she was inconsolable.

The wretched Paul also sent her a long letter, in which he assured her he would arrange the garden in a manner agreeable to her taste, and blend the plants of Europe with those of Africa. He sent her some fruit culled from the cocoa-trees of the fountain, which were now arrived at maturity: telling her, that he would not add any more of the other seeds of the island, that the desire of seeing those productions again might hasten her return. He conjured her to comply without delay with the ardent wishes of her family, and, above all, with his own, since he was unable to endure the pain of their separation.

Paul with a careful hand sowed the European seeds,

particularly the violet and the scabious, the flowers of which seemed to bear some analogy to the character and situation of Virginia, by whom they had been recommended: but whether they were injured by the voyage, or whether the soil of this part of Africa is unfavourable to their growth, a very small number of them blew, and none came to perfection.

Envy which pursues human happiness, spread reports over the island which gave great uneasiness to Paul. The persons who had brought Virginia's letter, asserted that she was upon the point of being married, and named the noblemen of the court with whom she was going to be united. Some even declared that she was already married, of which they were witnesses. Paul at first despised this report, brought by one of those trading ships, which often spread erroneous intelligence in their passage; but some ill-natured persons, by their insulting pity, led him to give some degree of credit to this cruel intelligence. Besides, he had seen in the novels which he had lately read, that perfidy was treated as a subject of pleasantry; and knowing that those books were faithful representations of European manners, he feared that the heart of Virginia was corrupted, and had forgotten its former engagements.

Thus the knowledge he had acquired of the world and its habits caused only anticipation of misery. What completed his suspicions was, that several European vessels had arrived during the year, yet he had not received any fresh tidings of Virginia.

Abandoned to all the agitations of a heart filled with love. This unfortunate young man 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 banks 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 nume-

rous 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, recovers its former limpidness, and having again become transparent, reflects, 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 re-

served 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 my necessities, and my pleasures.

To these I add a few books, which teach me to become better. They contribute also to my happiness, by placing before me pictures of those passions which render its inhabitants so miserable; and the comparison which I make between their destiny and my own, leads me to feel a sort of negative happiness. Like a man, whom shipwreck has thrown upon a rock, I contemplate, from my solitude, the storms which roll over the rest of the world; and my repose seems more profound than the distant sounds of the tempest.

I am led calmly down the stream of time to the ocean of futurity, which has no boundaries; while in the contemplation of the present harmony of nature, I raise my soul towards its supreme Author, and hope for a more happy destiny in another state of existence.

Although you do not descry my hermitage, which is situated in the midst of a forest, among that immense variety of objects which this elevated spot presents, the grounds are disposed with particular beauty, at least to one who, like me, loves rather the seclusion of a home-scene, than great and extensive prospects. The river which glides before my door passes in a straight line across the woods, and appears like a long canal shaded by trees of all kinds. There are black date plum-trees, what we here call the narrow-leaved dodonea, olive-wood, gum-trees, and the cinnamon-tree; while in some parts the cabbage-trees raise their naked columns more than a hundred feet high, crowned at their summits with clustering leaves, and towering above the wood like one forest piled upon

another. Lianas, of various foliage, intertwining among the woods, form arcades of flowers and verdant canopies. Those trees for the most part shed aromatic odours of a nature so powerful, that the garments of a traveller, who has passed through the forest, retain for several hours the delicious fragrance. In the season when those trees produce their lavish blossoms, they appear as if 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 gun 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.

Numerous confused sounds issue from those tumultuous waters, which scattered by the winds of the forest, sometimes sink, sometimes swell, and send forth a hollow tone like the deep bells of a cathedral. The air, for ever renewed by the circulation of the waters, fans the banks of that river with freshness, and leaves a degree of verdure, notwithstanding the summer heats, rarely found in this island, even upon the summits of the mountains.

At some distance is a rock, placed far enough from the cascade to prevent the ear from being deafened by the noise of its waters, and sufficiently near for the enjoyment of their view, their coolness, and their murmurs. Thither, amidst the heats of summer, Madame de la Tour, Margaret, Virginia, Paul and myself, sometimes repaired, and dined beneath the shadow of the rock. Virginia, who always directed her most ordinary actions to the good of others, never ate of any fruit without planting the seed or kernel in the ground. "From this," said she, "trees will come, which will give their fruit to some traveller, or at least to some bird." One day, having eaten of the papaya fruit, at the foot of that rock she planted the seeds. Soon after several papayas sprang up, amongst which was one that yielded fruit. This tree had risen but a little from the ground at the time of Virginia's departure: but, its growth being rapid, in the space of two years it had gained twenty feet of height, and the upper part of its stem was encircled with several layers of ripe fruit. Paul, having wandered to that spot, was delighted to see that this lofty tree had arisen from the small seed planted by his beloved friend; but that emotion instantly gave place to a deep melancholy, at this evidence of her long absence.

The objects which we see habitually do not remind us of the rapidity of life; they decline insensibly with ourselves; but those which we behold again, after having for some years lost sight of them, impress us powerfully with the idea of that swiftness with which the tide 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 tri-

amphal arches of the Romans! May nature, which is daily destroying the monuments of the ambition 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.

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 niece in marriage, when I shall have become a great lord."

"My good friend," I replied, "have you not told me that your birth is ignoble?"

"So my mother has told me," said Paul; "but, 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."

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

"How unfortunate I am!" resumed Paul, "every thing repulses me; I am condemned to waste my wretched life in labour, far from Virginia." And here he heaved a deep sigh.

"Since her relation," he added, "will only give her in marriage to some one with a great name;—by the aid of study we become wise and celebrated. I will fly then to study; I will acquire sciences; I will serve my country usefully by my attainments; I shall be independent; I shall become renowned; and my glory will belong only to myself."

"My son! talents are still more rare than birth or riches,

and are, undoubtedly, an inestimable good, of which nothing can deprive us, and which every where conciliate public esteem. But they cost dear: they are generally allied to exquisite sensibility, which renders their possessor miserable. But you tell me that you would serve mankind. He who, from the soil which he cultivates, draws forth one additional sheaf of corn, serves mankind more than he who presents them with a book."

"Oh! she then," exclaimed Paul, "who planted this papaya-tree, made a present to the inhabitants of the forest more dear and more useful than if she had given them a library." And, seizing the tree in his arms, he kissed it with transport.

"Ah! I desire glory only," he resumed, "to confer it upon Virginia, and render her dear to the whole universe. But you, who know so much, tell me if we shall ever be married? I wish I was at least learned enough to look into futurity. Virginia must come back. What need has she of a rich relation? She was so happy in those huts, so beautiful, and so well dressed, with a red handkerchief or flowers round her head! Return, Virginia! Leave your palaces, your splendour! Return to these rocks, to the shade of our woods and our cocoa-trees! Alas! you are, perhaps, unhappy!" and he began to weep. "My father! conceal nothing from me. If you cannot tell me whether I shall marry Virginia or no, tell me, at least, if she still loves me amidst those great lords who speak to the king, and go to see her."

"Oh! my dear friend," I answered, "I am sure that she loves you for several reasons; but, above all, because she is virtuous." At those words he threw himself upon my neck, in a transport of joy.

"But what," said he, "do you understand by virtue?"

"My son! to you, who support your family by your labour, it need not be defined. Virtue is an effort which we make for the good of others, and with the intention of pleasing God."

"Oh! how virtuous then," cried he, "is Virginia! Virtue made her seek for riches, that she might practise benevolence. Virtue led her to forsake this island, and virtue will bring her back." The idea of her near return fired his imagination, and his inquietudes suddenly va-

nished. Virginia, he was persuaded, had not written, because she would soon arrive: it took so little time to come 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 mornings 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 disordered and obscured; but there is an ever-burning lamp, at which we can rekindle its flame; and that is, literature.

“Literature, my dear son, is the gift of Heaven; a ray of that wisdom which governs the universe; and which man, inspired by celestial intelligence, has drawn to earth. Like the sun, it enlightens, it rejoices, it warms with a divine flame, and seems, in some sort, like the element of fire, to bend all nature to our use. By the aid of literature, we bring around us all things, all places, men, and times. By its aid we calm the passions, suppress vice, and excite virtue. Literature is the daughter of Heaven, who has descended upon earth to soften, and to charm all human evils.

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 towards us, and invite us to join their society, when everybody 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 hoisted upon the Mount Discovery, being the signal of a vessel descried at sea. He flew to the town to learn if any tidings had been brought by this vessel of Virginia.

He continued at Port Louis till the return of the pilot, who had gone to reconnoitre her, according to the usual custom.

The pilot did not return before evening. He then reported to the governor, that the vessel which they had hailed was the *St. Gerard*, commanded by a captain named *M. Aubin*; that she was not more than four leagues distant; and would enter Port Louis the following afternoon, if the wind were favourable: at present there was a calm. The pilot then remitted to the governor a number of letters from France, amongst which was one addressed to *Madame de la Tour*, in the hand writing of Virginia. Paul seized upon the letter, kissed it with transport, placed it in his bosom, and flew to the plantation. No sooner did he perceive from a distance the family, who were waiting his return upon the *Rock Farewell*, than he waved the letter in the air, without having the power to speak; and instantly the whole family crowded round *Madame de la Tour* to hear it read.

Virginia informed her mother that she had suffered much

ill treatment from her aunt, who, after having in vain urged her to marry against her inclination, had disinherited her; and at length sent her back at such a season of the year, that she must probably reach the Mauritius at the very period of the hurricanes. In vain, she added, she had endeavoured to soften her aunt, by representing what she owed to her mother, and to the habits of her early years: she had been treated as a romantic girl, whose head was turned by novels.

At present, she said, she could think of nothing but the transport of again seeing and embracing her beloved family; and that she would have satisfied this dearest wish of her heart that very day, if the captain would have permitted her to embark in the pilot's boat; but that he had opposed her going, on account of the distance from the shore, and of a swell in the ocean, notwithstanding it was a calm.

Scarcely was the letter finished, when the whole family, transported with joy, repeated, "Virginia is arrived!" and mistresses and servants embraced each other.

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 towards my habitation.

It might be about ten o'clock at night: I had just extinguished my lamp, and 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 answered, "I came from that part of the island called Gold Dust; and am sent to the Port, to inform the

governor that a ship from France had anchored upon the island of Amber; and fires guns of distress, for the sea is very stormy." Having said this, the man left us, and pursued his journey.

"Let us go," said I to Paul, "towards that part of the island, and meet Virginia. It is only three leagues from hence." Accordingly we bent our course thither. The moon had risen, and was encompassed by three large black circles. A dismal darkness shrouded the sky; but the frequent flakes of lightning discovered long chains of thick clouds, gloomy, low-hung, and heaped together over the middle of the island, after having rolled with great rapidity from the ocean, although we felt not a breath of wind upon the land. As we walked along, we thought we heard peals of thunder; but after listening more attentively, we found they were the sound of distant cannon, repeated by the echoes.

Those sounds, joined to the tempestuous aspect of the heavens, made me shudder. I had little doubt that they were signals of distress from a ship in danger. In half an hour the firing ceased, and I felt the silence more appalling than the dismal sounds which had preceded.

We hastened on without uttering a word or daring to communicate our apprehensions. At midnight we arrived on the sea-shore at that part of the island. The billows broke against the beach with a horrible noise, covering the rocks and the strand with their foam, of a dazzling whiteness, and blended with sparks of fire. By their phosphoric gleams we distinguished, notwithstanding the darkness, the canoes of the fishermen, which they had drawn far upon the sand.

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 spoke, 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 in her as if I were on dry land."

A third islander declared it was impossible for the ship to enter that channel, which was scarcely navigable for a boat. He asserted, that he had seen the vessel at anchor beyond the Isle of Amber, so that if the wind arose in the morning, it could either put to sea, or gain the harbour.

Different opinions were stated upon this subject, which while those indolent Creoles calmly discussed, Paul and I observed a profound silence.

We remained on this spot till break of day, when the weather was too hazy to admit of our distinguishing any object at sea, which was covered with fog. All we could descry was a dark cloud, which they told us was the Isle of Amber, at the distance of a quarter of a league from the coast. We could only discern on this gloomy day the point of the beech where we stood, and the peaks of some mountains in the interior of the island, rising occasionally from amidst the clouds which hung around them.

About seven in the morning we heard the beat of drums in the woods; and soon after the governor, Monsieur de la Bourdonnais, arrived on horseback, followed by a detachment of soldiers armed with muskets, and a great number of islanders and blacks. He ranged his soldiers upon the beach, and ordered them to make a general dis-

charge, which was no sooner done, than we perceived a glimmering light upon the water, which was instantly succeeded by the sound of a gun. We judged that the ship was at no great distance, and run towards that part where we had seen the light. We now discerned, through the fog, the hulk and tackling of a large vessel; and, notwithstanding the noise of the waves, we were near enough to hear the whistle of the boatswain at the helm, and the shouts of the mariners. As soon as the *St. Gerard* perceived that we were near enough to give her succour, she continued to fire guns regularly at the interval of three minutes.

Monsieur de la Bourdonnois caused great fires to be lighted in different parts, and along the strand, and to all the inhabitants to collect provisions, casks, planks, cables, and empty casks.

There very soon arrived a great multitude, accompanied by negroes loaded with provisions and cordage. They came from the plantations of Gold Dust, the quarter of the Marsh, and from the Rampart River. One of the oldest of the 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 *pailengu*, 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 head to the waves which rolled from the open sea: and as each billow rushed into the straits, the ship heaved, so that her keel was in air, and at the same moment her stern, plunging into the water, disappeared altogether, as if it were swallowed up by the surges. In this position, driven by the winds and waves towards the shore, it was equally impossible for her to return by the passage through which she had made her way; or, by cutting her cables, to throw herself upon the beach, from which she was separated by sand-banks, mingled with breakers.

Every billow which broke upon the coast advanced roaring to the bottom of the bay, and threw planks to the distance of fifty feet upon the land; then, rushing back, laid bare its sandy bed, from which it rolled immense stones, with a hoarse dismal noise. The sea, swelled by the violence of the wind, rose higher every moment: and the channel between this island and the Isle of Amber was but one vast sheet of white foam, with yawning pits of black deep billows. The foam boiling in the gulf was more than six feet high; and the winds, which swept its surface, bore it over the steep coast more than half a league upon the land. Those innumerable white flakes, driven horizontally as far as the foot of the mountain, appeared like snow issuing from the ocean, which was now confounded with the sky. Thick clouds of a horrible form swept along the zenith with the swiftness of birds, while others appeared motionless as rocks. No spot of azure could be discerned in the firmament; only a pale yellow gleam displayed the objects of earth, sea, and skies.



*Wreck of the St. Geran, and
Death of Virginia.*

Published by Hodgson & Co 10, Newgate Street.

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The violent efforts of the ship, soon caused what we dreaded would happen. The cables at the head of the vessel were torn away; it was then held by one anchor only, and was instantly dashed upon the rocks, at the distance of half a cable's length from the shore. A general cry of horror issued from the spectators.

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 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 hencoops, 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 the 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, he 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 the 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, engulfed 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 myself drew Paul senseless to the shore, the blood flowing from his mouth and ears. The governor put him into the hands of a surgeon, while we sought along the beach for the corpse of Virginia. But the wind having suddenly changed, which frequently happens during hurricanes, our search was vain ; and we lamented that we could not even pay this unfortunate young woman the last sad sepulchral duties. We retired from the spot overwhelmed with dismay, and our minds wholly occupied by one cruel loss, although numbers had perished in the wreck. Some of the spectators seemed tempted, from the fatal destiny of this virtuous young woman, to doubt the existence of Providence. Alas ! there are in life

such terrible, such unmerited evils, that even the hope of the wise is sometimes shaken.

In the mean time, Paul, who began to recover his senses, was taken to a house in the neighbourhood, till he was able to be removed to his own habitation. Thither I bent my way with Domingo, and undertook the sad task of preparing Virginia's mother and her friend for the melancholy event which had happened. When we reached the entrance of the valley of the river of Fan-Palms as it was sometimes called, some negroes informed us that the sea had thrown many pieces of the wretch into the opposite bay. We descended towards it; and one of the first objects which struck my sight upon the beach was the corpse of Virginia. The body was half-covered with sand, and in the attitude in which we had seen her perish. Her features were not changed; her eyes were closed, her countenance was still serene; but the pale violets of death were blended on her cheek with the blush of virgin 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 sufferings so exquisite, that I became convinced there was no sorrow like a mother's sorrow. When she recovered her senses, she cast her languid and stedfast looks on heaven. In vain her friend and myself pressed her hands in ours: in vain we called upon her in the most tender names; she appeared wholly insensible; and her oppressed bosom heaved deep and hollow moans.

The next morning Paul was brought home in a palanquin. He was restored to reason, but unable to utter a word. His interview with his mother and Madame de la Tour, which I had dreaded, produced a better effect than all my cares. A ray of consolation gleamed upon the countenances of those unfortunate mothers. They flew to meet him, clasped him in their arms, and bathed him with tears, which excess of anguish till now had forbidden to flow. Paul mixed his tears with theirs; and nature, having thus found relief, a long stupor succeeded the convulsive pangs they had suffered, and gave them a lethargic repose like that of death.

The governor sent to apprise me secretly that the corpse of Virginia had been borne to the town by his order, from whence it was to be transferred to the church of Pamplemousses. I hastened to Port Louis, and found a multitude assembled from all parts, in order to be present at the funeral solemnity, as if the whole island had lost its fairest ornament. The vessels in the harbour had their yards crossed, their flags hoisted, and fired guns at intervals. The grenadiers led the funeral procession, with their muskets reversed, their drums muffled, and sending forth slow and dismal sounds. 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 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 sigh 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 negroes 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 these 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 even possess!

This deeply-lamented corpse was interred near the church of Pamplemousses, upon the western side, at the foot of a copse of bamboos; where, in coming from mass with her mother and Margaret, she took pleasure in reposing, seated by him she called her brother.

On returning from the funeral, the governor ascended the mountain, followed by a part of his numerous retinue. He expressed himself, though in few words, with great indignation, against her unnatural relation. Approaching Paul, he said every thing to him which he imagined might have a tendency to render him consolation. "I was desirous," said he "to contribute to your happiness, and to that of your family. Heaven bears witness to my sincerity."

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 precipitately 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 to Pamplémousses; and when he was near the church, in the Alley of Bamboos, he walked directly to the spot where he saw some new-laid earth, and there kneeling down, and raising up his eyes to heaven, he offered up a long prayer, which appeared to me a symptom of returning reason; since this mark of confidence in the Supreme Being showed that his mind began to resume its natural functions. Domingo and I followed his example, fell upon our knees, and mingled our prayers with his. When he arose, he bent his way, paying little

attention to us, towards the northern part of the island. As we knew that he was not only ignorant of the spot where the body of Virginia was laid, but even whether it had been snatched from the waves, I asked him why he had offered up his prayer at the foot of those bamboos. He answered, "We have been there so often;" He continued his course until we reached the borders of the forest, when night came on. I prevailed with him to take some nourishment; and we slept upon the grass, at the foot of a tree. The next day I thought he seemed disposed to trace back his steps; for, after having gazed a considerable time upon the church of Pamplemousses, with its avenues of bamboo stretching along the plain, he made a motion as if he would return; but, suddenly plunging into the forest, he directed his course to the north. I judged what was his design, from which I endeavoured to dissuade him in vain. At noon we arrived at that part of the island called the Gold Dust. He rushed to the sea-shore, opposite to the spot where the Saint Gerard perished. At the 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 Peaks, 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 recalled the remembrance of his loss; and to lead him to a more busy part of the island.

With this view, I conducted him to the inhabited heights of Wilkinse's Quarter, which he had never before visited, and where agriculture and commerce always created much bustle and variety.

Numerous spectators were employed in hewing down the trees, while others were sawing plants. Carriages were passing and repassing on the roads. Numerous herds of oxen, and troops of horses were feeding on those ample meadows, over which a number of habitations were scattered. On many spots the elevation of the soil was favourable to the culture of European trees: ripe corn waved its yellow sheaves upon the plains: strawberry plants flourished in the openings of the woods, and hedges of rose-bushes along the roads. The freshness of the air, by giving a tension to the nerves, was favourable to the Europeans. From those heights, situated near the middle of the island, and surrounded by extensive forests, you could neither discern Port Louis, the church of Pamplemousses, nor any other object which could recall to Paul the remembrance of Virginia. Even the mountains, which appear of various shapes on the side of Port Louis, present nothing to the eye from those plains but a long promontory, stretching itself in a straight and perpendicular line, from whence arise lofty pyramids of rocks, on the summits of which the clouds repose. To those scenes I conducted Paul, and kept him continually in action, walking with him in rain and sunshine night and day, and contriving that he should lose himself in the depths of forests, leading him over untilled grounds, and endeavouring, by violent fatigue, to divert his mind from its gloomy

meditations, and change the course of his reflections, by his ignorance of the paths where we wandered.

But the soul of a lover finds every where the traces of the object beloved. The night and the day, the calm of solitude and the tumult of crowds; time itself, while it casts the shade of oblivion over so many other remembrances, in vain would tear that tender and sacred recollection from the heart: 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 towards 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 he appeared as if ready to burst with emotion. His eyes were filled with tears, which had no power 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 ardour 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. Your own misfortunes are indeed severe. You have lost the most amiable of women; she who sacrificed her own interests to your's, who preferred you to all that fortune could bestow, and considered you as the only recompense worthy of her virtues. But might not this very object, from whom you expected the purest happi-

ness, have proved to you a source of the most cruel distress? She had returned poor, disinherited; and all you could henceforth have partaken with her was your labours; while rendered more delicate by her misfortunes, you would have beheld her every day sinking beneath her efforts to share and soften your fatigues.

Had she brought you children, this would only have served to increase her inquietudes and your own, from the difficulty of sustaining your aged parents, and your infant family. You will tell me, there would have been reserved to you a happiness independent of fortune, that of protecting a beloved object, which attaches itself to us in proportion to its helplessness: that your pains and sufferings would have served to endear you to each other, and that your passion would have gathered strength from your mutual misfortunes. Undoubtedly, virtuous love can shed a charm over pleasures which are thus mingled with bitterness. But Virginia is no more; yet those persons still live, whom, next to yourself, she held most dear; her mother, and your own, whom your inconsolable affliction is bending with sorrow to the grave. Place your happiness, as she did hers, in affording them succour. And why deplore the fate of Virginia? Virginia still exists. There is, be assured, a region in which virtue receives its reward. Virginia now is happy. Ah! if, from the abode of angels she could tell you, as she did when she bid you farewell, O, Paul! life is but a trial. I was faithful to the laws of nature, love, and virtue. Heaven found I had fulfilled my duties, and snatched me for ever from all the miseries I might have felt for myself or others, I am placed above the reach of unhappiness. 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 tempest, 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 recall 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 immense summer 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 towards infinite duration, and bear the evils of a day."

My own emotion choked my utterance. Paul, looking at me steadfastly, cried, "She is no more! She is no more!" and a long fainting fit succeeded that melancholy exclamation. When restored to himself he said, "Since death is a good, and since Virginia is happy, I would die too, and be united to Virginia."

Thus the motives of consolation I had offered, only served to nourish his despair. I was like a man who attempts to save a friend sinking in the midst of a flood, and refusing to swim. Sorrow had overwhelmed his soul. Alas! the misfortunes of early years prepare man for the struggles of life: but Paul had never known adversity.

I led him back to his own dwelling, where I found his mother and Madame de la Tour in a state of increased languor; but Margaret dropped most. Those lively cha-

racters upon which light afflictions make a small impression, are least capable of resisting great calamities. "Oh, my good friend," said Margaret "methought last night I saw Virginia dressed in white, amidst delicious bowers and gardens. She said to me, "I enjoy the most perfect happiness;" and then approaching Paul with a smiling air, she bore him away. While I struggled to retain my son, I felt that I myself was quitting the earth, and that I followed him with inexpressible delight. I then wished to bid my friend farewell, when I saw she was hastening after me with Mary and Domingo. But what seems most strange is, that Madame de la Tour has this very night had a dream attended with the same circumstances."

"My dear friend," I replied, "nothing, I believe, happens in this world without the permission of God. Dreams sometime foretel the truth."

Madame de la Tour related to me her dream, which was exactly similar; and as I had never observed in either of those persons any propensity to superstition, I was struck with the singular 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 accomplish-

ing 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 his works by an internal impulse? Wherefore doubt of the intimations given in dreams, 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 is bestowed only on virtue to taste. She took the most tender farewell of Madame de la Tour, "in the hope," she said, "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 Fidè, he drooped to death nearly about the same time with his master.

I conducted Madame 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.

Far from reproaching her aunt for those afflictions she had caused; her benign spirit prayed to God to pardon her, and to appease that remorse which the consequences of her cruelty would probably awaken in her breast.

I learnt by successive vessels which arrived from Europe that this unnatural relation, haunted by a troubled conscience, accused herself continually of the untimely fate

of her lovely niece, and the death of her mother, and became at intervals bereft of her reason. Her relations, whom she hated, took the direction of her fortune, after shutting her up as a lunatic, though she possessed sufficient use of her reason to feel all the pangs of her dreadful situation, and died at length in agonies of despair.

The body of Paul was placed by the side of his Virginia, at the foot of the same shrubs; and on that hallowed spot the remains of their tender mothers and their faithful servants are laid.

No marble covers the turf, no inscriptions record their virtues; but their memory is engraven upon our hearts, in characters which are indelible; and surely if those pure spirits still take an interest in what passes upon earth, they love to wander beneath the roofs of these dwellings which are inhabited by industrious virtue, to console the poor who complain of their destiny, to cherish in the hearts of lovers the sacred flame of fidelity, to inspire a taste for the blessings of nature, the love of labour, and the 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 immense basin of rocks.

For my part, since I behold you no longer, I am like a friend stripped of his friends; like a father bereaved of his children; like a low and pensive wanderer upon the earth.

As the good old man uttered these words, he gently walked away; his eyes suffused with tears: as mine had frequently been during the recital of this affecting story.

THE END.

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