

THE
MONK
AND THE
VINE-DRESSER:
OR, THE
EMIGRANTS OF BELLESME.
A
MORAL TALE.
BY A LADY.

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ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

IT is with extreme diffidence the Author of the following sheets submits them to the public eye. They were written from a desire of inspiring a young friend, in whose education the Writer was warmly interested, with a taste for simple composition. Whether she has succeeded in producing a Tale of any interest, the Public, uninfluenced by the partiality of private friendship, will decide. Nor does the Author fear, that the latitude usually allowed to works of mere imagination will, in this instance, be withheld. That it is completely a work of fiction, she acknowledges, dates only being used to give an air of probability to the whole. The scene was first laid in France, from a desire of impressing a strong idea of the manners of the inhabitants at a very interesting epoch in the annals of that country. Politics have been as slightly glanced at as the nature of the subject would allow. To weave into a Moral Tale matter neither deficient in amusement nor instruction, was the intention of the performance, which is now submitted to a generally indulgent tribunal; and by its award must the pretensions of this little Volume be ascertained.

October 1809.

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AT Bellesme, in the government of Maine, within a few leagues of the city of Mortagne, resided Claude, the son of Baptiste Boussette, an ancient Vine-dresser of that place, who had bred him to the same occupation; and being almost too infirm to continue in so laborious an employment, had resigned to his son its more active duties, whilst himself officiated as occasional assistant to Pierre, the superintendant of the vintage cultivated on the estate of Monsieur Richambeau, Lord of Bellesme. In the same superiority, on the banks of the Huisne, and at a short distance from the cottage of Baptiste, lived Perron Corbeau, the father of Jacqueline, who was not only the best, but also the prettiest girl of the hamlet. From early childhood she had been the favourite companion of Claude; had participated in his juvenile recreations; and at the more advanced period of youth, at which both were now arrived, derived benefit from the instruction bestowed on him by Father Anslem, a venerable Religious of the neighbouring monastery of St. Nicholas. In one of the charitable visits which the worthy Monk was in the habit of paying to the poor of the villages around, he had met the youthful peasant, and, prepossessed by his ingenuous manners, had enquired into the ability of his father to afford an education suitable to the intellect his countenance and language evinced. Baptiste was at that time unable to provide for more than the passing wants of the day; and the good Monk, penetrated by compassion, resolved to supply the office of preceptor himself. The docility and amiable disposition of the pupil soon won on the susceptible heart of the benevolent Teacher; and those hours he could spare from the duties of religion and the avocations of charity, were devoted to the improvement of Claude. Even Jacqueline, from being a frequent auditor during the hours of study, became a scholar. She had imperceptibly imbibed a taste for those studies for which Claude evinced so strong a predilection; nor did the good Friar think the cultivation of female intellect a task beneath his care.

As he was far from wishing to disqualify them for a useful sphere of life, he carefully endeavoured to exclude those false refinements which engender discontent; consequently his system of education was extremely simple. Jacqueline he instructed in writing, arithmetic, history, and a thorough knowledge of her vernacular tongue. His plan in respect to Claude was more extensive: To him he imparted a general knowledge of the living languages, book-keeping, and, as his taste led him to admire with enthusiasm the vegetable productions of Nature, to those studies was superadded the science of botany; particularly the physical uses of plants, in the knowledge of which the Friar was eminently skilled. As the portions of time devoted to study were never allowed to interfere with those allotted to labour, the parents of the youthful pair beheld with honest pride their superiority to their companions, who, deficient in the ardour for improvement which distinguished them, or too indolent for the necessary exertion, neglected to avail themselves of the instruction which Father Anslem would have extended to all who manifested a desire to benefit by it. This superiority, which, accompanied by a supercilious temper, would have roused the spirit of envy and dislike, was so softened by the amenity of Claude and the gentle graces of his companion, that they were universally beloved and respected

in the hamlet: and it was at the door of Perron, their companions in labour met every evening, to enjoy themselves after the fatigues of the day. Here also did the elder peasants, seated on benches around, distribute prizes once a month to those who, among the maidens, had produced the best-finished piece of lace; and among the young men, to those who had succeeded best in the culture of their vines. These prizes were either a small crucifix, an utensil of husbandry, or some trifling article of domestic furniture; and the youth or maid who could display different pledges of his or her industry, were entitled to a premium on the festival of St. Denis, when Monsieur and Madame Richambeau gave a fete, and examined into the merits of the young peasantry on their estate. It was from their bounty that the monthly prizes were distributed, and they had found the plan an excellent stimulus to industry. In the time of the former Lord of Bellesme, who spent his income in the capital, where he constantly resided, his poor dependents had languished from neglect; but no sooner had his nephew succeeded to his possessions, and declared his intention of living among them, than the spirit of exertion revived; and the benevolent plans of Monsieur were so successfully followed up, that Bellesme soon obtained the distinguished appellation of "The Village of Industry."

The approach of the feast of St. Denis made every heart beat high with expectation, as it was not only customary to receive premiums on that day, but to betroth, and portion those who had been betrothed the year before, a twelvemonth being allowed to elapse between that ceremony and the marriage. Those who had been contracted for that time were put in possession of a free cottage for three years, when it was expected they would be enabled to save something for the expences attendant on a young family. These savings were usually placed in the hands of Pierre, who was directed to give the best interest; and when a sufficient sum was accumulated, if the tenant chose, he was allowed to purchase, at an easy rate, the cottage he had rented hitherto. In addition to this plan, their benevolent landlord had instituted, from the wish of preserving a spirit of independence amongst them, a fund to which each man contributed a small portion of his weekly gain, and by this means secured a certainty of moderate support when age or infirmity should incapacitate him for labour. To the young men who were not contracted, the festival of St. Denis was also an interesting period. Those who, by application or superior intelligence, had qualified themselves to be promoted in the mercantile line, were recommended, and through the interest of Monsieur obtained situations. Those who chose the service, received also from him credentials of their good conduct. It was the part of Madame to advance the views of the Maidens; and no sooner was an attachment formed between a young couple, than it was communicated to her by the mother of the girl. If she approved, which was generally the case, they were looked upon as contracted; and it would have been thought the height of coquetry on one side, and moral turpitude on the other, to wish to dissolve an engagement thus sanctioned. French women are all lace-makers, and as Madame had greatly encouraged the manufacture, and undertook to facilitate its sale, few of the young women were tempted to remove from Bellesme, and not one who had by good conduct obtained the approbation of its kind patroness.

The morning so ardently expected, which was the seventh anniversary of the festival of St. Denis since the accession of the present Lord of Bellesme, now arrived. It was delightfully serene, and seemed to harmonize with the feelings of the elder peasantry, who assembled on the green before the house of Pierre, waiting the marshalling of the young folks for the procession to the church of St. Denis. Six maids and youths preceded the Curé, strewing the early flowers of spring; then followed, immediately behind him, six more, chanting an anthem composed for the occasion. The old people came next, and then the remainder of the young peasants brought up the rear. On their arrival at the church, grand mass was performed; and after that ceremony, the

procession returned in the same order, excepting that, of the young men who were betrothed, each led his destined partner; the remainder scattering flowers before them, and singing an epithalamium. In this manner they returned to the lawn of the castle, where they were met by Monsieur and Madame Richambeau, to whom an address was delivered by the venerable Baptiste, who, as senior of the hamlet, was empowered to recapitulate the benefits they had derived from the benevolence of their patron, and in the simple eloquence of nature to describe their attachment and their gratitude. The young people then filed off to the stations which had been appointed them by Pierre and Baptiste. The youths who were betrothed took their place on the right hand of Monsieur, the maidens on the left of Madame; those who wished to be contracted stood next them, in the same order: the elder peasants formed a kind of amphitheatre in front of them, and the young girls and boys stood modestly behind. After the first class had been examined as to their steadily persisting in the wish of being united, on their answering in the affirmative, the marriage-ceremony was performed; and as the bridegroom kissed the hand of Madame, he received from it the three years lease of his cottage; while Monsieur, in saluting the bride, presented to her a purse containing a few Louis, to defray the first expences of her household. This ceremony being over, another, equally interesting, succeeded. Already had four couple declared their wish, and received the acquiescence of Monsieur and Madame to their contract, when Claude, led by Perron, and Jacqueline by Baptiste, advanced into the circle. "Behold," said the venerable parent of Claude, "the virtuous maiden my son hath selected! Deign also to ratify those vows which will secure to him an estimable wife, and to me another duteous child." "Most willingly," said the Marquis, "and immediately, if, after what I have to communicate, you shall persist in desiring it. That Claude and Jacqueline are deserving each other, is the highest tribute I can pay to their merit. But I must not pause here: They have mutually encouraged each other in the attainment of virtue and knowledge; and while I endeavour to secure a reward to the one, I must, for a short period, put the former to the test. Say, amiable and interesting Jacqueline, are you equal to the task of using the influence love hath given you, in an act of present self-denial? Will you, by example, impart to your deserving lover that heroism, which, in contributing to the welfare of others, can postpone self-gratification? If, (and I believe you are capable of this), attend, and when you have reflected on what I shall now offer to your consideration, you, you alone, shall be the arbitress of Claude's destiny and your own."

Mute with astonishment, and almost sinking with apprehension, the trembling Jacqueline could only, by a slight, but respectful motion of her hand, testify her attention to the discourse of the Marquis; when Claude advanced, and encircling her waist with his arm, in this attitude, they awaited the farther discourse of the sentiments of Monsieur.

"You are not to be informed," resumed he, "that the chief revenues of my late uncle were derived from his colonial possessions: But you perhaps are ignorant, that soon after his death, the spirit of insurrection had begun to be observable amongst the negroes of his plantation. The event which caused my accession, prevented, by involving me in business of various kinds, the attention which ought to have been bestowed on this subject at the commencement. But, from advices I have lately received, it appears to me, that prompt measures for the restoration of order are absolutely necessary, the negroes being almost in a state of open revolt, and only restrained from violence by an opinion that has been disseminated, of my being an advocate for those revolutionizing principles which are now become so general in this nation. What my political creed may be, it is unnecessary to state here. In common with every good man, I hail what appears to be the dawn of freedom to my oppressed country. But the plans of the regicide, who

would sacrifice a just and amiable Sovereign to his own schemes of aggrandizement, and make my native, my beloved France, a scene of anarchy and devastation, I abhor, and swear to them an eternal hatred, and everlasting opposition. But while a threatening cloud hangs over this kingdom, I will not leave it; yet, feeling a concern for the state of my plantation, beyond the individual one arising from mere possession, I have selected Claude as my representative to visit those refractory men; not to bind more closely the badge of slavery; no; but to present to them their native and unalienable right,—their Freedom!”

Jacqueline raised the hand of Claude to her lips; then modestly stepping forward, put it into that of the Marquis. “Oh, hand so beloved,” said she, “so worthy the glorious task assigned! I relinquish thee until it be performed; and during that period, mine shall be to render myself worthy of thee, who are thus selected to be the bearer of good to thy fellow-beings.” Claude cast a look of tender admiration on the amiable Jacqueline: then taking her hand, knelt with her at the feet of the Marquis. “Behold, my Lord,” he exclaimed, “the man who, eager to emulate the virtuous enthusiasm of a young female, and penetrated with gratitude for the honour with which you have distinguished him, is ready to obey your mandate. To your paternal care, and the benevolence of Madame, I entrust my venerable parent and my destined spouse.” At a look from Perron, Jacqueline arose, and was led by him to Baptiste, to whom he presented her, saying, “Receive, my friend, the spouse of your son! In his absence, we will have but one home. Sanctify with your blessing the promise she now makes, of alleviating the pangs of separation, of supplying to you the tender offices, the filial duty, of our estimable Claude!” The old man blessed, and sobbed on the bosom of Jacqueline; and, extending his hand to Perron, he exclaimed, “In our youth, my friend, we were fellow-soldiers, and our old age will be mutually cheered by the duteous affection of our virtuous children.”

The agitation of the interesting group having in some measure subsided, the remainder of the usual business of the day went on. After the appointments were made out, and the premiums distributed, the elder peasants sat down to a rural entertainment at the table of Monsieur, while Pierre and his wife presided at the one where the young folks assembled. By command of the Marquis, all discourse, relative to the intended departure of Claude, was postponed, lest it should throw a gloom over the festivities of the day. The repast over, the Marquis taking the hand of the oldest matron, and Madame that of the most venerable peasant, led off the dance, in which they were followed by the remainder of the aged part of the company; while the youths and maids formed into groups, and footed it away to the sprightly notes of the violin and tabor; and Jacqueline, rallying her spirits, with a generous effort to spare her lover the painful sight of witnessing what she mentally suffered, with graceful agility, maintained her wonted superiority in the dance. After it was over, and during the succeeding intervals, she observed Claude in close conversation with the Marquis; but knowing, that as soon as he could disengage himself she would be informed of the result, she devoted herself to the office of soothing his father, who, far advanced in life, and on the eve of a separation from a son so dear, felt with acuteness the approach of the time which would witness his departure. When evening came on, they were joined by Claude and Perron. “We have leave to retire, my beloved,” said the former. “A short time only, my father, have I to devote to love and duty. Let us not waste moments so precious.” The little party now retired to the cottage of Perron, when Claude informed them, that, at his request, and indeed from a conviction of its propriety, the Marquis had adopted his opinion, that, in the management of affairs at Guadaloupe, the advice of Father Anslem would be of essential service: And as the rules of his order admitted of an occasional absence, the Marquis intended waiting on the good Friar on the following morning, to request his aid, which he did not entertain

a doubt of obtaining. "Thus, my dear friends," continued Claude, "we may expect the hour of separation is approaching, as the good Father is quick in decision; and with such an object in view, I am convinced no delay on his part will occur. Ah! What do we not owe this venerable friend! But for him, my Jacqueline, and you, my beloved parents, how dreary would be this absence! Far from you, as I soon shall be, what could cheer me in the path of duty, but lines traced by hands so dear! Accustomed to be the repository of the chaste thoughts of my love, how could I exist under a total privation of them, or how could I express to her my gratitude and love! The Marquis will facilitate the tender interchange of letters; and let no packet from him reach your lover, without a recital of your sentiments and employments." In discourses like this, and in arrangements for the future, the little party had protracted the time of retiring far beyond their usual hour; when Claude, observing the languid cheek of Jacqueline, pressed her to his bosom; and kissing the hand of Perron, retired with Baptiste to their home.

Renovated by a few hours slumber, Claude, at an early hour, attended the Marquis to the monastery of St. Nicholas. After the first salutations of the morning, Monsieur imparted to Father Anslem his intended plan, and earnestly besought his acquiescence. At the mention of Guadaloupe, a momentary convulsion appeared to agitate the generally serene, though pensive features of the Monk. He pressed his hand to his heart, as if to still some sudden pang. Then addressing the Marquis, he gave his consent in these words: "With the outline of my unfortunate story, you, my Lord, are well acquainted. The mention of Guadaloupe, that grave of my happiness, awakens too forcibly those keen sensations which time and religion ought to have subdued. Nevertheless, weak as I am, command me; and it will indeed alleviate the pangs of remembered woe, if I can guard this beloved youth from the dangers of inexperience, or in any way contribute to the completion of a design so honourable to your feelings." The consent of the Monk being thus obtained, they proceeded to adjust the necessary preparations; and it was fixed, that, in the course of eight days, they should proceed to Mans on the Sarte, whence they could embark for the first port from whence, it was probable, a vessel destined for Guadaloupe would sail; and by that time, the Marquis engaged to have his written instructions in readiness.

It was now the painful office of Claude to announce to his friends the time fixed for his departure. Jacqueline strove to repress her grief, that she might not add to the affliction of her lover, and aided his filial efforts to console his aged father, who, acutely as he felt the approaching separation, still refused his consent to the offer which Claude, on witnessing his distress, had made, of declining the honour the Marquis had conferred on him. To all the arguments used by him in favour of this succession from his first compliance, the old man constantly replied, "Shall the timorous fears of a frail being, like me, preponderate against the benefit of hundreds of his fellow-creatures? No, my son! Go thou, and perfect the plans of your benevolent patron; and while I reflect that it is your glorious task to alleviate the sufferings of others, I shall feel resigned to my own. Nature is weak, my son; but the pangs of the father yield to the hopes of the man: And whether I live to behold thee again or not, my last prayer and blessing shall rest on the head of my duteous child."

The hour at length arrived, and Father Anslem received from the arms of Baptiste his beloved son, who eagerly clasped the now subdued Jacqueline. No sound issued from her lips; but pale, and almost fainting, she pressed to them, and to her heart, the hand of Claude:—then, throwing herself on the bosom of his father, allowed her own, assisted by Father Anslem, to lead from her the almost equally lifeless Claude. They found the Marquis ready to accompany them, with Perron, to Mans. On their arrival at that place, they bade farewell to the adventurers, who embarked in a small vessel for Havre de Grace, the first port in Upper Normandy where they

were likely to find a vessel ready for their destined voyage, on which they were too intent to delay making the necessary enquiries the moment of their arrival. Fortunately they found one bound for Guadaloupe direct; and they, with favourable winds, once more embarked. Claude could not be insensible to the novel attractions of his situation, and drew, from the cultivated mind of the good Friar, an exhaustless fund of information. That worthy ecclesiastic, viewing him as a being whose mind he had formed, strove, by judicious conversation, to withdraw his thoughts from dwelling too intently on the friends he had for a while resigned: And as he allowed no object, however minute, to pass, without drawing from it a source of mental improvement, and by dwelling on the benefits to be expected from their mission, he partly succeeded. Still a pensive languor pervaded those features, which, till lately, expressed only the hilarity of youth and hope; and, as the sailors chaunted the morning or evening hymn to the Virgin, an indelible melancholy stole over his senses. He thought of his Jacqueline! Of the bower in which he used to perform this service with her. In imagination, he beheld that interesting countenance, and those soft eyes, in which devotion, pure as it was ardent, was so beautifully expressed; and fancied he heard the last cadence as it trembled on her lips. The venerable forms of Perron and Baptiste, alternately joining in the notes, or gazing with parental delight on their beloved offspring, completed the group, from the imaginary contemplation of which, the Monk, in moments like these, never sought to withdraw his youthful charge. He knew that the tender melancholy of well-organized minds, when dwelling on recollections of departed happiness, so far from damping its energies, rather, by a momentary relaxation, prepares it for future exertion.

We now return to the inhabitants of Bellesme. Jacqueline, whose understanding was strong, as her heart was tender, felt how sacred was the duty of consolation to which she had devoted herself, and roused the energies of her character to perform the promised task. Father Anslem, in his parting address, had cautioned her against yielding to sorrow those moments, which provide, in active employment, its best remedy. "Pursue your wonted industry, my daughter," said the venerable Monk: "beyond the temporary pang of separation, you have no cause to grieve. By your example, you have enabled a worthy youth to sacrifice selfish gratification to the good of his fellow-creatures. And you will continue to show your companions, how much may be expected from a mind conscious of, and beneficially exerting its powers; and fear not, dear and amiable child, but the blessing of Providence will reward your filial and virtuous love."

In pursuance of this advice, Jacqueline returned with avidity to those employments which the events of the last ten days had interrupted. Baptiste had taken up his abode with her father, and after the first paroxysm of grief for the departure of his son, had busily employed himself in assisting Pierre. Perron also had resumed his usual occupation, and after the labour of the day, the aged pair were equally cheered by the tender assiduities of the amiable Jacqueline.

Weeks and months had now elapsed, and they hoped soon to hear from their beloved Claude; but e'er the tidings could reach Bellesme, the faithful peasantry had beheld, with mingled apprehension and concern, the altered appearance of their Lord;—he was become thoughtful and dejected;—he no longer took his evening ramble, accompanied by Madame, thro' the village, to heighten, by his smiles, their happy relaxation from labour; but retiring even from her, seemed to brood over some heavy calamity; and it was long e'er the solicitation of this beloved wife could wrest from him the horrible apprehension he entertained of impending danger; when one morning a packet was delivered to him before her, and his exclamation of grief at opening it, precluded the possibility of further concealment. "It is in vain, my beloved,"

said he, "that I strive to shield your bosom from the cares which have for some time distracted mine: France, my dear native land, is on the brink of ruin; she has no patriot son to save her; we are become a nation of ruffians. Read that, my Adonia. I must set off for Paris immediately." The letter mentioned the increasing popularity of the democratic party, amongst the infamous leaders of which, Phillippe of Orleans stood conspicuous, the flight of the King and Queen to Varennes, their detention, return, and consequent confinement, the proceedings of the National Assembly; and, finally, concluded with requesting the immediate presence of the Marquis. "I must be off this night," said he; "do not, O do not agonize me by a request I must refuse. You cannot accompany me. But while assured, my love, of your safety, and that of my infant boy, I shall be prepared to facilitate the business which takes me from you; and believe me, not one moment will I lose in returning to my home." To the most tender affection, Madame united the utmost deference for the opinion of her Lord. She also felt it was her duty to alleviate, and not add, by opposition, to the grief which already oppressed him. "Go, dearest Antoine," said she, drying her tears, "Go, if it be necessary; but oh! forget not, that with your safety is combined also that of your wife and son. I know you will not protract your stay; but to relieve what I cannot but suffer in your absence, allow Pierre to accompany you, that I may be assured of your having one with you to whom you may safely entrust those letters which alone can relieve my apprehensions."

The Marquis, charmed with the ready compliance of his excellent wife, tenderly embraced, and promised her his acquiescence to her request. He then went to make the necessary arrangements for his journey, he deputed Baptiste to act as superintendant during the absence of Pierre; his other orders respecting his estate, from his having always been a strict observer of method, were soon given. And accompanied by Pierre, and his confidential valet, Jacques, at an early hour in the afternoon, he bade adieu to his family and domain.

A few days after his departure, letters arrived from Guadaloupe, which mentioned the safe arrival of Father Anslem and his protégé, after a prosperous voyage. At the port, they were met by the agent of the late Monsieur Richambeau, whom his successor had continued in that office from ignorance of his real character. Fawning and plausible in demeanour, this man had gained the confidence of his late employer, whose extravagant expenditure called for large supplies, and whose heart never felt for the sufferings by which they had been procured. A fitter agent for oppression than M. St. Forlaix, could not be found; but as avarice still defeats its own purpose, the plantation, although thrice the extent of any other on the island, by no means made a return proportioned to its surface. The slaves wrought beyond their powers, and drooping beneath the lash, lost hope, and scarce a day passed without closing on the interment of one of those unfortunate victims of oppression. At length the spirit of vengeance was aroused; and although the power of St. Forlaix, combined with that of the other planters, prevented an open rebellion, yet was the hour of revenge secretly contemplated. The slaves of Monsieur Richambeau had among them a man of uncommon intellect; he had been a chief in his own country, and treacherously betrayed to slavery; but neither the humiliation nor labour attendant on that condition had power to subdue the ardour of a mind whose native grandeur rose superior to adversity. With the calm dignity which quietly submits to present but unavoidable evil, he performed the task daily allotted him. With indefatigable pains, he conquered the difficulties Nature herself seemed to have opposed to his acquiring a distinct pronunciation of the French language, which, being the one universally spoken in the island, he was anxious to attain. Confined as were his opportunities, his acquisition of general knowledge was such as to astonish the inhabitants of Guadaloupe. To this man, on the death of Monsieur Richambeau, thinking it a

favourable juncture, the slaves had confided their plans, and entreated him to be their leader; but, with the bravery of true courage, which detests a sanguinary, when a milder plan may be efficient, he opposed their desire, and refused to be their leader, unless they solemnly vowed to be guided by his counsel. Many of the slaves had been converted to Christianity; but as the planters supposed it their interest to keep them as ignorant as possible, no clear views of religion had been imparted. It was sufficient for those inhuman wretches, if they could so far impress them, as to work on their credulity. This Quako knew, and though his comprehensive mind had penetrated the mist with which they sought to veil the God of love and mercy, in this instance he thought it allowable to work on the superstitious terrors of his companions, and bound them by an oath, which he knew no torture would force them to violate, not to pursue their intentions unsanctioned by his consent. He recalled to the memory of some of the older slaves, the humanity with which the young heir of Richambeau had enforced some regulations in their favour, when on the island some years previous to this period. He represented, that in all probability he would himself visit the possession, which was now become his own; or at least send another agent, on being informed of the real character of St. Forlaix, a delineation of which he proposed they should privately transmit to France, and wait until a reasonable time allowed for the receipt of an answer should elapse. "We will wait this time, my brethren," said he; "and if disappointed, then shall the arm of vengeance be bared! then shall the spirit of the oppressed burst its bands, and the accursed forgers of our chains tremble!"

Years elapsed, and no diminution of hardship and oppression accompanied them; when the slaves, scarcely to be kept from violence even by their remembered oath, surrounded the house of St. Forlaix. Again the powerful energy of Quako subdued the tumult. He made the slaves retire to a small distance; then, baring his bosom, while his form seemed to dilate to an almost gigantic height, he vowed to plunge in it the dagger he held, and on which glimmered the last rays of the setting sun, if any dared to touch the miscreant who stood trembling before him, and whom he forced to acknowledge having intercepted and suppressed the letter of complaint intended for the Marquis. "One trial more, my friends," said he, "and if it prove ineffectual, I loosen you from your oath, and swear to dedicate myself to your revenge! There is, even in this accursed spot, one merciful man: Let him be employed to state our grievances; through his hand let the account be transmitted: And then, no more, redress or revenge shall be ours."

Monsieur St Amand, the arbitrator chosen by Quako, was a man of the first respectability in the island. His slaves were treated with lenity, and he inspected, rewarded, and punished, without delegating his authority to an unfeeling overseer; and of all the slaves in the island, his alone remained unbiassed by the prospect of revenge on the cruel task-masters.

This proposal of Quako meeting the approbation of his companions, delicate as the interference was, Monsieur St Amand found there was no other way of preventing the threatened insurrection. He therefore complied with their request. Until an answer could arrive, St. Forlaix was allowed to retain his situation; and mean and cringing in degradation, as he had been cruel and insolent in authority, he showed, that, although humanity could not influence him to mercy, fear could prompt the most abject indulgence.

It was the advices received from Monsieur St Amand that prompted the quick decision of the Marquis. The threatened anarchy of France, which he for some time had dreaded, prevented his sailing for Guadaloupe. But, endowed by nature with that intuitive knowledge, which at once penetrates and appreciates character, he saw in the youthful Claude a fit representative. He was aware of his ignorance of the world; but his errand was one of mercy: and although danger and difficulty might impede the execution of it, he knew, that, to boundless benevolence of heart, he

united that lofty decision of character adapted to overcome both. And although uniting the wisdom and experience of Father Anslem to those qualities which distinguished Claude, had not occurred to him, no sooner was the plan suggested by that grateful youth, than the Marquis immediately perceived the advantage to be expected from the co-operation of so able an auxiliary. And, though well acquainted with some particulars of the Friar's life, the tragical causes of which originated in Guadaloupe, he knew, however minds of strong sensibility may droop over the scene of their early sorrows, such minds, and such alone, when great occasions call forth the latent energies, possess the power of sacrificing private feeling to public good. Therefore he ventured to make the request, to which the worthy Monk so readily assented.

Our adventurers, on landing at Basseterre, proceeded to the house of Monsieur St Amand; on entering which, the Monk betrayed such extraordinary symptoms of agitation, as to excite the astonishment of his companion. Monsieur St Amand also was much affected: but each, with an evident effort, tried to subdue his feelings; and Monsieur, in presence of St. Forlaix, unfolded the system of oppression, which, but for the powerful sway Quako had acquired over his companions, would have produced the most horrible catastrophe in the island. He contrasted the character of that virtuous African, who used his influence in favour of a supposed oppressor, with that of the man who, abusing the confidence reposed in him, had used it as a cover for the most atrocious deeds. St. Forlaix stood abashed. To urge before St Amand, who had, on his own plantation, proved the falsity of the assertion, that the obstinacy and indolence of the slaves were to be overcome by coercion alone, was an effrontery, of which even he was incapable. And while Claude, in the magnanimity of Quako, recognised a kindred mind, the Friar proposed, that the Marquis's letter of instructions should be opened in his presence. They accordingly proceeded to that part of the plantation where the slaves assembled after the labour of the day. Numbers of them were scattered in groups around; while, at a few paces distance from them, his eyes intently fixed on a large volume he was perusing, and under the shade of a Capua tree, reclined Quako. "Behold," said Monsieur St Amand, "the friends empowered by M. Richambeau to redress the grievances, the detail of which you, by me, transmitted to France." The African arose, and, advancing, received the benediction of Father Anslem; who drew from his tunic the letter, and, giving it to Claude, exclaimed, "To you, my son, belongs the right of opening this packet." The eye of the African lightened with an indefinable expression. "If," said he, "it is necessary I should be present, so also must be my companions in slavery! The hour is now arrived, when I pledged myself to see their grievances redressed; or, if that be denied, with them to loose bands which have so long enchained men born free as their oppressors!" "In the name of Him who made us freemen of an everlasting kingdom, are we come," said the Monk. "Does this sacred volume," continued he, taking up the Bible Quako had been perusing, "does this," added he, "breathe the spirit of revenge and destruction?" "No," firmly replied the African: "For seven long years has its precepts, operating on the man before you, restrained the purpose of despair, which the unequalled barbarity of our oppressors had aroused! For seven long years hath it enabled me to wait the appointed time of deliverance!"—"Does it not inculcate humility?" questioned the Monk. "Has it not required, that man should do his allotted task, and be obedient unto his superiors?"—"True; but did not He who appointed unto man his portion, and assigned unto him his place on earth, say also, 'The labourer is worthy of his hire!' What has been our hire? Stripes for toil! Bondage for freedom! Was not the blood of him who died for all, shed equally for the sable African and the white-skinned European? Or was it for the latter alone the wonderful work was accomplished? Convince me of this! Say but the word, and I will aid you to reduce these abject worms to your subjection: For if in this frail and perishing life our being be

comprized, the degradation of such ephemeral atoms matters not; but if we are heirs of immortal life, never shall we submit to humiliation so derogatory to souls of such high destination!" The groups of slaves, attracted by the appearance of the strangers, and concluding, from the animated gestures of Quako, that these were the expected messengers, formed themselves into a body, and encircled their generous advocate. One determinate expression pervaded each sable countenance; and with their eyes fixed on the little party before them, they awaited the disclosure which would decide their fate.

With collected dignity, Quako eyed the band: then, with a sigh which seemed to shake his manly frame, folded his mantle over his face, and silently awaited the expected tidings.

Claude opened the important packet; and after reading the preamble, which constituted him the representative of his Lord, proceeded to state, "That ignorant as he had been of the cruelty practised in his name, all that remained for him was to make atonement. Therefore, to all the slaves on his plantation he gave their freedom, and the means of returning to their own country, if they chose to leave the island: to those who would remain he offered wages suitable to the value of the produce, and yearly to be regulated by that. Lastly, he desired that every slave should receive a portion for the time he had been on the plantation. To Quako, whom he styled the Noble African, he offered the situation of St. Forlaix, subject to no controul but those regulations by which Claude was empowered to form the settlement on the same plan which had given to Bellesme peace and prosperity. To him was also confided the care of embarking and providing necessaries for such of the slaves as chose to return to Africa, and Claude had brought with him funds to defray the expences. St. Forlaix was desired to give his papers into the hands of Claude, and to quit the island."

No language could describe the effect of the letter of Monsieur on the emancipated negroes. The cry of FREEDOM! FREEDOM! resounded thro' the plantation; while tears, which not all the hardships of a seven years bondage could force, now flowed from the burning eyes of Quako. He threw himself at the feet of Claude, exclaiming, "Blessed messenger of a gift more valuable than life, it is thus I thank thee. The hour is now arrived when, without degradation, Quako can prostrate himself at the feet of a white man, and bid him dispose of him at his pleasure." Then rising, with dignity he addressed his companions. "Friends and Brethren," he exclaimed, "ye who, when despair prompted the purpose of destruction, even then listened to the voice of Quako, as he promised to devote himself to your redress, behold it is accomplished! Hear him now swear to dedicate his life to the service of his deliverer. I will be the servant of this Father of his people,—of Richambeau, for ever!"—"Rickboo for ever! Fader Rickboo for ever! We him servant for ever!" exclaimed the slaves. Then, at the desire of Quako, they retired to their cabins for the night. St. Forlaix had been a mortified spectator of this scene; no one had offered to molest him: and Quako, with a dignified contempt, viewed his departure to his own house; while the slaves, watching the countenance of their companion, seemed by it to form their determination, seemed by it to form their determination, and look on their fallen oppressor as an object beneath resentment.

Already had that powerful attraction which unites kindred minds, linked those of Claude and the African Quako. Arm in arm they retired to the house of Monsieur St Amand, where the evening was employed in adjusting those plans in which their co-operation was so necessary; while the Friar, struck with the noble use Quako had made of his influence, and contemplating with admiration the strength of feeling and intellect he had displayed, determined to contribute to the further perfection of the talents of this extraordinary man; and observing with pleasure the

impression Claude and he appeared to have made on each other, prayed that the blessing of Heaven might cement a friendship thus auspiciously begun.

The next day was devoted by them to the formation of the intended plan; and a few more, with the assistance of the amiable Monsieur St Amand, saw the arrangement completed. St. Forlaix had left the island; but few of the slaves had accepted the proffered liberty of departing. Claude and Father Anslem had taken possession of the house lately occupied by St. Forlaix; but Quako refused to leave his cabin, until a hamlet, erected on the plan of Bellesme, should be completed, when one a little superior to the rest was to be prepared for him. Having thus succeeded in their mission, Claude and the Friar were anxious to transmit, by a vessel then loading for Havre, the welcome intelligence to Monsieur; and the paquet, as before stated, inclosing also letters for Jacqueline and Baptiste, arrived at Bellesme a few days after the departure of the Marquis, and was by Madame forwarded to Paris. The happy tidings it contained was a welcome and necessary cordial to the spirits of the Marquis, who had found, on his arrival at the capital, more than his worst forebodings realised. The Nobles, terrified by impending danger, had forgotten what they owed themselves and their country, and basely deserted their post. Even the Princes of the Blood lost the remembrance, that, of all the sons of France, they were most peculiarly called upon to shed the last drop of it in her bosom, in defence of their own and their Sovereign's right: and the only men who, by a vigorous co-operation, had a chance of saving the devoted nation, overawed by a factious multitude, lost the dignity of the patriot in the pusillanimity of fear, and, to preserve a dishonoured existence, fled!—La Fayette was at this period the idol of the people; but although a friend to republicanism, he perhaps had been led further than he either foresaw or intended at the commencement of his career. More sanguinary despots were undermining the regal government; nor could his moderation keep in order the lawless multitude; who, sanctioned by the National Assembly, committed those horrible excesses which at that period disgraced the annals of Paris.

Shocked, but resolute to the line of conduct he had imaged to himself, the Marquis began arranging his concerns with his banker. But to his advice of leaving the kingdom he returned a decided negative. "Never, while my King exists, will I abandon him," said he. "I will endeavour to remove my wife and son to a place of security, if, in the course of events, such a step should be necessary: but for myself, while Louis, my Sovereign, breathes the air of France, it also will I respire. While one solitary chance of serving him or my unhappy country remains, neither shall be deserted by me."

Consistently with the loftiness of character which distinguished the Marquis, some time after his arrival at the capital, he demanded permission to see the King. The request was denied. Still, as he was known to favour freedom, though his definition was widely opposite to the Parisian acceptance of the word at that time, no personal danger was supposed to threaten him for having made it. But about two months after, he was cited before the National Assembly, and there questioned as to his motive for having preferred the petition. To which he answered, that the affection and duty due from the subject to the Sovereign, alone had prompted him. Upon this the Orator of the people, with a wild declamation, which dazzled by its rapidity, set forth the natural equality of man; the absurdity of that pernicious system which empowered the single tyrant to subjugate those designed by reason and nature his equals in the scale of being, and partakers alike of power and possessions: he then represented the necessity of enforcing these sacred rights; and continued a metaphysical rhapsody, until he had puzzled himself and his auditors, when he sat down, amid the plaudits of the surrounding multitude.

The Marquis, struck with the absurdity of the oration, arose, and with manly eloquence, detected and exposed the flimsiness of the argument, and then recapitulated the blessings enjoyed by a free people, under the limited government of a virtuous monarch; and after a speech of two hours length, the irresistible pathos of which had awed even the orator into silence, he concluded with a motion for the enlargement of the King. Loud cries of derision and discontent now resounded through the hall; and the exclamation of "he is a traitor, an aristocrate, an enemy to honest men and to patriots," was vociferated on every side. When in a high voice he resumed, "I am an honest man and a patriot,"—the rest of his speech was lost in the confusion of tongues: but those words had served to divide opinion; and during the bustle which ensued, the Marquis was almost forcibly withdrawn from the hall of sitting, by his banker, Menou.

On their arrival at the house of the latter, he strongly reprobated what he termed the imprudent application of the Marquis, who, stung almost to frenzy by the reflection, that of all the Frenchmen present at the meeting, he alone had ventured publicly to avow those sentiments which so many affected to cherish privately, anathematised their pusillanimity, and deprecating the swift approach of ruin to France, he prepared for his return to Bellesme. Although differing in politics from his banker Menou, he knew he might safely confide in his friendship: receiving, therefore, his promise of regularly transmitting an account of every occurrence in the capital, attended by Pierre and Jacques, he commenced his journey.

On arriving near the end of it, he could not but observe changes most grating to his feelings. He had hoped, that the distance of Bellesme from the capital would have preserved it from innovation:—what then was his disappointment, on entering Mortagne, at beholding the tri-coloured cockade displayed on every hat, and to hear the sound of *Vive la Nation* resounding in every direction. He pursued his journey slowly, riding by the side of the Huisne, on whose white foam the red beam of a fine autumnal sun glistened. The last leaves of the vintage, scattered by the chill gale of the evening, fluttered in his path-way, and heightened the melancholy tone of his mind; and, buried in thought, he approached Bellesme. No vestige of its former happy appearance remained. It was the hour of relaxation, but no sound of the tabor announced his peasants were enjoying it.—Excepting here and there, that a solitary, with folded arms, was slowly pacing before the closed door of his cottage, no object was to be seen; but on the Marquis calling loudly to one of them, the well known voice brought the faithful peasantry to the feet of their Lord. The momentary joy, however, which illumined each countenance on his appearance, could not disguise the traces of anxiety which the events of a few months had implanted there. The acclamations of the villagers had reached the castle; and as the Marquis ascended the steps, the Marchioness and her lovely boy were in his arms. Madame was much altered. Fearful of distressing her husband, in her letters she had forborne dwelling, more than was absolutely necessary, on her apprehensions, that the mania of equality was rapidly infecting the province of Maine; and in addition to her own uneasiness, she had to allay the fears of the peasantry: Jacqueline, with admirable fortitude had seconded her efforts. But the health and spirit of Perron had been gradually declining. "This is a sorrowful meeting, my Adonia," said the Marquis, tenderly caressing her and the little Victoire. "But droop not, my love. Let us prove ourselves equal to the trials which probably await us. By your firm mind must the spirit of your Antoine be supported. To-morrow I will examine my people, and endeavour to provide for the worst."

On the morning the Marquis, with grief and indignation, heard from Baptiste, that deputies, in other words, spies, were scattered in every village around;—that the principles which it was their errand to disseminate were gradually eradicating the feelings of loyalty from every breast;—that Bellesme alone had withstood the contagion of democracy, and consequently had

become obnoxious to the prevailing faction;—that the terror which had impressed itself on the minds of the peasantry, had occasioned the appearance of solitude which had so much astonished him the preceding night. The usual labour went on, but no sooner was it over, than every man retired to his cottage, fearing, should they assemble as formerly, some informer would mix with the group, and, misinterpreting their conversation, report it accordingly.—“We must oppose prudence to power, my good old friend,” said the Marquis to Baptiste. “Do you encourage the peasantry to appear as unconcerned as possible, as you may be assured, should any circumspection be observed in supposed compliance with my orders, the consequence will be destruction to us all.”—They then retired to the saloon, to read to Madame and Jacqueline the contents of a packet just arrived from Guadaloupe.

These dispatches contained intelligence the most pleasing. Already had the united efforts of Claude and Quako, assisted by Monsieur St Amand and the Friar, reduced to practice the plan of Monsieur. And the newly erected hamlet presented to view, on a more extensive scale, the village of Bellesme; by which name Father Anslem had consecrated it. Here, too, the spirit of religion, which actuated every action of that virtuous man, induced him to propose building a chapel, where the negroes might attend public worship. The design had been completed; and the Monk, indefatigable in pious labour, had succeeded in enlightening the understanding of his sable auditors in matters so essential to their eternal welfare. Claude concluded his letter to the Marquis with mentioning, that although affection for Jacqueline would never actuate him to a conduct contrary to the duty he owed his patron; yet, as he thought he might now venture to leave Guadaloupe for a time, he was impatient to claim his affianced bride; of whose sentiments he was so well assured, that he was convinced, if such a plan should appear necessary to Monsieur, she, with their parents, would willingly return with him to the island. His letter to Jacqueline containing the same detail of operation which filled that of the Marquis, we shall select only one extract from it e'er we conclude the present dispatches from Guadaloupe.

“Having thus, my beloved, beheld order springing from anarchy and the glance of affection beaming from those eyes, which, on our arrival, loured defiance; I proceed to relate a trait of character so congenial to the benevolence of your own, that it cannot fail yielding your heart the pleasurable sensation which filled mine, on witnessing its effect. I have stated to you, that rewards for labour had been instituted in our New Bellesme, on the same principle which was found so beneficial in our native hamlet; and here, the general knowledge of our beloved Father Anslem was, as usual, applied to a generous purpose.

“Among the vegetable productions of this Island, is the Corbary tree, whose gum, plentifully yielded, and of a strong resinous quality, the negroes had been in the habit of rudely polishing, and selling to the inhabitants of different islands, as ornaments for the neck, &c. On analysing this gum, Father Anslem found, that, by a chemical process, it would, when dissolved, incorporate with certain ingredients, which gave it the colour and consistency of amber: and so complete is the deception, that it is by analyzation alone it can be discovered. Here then was a field opened for the sale of this simple manufacture at an advanced price; and those necklaces, which lately adorned the Caribbean female, may now glitter on the lovely bosom of a London or Parisian belle. At the next distribution of the monthly prizes, Father Anslem bestowed on six of the negroes a bottle of the mixture, with the directional process, which consists chiefly in exactitude of mixing the prepared materials with the gum, and the care to be observed in placing them properly in the sun-beam; which method of drying he preferred. And on finding the intended improvement answer their most sanguine expectation, our negroes have already exported a considerable quantity of our fictitious amber. This island also produces the Capua

tree; the balsam of which is of the most healing nature: but its qualities being so well known, the planter reserves its produce in his own hands, and derives considerable profit from its exportation. In a place abounding with beautiful shrubs, my Jacqueline will believe the predilection of her Claude for Botanic pursuits meets with the highest gratification. Here, however, as I often wander in search of scarce plants, through scenery luxuriant in beauty, I feel I am alone. In vain, on turning a sudden angle, and discovering some blooming landscape or romantic dell, do I look for the fine flash of that eye, which used, on such occasions, to beam on mine with congenial delight. Soon, very soon must I return to claim my affianced treasure. In the weary while, beloved and attaching creature! preserve inviolable that pure affection, which constitutes the chief charm of existence

“To your grateful CLAUDE.”

“I shall write to Guadaloupe immediately,” said the Marquis, after reading the letters. “And I presume, amiable Jacqueline, you will not oppose the return of your lover? Alas,” continued he, tenderly surveying the Marchioness and her son, “Events are crowding so mournfully and rapidly on us, that I fear, if my sad forebodings are realized, our deserving Claude will indeed bear a larger company to our New Bellesme, than he has the most remote idea of, or my worst apprehensions could foresee at the time of his departure. Forbear, my love,” continued he, on observing the enquiring eye of Madame, “forbear yet a while to question me. Fain, very fain, would I anticipate a favourable issue to what now wears so threatening an aspect. Would our good Friar were here, to aid me with his counsel: but I must yet request him to remain at Guadaloupe during the absence of Claude. Alas! I fear also, that e’er long, those sacred edifices, which, for ages, have been the sanctuary of men of his holy function, will, in France, be razed to the foundations. Not that I should lament the demolition of monastic institutions, which, in my opinion, are contrary to nature and to reason. Still, when I reflect on the many who in them found an asylum from disappointment and worldly scorn, and who will, in that event, be thrown friendless on a world they had abjured, my heart bleeds! But enough of melancholy forebodings for the present. I rejoice, my Adonia, that your interesting protégée is now with you, as her father, with Baptiste and myself, have much to settle respecting what may now be termed our decaying hamlet.” Saying this, the Marquis and Baptiste withdrew, leaving Madame to repose in the bosom of Jacqueline her conjectures respecting the hints of her Lord.

The letters from Baptiste and Jacqueline, which accompanied those of the Marquis, expressed every sentiment of parental and affianced love. And Perron also, unknown to every one but the Marquis, wrote a few lines to his adopted son. The fears of this affectionate parent, aided by the conviction he felt, that his languishing disorder would terminate in death, made him anxious to place his beloved child in the care of a husband, e’er she should be bereaved of that of a father. To Claude, therefore, he candidly avowed his apprehensions, and concluded his simple and affectionate letter thus:

“Return then, dear and promised protector of my darling child;—to you I can entrust a daughter so precious. Yet, in so doing, I shall prepare her for a voyage to which I am incompetent:—Yet, wherefore should I grieve at that? Soon will my hoary head rest in the bosom of the land which gave me birth. Ought I not to rejoice, then, that on that of a tender husband will my Jacqueline’s repose.”

Fully, in the Marquis’s letter to Claude, were those sentiments disclosed, which, from a fear of prematurely terrifying the Marchioness, he so carefully guarded from her. With the wisdom which, combining cause with effect, deduces the future from the past, he augured ill

from the succession of events, and endeavoured to be prepared for the coming storm. Much of pain and difficulty threatened to impede the completion of the plan he meditated; but however pain or difficulty might retard his views, or wound his heart, the Marquis was not the man to be overcome by either. Gentle as the serenity he admired, in time of peace, his was the bland and conciliating character, formed to be beloved. But his powers assuming a higher and more decided tone, seemed to expand with the events which called them forth; and, amid the storms of civil discord, one would, on surveying the conduct of a being thus endowed, exclaim, "This man was born for times of difficulty."

The winter now approached, and, for so mild a climate, exhibited an appearance of severity. The inroads of faction penetrated even the remotest part of the province of Maine and Perch; and there the sad predictions of the Marquis were verified. Convents and monasteries, in almost all the provinces of France, were now become, with their lately venerated inhabitants, obnoxious to the fury of a lawless mob; and, among the many, were seen the humble and pious brotherhood of St. Nicholas of Bellesme, wandering forth from the peaceful walls which had so long sheltered virtue and religion. Many of these venerable men had obtained leave, and embarked for different countries, where they hoped to find that religious retirement denied in their own. Others, scattered through the neighbouring villages, or sheltered by the Marquis, waited an opportunity of bidding also an eternal adieu to France.

It is here unnecessary to recapitulate events so well known as those which agitated that unhappy country at this period. Menou, faithful to his promise, transmitted to Monsieur the promised information respecting the imprisoned Sovereign, and mentioned, that a trial was an event confidently spoken of by the miscreants, whose influence was now equal to the completion of any project, however diabolical. The solitary hope of being useful to the unhappy Monarch, was almost extinct in the bosom of Monsieur; yet he could not forbear making one trial more in his favour: therefore, bidding a mournful adieu to his Lady, he once more set off for Paris. Here, while he strove to awaken the feelings of loyalty in every one whose example might stimulate others to virtuous exertion, it was his lot to experience disappointment in every form. Many indeed acknowledged, that could any plan, equally feasible and safe, be arranged, they would willingly yield, their concurrence; but to make themselves obnoxious to the prevailing party, by standing forth as the champions of a ruined cause, was not, in their code of prudence, an allowable, or to be expected mode of procedure.

While the Marquis was thus vainly endeavouring to serve his devoted King, affairs wore an equally hopeless aspect at Bellesme. Parties of horsemen were daily marauding, and often insolently demanding lodging for themselves and stabling for their horses at the castle. Tranquillity was chased from the village; and it seemed ordained, that the lamp of life, which feebly glimmered in Perron, should expire in the midst of civil and elementary discord. Previous to the departure of the Marquis, he had remarked the alteration in the appearance of his faithful vassal. But soon after, the hectic flush yielded to the pallid hue of approaching dissolution. He had not at any period been confined to his bed; and the fallacious hope with which we catch at the most remote or trifling alleviation in the illness of a beloved friend, had still whispered to Jacqueline, that could her dear father but be removed from a scene where his nerves were kept in constant irritation by terror, he might yet recover.

Thus deceived, with what inconceivable distress did this affectionate daughter behold the ravage a single night had wrought in the appearance of the dying Perron! Shocked, almost to the annihilation of her faculties, she caught the hand of her parent, and bursting into a passion of tears, sunk at his feet. "O thou," exclaimed the venerable man, "who hast been the dutiful solace

of a life now drawing to a close, embitter not, beloved child, those moments which should be dedicated to GOD in lowly thanksgiving, that I am spared the pang of witnessing the dissolution of my country, or being driven to pass a remnant of existence far from it. One supplication I have to offer at the throne of mercy,—May He who is about to deprive thee of thy earthly, be to thee an heavenly parent. Weep not, my child, for my exchange is glory! Thou, Jacqueline, whose fortitude hath so often cheered the broken spirit of thy father, wilt surely support him now!—A few years, my child, and we shall be reunited: Think of this, my exemplary, my heart's dear Jacqueline, and summon all thy magnanimity to sooth thy father's passage to his grave." Jacqueline arose, pressed to her lips the hands of her father, and, in faltering accents, promised even the mournful obedience his last request required.

Sad and slowly passed the day; when, as evening approached, Perron expressed a wish to be laid on his bed, and that a priest, whom he named, might be sent for to administer extreme unction. The night was dark and tempestuous; but Baptiste knowing the zeal with which Perron had always performed his religious duties, and fearing another messenger might not succeed in bringing the priest he wished, insisted on going himself, sending also a peasant to the castle to inform Madame of the alteration on Perron, and requesting her to send the wife of Pierre to support Jacqueline in her melancholy situation. Heavily passed the hours; and to the astonishment and deep affliction of Jacqueline, Baptiste returned not, neither did any one arrive from the castle. Two young companions alone were with Jacqueline, watching the expiring breath of her father.

It was now midnight. The storm heightened; and as, at the request of Perron, his daughter arose to open the casement for air to his oppressed bosom, the lightning glanced across her cheek, whose ashy paleness, contrasted with her dark hair agitated by the wind, presented an appearance almost as spectral as the wasted form reclining on the bed at the farther side of the apartment. Perron, refreshed for a moment by the admission of air, requested to be raised on pillows. When this was effected, he for some minutes contemplated, with an earnest eye, the clouded appearance of the heavens; then tenderly pressing the hand of Jacqueline, thus addressed her: "Grievous and opposing, as these conflicts in the elementary system, are the fears in the bosom of the dying sinner: but different, far different, are the consolations bestowed by the Almighty on the last hour of the righteous. To thee, my child, whom I have endeavoured to impress with a deep sense of the gratitude due from the created to the Creator, may this last lesson of thy father be the seal of truth of the doctrine he hath inculcated; and may this tranquil separation of a soul relying on the mercy of its GOD, prepare and strengthen thee for the hour in which thine also will be summoned into the presence of thy Redeemer and mine."

The last lesson had indeed quivered on the lip of Perron; the vital spark was now extinguished, and the lifeless form of the virtuous parent rested on the bosom of his agonized daughter. At this moment the Marchioness entered. She had been prevented from attending the messenger of Baptiste by a party of soldiers, who, affecting to discredit the absence of the Marquis, insisted on searching the castle, and under the conflict of contending emotions, Madame was obliged to attend the insolent intruders; and at the moment of their departure had hastened to the afflicted Jacqueline. "My child, my beloved child," said she, gently disengaging the corpse of Perron from her arms, "come to the bosom of a mother; shed, freely shed on it, tears due to thy departed parent; but yield, my Jacqueline, to thy faithful companions, the last sad duties to be rendered these sacred remains, and quit with me this melancholy scene." For a few moments Jacqueline threw herself on her knees by the bed of her deceased father; then rising, returned the tender caresses of the Marchioness, exclaiming, "No, Madame! to your every other

request will the humble Jacqueline pay implicit obedience; but here must the duty of the daughter supersede every other claim. Shall the parent, who, from early infancy, hath supplied a father and a mother's care to his sorrowing Jacqueline; who never rose but to bless her, nor closed the day without having done some act to call down the blessing of Heaven on her head: shall his venerable remains receive the last sad offices from any hands but those of his bereaved child? Ah, no, that must never be." Madame could not persist in opposing what her heart knew to be right: but determined not to leave the orphan, she dispatched servants to the castle with the necessary orders for the interment of Perron, which was to take place the next night but one; which solemnity, supporting Jacqueline, she herself witnessed, and knelt with that affectionate daughter on the grave which contained the mortal remains of her now beatified parent.

Three more days had now elapsed, and no Baptiste appeared; when the strong mind of Jacqueline, operated on as it had been by grief and alarm, now yielded to disease. And so rapid was its progress, that in a few hours from its commencement, the beautiful form, so lately blooming in health and vigour, was now writhing under the most alarming delirium. To the distempered imagination of the sufferer, the most horrible combination of dreadful events seemed even then passing in review. She called on her dead father to assist her in loosing the bands of Claude, who, she passionately averred, was in the act of being murdered by the negroes.—She accused the Marchioness with having secreted Baptiste, that he might not aid her in succouring Claude: and in one of these paroxysms, had nearly overpowered her attendants and thrown herself from the window, which, she insisted was the gate of the plantation, where, even then, those horrible cruelties were exercising on her lover. For several days this afflicting scene continued, and the spirit of Madame was nearly broken, when the Marquis arrived, and with him Baptiste; whom the former had relieved from a party of horsemen who had encountered him on the night of Perron's decease, when, it will be remembered, he went in search of the priest, and had thereby aroused their suspicion. They accosted him, and not believing his simple recital, insisted he had some treacherous plan to disclose to that priest, who was known to be an enemy to the people, and a great asserter of the rights of their enemy, Louis Capet. They therefore, forced him to proceed with them to Mortagne, and prevented any information of his detention from reaching his friends.

The Marquis had stopped a few minutes in that city on his way to Bellesme, and hearing of the confinement of Baptiste, had, by a liberal application of assignats, procured his enlargement.

The expressive countenance of Monsieur declared how little of comfort he had to impart, and manifested his grief for the death of Perron. "Good old man," said he, "In thee have I lost a faithful friend; yet should I not lament, but rather rejoice that thou hast escaped the knowledge of a deed which would have torn thy loyal bosom with shame and anguish. Yes, my Adonia, one son of France is spared the agony of hearing her utter degradation in the meditated murder of the King, for such I am assured will be the result of the present deliberation of the enemies of their country. As for our sweet Jacqueline, I hope, a fate shining as her merit yet awaits her. Claude must soon arrive, and then shall every thought of your Antoine be submitted to your inspection; and the beloved of his heart prove how capable she is of rising superior to a temporary, though painful privation, when his honour or happiness is, by such conduct, to be advanced."

It seemed as if the return of the Marquis was to be the portent of convalescence to Jacqueline, whose disorder from that day took a decidedly favourable turn. Her recollection was now perfectly restored, and as she was earnest in her request of seeing Monsieur, her wish was indulged, and the first tear she had shed since the death of her father, now flowed on the bosom

of him who promised to supply to her that tender relation, as gently and kindly he soothed her filial sorrow. This interview over, the recovery of Jacqueline was rapid, as had been the progress of her fever; and in a few days she descended to the saloon, where shortly after she was clasped to the bosom of Claude. Imagination may picture, but no pen can describe a meeting thus rendered interesting by circumstances. But Claude, as in memory he retraced every event, found his heart acknowledge, that in all the pride of beauty, and happy under parental care, as he had left her, never, till the moment he saw her pale, altered, and fatherless, did he know the extent of his affection for the lovely Jacqueline.

The Marquis no longer withheld from his Lady the plan it was now necessary to expedite. He was aware, that his tenure of personal safety was most uncertain. He was assured, that the sacrifice of the Monarch would be the prelude to that of his adherents. And although, from its distance from the capital, no violence, save that of insolent intrusion, had been exercised in his domain, he knew that, in the present situation of affairs, to anticipate the worst was the wisest course.

The project he had so long meditated, was to intrust Madame and Victoire to the care of Claude on his return to Guadaloupe, and as many of the female villagers as were particularly attached to, and wished to share their emigration; some of whom were already on their way to the port from whence they were to embark. The marriage of Claude and Jacqueline was immediately to be solemnized; and after the ceremony, they, with Madame, Victoire, and Baptiste, were to follow thro' different routes. Baptiste, and the wife of Pierre, were, with little Victoire, to proceed by Coutance, where a boat would be in waiting to take them to the vessel; and Madame and Jacqueline were, in disguise, to accompany Claude to Mans, where it lay. The men of the hamlet, to whom the Marquis, with a noble and fearless confidence, had, some time previous to this, entrusted the plan of emigration, were, in order to avoid suspicion, to take their passage in such vessels as were bound from different ports.

Having thus settled what appeared to be the only way of saving his friends and family, the Marquis, in presence of those most interested, disclosed the plan to Madame. With apparent approbation she listened to the detail, until Monsieur arrived at that part of it which mentioned her being, with Victoire, entrusted to the care of Claude, and thus declaring a separation to be intended; when, with the wildest expression of agony, she started from her seat, and would have caught the hand of her husband. But he, conscious that this was the moment to decide the contest of feeling, with an impassioned, but steady look, threw himself at her feet. "Behold, Adonia," said he, "the man who, when wooing thee in all the pride of youth and beauty, even to obtain the hand which hath strewed his path with blessings, would not have humbled himself thus; but who, to obtain a boon, which alone can secure to him the beings on whom he dotes, would, were it possible, a thousand times more lowly prostrate himself. Adonia! beloved and exalted woman, for my sake, for the sake of my dependants, whose very dependance calls for the sacrifice, bear this pain! Allow your husband to be, what in happier days it was your generous boast to call him, the father of his people! Ah, that day, so bright in prosperity, in which you blessed me with your hand, was the happiest that could mark an æra in the fate of man. Now also, beloved of my soul, even amidst storms and tempests, let the present, gilded by a noble deed, be the proudest."

The big drops stood on the manly forehead of the Marquis; while Madame, her hands clasped, and her beautiful eyes cast upward, with all the persuasion of supplication, seemed to plead for a mitigation of the dreadful sentence of separation:—when the Marquis, pressing Victoire to his bosom, and then putting him into the arms of his mother, exclaimed, "Go, dearest boy! help your unhappy father to plead to the heart of your adored mother:—Tell her, that on her

fortitude depends the preservation of the last relic of a Noble House: Tell her, it is the duty of him who gave thee being, to preserve to thee, if it be possible, the birth-right descended from a line of ancestors, loyal as distinguished: And lastly, dearest of pleaders, beg that thy father's honour may be preserved inviolate, that he may not be branded as a miscreant who forsook his King even in his hour of sorrow! If that King find no succouring hand, if the plan of the regicide be accomplished, then, Adonia," again throwing himself at her feet, "then I swear to abjure my country for ever: Then will I resign a name, which, as the gift of my Sovereign, while he has one, I will retain, but which I may well forego when his nobler one shall be extinguished."

Deep sighs now burst from the tortured heart of the Marquis: and the little Victoire, with infantine endearment, flew to the neck of his father, who once more assayed to decide the conflict. "Behold," said he, clasping and holding up the little hands of his child, "behold the united supplication of the father and the son. Oh, dear, but too tender, yield, oh yield. Preserve, Adonia, the life of my child." The Marchioness gasped for breath; then faintly articulating, "You have conquered," fell into the extended arms of her husband, who, passionately pressing her cheek and forehead with his quivering lip, resigned her to the care of Jacqueline, and rushed out of the apartment. Claude would have followed; but on Monsieur waving his hand, as if to request being left alone, he returned to assist Jacqueline in the restoration of Madame, the conflict of whose feelings had brought on repeated faintings. And her unhappy Lord, unable to retreat, or to witness her sufferings, wandered about the extensive grounds of the Castle in a state bordering on distraction. When the Marchioness recovered, feeling that her consent, if given at all, should be bestowed with dignified resignation, she sent little Victoire, with Claude, to request the presence of Monsieur. On his entering the room, she presented her hand, saying, "Pardon, my Lord, the opposition which the fears of a wife have given to your design. Proceed, without fear, to the full disclosure of your arrangements; and if your Adonia is now called upon to give the first painful proof of her obedience, it is indeed a sacrifice due to your unbounded love."

"Best of women, and of wives," returned the Marquis, "in every thing my superior, you teach me my duty. I now feel, that, endeavouring to be considerate, I have been cruel. In keeping from you what I have long foreseen would be a necessary measure, I have given you occasion to doubt my confidence in your fortitude. Yet, until my last journey to Paris, I still cherished the hope of being able to prevent this separation. On my arrival at the capital, its fallacy was apparent, and I could not bear the idea of prematurely alarming you. I have now to rejoice in the precaution I used, of informing Claude, in my last letters to Guadaloupe, of my fears and wishes. To his care, and that of Jacqueline, I feel happy in confiding the comfort of my Adonia, and my son; and should the event I dread take place, be assured, I will immediately follow you."

On the following day the marriage of Claude and Jacqueline was solemnized; and immediately after, accompanied by Madame and the Marquis, they proceeded to a village near Mans. Baptiste and Victoire were already embarked, and with a view of following them unobserved, they had determined, that the separation between the afflicted Marquis and his Lady should take place here. It was agonizing, and with difficulty Monsieur was equal to the task of resigning her to the protection of Claude, who at length accomplished their safe embarkation. The unhappy mother, on ascending the deck, received into her arms the blooming Victoire, and passionately calling him her "fatherless boy," she kept him constantly with them. No persuasion could induce her to descend to the cabin, while the least vestige of the land which contained her Lord was to be seen; but when far from it, yielding at length to fatigue and indisposition, she was conveyed to bed, where she continued till within a day's sail of Guadaloupe. The weather had

been favourable, and the passage unusually quick: the sea-air had invigorated her nerves, and her mind consequently in some measure recovered its tone. At length she yielded to the solicitation of Claude and Jacqueline, to join them on deck. Little Victoire, enchanted with his novel situation, and too young to comprehend the grief of his mother, was in high health and spirit. Claude, who was enthusiastically fond of children, had succeeded in obtaining a large share of his affection, and was the companion of his sports and the kind anticipator of his wants and wishes.

As the vessel approached the shore of Guadaloupe, Madame, with Victoire in her arms, sat meditating on her forlorn husband; and as her tears fell on the beautiful face of her child, she exclaimed, "Far from thy home and honours art thou wandering, dear, dear boy! and whether thou findest a peaceful, tho' more lowly one, thine unhappy mother hath yet to learn. But be it poor and dreary as imagination can picture, were thy noble father but with us, in it we might find comfort." Every argument which could suggest hope or peace was used by Claude and Jacqueline to alleviate a despondency so natural; and Madame, with the view of convincing her young friends of her wish to rise superior to even a just grief, rallied her spirits into a state of apparent composure.

They were now safely landed, and entering Basseterre, were greeted by Monsieur and Madame St Amand, and Father Anslem. The emotion of Madame Richambeau on meeting the worthy Friar, could only be equalled by what he felt at beholding her and her lovely boy thus driven from their country. "Be comforted, my noble daughter!" said he, on Madame's holding out her hands, unable to speak to him, while his tears fell on them in profusion, "be comforted, most exemplary of women: the power of Him who hath brought thee and thy child in safety o'er the deep waters, encompasseth also thy noble husband, and will, I trust, in due time, conduct him to taste, even here, the perfection of his own benevolence!"—"For you, my beloved children, you dear adopted of my care," addressing the kneeling Claude and Jacqueline, "may the holy ordinance which hath united your fate, still more closely cement those hearts which I have endeavored to form worthy of each other. Then will ye taste felicity even on this earth, and you, excellent Baptiste, reap the reward due to your parental care."

The Friar now introduced Monsieur and Madame St Amand more particularly to the Marchioness; and on their politely insisting on the whole party's remaining at their house until the next day, when they promised to accompany them to the plantation, they proceeded to Monte Amand.

The spirits of the Marchioness being soothed by the attentive kindness of her friends, in the morning she declared her ability for the ride. The beautiful appearance of the island seemed to make a considerable impression on her mind, which had been rather prejudiced in its disfavour; and once she could not help exclaiming to Claude, "Were but my Antoine here, methinks I should not regret the fertile fields of France."

As the little party entered the plantation, crowds of negroes, unrestrained by the modes of the more polished European, rushed forward, and throwing themselves at the feet of Madame, uttered the wildest demonstrations of joy; while Victoire, delighted with the noise, screamed aloud with rapture. Madame, leaning on Claude, gracefully presented her son to the grateful Negroes, saying, "Behold, my friends, the son of Richambeau! To your care and faithful services, during the detention of his father, his mother commends him." "And to your notice, Madam!" said the Friar, presenting a negro, whose dignified look at once announced him, "allow me to introduce the noble Quako." "Excellent, most excellent man!" said Madame, "How shall the wife of Richambeau thank the generous friend of her husband! Accept the hand I offer

as that of a sister; and may this meeting be the commencement of a friendship lasting as disinterested!" With a dignified and interesting humility, Quako pressed the offered hand of Madame to his lips: Then, seizing the young Victoire, kissed, with uncontrollable emotion, the little hands and smiling mouth of the lovely boy: Then, bursting into a violent passion of tears, rushed from their presence.

It was now that the provident care of the most excellent of men and of husbands was to be displayed to the astonished senses of Adonia. Already had they traversed the plantation; when, on turning a sudden angle, embosomed in a little paradise of blooming shrubs, (whose luxuriant growth, aided by the genial influence of climate, had assisted the generous plan,) rose, on a gentle eminence, a structure, formed of slighter materials, it is true, but built on the exact model of the Castle at Bellesme. A little to the left of it, was a smaller building, that of Pierre, the superintendant's, and designed for his residence; and on the right of the Castle, in the form of a crescent, were erected the dwellings of the emigrant party of the Marchioness, Father Anslem, and Quako.

All this had been arranged by Monsieur in his letter to Claude; who, giving Quako a clear idea of the plan, left it under his superintending care, and that of the Monk; and so happy were the negroes at the probability of their deliverer and his family taking up their abode in the island, that they were unanimous in exertion; and the ground being laid out, some were employed in planting, some in building, and the whole was finished, and, with the assistance of Madame St Amand, furnished in the style of simple elegance, which Claude had informed her was congenial to the taste of the Marchioness.

Overcome by this new proof of the unceasing attention of her Lord, it was with difficulty that the Friar and Claude could support this amiable woman into the mansion thus prepared for her, when, leaving her to the care of Madame St Amand and Jacqueline, they retired to give orders for the arrangement of her household.

A few days repose, combined with the grateful affection of her young friends, and the delicate attentions of Monsieur and Madame St Amand, had restored to Adonia the resigned composure of one deeply feeling, but endeavouring to rise superior to the disquietude of fear and suspense. Her boy, blooming as an angel, was already become the idol of the negroes; and, struck with the noble and commanding figure of Quako, which indeed, for height and fine proportion, bore some resemblance to that of the Marquis, he constantly addressed him by the appellation of "Black Papa."

Our interesting emigrants had now been six weeks on the island; and Madame, anxious to fulfil the wish of her husband, had, with her own hand, distributed the monthly prizes once. In this task she was assisted by little Victoire, who, proud of his new office, with enchanting simplicity, assured the delighted negroes, "that Mama presented such and such gifts, because they were good, like little Victoire."

The agitation caused by their arrival had scarcely subsided, when, with deep regret, Jacqueline observed the apparent alteration in the health of Father Anslem, and expressing her fear to Claude, that the events, whose melancholy impression had deprived her of a father, would also occasion the decline of their venerable preceptor, was, for the first time, informed, that some dreadful event relative to that excellent man, early in life, had occurred in the place they were now in: "But of the nature of that event, my Jacqueline," said Claude, "or in what manner it affected the happiness of the worthy father, I am ignorant. Though, were it not for the delicacy I feel in prying into the secrets of one so dear, I am sure I could gain the necessary information from Monsieur St Amand, whose father was on the island, and in some way connected with our

friend, not then known as the humble and virtuous Father Anslem, but as the noble and accomplished Theodore De Montpensier.

“The Marquis informed me, before I left Bellesme the first time, that in consenting to accompany me, the good Friar had made a sacrifice of feeling to affection:—and so thoroughly aware am I of the extent of that affection, that unless circumstances render the disclosure improper, our venerable friend will yet confide to his adopted children the history of his sorrows.”

A few nights after this conversation, Baptiste having declined partaking of the usual evening walk, and retaining Victoire as the amusement of the period of their absence, Madame and Jacqueline, attended by Quako and Claude, extended their ramble to a more distant and romantic part of the island than they had hitherto explored, and on entering a beautiful dell, were surprised by the appearance of Father Anslem and Monsieur St Amand, who seemed to issue out of a small grove of wild Cinnamon and Corbaries. With the promptitude occasioned by unintentional intrusion they were rapidly retiring, when the Friar advanced. The traces of deep emotion were visible on his countenance, and of the tenderest sympathy on that of Monsieur. The Monk took the hand of Madame, and, while audible sighs burst from his heart, led her on, the rest of the party following, at the motion of his hand, to the wood from whence they had observed him emerge. On entering the inclosure, with astonishment they beheld, raised about two feet from the ground, the long branches of the Capua and Corbary entwining over it, a tomb, and with equal surprise read the following inscription.

TO THE MEMORY
OF
THE MASSACRED CECILIA,
THIS MARBLE IS INSCRIBED,
By
THEODORE DE MONTPENSIER,
AND
PHILLIPPE ST AMAND,
Anno Domini 1760.

“Long, Madame, very long has it been the intention of the unfortunate man before you,” said the Monk, “to unfold to you, and to those beloved beings, the event which saddened and overcast his spring of life! What time then can be more suitable, or what place more appropriate for the mournful relation, than over the tomb which incloses the ashes of her who was the innocent cause of my sorrows? Blessed spirit,” continued he, apostrophizing that of the being he lamented, “if thou art yet sensible of the weakness of mortality, if thou art hovering over the spot consecrated to thy memory, aid, oh, aid thy unfortunate lover! support him through the detail of thy matchless worth, thy bitter and calamitous fate!”

Deeply affected, Claude, Quako, and Monsieur St Amand, formed, with the flexible branches of the trees, seats for Madame and Jacqueline: And the Monk, after a visible struggle to subdue his feelings, commenced his narrative, having recourse occasionally to a diary which he appeared to have been shewing to Monsieur St Amand previous to their arrival at the spot.

“Born the second son of a cadet of one of the first families in France, and bred up with high notions of honour, and what I owed the illustrious root from whence I sprung, I shall pass over the earlier part of a life, whose opening seemed the dawn of a propitious day. The darling of

my parents, who spared no expence on the cultivation of talents, whose supposed brilliancy existed chiefly in their fond partiality, I shall also pass over the detail of those studies through which the youth of noble birth prepare for the high destination to which they aspire.

“My brother Adolphus was my senior by two years, and intended for the service, which being at that time considered as the school for finishing the education of a gentleman, it was determined that I should serve one campaign, and then take upon me, in conjunction with the worthy father of Monsieur St Amand, the management of a large colonial possession in Guadaloupe. Suffice it to say, that in pursuing the plan chalked out, I was not branded with having tarnished the military reputation of my ancestors. Soon after, resigning my sword for the more lucrative profession selected, I bade adieu to France, and after a prosperous voyage, landed at Guadaloupe, precisely on the day, in the evening of which, in honour of a newly arrived Governor, a grand ball was to be given at Basseterre.

“Monsieur St Amand had been some years on the island, and being a married man, my father wished I should domesticate with him, in preference to taking up house at so early an age. I accordingly, on landing, was conducted to his, and after spending a day, which served entirely to banish the idea of the newness of our acquaintance, in the evening accompanied him and Madame to the ball. On entering the Town-house, I went through the necessary etiquette of introduction to the Governor and chief men of the island; after which, as I was assiduously attending Madame, she smilingly told me, she must not monopolize a newly imported beau, lest she should incur the displeasure of those ladies, who were not, like her, contented with the admiration of one. Therefore,” continued she, “as I observe Monsieur is engaged with the Governor’s Lady, I shall introduce you to one well qualified to be your Cicerone;” at the same time holding up her fan to a young man of an elegant exterior, “Come hither, Charles,” said she, “for once I will condescend to employ you, if you promise to exert yourself suitably to the honour conferred. The young man advanced with a smile, and Madame taking my hand, put it into his, saying, to you then, for this evening, I commit the charge of my newly-arrived friend, Monsieur de Montpensier, and trust, that in the polite attentions of Monsieur de Launi, he will receive a favourable specimen of the hospitable manners of Guadaloupe. Then, gracefully kissing her hand to both, she joined the party of the Governor’s Lady; while young de Launi, with a polite frankness, assured me, that of all the favours the goodness of Madame St Amand had conferred on him, the present was the most gratifying to his feelings.” Then leading me through the rooms, the dancing having commenced, he introduced me to a beautiful girl, whom I then led to the set. De Launi soon followed with a partner, whom I supposed he had selected in the interval. As we were near the top, and soon began the dance, I had not observed the Lady who honoured Charles with her hand. But after having gone down, and being soon followed by them, as I was replying to one of the brilliant nothings of my partner, my attention was powerfully awakened by the melting pathos of a voice, whose unequalled sweetness seems yet to play around my heart. On turning about, I observed it was that of the young lady who had been dancing with de Launi; and being arrived at the lower part of the room, she was now conversing with a knot of gentlemen, who seemed anxious to catch the “silver sounds” which had so suddenly impressed me, and which induced me to examine, with increasing interest, the fair being from whom they proceeded.

“When I observed the almost manly outline of a forehead, over which strayed, in careless profusion, a quantity of dark brown hair, I should have thought its expression too commanding, had it not been for the feminine delicacy and contour of the lower part of the face. Of her eyes, or what constituted their powerful attraction, it is difficult to determine; it was neither any particular

beauty of form or colour, but eyes so full of soul, so expressive of the diviner emanation of feeling and intellect, never in any other being have I seen equalled. When silent, the general expression of her countenance might be termed pensive; but when speaking, or listening to a tale of interest, it glowed with celestial effulgence! Her form scarcely rose to the graceful, yet her movements were eminently so; she seemed to tread on air; and even at this distance, I can recal the feeling with which I assented to the remark of a gentleman who stood near me, who, on observing her cross the room, exclaimed, "There is sentiment in her very walk!"

"With a creature thus endowed, for a partner, it was with extreme astonishment that I remarked the indifference of de Launi, who, scarce noticing, beyond what mere politeness required, the being who had thus honoured him, repeatedly strode off to utter a profusion of compliments the most bare-faced, to the gaudy belles of which the assembly was chiefly composed.

"My partner was unquestionably the handsomest girl in the room; but she was one of those ornamented trifles, who, however they may adorn a ballroom, are such as the heart of the feeling and domestic man will invariably turn from with disgust. Wearied by her flippancy, it was with heart-felt pleasure I heard her declare, that the vulgarity of the exertion would prevent her from venturing through another dance; and having learnt that she was niece to the Governor's wife, I led her to a seat by that Lady. Then going in pursuit of Monsieur de Launi, I eagerly requested he would introduce me to that charming woman. "What charming woman?" said he, "I think that title almost exclusively belongs to the one you danced with; for I verily believe, such another set of painted babies it would be difficult to produce in any other part of the globe; and I think the Pope ought especially to exempt the men of Guadaloupe from any other penance for their sins, than the one they are daily obliged to undergo, of saying civil things to such moppets. But prithee, describe your enchantress; and, if in my power, I will with pleasure accede to your request." When I told him it was his partner whom I meant, he surveyed me for a moment, with a glance I thought singularly scrutinising: then, turning on his heel, he exclaimed, "What, Miss Leicester! Really I should never have recognised your goddess from your flattering appellation. She is a good enough little girl, but I think scarcely even pretty. But *allons, allons*; I shall soon effect the gratification you wish." Saying this, he led me back to the room I had lately quitted, and at the upper end of which, Miss Leicester, seated on a sofa with two other ladies, was supporting, with a number of gentlemen who surrounded them, a conversation, the animation of which was broken in upon by my eccentric Cicerone, who advanced without ceremony through the band, and seizing her hand, exclaimed, "Miss Leicester, here is a gentleman newly arrived from France, who says, that your very face manifests an hostile defiance to that country, inasmuch, that it plainly discourages one chief article of its manufacture; therefore, being himself a considerable exporter of rouge, while he expresses his gratitude to many of your fair companions, he begs the honour of an introduction, that he may have an opportunity of converting you from your heretical opinion on the subject. Allow, therefore, Monsieur de Montpensier the felicity of kissing your fair hand."

"The group of gentlemen, laughing at this whimsical address, retired, and made room for me to advance, when I paid, with involuntary awkwardness, the usual slight compliment of introduction, which she returned, gracefully felicitating my arrival on the island. It was now that I felt enjoyment, pure as it was rational, supersede the unsatisfactory festivity of the former part of the evening. Charles de Launi, finding his partner declined dancing again, and grown weary of a conversation too sedate for his lively spirits, deputed me to take care of his "fair charge," as he

styled Miss Leicester, and telling her that I had said, "she would be a tolerably charming woman with the help of Carmine," left us, in pursuit of diversion more congenial to his taste.

"I fear, Monsieur de Montpensier," said the fair Cecilia, "if you form your opinion of the ladies of Guadaloupe from the description of the lively rattle who has just left us, you have already begun to contrast them with those of France, eminently to their disadvantage. But suspend your opinion for a while. Wits claim a licence; and Monsieur de Launi ranking as one, you must allow the necessary exaggeration. Believe you will, on this island, meet many amiable and accomplished women; and from the manners of Madame St Amand I would recommend you to form your opinion, in preference to the too sarcastic delineation of your whimsical Cicerone."

"While indeed I felt there was one fair creature, whose mind and manners could redeem the opinion he had expressed, I could not, though a Frenchman, tutor my tongue to utter what would bear the interpretation of a compliment; therefore, leaving herself entirely out of the answer, I assured her of the favourable idea I had formed of the ladies, from the specimen she had selected. The two ladies, who were sitting with Miss Leicester, and to whom she had presented me, now joined in the conversation, and, for an hour, supported it with great sprightliness; when De Launi, returning to lead his partner to the supper-room, whispered, that "etiquette required I should do the same to mine."

"Sensible that I had been deficient, and regretting, that politeness sometimes obliges us to desert the gold for the dross, I bowed to the fair group, and sought the beauty whom I had a while forgotten. She was sitting nearly where I had left her;—but, although surrounded by the chief men of the island, an air of discontent and hauteur had overspread those fine features, so lately dimpling in all the witchery of blandishment. I had behaved rudely; and, feeling that an apology was due, I framed the most gallant one the confusion I really felt would allow, and which being condescendingly accepted, I led the fair one, in all the splendour of conscious beauty, to the supper-table.

"Here, as precedence was strictly attended to, my rank and that of my fair companion placed us near the top; and it was with keener sensations of envy than I had ever before experienced, that I observed the situation of the careless Charles, who, seated with her, to have been near whom, I would gladly have renounced rank, or any distinction which should impede that happier one, was enjoying, with those around them, the hilarity of mirth, and the effusion of wit.

"Never had I been placed in a situation more tantalizing. My partner, whose stock of ideas seemed centred in the sense of her own importance, and the extent of her knowledge in the fashions and gewgaws so gratifying to an empty mind, seemed at length disposed to devolve on me the task of amusing her: in which employment, fatiguing from the difficulty of adapting it to her capacity, my spirits and temper were nearly wearied, when they were relieved by the Governor's calling upon Miss Leicester and Monsieur De Launi for a duet. His voice was clear, and of great extent:—But her's,—oh, her's! so soft, and yet so powerful, thrilled every nerve; and my pleasure would have been pure as it was ardent, had not a feeling, new, but irresistible, poisoned all, by a jealousy, which I could not suppress, that he, of all present, should have been selected to aid with his voice, one, whose sweet modulation seemed to breathe celestial harmony.

"My pleasure for that night was destroyed. A great number of songs were now sung: and at the pause between each, my feeling of dread, that they would again be called upon to unite their powers, was inexpressible. At length Miss Leicester was particularly requested to sing one, which was named: and she complied, by singing an air so sweetly simple, that a few notes allaying the painful sensations which had thus stolen on my serenity, I listened to the sounds,

that, from her lips, seemed to realize a picture of happy love, which the poet, in all the enthusiasm of nature and genius, had, in the most glowing language, described: and, as her taste displayed itself in marking the minuter traits of feeling and tenderness, I inwardly felt, that if ever bliss, such as the song had imaged, were to be known by me, it would be participated with her alone.

“Daylight had long dawned on our revels, and the party at length broke up; when De Launi, declaring that “going to bed was a horrid bore,” proposed a ramble to the Devil’s Mountain;—to which several thoughtless young people of both sexes consented: when Madame St Amand interposed; and after rallying Charles on his want of gallantry, in thus proposing a ramble, which must necessarily deprive Miss Leicester of an escort, was proceeding, when I hastily turned round, and beheld that Lady, whose countenance wore, not the symptoms of offended pride, but the melancholy expression of anguish, which was immediately checked by an effort to smile, as she falteringly intreated, that no consideration of her might interrupt the proposed party, as her servant Felix would be a sufficient guard.

“De Launi looked a little abashed; but taking her hand, which he pressed to his lips, he declared, that presuming on her goodness, he had hoped she also would have accompanied them on the proposed excursion; “which I sincerely hope,” interrupted Madame St Amand, “will now be given up; at least, I trust you young Ladies, instead of exposing yourselves to the sulphureous steam of the mountain, after the exertion of the night, will accompany me to Monte Amand to breakfast; and the gentlemen who are disposed to go with this hair-brain, shall bid adieu at present, while the more rational will, I am sure, find their account in escorting us. For you, Miss Leicester, do not imagine you will leave me before night. Monsieur St Amand will ride over to St Floria after breakfast, and prevail on your uncle to accompany him back to dinner, and after that, perhaps I may release you.”

“Most of the gentlemen now intreated to be included in the invitation; and De Launi, whose sole motive for proposing the ramble arose from having observed some of the young men rather liberal in toasting the health of the new Governor, thought they would never accomplish a walk of three miles, and mischievously anticipated the pleasure of leaving them worn out by the way. Finding he was not asked to Monte Amand, he threw himself on his knees to the ladies, and, folding his hands like a child who has been punished, he promised, “If they would intercede with Madame to give him his share of bread and butter this one time, he would be the best boy in the island! and never, no, never attempt to lead so large a party to the Devil again.”

“His pardon being granted, a large party accompanied us to the house of Monsieur St Amand, and soon after sat down to an elegant breakfast; and a few hours were spent in a manner the most delightful. But no intreaties could prevail on Miss Leicester to stay dinner. She pleaded fatigue; and indeed her countenance evidenced indisposition, arising either from that, or some other cause.

“On parting, with an amiable frankness she put her hand in mine, saying, “As my uncle will be here to-day, Monsieur de Montpensier, I shall leave him to offer every inducement to your visiting St Floria, and will only intreat, that society from which I expect to derive so much pleasure, may not be unnecessarily or ceremoniously with-held.”

“To a compliment so flattering, I could only reply, by gently compressing the lovely hand I held, and murmuring over it an ardent desire to avail myself of her goodness. The company now departing, I yielded to the advice of Madame St Amand, who representing, that the fatigue of my late voyage, aided by the exertion of the last night, rendered a few hours rest absolutely necessary, begged I would repose myself for that time, in order that I might be enabled to appear

with éclat at the dinner, at which some of the finest women of the island were to be present. I would have given all I possessed to have assumed courage to ask a few questions relative to the enchanting Cecilia; but with the timidity of a real passion, was with-held by the fear of betraying the strong interest my heart acknowledged in that lovely creature. Therefore, thanking Madame for her good advice, I retired to my apartment.

“Here I had leisure to meditate, for sleep was out of the question. And meditate I did, almost to agony. There appeared to me something incomprehensible in the power of De Launi to hurt the feelings of a woman like Cecilia; and hurt she evidently was, notwithstanding her endeavours to suppress the appearance of being so. She seemed infinitely above the little pride of self-love, so prone to take offence at the incidental omission of attention; at least her conduct during the dance had given me reason to form that favourable idea of her good sense. And although the behaviour of De Launi, in proposing the ramble, was certainly rudely neglectful, it appeared singular that a man, who, it was easy to perceive, was a compound of whim, veiled under the gloss of an elegant exterior, could be of so much importance to a discerning female, as to make his attention or neglect a matter of consequence. That he did not love her, was evident. That he was incapable of loving a woman like her, I felt convinced. And weary of puzzling myself with conjectures to no purpose, I prepared to rise, that I might be in readiness to attend the summons of Madame.

“On entering the drawing-room, I found already seated in it, in addition to many of the last night’s party, three very fine women, sisters, of the name of Le Hardi; a Madame Les Vesconte, the widow of a planter, immensely rich, and extremely affected; a Mademoiselle La Tour; a Monsieur Pierrepont, whose spider-like form was nearly overwhelmed with the load of finery with which it was decorated; and seated next him was a man, the vulgar importance of whose person formed a ludicrous contrast to the diminutive figure of the little beau. This consequential gentleman was soon introduced to me as Monsieur Devereux, the uncle of Miss Leicester. With a feeling of disappointment, for which I could not account, I returned the compliments, which, on understanding I was of rank, he profusely offered; and, glad to escape from a feeling so unpleasant, I took refuge by the three young ladies, whose personal charms I could not but admire; and finding them unaffectedly pleasant, strove to lose in sprightly conversation the uneasiness I felt.

“Dinner was just announced, when Charles de Launi, drest in a style of elegance which greatly heightened the attraction of his really fine person, entered the room, and bowing slightly to the company, glided up to Madame, and seizing her hands, exclaimed, “As you had no opportunity of expressing at breakfast your contrition for having afflicted me, I am come back, that you may yet avail yourself of the power of so doing. And should that not be a sufficient excuse for the liberty I have taken of supplying your deficiency of an invitation, I appeal to your justice, whether, having kept me from the place you did this morning, you ought also to exclude me from this paradise of angels?” bowing to the ladies. Then striding away to Monsieur Pierrepont, he told him, “Miss Leicester had desired him to mention, that she was to be at home in the afternoon; and as she greatly admired his emphatic style of reading, she would reserve a poem she had just received, in the hope, that the fineness of the weather would tempt him to St Floria.” While the little animal declared, he “lived but to oblige her,” Monsieur St Amand whispered, “This is cruel, De Launi, you know she abhors him; and however amusing your eccentricities may sometimes be, I beg you will not make that amiable girl the subject of them!”

“Well, really I am most unfortunate, said the incorrigible.” Here had I taken pity on the poor little solitary, whom I left adapting most pathetic words to most agreeably dismal tunes; and

knowing Pierrepont to be the best crochet-monger in the island, I thought I had prepared a most delectable tête à tête for the pair." "Did Miss Leicester really expect him?" said Monsieur. "No, to be sure; pleasure, to be great, should always be unexpected! and so delightful will be the expression of astonishment on the face of the little Sentimentalist, that I am half inclined to ride over with Pierrepont, to get the meeting for a subject of caricature."

"Monsieur, with an entreating, or rather expostulating look, now whispered some words to De Launi; when Madame calling to me, I led her to the dining-room.

"At the table of Madame St Amand, there was just sufficient ceremony observed to render a mixture of society pleasant. Her own manners were eminently fascinating; and as, aided by the accomplished Le Hardis, she gave the ton, the time passed in an interchange of conversation of refined brilliancy. Even Charles de Launi appeared for a time to lose the wild etourderie of his own character in that of the polished gentleman, and gave with peculiar grace, when called upon for a song, one in which, couched in beautiful and appropriate language, the Genius of the island was personified as felicitating my arrival.

"The compliment was unexpected, as gratifying, when informed, that the composition was from the elegant pen of the sweet Cecilia, "whom," said Charles, "I was obliged to put in requisition to obtain the full forgiveness of Madame St Amand, who, after having heard this sublime effusion, must surely congratulate herself on the power of obliging others to exert their talents of persuasion, for the sole purpose of gratifying her, through the medium of a just compliment to her newly-arrived friend." A bow to Charles was all the return I could make for this insinuating address; and after a trio, in which the fair Le Hardis charmed the ear and touched the hearts of most present, the ladies withdrew.

"Politics and produce now took place of the delicious intercourse which had before so highly delighted me; and finding that the graces which give the charm to conversation fled with the ladies, as soon as politeness would permit, I followed them to the drawing-room.

"Madame St Amand, contrary almost to the rule of every other house on the island, never introduced cards at hers unless particularly requested; and even then would never allow high play. But as her society was the most select, and as she had great powers of mind herself, conversation, aided by music, generally formed the amusement of the evening; and, had Cecilia been present, never did one in the most polished Parisian circle glide away with the rapidity of this.

"Some gentlemen had followed my example in joining the ladies in the drawing-room. But it was late e'er the devotees to Bacchus made their appearance. Then was the time of enjoyment to Charles De Launi arrived. He had plied the little Pierrepont with bumpers to the health of Miss Leicester, until the latter had forgotten the supposed appointment at St Floria; while De Launi, reproaching him for his forgetfulness, dragged him to the ladies, to receive from them the punishment due for his neglect of their fair friend, which was the more cruel, he alleged, from the value Miss Leicester placed on the flattering attention of a man of Monsieur Pierrepont's talents and accomplishments. The confusion of the little beau was inexpressible, when Madame St Amand, perceiving his tormentor was not in a state to be reasoned with, rescued him, by observing, that as she intended riding over to St Floria in the morning, she would appoint Monsieur Pierrepont one of her Esquires, and thereby give him an opportunity of soliciting that pardon, which she was assured her gentle friend would readily grant."

"De Launi looked disappointed at this interference of Madame; but as even he stood a little in awe of this charming woman, he relinquished the little gentleman, who he had mischievously intended should accompany him to St Floria, inebriated as he was. Monsieur

Devereux, on departing, requested I would also attend Madame on her ride in the morning, as “a prelude to an intercourse of friendship, which he hoped would be uninterrupted during my stay on the island.”

“It was now the moment of enquiry was arrived; and unable longer to restrain my impatience, I began, by expressing to Madame my astonishment, that a man like Devereux should be the uncle of a woman of Miss Leicester’s apparent elegance. “So, my good friend,” said she, smiling, “you think every member of a family should be equally accomplished? This opinion will soon be eradicated by a general intercourse with the world, and in no instance more completely than in the present. Monsieur Devereux is indeed the uncle and guardian of Cecilia, whose mother, the sister of the late Madame Devereux, married an Englishman of good family, and some fortune, which, very soon after the birth of his daughter, was dissipated in the most idle extravagance. Her mother was equally improvident; and, both dying within a short period of each other, left, at six years of age, their child an orphan.

“Mr. Leicester’s friends, displeased by his marriage with a Frenchwoman, and disgusted by the conduct of both, refused any assistance, or to acknowledge the interesting child: when the late Madame Devereux, who was as excellent a woman as her husband is an inferior man, went over to England, and placed her niece at one of the first schools in London, the governess of which had been educated in France, and was one of her early and most valued friends. This Lady faithfully acquitted herself of the trust reposed in her; and four years ago Charles De Launi was sent over to conduct the amiable Cecilia to Guadaloupe.

“I was much with Madame Devereux after my marriage, and soon learned to admire her charming niece, whose first stroke of real affliction was occasioned by the death of the excellent aunt, who had more than supplied the place of a mother, and whose last request to her husband was, that he would continue to be the firm friend and paternal protector of her sweet Cecilia, in whose arms she soon after expired.

“Monsieur Devereux is as fond of his niece as he can be of any thing. He admires her talents, as far as he is capable of appreciating them. But, sensible that she has no dependence but on himself, he sometimes, with all the indelicacy of a little mind, reminds her of obligations, in a way most wounding to a heart depressed by the weight of them, and yet unable to escape from his bondage; for her aunt, foreseeing the danger to which a character of her extreme sensibility would be exposed, if thrown unguarded on the world, exacted a promise, that she would never leave the protection of her uncle, until safe in that of a husband.

“About a year ago, I thought Charles De Launi attached to her. He is a distant relation of Monsieur’s; and from living constantly with him, she would not be so sensible of the imperfections of his character. But I doubt the concurrence of Monsieur, his views for his niece being more ambitious; and Charles having only been taken into partnership very lately, he cannot have realized any thing to enable him to act independently of his consent. Indeed, my opinion of his attachment no longer exists: she is too refined to make a permanent impression on a man like him, whom report now numbers with the admirers of the widow Les Vesconte.

“The little fop Pierrepont is one of the most opulent men on the island; and admiring Miss Leicester, finds a staunch advocate in her uncle. And De Launi, too, whether actuated by the love of mischief, or merely the whim of the moment, seems anxious to forward his suit. Tomorrow you will have an opportunity of judging, whether their united powers have a chance of effecting the desired success.” Saying this, Madame presented her hand, which having saluted, I bade her good night, and retired to my chamber.

“As Madame wished to have a long morning at command, being obliged to return to a late dinner, given by Madame Les Vesconte, she had ordered breakfast at eight. But such was my impatience, that I arose with the dawn. The morning was beautiful; and to beguile the hours which must intervene before the appearance of Madame, I wandered through grounds ornamented by her taste. At length a summons to breakfast brought me to the table, round which was seated Monsieur Pierrepont, Mademoiselle St Fleuri, my partner at the ball, Olympia, one of the fair Le Hardis, and two gentlemen of the last night’s party.

“You are disobeying my injunctions, my good Theodore,” said Madame, extending her hand, on my entrance. “Remember, I am to officiate here in character of your Guadeloupe mother, and will chide my refractory son, if he does not take sufficient rest to recruit him, after the fatigue he has lately undergone. Claudine tells me she saw you in the flower-garden by daybreak. I shall begin to suspect, from your sleeplessness, that you have left that heart in France, which you ought to have given our fair islanders a chance of winning.”

“After assuring Madame that my heart had accompanied me to her presence, and thanked her for her goodness in the maternal character, I promised to make in future a more appropriate return to her kind admonitions. We now hastily dispatched our breakfast, and the fashionable timidity of Mademoiselle St Fleuri not permitting her to venture on horseback, it was agreed that Monsieur St Amand should drive her in a carriage adapted to the mountainous part of the island through which we had to pass; and in case of accidents, as she would not trust to servants, the two gentlemen were to ride close to them. I did not offer my attendance, but had, with Pierrepont, the pleasure of escorting Madame and the sensible Olympia.

“Our ride lay through the most romantic part of the island, and coming to a beautiful dell, Miss Le Hardi exclaimed, “This spot I always admired; but since its beauties have been characterised by Cecilia’s pen, I view it with enthusiasm.” “Her pen would confer beauty on any spot, would she but admit a little more ornament,” said Pierrepont. “But in my opinion, in description, she adheres too closely to nature.” “Which to me,” said Madame, “is the first recommendation of her poetic talent. Trusting to nature alone, she rejects all meretricious aid; and often, when reading her effusions, I recal those sensations which she so powerfully delineates, and, with something of envy, regret I also have not the talent of describing what I feel, in terms of such glowing precision.”

“Bless me,” exclaimed Mademoiselle St Fleuri, who just arrived at the spot we were admiring, “Is Miss Leicester a poet? Poor little girl! I thought there was something queer about her. Well, as I am going to be very intimate, I will ask her to write some lines on my parrot, which is the sweetest creature, Ma’am you have any idea of.” “I intreat, Miss St Fleuri,” said Madame, “that you will make no such request. However Miss Leicester may exert her powers for the gratification of her friends, as she has the powers, so likewise has she the pride of genius, and generally adapts her compositions to subjects deserving them.

“Well, now,” rejoined the Miss of ton, “I should have thought she would have received it as a great compliment. I have heard, that people who write are very fond of having their productions praised; and I remember there was a sort of an author, to whom I gave two guineas for a dedication, who told me, if I would allow him to write a few lines on me, he would insert them also in his work.”

“I don’t know,” said Madame, (with a greater expression of displeasure on her countenance than I had ever before observed), “what gratification your condescension might afford the sort of an author who received two guineas for a dedication; but I can assure you, however my friend Miss Leicester may value the praise of the discerning few, she has too much

discrimination herself to be anxious for the plaudits of the many. Therefore I question her readiness to comply with a request, which I again intreat may never be preferred.”

“Monsieur St Amand, good-humouredly smiling at the ruffled expression of his wife’s usually placid countenance, nodding at her with a look which seemed to say, “I will relieve you from the task of endeavouring to correct an incorrigible,” drove off. Madame soon recovered her serenity, and the remainder of the ride, through scenery of picturesque beauty, received additional charms from the conversation of two highly cultivated and accomplished women.

“Through a grove of moubane and corbaries, we now advanced to the house of Monsieur Devereux, which, having been erected on a plan from the pencil of his late wife, was a singularly light and elegant structure. Cecilia, above all forms when expecting those she loved, sprung from the steps to welcome her friend, and cordially presenting her hand, said, “Madame had indeed now been attended by an escort worthy of such a charge.” She then gracefully welcomed the rest of the party, without particularising Monsieur Pierrepont; upon which Charles de Launi (who, with Monsieur Devereux, had by this time joined the group) told him, her cold looks were meant as a punishment for his behaviour on the last night; and adding, there was nothing for it but to ask pardon on his knees he twirled him off his horse, and without ceremony placed him in that humble posture at the feet of Miss Leicester.

“What is the meaning of this?” cried she, with a look of unaffected surprise. “Rise, I intreat, Monsieur. This is too ridiculous.”—“Well, well, son of Bacchus, arise forgiven!” said De Launi, “and I will explain the cause of your distress, and Miss Leicester’s displeasure. You must know, good folks, that at dinner yesterday, Monsieur informed me, that Miss Leicester had sent him a pressing invitation to spend the evening with her; and having to beguile many tedious moments e’er the happy one could arrive, he thought a copious libation to the health of the fair lady would not be amiss. But the nectar being more potent than his enthusiasm in devotion had allowed him to imagine, he was obliged to postpone his visit to St Floria, and invoke Monsieur Morpheus to compose his agitated brain; and, conceiving that Miss Leicester’s cold looks reproached his neglect, he sought, by prostration, to awaken the spark of compassion in her flinty bosom.”

“With the most energetic gestures did Pierrepont now endeavour to exculpate himself, and related the message Charles had delivered to him: when Cecilia, deeply sighing, requested “he would think no more of it, as she entirely attributed the mistake to the author of it.”

“We now proceeded to the drawing-room, where the simple elegance of the decorations evinced the purity of the taste of her who officiated as mistress of the mansion. I was struck with the profusion and beauty of the plants with which every recess was adorned, and from their classic arrangement, immediately perceived Cecilia was an adept in a science, of which, from my earliest youth, I had been an enthusiastic admirer; and with delight bordering on rapture, I anticipated the time, when a more intimate acquaintance would allow me the felicity of joining in her botanic pursuits.

“We were scarcely seated, when Mademoiselle St Fleuri abruptly informed Miss Leicester of the motive which had brought her to St Floria. “As the Governor,” said she, “must give an entertainment in return for the one he has received from the gentlemen of the island, I have persuaded him, that of all things, a play, acted by those who are not obliged to do it for a livelihood, will be the most delightful.

“Now, Miss Leicester, as every body is talking about your great taste, and as Monsieur De Launi informs me you are very good-natured, and fond of giving advice, I am come to ask your assistance in getting up a play.”—“Monsieur De Launi has done me an honour, Madam, of

which I am totally undeserving. Of scenic arrangement I am entirely ignorant.”—“Dear me, this is really astonishing,” resumed this sapient patroness of the drama: “Why, he told me you doated on Shakespear, and had all his writings by heart.”

“That I peruse them with boundless admiration is true,” replied Cecilia: “But that I am qualified to do justice to them, by any advice respecting a representation, I have yet to learn.”—“Oh, but I will not let you off so,” interrupted the fair Pulcheria; “you must not only give advice, but take a part yourself. I was thinking we would play Macbeth, and that I would be Lady Macbeth myself.”

“Here the politer part of the company restrained an incontrollable propensity to laughter, by compressing it into a titter: but Charles De Launi absolutely screamed. “A glorious thought, by Jupiter,” cried he; “your dignified manners are just suited to the character; and as Miss Leicester would make a devilish bold, blood-thirsty looking rascal, we will make her your lordly husband.”—“Oh, delightful! I declare, M. De Launi, you are a charming creature!”—“I should rather think,” observed Monsieur Lanou, (one of the gentlemen who had accompanied us), “the figure of Miss Leicester more adapted to represent that of the interesting, the soul-subduing Imogen; and if Miss St Fleuri wishes for an ambitious character, in that of the Queen-Mother, there is full scope for scenic dignity.”

“I assure you,” said the blushing Cecilia, “neither in the character of Duncan’s murderer, nor in that of the faithful wife of Leonatus, should worlds tempt me to appear: therefore, in casting the parts, I intreat Miss St Fleuri will omit my name.”

“We will not waste the short time we have to stay with you, my dear Cecilia, in an application so unpleasant to your feelings;” said Madame St Amand. “To-morrow I expect you will ride over to Monte Amand, with the full intention of staying a fortnight with me, as Monsieur Devereux informs me he is going to Martinique, where he may be detained even for a longer period. Then, if your friends wish farther to solicit an exhibition, which will, I am sure, be correct in any character, they will have every opportunity of trying their powers of persuasion.”

“Soon after, the party arose; when Madame, addressing De Launi, said, “As for you, Don Flippanto, whenever you are disposed to be taken good care of, come over; that is all the invitation I intend to give you.” “Oh! but Don Flippanto means to take good care of himself just now, by riding over without an invitation at all. Therefore, my fair Imogen,” taking Miss Leicester’s hand, “be careful of yourself to-day, and in the morning I will be here to escort you to Monte Amand. In the mean time, shall we leave Monsieur Pierrepoint to give you a few preparatory instructions?” A something of tender reproach clouded the eye of Cecilia, as, unheard by all but me, she whispered, “Imogen indeed!” Then tenderly embracing Madame, she promised to be at Monte Amand early on the following day, and we took leave.

“During our ride home, I was absorbed in a reverie, which even my agreeable companions could not dispel, and with difficulty rallied my spirits to attend them to Madame Les Vesconte’s. The attentions of Charles De Launi to that lady at dinner, and through the afternoon, were sufficiently pointed to countenance the report Madame had mentioned; and most fervent were my prayers that his suit might prove successful.

“In the morning, on my expressing an intention of riding, Charles requested I would accompany him to give the promised escort to Miss Leicester; to which, with a heart throbbing with pleasure, I assented. She was waiting our arrival, and after a slight refreshment, I had the happiness of riding at her side; and as her taste pointed out the beauty of objects which had before escaped my notice, I at once perceived, that for the eye of the poet, Nature has a thousand charms unknown to those of perceptions less acute. Charles De Launi, alleging he had never seen

a pair of more congenial or antiquated taste, said, he also was beginning to have a relish for one of our refined pursuits: then riding off for a wild dock leaf, requested we would drop the subject on picturesque beauty, and give him a lecture on botany.

“Notwithstanding his frequent interruptions, I thought this ride the most delightful I had ever taken; and on our arrival at Monte Amand, had the pleasure of assisting my fair companion into the house. De Launi, saying he “would ride further in quest of simples,” bade us good morning, and disappeared.

“It was with satisfaction I now heard that Olympia le Hardi was also to be our visitor during the stay of Miss Leicester, and anticipated a pleasure in attending the fair friends, pure as it was ardent.

“We were to dine without company, as a large evening-party was expected; and Charles de Launi not returning, we sat down at an early hour. In the society of friends she loved, and free from the restraint of ceremony, the charms of Cecilia’s mind seemed to expand. Her sentiments, so original, and yet so clear; her wit, so chastened by modesty and benevolence, here shone in full lustre; and e’er the little party had separated to dress, I felt my heart had selected its partner, and that no future event could erase the impression.

“On joining the company assembled in the evening, I observed a vacant seat, by Cecilia, which I eagerly seized. Here a most interesting conversation was broken in upon by De Launi, who entered the room accompanied by Pierrepont and Madame Les Vesconte, dressed in the extremity of absurdity, and both highly rouged. Perceiving us, Charles, without ceremony quitting his companions, asked laughingly, “Whether his search after *simples* had not been very successful?”

“Even Cecilia could scarcely refrain from smiling, when he informed her, that the present adorned appearance of Monsieur and Madame was occasioned by his assuring the former, Miss Leicester had said, “that a little colour would render the interesting languor of Monsieur Pierrepont’s complexion less perceptible.” And affirming to Madame, that no woman could be called dressed without a double proportion to what she usually wore, he offered, with Pierrepont, to stay dinner with her, to see the necessary quantity applied.

“Madame St Amand now seated herself at the harpsichord; and desiring Charles to take his violin, they executed a lesson in very fine style. Then calling to Cecilia to take her place, Madame requested I would accompany her in a duet. I had studied music; and the song breathing the soul of affection, I felt my powers expand in proportion to that which I felt for Cecilia; and never, oh! never will the moment be forgotten, when, (availing myself of the words), I uttered, through that medium, those sentiments which I feared less ambiguously to disclose.

“As Madame wished to prepare for a few quiet days, that she might uninterruptedly enjoy the society of Olympia and Cecilia, she had made this a kind of public night: and more company now arriving, it was proposed to vary the amusement of the evening by dancing. I eagerly besought the hand of Miss Leicester; and De Launi telling Madame Les Vesconte “she looked like an angel,” engaged hers.

“As this woman, to vulgar flippancy of manner, united a very ordinary person, I could not help feeling a sensation of pain on observing the eye of Cecilia rest, as it frequently did, on her and her partner, with a look of disquietude. Still, De Launi’s total disregard of Cecilia prevented this sensation from rising to the acme of jealousy; and happy in being her partner for a few hours, I regretted when the company, after a slight supper, withdrew.

“The next week glided away in rational enjoyment and rural rambles. There appeared to be a congeniality of pursuit in the three amiable women thus domesticated, which shed a genial influence on all within their reach.

“This week was the most uninterruptedly happy period of my existence. On the beginning of the second, Charles de Launi arrived from the Governor’s, where he had been staying during the first; and mentioned, that that gentleman, with his wife and niece, accompanied by a large party, were coming to try their rhetoric on Miss Leicester and myself to take a part in the play.

“Cecilia was going to pronounce a decided negative, when De Launi whispered her, and Madame said, “Do not refuse absolutely, my dear Cecilia. If there is to be a play, let us endeavour to procure such a one as will afford gratification to a large circle of friends. Leave me to manage Miss St Fleuri, and at least wait until we hear what play has been selected.”

“The company now arrived; and after a proper interval, the Governor, who was a well-bred and sensible man, introduced the subject; and mentioning his niece’s strong desire for the representation, added, that “as she had kindly accompanied her aunt from Paris, he was anxious to procure her every gratification that might prevent her from regretting those she had left behind; but that in this instance, his compliance must be sanctioned by the opinion of a lady of Madame St Amand’s known taste, and knowledge of the entertainment adapted to that of the gentry on the island.”

Madame being thus chosen umpire, was unwilling to reject a plan, which would, she knew, be a real treat to many of the lovers of the drama. Therefore she told the Governor, that if he could prevail on those qualified to support the characters, she had no doubt but the exhibition would be an interesting novelty to the inhabitants. “There I must intreat your powerful aid, my dear Madame,” said the Governor. “Also to you must the trouble of selecting the play be referred.”

“If,” said Madame, “I could prevail on Monsieur de Montpensier and Miss Leicester to aid the plan, I would recommend the comedy of “Much ado about Nothing;” and adding Miss St Fleuri, Charles de Launi, and Miss Le Hardi to the list, I think we might cast the parts with great effect.”

“Oh! dear, exclaimed the gay Pulcheria, there is no queen in that play.” “But there is a Duke, my charming angel; and in male attire you would be irresistible,” said De Launi. “No,” returned Madame St Amand. “Had it not been that I feel assured, that no lady in this assembly would appear in a dress so derogatory to female modesty, I should have adopted the idea of Monsieur Lanou, and recommended Cymbeline, which, for spirited and affecting touches of feeling and tenderness, I think Shakespear’s masterpiece. But as I have deprived Miss St Fleuri of a dignified character, I would advise her to study that of the witty Margaret.”

“As she could not be a queen, Miss St Fleuri was charmed with the idea of personating a wit; and readily promised her assistance in that character. And the rest of the ladies being prevailed on to give their consent, the parts were thus allotted. De Launi was to be Benedict, and to Olympia Le Hardi, who, in reality possessed the wit Miss St Fleuri affected, the part of Beatrice was assigned. Cecilia took that of the “fair young Hero;” myself the enamoured, but too credulous Claudio; Lanou, the Duke; Pierrepoint, Don John; Hero’s father, Monsieur St Amand. The other characters were to be supported by gentlemen of the Governor’s household; and that night seven-night being fixed on for the one of representation, after returning thanks to Madame St Amand and her party, Monsieur St Fleuri and suite withdrew.

“Our parts were soon studied; and we had leisure to enjoy the preparations of Pierrepoint and Madame Les Vesconte, the latter of whom, expressing chagrin at having been neglected in

the nomination of characters, was complimented with that of Ursula. She had requested Miss Leicester to resign that of Hero, but De Launi, telling her it was the part of a whimpering chit, and unworthy the exertion of her beauty and talents, prevailed on her to take the one assigned.

“During the interval of our frequent rehearsals, I had an opportunity of minutely observing the conduct of Charles and Cecilia. Still the same mystery pervaded it. She had expressed a decided dislike to appearing in the play, and yet a single whisper from him had influenced her acquiescence. I dared not dwell on futurity, but endeavouring to lose the fear of anticipation in the enjoyment of the present, I sought to render myself worthy of the friendship which Cecilia, with the chastened freedom of her country, seemed disposed to bestow.

“To me, jointly with Madame and Olympia, were submitted the effusions of a heart of angelic purity, heightened by an imagination of resplendent genius; and while she thus threw a ray of literary effulgence over our domestic hours, I gazed on a creature thus endowed, with sensations of admiration bordering on agony. But though I would have given empires to appropriate the treasure, I felt the propriety of being assured of a favourable hearing, e'er I disclosed my sentiments to the fair being who had inspired them.

“The day before the entertainment at the Governor's, a letter from Monsieur Devereux to Madame St Amand, containing one for his niece also, arrived. The former was a request to Madame, that she would use her influence with Cecilia in favour of Monsieur Pierrepont, whose pretensions the writer was determined to sanction; and indeed, under the appearance of anxiety for a splendid establishment for his niece, couched a threat of desertion in the event of a refusal. Cecilia, on reading the first line of her own letter, arose, and, with an ashy paleness overspreading her countenance, left the room.

“The evening appointed for the entertainment at the Governor's was now arrived; and as a splendid ball was to succeed, the play commenced at an early hour. A deep dejection had settled on the soft features of Cecilia from the time of receiving her uncle's letter; but no sooner was she called upon for exertion, than, with an effort which I thought that of agony, she prepared for the exhibition. An assemblage of the most brilliant society in the island formed the audience: and as the taste of Madame St Amand had been consulted in every particular, the scenery and decorations of our temporary theatre were elegantly appropriate.

“Charles de Launi was the very Benedict he personated, and Miss Le Hardi the Beatrice of the poet. As Madame had assigned to Miss St Fleuri and Madame Les Vesconte parts in which they could not materially err, they got through them with some eclat. The modest, but suspected Hero, received every advantage from the chaste delineation of Miss Leicester; and my heart seemed to hover on my lips, when, in the language of Claudio, I expressed to her the sentiment which actuated it. The play went off with great effect; and on its conclusion the ball commenced.

“During the rest of the night, in spite of every effort, Cecilia looked wretched; and Charles de Launi, with an affectation of attention very opposite to his usual rude neglect, kept every one from approaching her. I was miserable from contending emotions, and felt relieved when Madame St Amand, insisting that Cecilia and Miss Le Hardi had exerted themselves too much, proposed returning home. Monsieur St Amand, with Lanou, (who was now become the shadow of the fair Olympia), and myself, conducted the Ladies; but Charles, with an indelicate inconsistency, remained until Madame Vesconte left the ball-room, which was not for many hours after we had retired to our pillows.

“The next morning Miss Leicester, attended by De Launi, left Monte Amand; and the day following, as her uncle was to be at home, at her earnest request, we promised to dine at St Floria.

“We commenced our ride early in the day; but the uneasiness I felt had divested it of every charm; my fair companions, too, anxious about their friend, participated in my melancholy mood. On reaching St Floria, we found Monsieur Devereux and De Launi in the drawing-room; and soon after Monsieur Pierrepont was announced. I could scarcely look on this man, whose unfeeling conduct was preparing pain for my beloved, without a sensation of abhorrence. But he was perfectly at ease, and on Miss Leicester’s entrance, seemed to regard her with an air of triumph.

“The dinner passed most unpleasantly. Cecilia strove to exert herself, but it was easy to perceive that her heart was rent by anguish. Every one present seemed more disposed to reflect than to join in conversation, except Pierrepont, who chattered incessantly; and when the cloth was removed, he arose, and saying he must sail for Martinico that night, requested a conference with Miss Leicester, whose hand he took, with the intention of leading her from the room. But, with a dignified look, she withdrew it, saying, “Whatever commands Monsieur had for her, she could attend to them without leaving her company.”

“At this refusal Monsieur Devereux lost all command of himself, and, with all the violence of rage, reproached his niece with the obligations he had heaped on her, and with what he termed her vile ingratitude. With a look of deeply-wounded sensibility, Cecilia, casting an imploring glance on her unfeeling uncle, rushed from the room; and while the company were endeavouring to pacify Monsieur, I followed her unperceived by them.

“I found her in the arbour in the garden. She had thrown herself on her knees, and with her face reclining on the mossy seat, was sobbing with convulsive emotion. On my entrance she turned her head, and the agonized expression of her lovely face threw me off my guard. Claspings my arms around as I knelt beside her, I entreated that in them, as the cherished, the adored wife of De Montpensier, she would accept a shelter from insult and oppression.” She started on her feet, and gasping for breath, with difficulty articulated, “I am already a wife!—the wife of De Launi.”

“I knew nothing further.—For two months, seldom did a ray of reason illumine my frenzied brain. At the expiration of that period, I observed the watchful attendance of my friends the St Amands. But it was long e’er I could sufficiently connect ideas to recal the past; and when at length memory returned, feeling the future was a blank, I yielded to the solicitation of Madame to forbear questions until perfectly recovered. When I was pronounced to be completely so, I listened to the detail, and every fibre of my heart quivered at the recital.

“You, my dear Theodore,” said Madame, “were found lying in a state of stupefaction in the arbour at St Floria. I believe Cecilia had observed you wandering that way with the appearance of indisposition; for she entered the house in great agitation, requesting St Amand would go to you. You were brought in; and I immediately saw the propriety of your being conveyed to Monte Amand.

“Therefore after seeing you laid commodiously on a litter, the friends who had accompanied you in the morning, rode mournfully by its side. At parting with Cecilia, I begged she would obtain permission to return to me for a few days; but, with an expression of agony, she pressed her lips to my forehead and hands, and exclaimed, “Alas! I have deceived you also. But if you knew my sufferings!”—She paused, then resumed, “Oh! while you blame, compassionate: while you wonder, forgive.” A presentiment, sudden as painful, that she had entered into some rash engagement with Charles De Launi, now oppressed me almost to suffocation; and I could only say, “Whatever this communication may be, I promise to love and pity you. Come then to me, dearest Cecilia, in the morning.”

“On arriving at Monte Amand, the first medical assistance was procured. Your illness was affirmed to be occasioned by a sudden shock; and as the lethargy was expected to continue some hours, for that time no positive idea of the extent of the danger could be ascertained. This being the case, that he might relieve my distress on Cecilia’s account, St Amand returned to St Floria, which he did not leave until the morning; and then, what a tale of horror had he to relate! “Prepare yourself, my dear Leonora,” said he, “for a dreadful story.”

“No sooner had we left St Floria, than Devereux summoned his niece to his presence; and after a torrent of reproach for the resistance she had made to his will at dinner, commanded her to prepare for her immediate marriage with Pierrepont, or leave his house that night.” What then was his rage, on hearing her declare, that “six months had elapsed since she became the wife of Charles De Launi, who, from apparent sympathy at the time of her aunt’s death, and from early and habitual confidence, had won her love!” Still, had she not been harshly used, she never would have consented to a clandestine marriage, which, however, the influence of Charles had at length effected; and the same influence had since obliged her to keep the secret.

“Devereux gave not one word in answer to this detail; but desiring her to quit his presence, with an inflamed countenance, he bade her send “the scoundrel who had enticed her from duty, to answer for himself.” She accordingly flew to Charles; but here no soothing tenderness awaited her. On hearing that her uncle was informed of their marriage, and desired to see him, almost frantic with passion, he exclaimed, “Fool! romantic, whining fool, you have undone me!” and rushed from those arms, which, as if for protection, she had thrown round him.

“I had been present at the whole of this scene, and now endeavoured to console the dear imprudent by every argument which friendship could suggest; when a loud scream for assistance from De Launi, attracted us to the room whither he had gone to attend Monsieur Devereux, who, supported by Lanou, (who had gone in with Charles), was extended on a sofa, almost inundated by the effusion of his own blood. The violence he had for a few moments suppressed in the presence of Cecilia, burst forth on the entrance of Charles; and striving to vent his rage, he burst a blood-vessel, which in two hours terminated his life.

“The grief and self-reproach of Cecilia,” continued Madame, “were such as seriously to alarm us for her safety. Charles, however, with indelicate avidity, hastened to open the will of Monsieur, made just after the death of his wife, and which the suddenness of his own prevented his altering. It constituted Cecilia Leicester sole heiress, with a legacy of five thousand pounds to Charles de Launi.

“Already,” added Madame, “does the character of that young man begin to develop itself; and I fear I am not uncharitable in believing, he does not regret the melancholy event which has made him master of his own actions.

“With regard to Cecilia, I greatly dread this one imprudence of her life will sadden the remainder of it. Charles does not love her; his exclamation, indeed, convinces me that interest alone induced him to marry her: and now that she is entirely in his power from the want of proper settlements at the marriage, I dread the use he will make of it. Her situation was such as to render a much longer concealment impossible. Yet did he, by way of blinding Monsieur Devereux, subject her to the solicitations of Pierrepont, and pay himself those extravagant attentions to Madame les Vesconte, which made them the talk of the island.”

“I now fully understood Cecilia’s pathetic reiteration of “Imogen indeed.” My fate was decided, and I endeavoured to bear it like a man. Madame had not even hinted a knowledge of my unfortunate attachment, and I hoped to bury it for ever in the recesses of my bosom.

“At length I saw company, saw Cecilia and her acknowledged husband! whose new acquisitions had not at all improved him. Madame de Launi looked ill; and finding I durst not yet venture to trust myself in the society of her I fondly loved, though lost to me for ever, I mentioned in her presence an intention of “taking a tour of some months duration through the neighbouring islands, with a view of recovering that strength of which my late illness had deprived me.” I saw she penetrated and approved my motive; and rewarded it with a look of tender compassion, that cheered a heart, which even in thought never aspired to awaken an interest derogatory to the purity of a lovely and most unfortunate being.

“I accordingly soon after prepared for my departure; and Lanou, with friendly zeal, insisted on accompanying me. This gentleman, afterwards the happy husband of the amiable Olympia, was a man of great and general information: Of course I could not have met with a companion better adapted to withdraw my mind from melancholy reflections; and with the desperate efforts of one who rises superior to, because unable to avoid affliction, I determined to avail myself of every means of employing my time.

“To lose a sense of sorrow in the relaxation of dissipation, or frivolous pursuit, was at all times contrary to my principles and habits. But in study, aided by the maturer knowledge of Lanou, I at least lost some of the bitterness of disappointment; and from his religious sentiments, embibed lessons of resignation.

“Four months had now elapsed. In that time we had heard of the birth of a son to Cecilia, and of the recovery of the mother. Business now demanded my return to Guadaloupe, as St Amand was obliged to attend the winding up of the affairs of a commercial house in St Lucia, in which we were deeply interested; and summoning every particle of manly fortitude, to meet frequently, and without emotion, the woman whom judgment and affection had alike consecrated my heart’s idol, I once more returned to the house of St Amand.

“With the tenderest expression of affectionate joy, did the excellent wife of my friend welcome my arrival; while she felicitated me on those amended looks, which the intelligence she had to communicate soon saddened. She told me, that De Launi, free from every check which had formerly restrained him, now gave way to every species of licentiousness. He had always been an arbitrary master; but he was now become a ferocious tyrant to the unhappy wretches on his plantation. Nor was he more amiable in the domestic character.

“Madame had been so much alarmed at the danger of Cecilia during her confinement, that, thinking she required a faithful and experienced woman about her, she had sent Claudine, in whom she had great confidence, to attend her; and from her she heard, that the behaviour of De Launi was far from being kind. His time was wholly dedicated to Madame Les Vesconte, and a set of the most dissipated men in the island, while, in proportion as he grew more worthless, he avoided the society of those whose notice formerly did him honour. No complaint escaped the lips of Cecilia. Not even to her beloved Madame St Amand did she breathe a syllable that could be construed as a reflection on the conduct of De Launi. She bore his slights with patience, and welcomed his presence with affection. Still it was evident that her sufferings preyed on her delicate frame; and her health was hourly declining.

“I put off my visit to St Flordia as long as I possibly could, without exciting enquiry to my motives; and when that could no longer be done, I traversed with a heavy heart the road I used to trace with the rapture of expected happiness. I found Cecilia alone in her drawing-room. She received me with a look of kindness; and, to relieve the awkward consciousness of the meeting, she rung the bell, saying, “I must introduce my little stranger.”

“Racks and tortures would have been preferable to my first sensations, on beholding the son of my rival. But, ashamed of a weakness so unmanly, I caught the infant to my bosom, and, endeavouring to consider him the child of Cecilia only, I smothered him with caresses; and bent my face over his, to conceal those tears, which neither wounded love nor pride could restrain.

“She penetrated my very heart; and, anxious to shorten so painful a scene, called Claudine, saying, “Take away the Marmousette, Claudine or Monsieur will devour him.” I turned to the window, pretending to admire a beautiful arbutus, but, in reality, to conquer my emotion. When a little recovered, I seated myself on the sofa beside Cecilia; and, with a view of giving a new turn to the ideas of both, enquired, whether she had lately exercised her poetic talent. “I will show you,” said she, opening a drawer which stood near. “I believe that is one of the follies which will accompany me through life; and I indulge in it the more readily, from believing it to be innocent in its effect. I am much alone; my health has been delicate of late, and Monsieur De Launi kindly indulges a wish for seclusion, which such a state is apt to inspire; and being often under the necessity of visiting himself, I find, in my pen, a resource against that unwelcome intruder ennui. But I doubt whether my productions will repay the trouble you are now taking,” seeing me eagerly glancing over several pieces, which too strongly marked the state of the writer’s feelings.

“Traits of genius, of wonderful command of language, and combination of imagery, were every where visible. But no longer were subjects congenial to youth or hope delineated. Formerly, the first appearance of spring, the opening beauties of nature, had fired her soul with enthusiasm, and given to her pen its glowing energy. Now, every object connected with dissolution and decay was selected:—the setting sun, the barren rock, the ravages of war, and the devastation of winter, in every form presented themselves. I returned the papers with a sigh, which I could not repress. I saw as clearly into her soul, as if she had declared to me its every emotion. I saw her singular and resplendent talents enveloped in a shade of sorrow, from which no earthly hand could extricate them. I saw a creature born with every endowment to bestow bliss on a delicate and refined man, the property of one blind to her attractions, and bestowing on a worthless rival that affection she so eminently deserved; and beheld her, even in this situation, bearing her heavy lot with unparalleled meekness, and supporting the conjugal character with dignified submission.

“With her, the splendours of genius served not as the fallacious excuse for the aberrations of the wife. Who, then, could contemplate these sad relics of a gifted mind, untouched by the tenderest emotions of pity and of love? To behold that heart, so pure, yet so impassioned, the possession of which would have constituted at once the glory and the charm of my existence, thus withering under the cold neglect of a being unworthy of so sacred a treasure; to witness the decay of those fine powers, which, on any but a mind of more than Cimmerian darkness, would have shed a radiance pure as intellectual, was more than my fortitude was prepared for; and I was framing an excuse for leaving her, when De Launi entered the room.

“He congratulated my appearance of amended health; and then coarsely added, “If you had been taken ill one day later than you were, I should have thought it had been with vexation for the loss of Cecilia. I remember, I used sometimes to think you my rival; and I don’t think you altogether relish my marriage, when you don’t wish me joy. I excused you that ceremony, as you were an invalid the last time I saw you. But why don’t you do it now, when I am a Papa into the bargain, and give Cecilia a kiss on the occasion?”

“Saying this, he pushed me to her in such a way, that I could not avoid doing what he desired. For the first and only time in my life I pressed the lips of my beloved; and as my soul

hovered on mine, so bitter was the pang, the reflection, that this caress, which given voluntarily, and under different circumstances, would have been to me a boon of heavenly bliss, was bestowed at the command of him who had deprived me of felicity, that, in the anguish of my spirit, I mentally vowed that no inducement should ever again place me in a situation of such misery.

“Cecilia trembled too; and Charles broke in upon our confusion, by telling her, that he had invited a large party to dinner. She looked distressed: her health was in such a precarious state, that a kind husband would have been solicitous to spare her fatigue. But he was angry at her not expressing pleasure at the information he had given, and tartly said, “From your looks, Madame, I suppose my friends will not receive a very cheerful reception; I had therefore better take them where there will be a surer chance of amusement.” “Pardon me, my dear Charles,” said she; “with such a motive for exertion, as that of giving you pleasure, I shall certainly succeed in divesting myself of a languor which my late illness has thrown over my spirits.” “Oh, you need not exert yourself much,” carelessly answered De Launi: “the fair widow will talk for you; and I have also invited the beautiful St Fleuri, who, by the way, has undertaken to console little Pierrepoin! I asked him to attend her, but the ourang outang, is still in the sulks, from envy, no doubt, of my superlative felicity!” bowing to his wife with an air of derision. Then turning to me, he exclaimed, “I hope you will stay, De Montpensier, if but from pity to my wife. We are all creatures of “this earth’s mould;” but in you she would have a congenial spirit!”

“Not for worlds would I have remained. I had watched the countenance of Cecilia, when he mentioned Madame Les Vesconte, and had read in it a confirmation of my worst fears. I arose, and taking the hand of Madame de Launi, told her, a previous engagement would prevent my availing myself of the invitation of Monsieur; and begged she would honour me with her commands to her friends at Monte Amand; and having received from her one, requesting a speedy visit from Madame, I bade her adieu!

“Charles accompanied me through the plantation, and I could not but observe the terror of the slaves at his approach; while, mean as my opinion of him had been before this interview, every circumstance of it had tended to raise contempt to abhorrence.

“Weeks and months passed on, and Charles progressively became more abandoned. The society of Madame Les Vesconte was given up by every respectable woman on the island, and at length Cecilia, though the gentlest of human beings, refused to receive her at St Floria, which so exasperated her unfeeling husband, that he struck her, even in the presence of Claudine, who entered the room at that instant. Struck her!—Cecilia spoke not, she uttered no reproach; but, on his leaving the room, requested Claudine would never mention the event.

“Nevertheless the blow sunk in her heart. She was never seen to smile after; and losing her boy in the sixth month of his age, her health entirely failed. To recruit her nerves, which grief had completely shattered, she was ordered to bathe. Monsieur St Amand, for the accommodation of his wife, had fitted up an elegant bathing-house at the bottom of his garden, which descended to the river which divides Basse from Grand Terre.

“Claudine having broken through her promise of secrecy to her mistress, from anxiety for her personal safety, had informed Madame St Amand of what she believed to be the cause of her deep dejection. Madame was agonized by the recital; and, availing herself of the orders for bathing, immediately set off for St Floria, which she refused to quit without Cecilia.

“My sufferings were now drawing to a crisis. I had avoided meeting Cecilia by every means in my power, and conducted myself in such caution, that I believed she thought my ardent admiration had subsided into a friendly zeal for her welfare, while she honoured me with the

only return in her power, a pure and disinterested friendship. We now met; but I, alas! with far different feelings from those which actuated me in our first and happier domestication. I was then a lover, suffering no doubt the fears inseparable from such a character, but not debarred from hope. Now I beheld the being I still adored, a wife, a deserted wife! And fearing the sympathy I felt for her misfortunes might, in some unguarded moment, betray the deep interest of my heart, I resolved on flight.

“To presume on her situation, and betray a passion, which, in the circumstances we were now in, would be insult, was what my nature was incapable of. Cecilia had indeed given one sad proof to how imprudent a length affection could draw her. But was I from these data to draw an inference, cruel as worldly, that she who could thus love, “not wisely, but too well,” would warrant a disclosure so improper? No, I could not wound a heart already lacerated! I could not add to her punishment already inflicted on her “reckless love.”

“But while I adored her person, I respected her feelings, and determined at once to make Madame St Amand the confidant of mine. I told her every thing, and begging her to watch over her unfortunate friend, and write me a circumstantial account of every event relative to her, I prepared for my departure. Madame highly approved of it, and accelerated it by every means in her power; but e’er it could be accomplished, we were surprised by a sudden message from Charles de Launi, who, under the plea of indisposition, desired the immediate return of his wife.

“Cecilia did not hesitate in obeying the mandate; and St Amand accompanied her. On his return, he informed us, that De Launi certainly was ill. He had been attacked one night, when returning from the house of Madame Les Vesconte, by some slaves, who assailed him with bludgeons, and had nearly effected their purpose of destroying him, when his cries raised the alarm. The slaves fled, and from the suddenness of the attack, as well as the inebriety of Charles, it was impossible for him to describe them.

“I would advise De Launi,” continued Monsieur,” to sell his plantation, and quit a place where he has become so obnoxious, were it not for Cecilia, whose treatment will, when far from her friends, assuredly break her spirit, if not her heart. And although I am persuaded a separation would be better for both, I am sure the proposal will never come from her, while the most remote chance of reclaiming him remains.”

“Alas! no such chance remained. The next day a hasty note from Cecilia arrived, in which she mentioned, that the slaves were now openly threatening, and begged for Heaven’s sake to see Monsieur St Amand immediately. We set off, for I insisted on accompanying him. When we reached the plantation, it was in a state of confusion. We pressed on to the house: it was full of slaves. I rushed through the croud, to the apartment of Cecilia, and the first object that struck my frenzied sight was the mangled body of the most beloved of women!

“Again did the height of delirium deprive me for a while of the consciousness of misery! Many months it continued, and all hopes of returning reason were nearly abandoned, when Madame, who had been my unwearied attendant, by a happy indulgence, which is in general too little attended to in cases of insanity, brought me back to recollection and to sorrow. I had raved continually about my Cecilia! I begged to be laid on her grave! And Madame, thinking much might be risked, where there was so little to hope, one evening, unknown even to St Amand, who, with all the delicacy of friendship, had anticipated my wishes, and raised this tomb, brought me to it. My aching temples were pressed to the marble tenement of my love. Madame called upon her name, and pathetically bewailing her, awakened, by soothing the most gentle, a connected remembrance in the unhappy lover of the departed. Tears now flowed in torrents down my emaciated countenance, while my tender friend encouraged the welcome strangers, and

after a long indulgence in sorrow, led me from the melancholy spot consecrated to unfortunate virtue.

“I now gradually recovered, and being relieved from the irksome attendance of nightly watchers, the first use I made of my liberty, when the family were buried in repose, was to leap from my chamber-window, and pass my sad and wakeful night on the tomb of the murdered Cecilia. It is indeed “when the mind is well, the body’s delicate.” These melancholy wanderings did not retard my recovery, which was now considered as established; and Madame yielded to a request that I made, to be informed of what had passed at St Floria.

“I understood that the death of Cecilia was occasioned by her having thrown herself before her husband, when the slaves entered the room with the intention of shooting him, but without a thought of murdering her. Her terror on his account had induced the sudden movement, by which the ball, intended for him, had lodged in her spotless bosom. She fell instantaneously. The slaves then murdered De Launi, and dragging away his mangled body, either plunged it into the waves, or scattered the disfigured members in air, as no search for it led to a discovery of what they had done with it.

“It was necessary to inflict a signal punishment on the ringleaders of this alarming outrage, and they died exulting even in torture, that they had accomplished this atrocious deed.

“The plantation had been sold to Pierrepont, nor did the memory of the dead Cecilia prevent his shortly after leading to St Floria the fair St Fleuri, as mistress of the mansion, in which the former had with unequalled grace presided.

“The purchase-money of the plantation was lodged in the hands of proper trustees, and notices of the death of Charles and Cecilia were inserted in every French and English newspaper, for the behoof of their next of kin. Madame Les Vesconte, whose conduct had created universal disgust, left the island; and some years after, I met her begging on the streets of Paris. She had married a worthless gambler, who, allured by her wealth, lived with her until it was dissipated, and then left her to ponder on the memory of the past.

“Letters now arrived mentioning the death of my father, the ill health of my brother Adolphus, and the anxious wish of my mother for my return to France.

“I settled the concern of the plantation with my friend St Amand; and after what I then believed to be my last visit to the tomb of my Cecilia, while I invoked her beatified spirit, I solemnly vowed, that no other being should ever supply her place in the heart she had so entirely possessed.

“After uttering to my excellent friends the St Amands every sentiment which gratitude for their unequalled kindness could suggest, and exchanging with them, Lanou, and Olympia, the most affectionate adieus, I bade farewell to Guadaloupe.

“On reaching Paris, I had the mortification of meeting my dear Adolphus, whom I had left in all the bloom of health and beauty, in the last stage of a rapid decline; and two months after my arrival, closed the eyes of the most amiable of brothers and of men.

“This new calamity weighed heavy on the already broken spirit of my mother. I retired with her to a chateau in Provence, where I hoped her native air would renovate her exhausted frame; but in less than two years, in her, I lost my sole tie of near relationship. The Duc De Montpensier, the representative of the family, was noble, but not opulent. I was much more so, and therefore thought it my duty to transfer to him the half of my fortune; while, reserving the remainder for charitable purposes, I retired to a monastery, and dropping my family-name, assumed that of Father Anslem; yet, in becoming a religious, I did not abandon the world. It had no longer charms for me; but feeling that, while man is upon the earth, whereon his Creator hath

placed him, he has duties to perform, for the neglect of which no absolution of the formalist can excuse, or no plea of disappointment exclude him, I entered a monastery, whose regulations would at once ensure me the religious retirement suitable to a deeply-wounded, but, I trust, not a repining spirit, and allow liberty of absence, when benevolence to others should call me abroad. And, during thirty years experience, I have found, that the paths of sorrow and disappointment, when studied aright, conduct eventually to those of peace and righteousness.”

The Friar now prostrated himself for a few moments, apparently in fervent prayer, on the tomb of Cecilia. The little party had been too much affected by his recital to interrupt it, and when the Monk arose, they silently returned to the plantation.

On their arrival at home, they found a letter from the Marquis. It was written in a disguised hand, and evidently under a fear of its miscarriage, mentioning in ambiguous terms the death of the King, and the writer's determination of leaving France by the first opportunity. The letter was unsigned, and dated four months previous to the receipt, consequently the Marchioness began to feel all the incertitude of expectation. Daily were prayers offered up in the little chapel, and nightly did the tender wife and grateful friends of the Marquis wander on the shore, in the hope of descrying the vessel which might contain him. One night the alarm was given of a shipwreck about two leagues from the shore, and unguardedly the news was repeated in presence of Jacqueline, who for some moments was overwhelmed with terror; but on Claude's representing to her the necessity of keeping Madame in ignorance of the report until its truth could be ascertained, she summoned all her fortitude, and went to Madame, with the view of preventing her from taking her usual walk; while Claude, Quako, Monsieur St Amand, and the Friar, seized the first boat at hand, and rowed off to the wreck.

The wind was so tempestuous, that it was with difficulty they could approach. Two other boats were nearer her, and crowded with those just rescued from their perilous situation; the man who had the command of the last boat was loudly declaring that there was only room for two more, and intreated the captain of the vessel, and a gentleman, who, with him, was assiduously helping others down the sides of the wreck, that they would themselves take the seats, when the latter, in a voice which Claude knew to be that of the Marquis, absolutely refused till every man should be safe, when he offered the pilot his own terms to come back for him and his attendants.

A cry of joy from Claude now announced to the Marquis the approach of his friends. The eye of Monsieur was uplifted with a look expressive of his gratitude to Heaven for their providential arrival; and first pushing the captain and the remainder of the crew into the boat, he then threw himself into the arms of his friends. Father Anslem bent over him in fervent benediction, and Quako laid himself at the bottom of the boat, kissing with convulsive emotion the garment of the man, whose high endowments had aroused all the enthusiastic admiration of his energetic mind. His strong emotions announced him to the Marquis, who raising him from the humble posture he had taken, pressed him in his arms, calling him his “friend and brother.”

Monsieur St Amand was now introduced, and received as his friendly exertions in favour of Monsieur deserved. They now approached the shore, which was crowded with people, and the screams of a female were distinctly heard. It was Madame. Before Jacqueline could prevail on her to forego her evening-walk, the cry of “The wreck, help for the wreck!” resounded through the plantation. She flew to the shore, accompanied by her slaves and household. No boat would put off, when grasping her son, her agony rose almost to frenzy. At this moment the boat arrived, the Marquis leapt on shore, she saw him, and exclaiming, “My Antoine! it is my Antoine!” flew into his arms. Neither could speak for some minutes, when Jacqueline, pressing forward, held

little Victoire to his father, who for a moment relinquished the mother to enfold the son, and then pressed them to his bosom together.

The negroes surrounded them, clapping their hands, and crying aloud, "Him come at last! Fader Rickboo, de black man friend, him come to him's children! Black man love—serve—him's Fader Rickboo forever!"

The Marquis was overwhelmed, he could not speak; but, kissing his hand in acceptance of their simple expressions of love and gratitude, and taking the hand of Madame, while Victoire ran at his side, he accompanied his friends to the plantation. When the agitation of the meeting was a little subsided, Monsieur commenced the narrative of his escape. It is here unnecessary to go into a detail of events so well known as those which agitated France at that period. Suffice it to state, that after the death of the King, the Marquis would not have remained in safety, had it not been for the friendship of Menou, who, although now become a leader of a popular party, was no Terrorist.

This man had remembered, that his first success in life originated from the interest procured for him through the exertions of Monsieur. He could not be ungrateful to his benefactor, but, with all the ardour of zeal, exerted himself, to secure first his personal safety, and then to facilitate his escape to England, which was at length effected: and Monsieur had sailed from thence in a vessel under American colours. The voyage was prosperous until within a few leagues of Guadaloupe, when a gale springing up, the vessel was driven at an immense rate, till she struck on a rock, from whence it was now found impossible to extricate her.

The next day the Marquis surveyed his new Bellesme, and commended the exactness with which his plan had been executed. Then calling his family and people about him, he thus addressed Claude: "Already, my dear young friend, has your generous self-denial brought an adequate reward; and may you long, in possession of your lovely Jacqueline, enjoy the meed of your integrity and worth! And may you, my honoured and pious friend," addressing the Monk, "in the conscious approbation of your bosom, find an amelioration of the pangs of recollected woe, and the remainder of a life so exemplary experience every alleviation which a friendship, ardent as sincere, can possibly bestow.

"As for you, Quako! the friend of the unknown but supposed oppressor, the assertor of his rights, the defender of his property, what reward adequate to such unexampled, such glorious conduct, can you receive, or I bestow?" "A boon that will cancel all! And which Quako would receive from no hand but thine," cried the African. Then darting from them, he returned soon, leading a beautiful female negro, whom Madame and Jacqueline had often noticed for the lofty dignity and fine proportion of her figure.

"Behold," cried the African, "behold, my Lord," presenting the trembling Zorrella, "the maid whom the soul of Quako hath for seven long years most passionately loved! When the task of the oppressor hath wrung the drops from my disgraced temples, oh, how have I languished for the soft hand of Zorrella to wipe from them the evidence of anguish! When night succeeded to days of torture, I have thought how delightful it would be to rest in the arms of my beloved. But Zorrella was the heir of a throne; could I make her the wife of a slave? She was the child of a king; could I make her the mother of bondmen? No! I scorned the degrading thought. But my soul writhed in torture. My Zorrella pined, for she loved me. Bonds had not fettered my mind. I strove to deserve her! You gave us freedom,—from you we will receive bliss!"

They then prostrated themselves at the feet of the Marquis, who raising, embraced them separately. Then taking the hand of Zorrella, he gave it to Quako, saying, "Receive from a friend,

a guardian, a brother, the hand of your beloved! and with it receive also the promise of affection appropriate to designations so dear.”

The lovers sprung to the arms of each other, and for some moments were lost in speechless ecstasy: and when at length they found utterance, their artless effusions of gratitude were interrupted by Monsieur, who exclaimed, “I have now in all probability bade an everlasting adieu to my native soil. To it also must my beloved wife and infant son be aliens! Yet will I hope, that in sinking the Nobleman in the Planter, while I endeavour to forget my own, and hail this as my adopted country, although a sigh may sometimes be given to privations to which we must submit, that no spirit of repining will prevent my enjoying, as a father in the midst of his children, the blessings which remain!” “To whom the hand of an all-wise Creator hath conducted you,” said the Monk. “What stronger evidence of his superintending care can be selected than from the events springing from the life of the man before you?”

“Take as the first cause the blow, which, by depriving him of earthly felicity, disposed him to acts which might ensure that which is heavenly, and implanted in him that love for his fellow creatures, which induced him to facilitate by cultivation the development of those talents in the youthful Claude, which fitted him for the completion of that benevolent plan you had contemplated for the benefit of your unknown slaves, with whose happiness the eventful changes in your prospects, under the hand of the Almighty, hath now so intimately connected your own.

“Strong is the moral to be deduced; and would all men use power as you have done, then would not so many of the species have cause to look with envy on him, who, as Planter, is greater than Lord, or on his faithful Claude, who, as Superintendant of free Negroes, is happier than as VINE-DRESSER OF BELLESME.”

THE END.

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