PAUL AND VIRGINIA

BY BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE Translated from the French by CLARA BELL

Revised and Corrected in the United States

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BY WILLIAM S. GOTTBERGER.
Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was born at Havre on the 19th of January, 1737. At the age of twelve he had a fancy to try the life of a sailor, but he gave that up after making a voyage to Martinique. On his return to France he devoted himself to mathematics and studied at the Engineering college which he quitted in 1760, a qualified officer of Engineers. He then went on service in Germany but was ere long sent home in consequence of his insubordination and many love affairs. He spent the next few years in the pursuit of fortune, which constantly eluded his whimsical and capricious temperament; now in Holland, where he passed six months as a newspaper writer; now in Russia, where he wanted to found a model republic on the shores of Lake Aral; and again in Poland, and in Prussia, where Frederic II. refused an offer of his services, on account of the price he put upon them. At last, in 1766, he got employed as an engineer in the Isle of France and remained there five years.

In 1771, having returned to Paris cured of his philanthropic visions and rich in experience and notes acquired during his last travels, he gave himself up entirely to literary labors. In 1772 he made the acquaintance of Jean-Jacques Rousseau who, thenceforth, became his friend and model. He published in succession: "A voyage to the Isle of France" (1772); "Studies of Nature" (1784); "Paul and Virginia" (1789); "Dreams of a Recluse" (1791); and "The
"Indian Cabin" (1791.) Works which have made him famous and which gained admission to the Institut in 1795. In 1792 he was appointed by Louis the XVI. director of the Jardin des Plantes, but the Revolution deprived him of the office and he retired to Essone, where he lived quietly till 1794. He was then invited to Paris and appointed to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the Ecole Normale which had just been founded.

His last years were spent in peace and comfort, thanks to a handsome pension granted to him by Napoleon and Joseph Bonaparte. He died at Paris on the 2d of January, 1814.
PREFACE.*

This little book was written with a great aim. In it I have tried to give a picture of a land and vegetation unlike those of Europe. Our poets have made their lovers rest long enough on the margin of brooks in meadows under the foliage of beech-trees. I wanted to seat mine on the sea-shore, at the foot of cliffs in the shade of coco-palms, banana-trees and flowering lemon-shrubs. The other hemisphere needs only its Theocritus and its Virgil to yield us scenes at least as delightful as those of our own country. I know that travellers of taste have given rapturous descriptions of many of the Isles of the Southern sea, but the manners of the natives, and still more those of the Europeans who visit them, mar the landscape. I have attempted to combine the beauty of tropical nature with the moral beauty of a small settlement.

It was also my purpose to set forth several great truths; this among others: that our happiness lies in living by the rules of nature and of virtue. I had not, indeed, to draw on my imagination for a romance in describing family happiness. I can declare that the families here described really existed, and that their story is a true one in its chief incidents. These were told me by several inhabitants of my acquaintance in

* For preface to the quartó edition, see Appendix.
the Island of Mauritius (*Ile de France*). I have added only a few trifling details; but these, as being personal to myself, have also a stamp of reality.

When, some years since, I had made a very incomplete sketch of this pastoral, as I may call it, I begged a fair lady who lived in the world of fashion, and some grave and reverend men who dwelt apart from it, to hear the tale so as to form some idea of the effect it might produce on readers so dissimilar: I enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing them each and all shed tears. This was the only verdict I could obtain, but it told me all I wanted to know. As, however, great faults often tread on the heels of small talent, this success urged my vanity to style the work "A Picture of Nature." Happily I remembered how unfamiliar I was with Nature, even in the land of my birth; how infinite are her wealth, variety, loveliness, magnificence and mystery in those countries where I have seen her works merely as a traveller; how utterly I lacked the knowledge, taste and command of language which would enable me to know her and paint her.

I shrank into myself.

I have therefore included this humble effort under the name and in the series of my "Studies of Nature" which have been so kindly received, to the end that this title, while it reminds the reader of my incapacity, should bespeak his indulgence. *

* The reader who is tempted to make further acquaintance with the island which is the scene of this romance will do well to consult a volume called "Sub-tropical Rambles in the Land of the Aphanapteryx" by Nicholas Pike.
On the eastern slope of the hill which rises behind Port-Louis, in the island of Mauritius, the ruins of two little cabins are to be seen on a plot of ground which once was a garden. They stand almost in the middle of a glen enclosed by large rocks, with only one opening to the north. To the left rises the hill known as the Look-out (Morne de la Découverte), whence vessels are first signalled as they approach the island, and at the bottom of this height lies the town of Port-Louis; to the right a road leads from the town to the outlying village of Pamplemousses (Shaddock-grove), to the church beyond, standing amid avenues of bamboo in a wide plain, and further yet to a forest extending to the very shore of the island. The strand lying in front is the Bay of
the Tomb; a little to the right is Cape Misfortune, and out at sea, almost on a level with the waves, are a few uninhabited islets—among them that known as the Coin de Mire, rising like a bastion above the waters.

In the gorge leading to the glen, whence there is so wide a view, the echoes of the hill-side repeat unceasingly the raving of the winds which toss the neighboring forests, and the booming of the waves breaking on the distant reefs; but close to the cottages not a sound is to be heard, and nothing is to be seen beyond the towering crags, as steep as walls. Clumps of trees grow at their feet, from the rifts in their sides, and up to their very peaks where the clouds linger. The rains attracted by their summits often paint their green and brown flanks with rainbow hues, and feed the springs which rise below to form the little Lataniers, or Fan-palm, river. A great silence reigns in this retreat, where all is restful — the air, the waters and the light. Echo hardly answers to the murmur of the palms on the higher shelves of rock, where their spiry crowns may be see-
constantly swaying in the breeze. Tender daylight reigns in the depths of this dell, for here the sun shines only at noon; but at earliest sunrise its beams strike the surrounding heights, and the peaks stand out above the shadows of the mountain in gold and purple against the blue sky.

I loved to haunt this spot, where I could enjoy at once a glorious view and complete solitude. One day when I was sitting at the foot of the huts, contemplating their ruins, a man of ripe age happened to come by. He was dressed in the fashion of the early settlers, in a short jacket and loose trousers. His feet were bare and he leaned on a staff of ebony. His hair was quite white, and his face both noble and simple. I bowed respectfully; he returned my civility, and then, after looking at me for a minute, he came up to me and sat down to rest on the turf-bank by my side. I was attracted by this friendly demeanor and spoke to the old man.

"Father," said I, "can you tell me who once lived in these two cottages?"

"My son," he replied, "these walls and this
waste ground were occupied about twenty years since by two families who were very happy here. Their story is a touching one; but on an island situated, as this is, on the highway to the Indies, what European can take an interest in the fate of a few obscure individuals? Who even would care to live here poor and unknown, though happy? Men care only to know the history of kings and great men, which is of no use to any one."

"Nay, Father," said I, "it is easy to see from your manner and mode of speech that you have had much experience. I would beg you to tell me, if you have time, what you know of the former inhabitants of this waste; and believe me, even the man who is most corrupted by worldly prejudice likes to hear of the happiness which springs from nature and from virtue."

Then, after sitting for some time with his forehead in his hands, like a man trying to recall various incidents, he told me the following story.

In the year 1726 a young Norman gentleman
named M. de la Tour, after vainly hoping for service in France and help from his family, made up his mind to come to this island to seek his fortune. He brought with him a young wife whom he greatly loved, and who loved him no less. She belonged to an old and wealthy family of Normandy, but he had married her privately and without a dowry, as her parents had opposed the marriage on the ground that he was not of gentle birth. He left her at Port-Louis and sailed for Madagascar, hoping to purchase a few negroes and return immediately to settle here. He reached Madagascar at the stormy season, which begins there about the middle of October, and soon after his arrival he died of a pestilential fever which devastates that island for six months of the year, and which must always hinder European nations from effecting a permanent settlement. The property he had with him was sold and dispersed, as commonly happens in the case of men who die beyond seas. His wife, who was awaiting him in Mauritius, was left a widow, expecting the birth of a child, and bereft of every-
thing in the world excepting one negro woman, in a land where she had neither credit nor introductions. Not choosing to ask anything of any one after the death of the only man she had ever loved, she took courage in her misfortune. She determined to cultivate some little spot of earth with the help of her slave so as to have enough to live on.

Though the island was almost uninhabited and she could pick and choose her plot of ground, she did not select the most fertile district nor that most favorable for traffic, but seeking some mountain ravine, some sheltered nook where she might dwell alone and unknown, she turned her back on the town and found her way to these rocks where she might as it were build her nest. It is a native instinct in all sensitive and suffering souls to withdraw to the wildest and least frequented places, as though rocks could be a rampart against misfortune, or the peace of nature could soothe the aching sorrows of the heart. And Providence, who comes to our aid when we ask no more than is really needful, had a blessing
in store for Mme. de la Tour which neither wealth nor rank could have gained her — namely a friend.

In this very spot, for about a year, there had lived a brisk, kindly and tender-hearted woman; her name was Marguerite. She was born in Brittany, the child of peasants who loved her dearly, and who would have made her happy if she had not been so weak as put her trust in a gentleman living in the neighborhood who promised to marry her. But after gratifying his passion he deserted her, refusing even to grant a maintenance to the child she bore him. She decided on quitting her native village and on going to hide her sin in the colonies, far from the home where she had forfeited her character, the only dowry of a poor and respectable girl. An old negro, purchased with a small sum she was able to borrow, helped her to till a patch of ground in this valley.

Mme. de la Tour, accompanied by her negress, here came upon Marguerite with her child at her breast. She rejoiced at meeting with a woman, in a situation, as she supposed, so like
her own. She told her briefly of her past position and of her present needs. Marguerite was moved to pity by Mme. de la Tour's tale, and wishing to deserve her confidence rather than to win her esteem, she confessed the folly of which she had been guilty, hiding nothing. "As for me," she added, "I have deserved my fate; but you, Madame, you so good and so unfortunate.

And with many tears she offered her her cottage and her friendly aid. Mme. de la Tour, touched by this tender welcome, clasped her in her arms exclaiming:

"God means to let my misery end, since he has put more kindness into the heart of a stranger, as you are, than I ever met with from my parents."

I knew Marguerite, and though I live a league and a half from this spot, in the woods behind Long Mountain, I regarded myself as her neighbor. In the cities of Europe, a street, a wall even, is enough to prevent the members of one family from meeting for whole years; but in a new
colony those who are parted only by woods or hills consider themselves near neighbors. At that time especially, when there was little traffic between this island and India, such neighborhood was a sufficient bond of friendship, and hospitality to strangers was both a duty and a pleasure. As soon as I heard that Marguerite had a housemate I went to see whether I might be of use to them both.

Mme. de la Tour I found to be a person of interesting appearance, with a noble and very sad countenance. She was daily expecting the birth of her child. I suggested to the two women that they would do well, both for the interest of their children and, more particularly, with a view to preventing the settlement of any third person, to divide between them the land in this glen which contains about twenty acres. They trusted to me to make this division. I marked off two nearly equal plots: one lying on the upper ground of the valley, from that cliff crowned with cloud where the Fan-palm river takes its rise, as far as the scarped breach you may see at the top of the mountain and which is known as the Embrasure
—it is in fact like a notch cut for a cannon. That part of the ravine is so full of rocks and rifts that it is hardly possible to walk there, but fine trees grow there and it is full of springs and brooklets. The other half included all the lower land skirting the little stream as far as the gorge where we are now sitting, whence the stream begins to flow seaward between the sloping hills. You may see that it is bordered here and there with meadows and a fairly level soil; but it is not much better land than the upper part, for during the rains it is very marshy and in the drought it is as heavy as lead, so that if you want to cut a trench you can only do it with hatchets.

After marking out this division I suggested that the ladies should draw lots for them. The upper plot fell to Mme. de la Tour and the lower to Marguerite. They were both quite satisfied, but they begged that their dwellings might stand side by side: "so that we may always be able to meet," said they, "to talk, and to help each other." At the same time they each required a separate home.
Marguerite's cabin, as it happened, was in the middle of the dell on the very boundary of her plot. I built one for Mme. de la Tour close beside it, so that the two friends were at the same time near neighbors and each on her family property. With my own hands I cut the stakes on the hill-side, I brought palm-leaves from the seashore for the construction of the two huts, where now neither porch nor roof remains visible; but, indeed, too much is left for my sad remembrance! Time, which soon sweeps away the memorials of empires, seems to have respected those of friendship in this wilderness, to keep my sorrow green till my dying day.

I had but just finished the second cottage when Mme. de la Tour gave birth to a girl. I had stood godfather to Marguerite's child, a boy named Paul. Mme. de la Tour begged me to be sponsor with her friend, to her infant daughter. Marguerite named her Virginia. "She will be virtuous," said she, "and so she will be happy. I was not unhappy till I forsook the paths of virtue."
By the time Mme. de la Tour had recovered her strength the two little estates were beginning to yield; in return, partly for the care I occasionally bestowed on them, but chiefly as a result of the labors of the two slaves. Marguerite's man, whose name was Domingo, was a Yolof negro, still vigorous though beginning to age. He had experience and natural good sense. He worked on both the little plots wherever the soil seemed most fertile, and put in such seeds as suited each part best. In the poorer land he sowed millet and maize, a little wheat where the ground was rich; rice in the marshy bottoms, and at the foot of the rocks pumpkins, gourds and cucumbers, which cling and climb over them. In well-drained patches he planted sweet potatoes, which grow very sugary there; in heavy soils sugar-cane flourished, and coffee shrubs on the slopes: the berry is small but well-flavored. By the riverside and round the huts he set banana-trees, which yield their long clumps of fruit all the year round and give a delightful shade; and finally a
few tobacco plants, to soothe his cares and those of his good mistresses. *

He too hewed wood on the mountain-side for burning, and broke up the boulders here and there on the land to make a level path. And all this he did with skill and energy because it was a labor of love. He was strongly attached to Marguerite, and not less so to Mme. de la Tour, whose slave-woman he married when Virginia was born.

He was passionately fond of his wife whose name was Marie. She came from Madagascar and was skilled in the industrial arts of the natives, especially those of basket making, and of weaving the stuff used there for loin-cloths from the fibre of grasses which grow in the woods. She was handy, clean and most faithful. It was her care to cook their food, to attend to a few fowls, and to go to Port-Louis from time to time carrying to market whatever could be spared for sale, which was but very little. Add to these

* At the time when this was written ladies, even of the highest rank, took snuff.—Translator.
two goats which grew up with the children, and a big dog to keep watch outside at night, and you have a complete idea of the whole wealth and establishment of the two little farms.

As for the two owners, from morning till night they spun cotton. This enabled them to clothe themselves and their families; but they were so destitute of the products of manufacture that they always went barefoot about the plantation, and wore shoes only on Sundays, when they went very early in the morning to hear mass at the church of Pamplemousses, which you see yonder. It is a much longer walk than to Port Louis, but they rarely indeed went to the town, for fear of being treated with scorn because they had nothing to wear but coarse blue Indian cotton cloth, the usual dress of slaves. And after all, is public respect half so precious as domestic happiness? If the women suffered some little humiliation outside, they came home with all the livelier pleasure. Marie and Domingo no sooner discovered them from that knoll on the way to Pamplemousses than they ran to the foot of the hill to help them
up it. They could read in their slaves' eyes how glad they were to see them return. At home they found comfort, and freedom, possessions which they owed to their own toil and to their servants' devoted zeal and affection. They themselves, united by their common necessity and having known almost the same sorrows, called each other by fond names—friend, companion and sister; their will, their interests, their table, were the same. They had everything in common. Sometimes indeed, former fires fiercer than the glow of friendship revived in their souls, then pure religion, seconded by their innocent and simple lives, bid them turn to another world, as a flame floats heavenward when it is deprived of earthly nutriment.

The duties prescribed by nature also added joy to their intercourse. Their friendship gained in warmth as they watched their infants, each the child of a hapless love. They would wash them in the same bath and lay them to sleep in the same cradle. Often each would nurse the child of the other. "So we shall each have two chil-
"dren," said Mme. de la Tour, "and they will each have two mothers."

Thus, as two buds left alone on two trees of the same growth when a storm has wrecked all the other branches yield sweeter fruit when each has been cut from its parent stem and engrafted on the other, so these two little ones, bereft of every other tie of relationship, imbibed closer tenderness of union than those of son and daughter or of brother or sister when they thus were fed by turns at the breast of the two women who had given them life. Even over their cradle the mothers would speak of their marriage, but this dream of wedded happiness by which the women charmed their own sorrows often ended in tears: one reflecting that her woes had ensued from her neglect of marriage, the other from her having assumed its bonds; one from her having aspired above her rank, the other from her having stooped below it—but then they would comfort themselves by thinking that some day their children, more blest than themselves, and at a distance from the cruelty of European prejudice, would be
happy in the joys of love and the freedom of equality.

In fact nothing was ever seen to compare with their devotion to each other already. If Paul was fretful they would bring Virginia to him; as soon as he saw her he smiled and was quiet. If Virginia was hurt Paul’s cries made it known, but the sweet little girl would try to conceal her pain that it might not distress him. I never came here but I found them quite naked—as the custom is in the island—and when they could hardly walk, clinging together with their arms round each other’s shoulders, as the constellation of the Twins is represented. Even at night they would not part; they were constantly to be found in one cradle, cheek to cheek, with their hands under each other’s necks, asleep in each other’s arms.

When they began to speak, the first names they learnt to give each other were those of brother and sister. Childhood, though knowing tenderer kisses, knows no sweeter names. Their teaching only made them dearer to each other,
guiding their love to supply each other's needs.

Very soon everything connected with house-wifery, cleanliness, and the preparation of a rustic meal was made Virginia's care, and her labors were always rewarded by her brother's praises and kisses. He, never for a moment at rest, dug in the garden with Domingo, or followed him into the forest armed with a mimic hatchet; and if in the course of these excursions he discovered a fine flower, a good fruit, or a nest of young birds, even if it were at the top of a tree, he would climb to procure it for his sister.

When you met one of the pair you might be sure that the other was not far off. One day, as I was coming down from the ridge of that mountain, I saw Virginia at the further end of the garden, running homewards, her petticoat thrown over her head for shelter against a shower. From a distance I fancied she was alone, but on going forward to help her on, I saw that she had Paul by the arm almost hidden in the same hood, and both laughing at finding themselves together
under such an umbrella of their own devising. The two pretty heads under the full, swelling skirt reminded me of Leda's twins enclosed in a single egg.

The one thing they studied was how to please and help each other. Beyond that they were as ignorant as all Creoles are, and could neither read nor write. They cared nothing about the events of a remote past or of distant lands. Their curiosity did not soar beyond that mountain. They believed that the world ended with the limits of their island, and they could conceive of nothing lovely where they were not. Their love for each other and that of their mothers engaged all the energies of their souls. They had never shed tears over useless learning; never wearied over lessons of gloomy morality. They knew not that they must not steal, for with them all was in common; that they should not be intemperate, having plain food in abundance; that they must not lie, since they had no truth they could wish to conceal. They had never been terrified by hearing that God reserves fearful punishment for
graceless children; to them filial love was the natural offspring of maternal love. They had been taught nothing of religion but what should lead them to love it, and though they did not put up long prayers in church, wherever they might be—at home, in the fields or in the woods, they raised to Heaven their innocent hands, and hearts overflowing with love for their parents.

Thus their first childhood passed away like the fair dawn of a glorious day. They were already helpful to their mothers in the business of the household. As soon as the cock crowed to herald returning dawn Virginia rose, fetched water from the neighboring spring and came back to prepare breakfast. Soon after, when the sun began to gild the battlements of the cliffs, Marguerite and her boy would go to Mme. de la Tour's hut; there they first prayed together, and afterwards shared the morning meal. They often ate it out of doors, sitting on the grass in the shade of the banana-trees, which furnished them not only with food ready to eat, in their nu-
tritious fruit, but with a table-cloth, in their broad, long, sheeny leaves.

The young creatures grew apace having wholesome and sufficient food, and their gentle nurture stamped on their faces the purity and happy ease of their minds. By the time Virginia was but twelve her figure was already half formed; her head was overshadowed with masses of fair hair; her blue eyes and coral lips were delicately bright against the freshness of her complexion; they always smiled with one consent when she spoke, but when she was silent their natural turn heavenwards gave them a peculiarly pathetic—indeed a slightly melancholy look. As for Paul, in him the characteristics of a man were developing among the charms of youth. He was taller than Virginia, his skin was more tanned, his nose more aquiline, and his eyes, which were black, would have been a little defiant but that the long lashes which encircled them like a fringe lent them wonderful softness. Though he was never still, as soon as his sister appeared he was quiet and would go to sit by her. Often a meal would
be eaten without their saying a word to each other; from their silence, from the simple grace of their attitudes and the beauty of their bare feet, they might have been taken for some antique group of white marble representing two of Niobe's children, while from their glances which so constantly met, from their smiles answered by still sweeter smiles, they seemed rather like children of the sky—those beatified spirits whose nature it is to love each other and who have no need of thoughts to formulate feeling, or of words to express friendship.

Mme. de la Tour, however, seeing her daughter growing up with so many charms, felt her anxieties increasing with her affection. She would sometimes say to me: "If I were to die what would become of Virginia, a portionless girl?"

She had a maiden aunt in France, of good family, rich, old, and somewhat bigoted, who had refused her all help when she married M. de la Tour, so sternly that she had promised herself never to apply to her again whatever extremity she might be reduced to. But as a
mother she no longer dreaded the rebuff of a refusal. She wrote to tell her aunt of her husband’s unlooked-for death, of the birth of her little girl, and the difficulties in which she found herself, far from her own country, destitute of means, and with a child to maintain. She received no answer. Her nature was a lofty one, she no longer feared humiliation; she shrank not from exposing herself to the reproaches of a relation who had never forgiven her for marrying a man of no birth, however admirable, so she took every opportunity of writing to her in order to induce her to interest herself in Virginia. Still, many years had elapsed and she had received no token that she was not forgotten.

At last in 1738, three years after the appointment of M. de la Bourdonnais as governor of the island, Mme. de la Tour was informed that he had a letter for her from her aunt. She hastened to Port-Louis without troubling herself to think that she was poorly dressed, her joy as a mother raising her above any care for the world’s regard. M. de la Bourdonnais did, in fact, give her a letter
from her aunt. This lady wrote that her niece had deserved her fate for having married an adventurer and a libertine, that our passions bring with them their own punishment, that her husband's early death was a just chastisement from God, that she had done well to emigrate to this island rather than remain in France, a disgrace to her family, and that she was at any rate in a very pleasant country where all but the idle made their fortunes. After thus accusing her she went on to praise herself: in order, she said, to avoid the often disastrous results of marriage she, for her part, had always refused to marry. The truth was that she had been too ambitious ever to accept a man of any but the highest rank; still, though she was very rich, and though at Court nothing is so much thought of as a fine fortune, no one could be found to wed so ugly a woman and with so hard a heart.

In a postscript she added that, taking all things into due consideration, she had strongly recommended her niece to M. de la Bourdonnais' good graces. And so she had, but in a fashion that is only
too common now-a-days, and which makes the protector a person more to be feared than an open enemy: to justify her ruthlessness in the governor's eyes, she had slandered her niece while pretending to pity her.

Thus Mme. de la Tour, whom no unbiased man could see without feelings of interest and respect, was very coldly received by M. de la Bourdonnais, who was prejudiced against her. He replied only in harsh monosyllables to her statement of her position and that of her daughter:

"I will see — we shall see — in time — there are so many people in trouble. — Why displease so well-disposed an aunt? — The fault is on your side."

Mme. de la Tour returned to the little plantation broken-hearted and embittered by disappointment. As soon as she got home she sat down, tossed her aunt's letter on the table, and said to her friend:

"There is the fruit of eleven years' patience!" But as no one of the party but herself could read, she took the letter up again and read it to the
whole family in council. She had scarcely finished it when Marguerite eagerly exclaimed:

"What do we want of your relations? Has God forsaken us? He alone is our Father! Have we not lived happily to this day—then why make yourself miserable? You have no courage!" And seeing Mme. de la Tour in tears, she threw herself on her neck and clasping her in her arms went on: "My dear friend—my dear friend!" But she broke down, and sobs choked her voice.

At this scene Virginia too melted into tears, pressing first her mother's hand and then Marguerite's to her heart and her lips, while Paul looked on, not knowing whom to blame, his eyes flaming with rage, storming, stamping and clenching his fists. At this outcry Domingo and Marie hastened in, and nothing was to be heard in the little dwelling but wailing and exclamations of: "Oh, Madame!—My good Mistress, Mother, do not weep!"

These proofs of tender affection moderated Mme. de la Tour's distress. She took Paul and
Virginia in her arms, and said with a happy smile:

"My children, you are the cause of my sorrow, but you constitute all my joy. Oh, my dear children, grief has only come from afar, and happiness is close beside me!"

Paul and Virginia did not understand her, but when they saw that she was calm they could smile and caress her. So they still were happy, and that was but a storm in the midst of a beautiful spring.

The children's sweet natures showed more plainly every day. One Sunday at earliest dawn, when their mothers had gone to the church at Pamplemousses, a fugitive negress came up to the banana grove that surrounded the cottages. She was as fleshless as a skeleton, and her only raiment was a rag of sack cloth round her loins. She threw herself at Virginia's feet — the young girl was preparing breakfast for the family — and said: "Oh, young lady! have pity on a poor runaway slave; for a month I have been wandering about these mountains, half dead of hunger,
constantly hard driven by the hunters and their dogs. I have run away from my master who is a rich settler on the Black River; he treated me as you may see"—and she showed her her back, seamed with deep scars from the floggings he had inflicted.

"I meant to drown myself," she went on, "but knowing that you lived here I said to myself: 'As there are still some good whites in the land, I will not die yet.'"

Virginia, deeply moved, replied:

"Be quite easy, poor unfortunate creature! Eat, eat"—and she gave her the food that she had just cooked for breakfast.

The negress in a few minutes had eaten the whole of it; Virginia seeing her hunger satisfied then said:

"Poor wretch; I should like to go and ask your master to forgive you; he would surely be moved to pity at the sight of you. Will you show me the way to him?"

"Angel of Heaven," replied the negress, "I will go wherever you bid me."
Virginia called her brother and begged him to come with them. The slave led them by paths through the forest, over heights which they climbed with much difficulty, and across wide streams which they had to ford. At last at about noon, they reached the foot of a hill on the bank of the Black River. There they saw a well-built house, extensive plantations, and a great number of slaves employed in all kinds of labor. Their master was walking about among them, with a pipe in his mouth and a rattan in his hand.

He was a tall, spare man with an olive complexion, sunken eyes, and black eyebrows that met in the middle. Virginia, tremulously clinging to Paul's hand, went up to the planter and begged him, for the love of God, to forgive his slave-woman who was at a few steps behind them. At first the man paid little heed to these two poorly-clad children; but when he noted Virginia's graceful figure, and her pretty, fair head under its blue hood, and when he heard the sweet tones of her voice which trembled—as she did from head to foot—while craving his pardon,
he took his pipe from his mouth, and raising his rattan heavenwards he swore a fearful oath that he would forgive the negress, not indeed for love of God, but for love of Virginia. Virginia signed to the slave to draw near to her master; then she turned and fled, and Paul ran after her.

They climbed together the slope down which they had come, and having reached the top they sat down quite exhausted by fatigue, hunger and thirst. They had walked above five leagues fasting, since sunrise. Paul said to Virginia:

"It is past noon, sister, you are hungry and thirsty: we shall find no dinner here; supposing we were to go down the hill again and ask the slave's master for some food."

"Oh, no! dear Paul," said Virginia, "he frightened me too much. Remember what my mother says: 'The bread of the wicked fills the mouth with stones.'"

"But what can we do, then?" asked Paul. "These trees yield no fruit fit to eat; there is not even a tamarind or a lemon to be found to refresh you a little."
"God will have mercy," said Virginia. "He listens to the voice of the little birds who cry to Him for food."

She had hardly spoken when they heard the ripple of a brook springing from a rock close at hand. They ran towards it and after quenching their thirst with its waters, clearer than crystal, they gathered and ate some cresses they found growing on its rim.

As they gazed right and left in the hope of discovering some more solid food, Virginia discerned a young cabbage-palm among the forest tangle. The cabbage which forms the heart of the leaves at the top of this palm is very good to eat; but, though its trunk was not thicker than a man's leg, it was more than sixty feet high. The timber of this tree is, to be sure, no more than a compact bundle of fibres; but its inner bark is so hard that it turns the best axe, and Paul had not even a knife. It occurred to him that he might set fire to the bottom of the tree; but to this there was another obstacle—he had no tinder-box, and indeed in the whole of this island, cov-
ered as it is with rocks, I doubt if a single flint could be found. Necessity is the parent of industry, and some of the most useful inventions are due to the needs of the most wretched men. Paul determined to light a fire in the way the negroes use. He made a small hole in a very dry branch of a tree with the corner of a pebble, holding the wood steady with his feet; then, with the cutting edge of the stone, he sharpened another dry stick to a point, choosing, however, wood of another kind; he fitted the sharp end to the hole in the branch he was standing on, and making it twirl between his hands, just as a chocolate stick is twirled to raise a froth on chocolate, in a few minutes he saw smoke and sparks rising from the point of contact. He gathered a heap of dry plants and of other branches and set fire to the bottom of the cabbage-palm, which presently fell with a great crash. The fire then helped him to burn away the sheath of long, prickly, woody leaves which enclosed the cabbage. He and Virginia ate part of it raw and part of it baked in the ashes, and they found both equally savory.
As they enjoyed this frugal feast they were glad to remember the good deed they had done that morning; but their joy was clouded by the thought of the anxiety which, as they knew, their long absence from home must certainly be causing their mothers. Virginia spoke of this again and again, but Paul, who felt himself quite recruited, assured her that they should soon be able to soothe their parents' alarms.

After dining they found themselves in great perplexity, for they had no guide to show them the way home. Paul, who was not to be daunted, said to Virginia:

“Our hut lies toward the sun at noon. We must cross that mountain with three knolls, as we did this morning. Come, let us start, sister dear.”

This mountain was that called Les Trois Mamelles,* so named from the shape of the three

* Three Breasts. Many mountains are crowned by rounded knolls in this shape, and are called by this name in every tongue. And they deserve the name, for from them flow many rivers and brooks which give fruitfulness to the earth. They are the heads of the chief rivers which water the land; and they constantly yield their waters, for they attract the clouds round their central peak. I have pointed out those admirable provisions of Nature in my former writings.
summits. So they went down the northern slope towards the Black River, and after an hour's walking reached the shore of a wide stream which barred their progress. That large tract of the island which is overgrown with forests is so little known, even at this day, that many of the streams and hills are not yet named. The river by which they stood rushed foaming over a bed of rocks. The noise of the waters frightened Virginia; she dared not put her foot into them to wade across. So Paul took her on his back, and thus loaded crossed the slippery stones in the river, in spite of the roar of the torrent.

"Do not be afraid," said he, "I can carry you quite easily. — If the planter by the Black River had refused to grant you pardon for his slave, I would have fought him!"

"What!" cried Virginia, "that big, wicked man? Think of what risk I have brought you into! Oh, dear! how difficult it is to do right. Nothing is easy but to do wrong."

When Paul had reached the bank he wanted to continue carrying his sister, and flattered him-
self he could thus climb the mountain which he saw before him at the distance of about half a league; but his strength soon failed him; he was obliged to set her down and to rest by her side. Then Virginia said:

"Brother, the day is waning; you have still some strength left and mine is failing. Leave me here and go home alone to comfort our mothers."

"No, no," said Paul, "I will not leave you. If night surprises us in the forest I will light a fire again and fell a cabbage-palm; you shall eat the cabbage and I will make a screen of the leaves to shelter you."

However, after resting a little while, Virginia gathered some long hanging leaves of hart's-tongue growing on the trunk of an old tree which bent over the river; of these she contrived a kind of sandals, binding them round her feet, which were cut and bleeding from the stones; for, in her haste to be helpful, she had forgotten to put her shoes on. Much relieved by the coolness of the leaves, she broke off a branch of bamboo and
set out again, supporting herself by one hand on the cane and the other on her brother.

They made their way leisurely through the woods; but the height of the trees and the thickness of the foliage soon hid the hill-tops from their sight, and even the sun which was now near setting. In a very short time, and without perceiving it, they had wandered from the beaten path along which they had till now been walking, and they presently found themselves in a maze of trees, tangled creepers and rocks from which they saw no issue. Paul made Virginia sit down while he ran to and fro, seeking a way out of this dense thicket; but he wearied himself in vain. He climbed a tall tree to discover at any rate the bearing of the three mounds, but all round him he saw only the tops of trees, of which a few still shone in the last rays of the sinking sun. The shadow of the hills had fallen on the woods in the valleys; the wind was falling, as it does at sunset; deep silence reigned in the solitude and not a sound was to be heard but the belling of the stags seeking a covert in this remote wilderness.
Paul, hoping to be heard by some hunter, took to shouting with all his might: "Help—come and help Virginia!" But there was no reply but the forest echoes, on all sides repeating: "Virginia, Virginia!"

Paul came down again, overwhelmed with fatigue and distress. He hunted about for some means of spending the night in this spot, but there was no spring, no cabbage-palm, not even a branch of dry wood fit for making a fire. He then felt by experience how slender his resources were and he began to cry.

"Do not cry," said Virginia, "if you do not want to break my heart with grief. I am the sole cause of all your trouble, and of that which our mothers are suffering at this moment. We ought never to do anything—not even good—without consulting our parents. Oh! I have been very foolish!" and she too melted into tears. However, she said to Paul:

"Let us pray to God, brother, and he will take pity on us."

Hardly had they finished their prayers when
they heard a dog barking. "It is some hunter's dog," said Paul; "they come up in the evening to stalk the deer."

Soon after the dog barked again more eagerly than before. "I fancy," said Virginia, "that it is Fidèle our house-dog; yes—I know his voice. Can we be so near home, and at the foot of our own mountain?"

In fact a minute later Fidèle was at their side, barking, yelping, whining, and covering them with caresses. They had not yet got over their surprise when they saw Domingo running towards them. As the good negro came up with them, crying for joy, they, too, began to cry, and could not speak a word. When Domingo had recovered himself: "Oh! young masters," he began, "how anxious your mothers have been! How astonished they were when they did not find you on their return from mass, to which I had accompanied them! Marie, who was at work in the plantation, could not tell us where you were gone. I came and went everywhere about, not knowing where to look for you. At last I took some of
your old clothes,* I made Fidèle smell at them, and at once the poor beast began sniffing out your tracks, just as if he had understood me; he led me, wagging his tail all the time, as far as the Black River. There a planter told me that you had brought back a runaway negress and that he had granted you her pardon. — A pardon indeed! He showed her to me with a chain on her feet, fastened to a log of wood, and with an iron collar with three spikes round her neck. — From thence Fidèle, still with his nose to the ground, led me up the slope by the Black River where he stopped, barking with all his might; that was close to a spring, near a fallen cabbage-palm, by a fire that was still smouldering. At last he led me here. We are at the foot of the mountain and must cross it; it is four leagues and more to our plantation. Here, eat and recover your strength a little.”

He gave them a cake, some fruit, and a large

* This sagacious conduct on the part of the negro Domingo reminds me of that of Téwénissa, the savage and his dog Oniah, as related by M. de Crèvecoeur in a book full of humane feeling: Lettres d'un cultivateur Américain.
calabash full of a drink composed of wine and water with lemon juice, some sugar and nutmeg, which their mothers had mixed to refresh and strengthen them. Virginia sighed over the recollection of the poor slave woman and the anxiety of their parents. She repeated more than once, "Oh, how difficult it is to do right!"

While she and Paul took some refreshment, Domingo lighted a fire, and having hunted among the rocks for a twisted kind of wood known as *bois de ronde*, which burns with a bright flame even when quite green, he made a torch and lighted it, for it was now dark. But his difficulties were far more serious when they were to start homewards. Paul and Virginia could walk no more; their feet were swelled and sore. Domingo could not decide whether he should go a long distance to seek help, or pass the night with them on the spot.

"Where is the time," said he, "when I could carry you both at once in my arms? But you are grown big and I am grown old."

As he was debating this a party of Maroons
or escaped slaves came in sight, about twenty yards off. The head of this party came up to Paul and Virginia and said:

"Kind little whites, do not be frightened; we saw you pass this morning with a negress from Black River. You were going to ask her pardon from her wicked master. In token of gratitude we will carry you home on our shoulders."

He signed to the others, and the four strongest negroes made a litter of branches of trees bound with creepers, on which they placed Paul and Virginia, and lifted it on to their shoulders. Domingo marched in front with his torch, and they set out, all the party shouting with joy and heaping them with blessings. Virginia was touched:

'You see," she said to Paul, "God never leaves a kind act unrewarded."

Towards the middle of the night they reached the foot of their own hill; on the ridges several beacon fires were blazing. Hardly had they climbed it, when they heard voices shouting:

"Is it you, my children?"
They called back in reply, with all the negroes:

"Yes—yes, here we are!" and they soon could see their mothers and Marie coming to meet them with flaming brands.

"Miserable children," said Mme. de la Tour, "where have you been? what torments of anxiety you have caused us!"

"We have been to the Black River," said Virginia, "to ask pardon for a poor Maroon slave-woman, to whom I gave all the breakfast for the family, because she was dying of hunger; and now, you see, the Maroons have brought us home."

Mme. de la Tour embraced her child but was unable to speak, and Virginia, feeling her face wet with tears said:

"You make up to me for all the misery I have gone through!"

Marguerite, beside herself with joy, clasped Paul in her arms saying: "And you, too, my boy, you have done a kind action."

When they got back to the huts with the
children they gave a good meal to the negroes, who then returned to their woods, wishing them every kind of good luck.

Every returning day brought peace and happiness to the little families. Neither envy nor ambition ever troubled them. They did not crave that vain distinction in the outer world which is to be won by intrigue and can be destroyed by calumny; they were satisfied to be their own witnesses and their own judges. In this island, as in every European colony, spiteful reports are the only subject of curiosity; thus the virtues and the very names of these good women remained unknown; only, when a passer-by on the road to Pamplemousses happened to ask of some dweller in the plain: "Who lives up in those little cabins?" his informant would reply, even without knowing them: "They are good folks." Thus violets hidden under a thorny brake shed their perfume far and wide, though they are not seen.

Slander was banished from their conversation, since under the semblance of justice it never fails
to incline the heart to hatred or to falsehood; for it is impossible not to hate men when we believe them to be wicked, or to live with the wicked unless we conceal our hatred under a false appearance of good will. Thus slander compels us to be ill at ease with others, or with ourselves. So without judging individuals they talked only of how to do good to all men alike; and though they had not the power to do it they had an unfailing will for good, and an overflowing benevolence which was always ready to go forth to the whole world. Thus, though living in a wilderness, far from becoming savages they had grown more human. And while the scandals of society afforded them no subjects for discussion, the story of nature was a source of endless delight and joy. It was with rapture that they contemplated the power of Providence which, through the work of their hands, had shed abundance and beauty on these barren rocks, with a daily round of pure and simple joys.

Paul, who at the age of twelve was better grown and more intelligent than most Europeans
at fifteen, had beautified the spot which Domingo had merely tilled. He would go with him into the neighboring woods to dig up young saplings of lemon and orange, of the tamarind tree whose tufted crown is of so rich a green, and of the custard-apple bearing a fruit full of sweet cream with a flavor of orange-blossom. These trees, already of some size, he planted round the garden-plot. He had sown the seeds of such shrubs as flower or fruit the second year: the Agati with drooping bunches of white blossoms like the drops of a chandelier; Persian lilac holding aloft its spikes of grey-pink bloom; the papaw with an unbranched stem looking like a column hung round with the melon-like fruit and a capital of broad leaves resembling those of the fig. He had also sown the seeds or nuts of the Indian almond, of mangoes, avocado pears, guavas, jack fruit and the Jamrosa. Most of these by this time were making a return in shade and in fruit. His industrious hand had carried fertility even to the most barren spots of the valley. Numerous species of aloe, prickly pear loaded with yellow flowers
dashed with red, and thorny cactuses grew on the dark tops of the rocks, as if trying to reach the trailing creepers which hung their garlands of blue or scarlet flowers over the cliffs above.

He had arranged these plants in such a manner that the eye saw all their beauties at a glance. In the middle of the dell were those of the humblest growth, beyond these were shrubs; then low growing trees, and outside, the taller kinds which closed it in, so that this wide glen was a perfect amphitheatre of greenery, of flowers and of fruits, and included garden plants, strips of meadow, and plots of rice and corn. Still, while making them subserve his own design he had not neglected that of nature; he had followed her suggestions, placing the kinds that bear light-winged seeds on high ground, and those whose seeds are formed to float near the brooks. Thus each plant grew in its natural soil, and each soil was clothed with its natural growth. The waters which tumble from the tops of those rocks were used in the valley to form spring heads or wide pools which reflected the verdure of the flower-
ing trees, the cliffs and, in the middle, the blue sky.

Notwithstanding the broken character of the ground all these plantations were almost as accessible to reach as to sight; indeed, we all helped him with our advice and assistance to achieve that end. He made a path which skirted that pool, and a number of others came from the surrounding grove to meet in the centre. He had taken advantage of the rougher ground with the happiest effect, and had succeeded in combining the inequalities of the soil with an easy ascent, and cultivated trees with those that grew wild. Here and there he piled up pyramids of the huge boulders which lie about in vast quantities, and are now strewn on these paths, as all over the soil of this island; he filled up the chinks between the stones with earth, roots of roses, poinciana* and other shrubs which affect a rocky soil. Ere long these rough and gloomy cairns were covered with greenery, or the brightness of the loveliest flowers. The ravines were over-

* Poinciana regia, the Barbadoes Flower-fence.
grown with old trees slanting across them, which made them like subterranean vaults where the family retired for coolness during the day. One path led to an arbor of natural growth with a cultivated fruit-tree in the middle, sheltered from the wind and loaded with fruit. On one hand was a harvest, on the other an orchard. From the end of one avenue the two little houses could be seen, through another the inaccessible heights of the mountains. There was a bower of Tata-maka trees interwoven with creepers and so dense that it was too dark in it to see anything even at high noon; from the top of that great crag which juts out from the hill-side hard by, there was a bird's-eye view of the whole plantation, with the sea beyond where now and then a ship might be seen coming from Europe, or perhaps returning thither. On that rocky platform the family met every evening to enjoy in silence the fresher air, the fragrance of the flowers, the ripple of the waters and the dying harmonies of hue in the lights and shadows.

Nothing could be more pleasing than the
names given to most of the delightful nooks in this retreat. The rock of which I was speaking, and from whence they could see me coming when I was still very far away, they called *Friendship's Look-out*. Paul and Virginia had, in play, planted a bamboo there, to the end of which they would hoist a little white handkerchief to signal my arrival as soon as they descried me, just as a flag is run up on the neighboring heights when a vessel is seen in the offing. I had a fancy to place an inscription on the stem of this reed. However great the pleasure I have derived in my travels, from seeing a statue or a monument of antiquity, I have found far more in reading a happy and well-written inscription; the stone has seemed to speak to me with a human voice sounding through the centuries, and telling man even in the midst of deserts that he is not alone, that other men have, on the very same spot, felt, thought and suffered as he does. And if the inscription is the record of some ancient nation which has ceased to exist, it raises the soul to wander through the fields of the infinite, giving it a sense of immor-
tality by proving that a thought has been able to survive the ruin of an empire.

So I cut into the little flag-staff, set up by Paul and Virginia, these lines from Horace:

"Fratres Helenae, lucida sidera
   Ventorumque regat pater,
   Obstrictis alis, praeter Iapyga." *

I also engraved this line from Virgil on the bark of a Tatamaka in whose shade Paul was wont to sit and watch the surging sea:

"Fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agrestes!" †

And yet another over the door of Mme. de la Tour's cottage, where the family commonly met:

"At secura quies, et nescia fallere vita." ‡

Virginia, however, did not approve of my Latin; she said the inscription on her flag-staff

* May those bright stars the Brothers of Helen
   And the Father of the Winds rule,
   When all are stilled save Zephyr.

† And happy is he who knows the Gods of the fields.

‡ Untroubled peace and a life innocent of guile.
was too long and too learned. "I would rather," she added, "have had the words: 'Toujours agitée mais constante—Storm-tossed but unmoved.'"

“That motto,” replied I, “would apply even better to virtue.” And my remark made her color.

The tender feeling of these happy souls went forth to all that surrounded them. They had given loving names to what seemed objects of complete indifference. There was a ring of orange-trees, bananas and jamroses enclosing a grass-plot where Paul and Virginia would sometimes go to dance; this they called Concord. An old tree, beneath whose shade Mme. de la Tour and Marguerite had told each other their woes, was known as Wiped-away Tears. They had given the names of Brittany and Normandy to some plots of ground where they had sown corn, strawberries and peas. Domingo and Marie, wishing to imitate their mistresses and commemorate their birth-places in Africa, bestowed the names of Angola and Foullepointe on two patches where the reed grew of which they wove their
baskets, and where they had planted a calabash-tree. In this way the exiled families kept up a fond remembrance of their native land and soothed their regrets on a foreign soil. Ah! I have known the trees, the springs, the very stones that surround this deserted spot made, as it were, living things by the sweet names they were called by; and now, like some field in Greece, nothing remains here but ruins and pathetic words.

Of all the spots within this dell none was plasanter than one known as Virginia's Rest. At the foot of the rock called Friendship's Look-out is a little grot whence a spring flows which at once fills a pool of water in the midst of a meadow of fine sward. When Paul was born I made Marguerite a present of an Indian cocoa-nut which had been given to me. She planted the nut by this lakelet in order that the tree growing from it might serve to record and date her son's birth. Mme. de la Tour, following her example, sowed another for the same purpose at the birth of Virginia. From the two nuts two trees had sprung which constituted the family archives: one was
called Paul's tree and the other Virginia's. They grew as their owners' grew, one rather taller than the other, but in twelve years they were already above the cabin roofs. Their plumy leaves crossed and mingled and their bunches of young fruit hung over the tank below the spring.

Beyond planting these coco-palms the little cave remained just as nature had made it. Large leaved spleenworts clung to its damp brown sides, decking them with star-shaped patches of shining black and green; tufts of harts'-tongue hung like long purplish-green ribbands, floating on the wind. Hard by grew a border of the Madagascar periwinkle with flowers almost like those of the Indian pink, and capsicums with scarlet pods more vivid than coral. All round grew balsam plants with their heart-shaped leaves and herb basil smelling of cloves, filling the air with fragrance. From the top of the ravine fell creepers, covering the face of the cliffs with hangings of greenery like swaying drapery. Sea-birds, tempted by this sheltered retreat, would spend the night there; at sunset the curlew and
the lapwing might be seen there, sweeping along the sea-shore, and in the upper air the black frigate bird and the white albatross, deserting the lonely Indian ocean with the sun.

Virginia loved to sit by this spring with its wild but splendid magnificence of nature. She would often wash the household linen under the shade of the coco-palms; sometimes she led her goats to feed there. While she made cheeses of their milk she liked to see them cropping maidenhair on the steep slopes of the cliff or standing perched in the air on a crag as if it were a pedestal. And Paul, seeing that Virginia loved the spot, brought to it birds’ nests of every kind from the neighboring forest. The parent birds followed their broods and came to settle in the new colony. Virginia fed them from time to time with rice, maize and millet: as soon as she came in sight the piping thrush, the Indian finch with its soft low note, and cardinal birds in their flame-colored plumage came forth from the shrubs; parroquets in emerald green flew down from the fan-palms; partridges ran to her through the
grass—all came hurrying to her feet like so many fowls. She and Paul were never tired of the amusement of watching their play, their feeding and their love-makings.

Sweet children! thus you spent your early years in the practice of kindliness. How many a time in that very spot, have your mothers clasped you in their arms and blessed Heaven for the consolation you were preparing for their old age, happy to see you beginning life under such happy auspices! How many a time under the shadow of those rocks have I shared your rustic feast which cost no creature's life! Calabashes full of milk, fresh eggs, rice cakes on plantain leaves, baskets full of sweet potatoes, mangoes, pomegranates, custard-apples and pine-apples formed a meal at once wholesome, beautiful in color and delightful in flavor.

The conversation was as pleasant and as innocent as the banquet. Paul would discuss the labors of the day and of the morrow; he was always planning something of use to the little colony. Here the path was inconvenient, there a
seat was uncomfortable; that newly-planted arbor did not give sufficient shade and Virginia would find it pleasanter elsewhere.

During the rainy season they spent the day all together within doors, mistresses and servants alike plaighting grass mats or bamboo baskets. Rakes, hatchets and spades stood in the neatest array along the wall, and near them the products due to the use of these tools of the field: bags of rice, sheaves of corn, and bunches of plantains. Daintiness always went hand in hand with abundance. Virginia, under the instructions of her mother and Marguerite made sherbet and cordials from the juice of the sugar-cane, lemons and limes.

After nightfall they supped by lamp-light; then Mme. de la Tour or Marguerite would tell some tale—of travellers losing their way in the dark in Europe in forests infested with robbers, or of the wreck of a ship cast by the tempest on the reefs of a desert island. Such stories would fire the children’s fancy; they would pray Heaven to grant them the chance of some day
showing hospitality to such hapless wretches. But the families would presently separate for the night, eager to meet again on the morrow. They would fall asleep sometimes to the sound of the rain pouring in torrents on the thatch of the huts, or to the sighing of the wind which brought up the distant roar of the breakers on the beach. Then they thanked God for their own safety which the sense of remote danger made doubly precious.

Occasionally Mme. de la Tour read aloud some touching passage from the Old or the New Testament. They did not argue or discuss the sacred Books; their theology was all in feeling like that of nature; their morality was all in action like that of the Gospel. They did not give up certain days to pleasure and certain others to penance. To them every day was a festival, and all that surrounded them a sacred temple in which they constantly admired an infinite Intelligence, all-powerful and full of love for man; this confidence in a supreme Power gave them comfort for the past, courage for the present, and
hope for the future. Thus these two women, thrown back on Nature by misfortune, had cultivated in their own souls and in those of their children the feelings which nature has bestowed on us to preserve us from succumbing under grief.

Still, since clouds sometimes arise to trouble even the best-regulated mind, if at any time one of the little party seemed sad the others would draw more closely round and try to drive away bitter thoughts by affection rather than by persuasion. Then all would show their special bent: Marguerite her light-hearted gaiety; Mme. de la Tour, her gentle piety, Virginia, loving attentions; Paul, frankness and heartiness. Marie and Domingo, too, would do all they could. When one was grieved all were grieved; if one wept all wept. Thus feeble plants grow clinging together to enable them to stand against the hurricane.

In the fine season they went every Sunday to the church of Pamplemousses—you may see the belfry in the plain yonder. There they met the wealthier inhabitants, who came in palanquins
and who often were eager to make acquaintance with these united families and to invite them to parties of pleasure. But they always declined their advances with respectful civility, feeling convinced that the powerful never seek the weak excepting to attract flatterers, and that the only way to flatter them is by being obsequious to their passions, whether good or evil. On the other hand they were not less careful to avoid intimacy with the inferior residents, who are for the most part jealous, gossiping and coarse-minded. The rich thought them bashful, the vulgar thought them proud; still, their reserve was linked with so much kindness and politeness, especially towards all who were in trouble, that the rich unwittingly respected them and they gained the confidence of the poor.

After mass was ended they were constantly applied to for some good offices. Some one in sorrow needed counsel; or a child implored them to call on its mother who was ill in a neighboring village. They always had some useful recipe that was suitable to the common ailments of the set-
tlers and they gave with the good grace which lends value to the most trifling service. Especially they had the skill to charm away the pain of mind which is so terrible to the solitary and infirm. Mme. de la Tour spoke so confidently of the God above us that the sufferer, as he listened, felt His Presence. Virginia often came home with her eyes full of tears; but her heart was glad, for she had had an opportunity of doing good. It was she who concocted the remedies needed for the sick and who would give them with enchanting grace.

After these visits of charity they often extended their walk through Long-Mountain valley as far as to my house where I used to wait for them for dinner by the side of the little river that runs by my plantation. On these occasions I procured a few bottles of old wine to increase the pleasures of our native meal by the cheering and gladdening produce of Europe. At other times we met on the sea-shore, at the mouth of one of the other streams which are scarcely more than large brooks; then we carried with us some veg-
etable provisions to which we added those which the sea affords in abundance. From the shore we caught mullets, grey and red, with cray-fish, shrimps, crabs, sea-urchins, oysters and shell-fish of all kinds. We often found the most soothing enjoyment in the most terrific spots. Seated on a crag, under the shade of a tree that grows on the shore here and is known as the Veloutier, * we sometimes watched the billows surge in to break at our feet with an awful roar. Paul, who swam like a fish, would wade out over the reefs to meet the waves; then, as they rushed in, he fled to the shore before the foaming and thundering surf, which chased him far up the strand. But Virginia would scream aloud at the sight, and say that such sports frightened her dreadfully.

After our meal the two young people sang or danced. Virginia would sing of the happiness of a rustic life and the disasters of seafaring men, tempted by greed to sail a raging element rather than to till the earth which peacefully yields so

* Scaevola Koenigii.
many bounties. Now and then she and Paul would perform a scene in dumb show as the negroes do. Pantomime is the primeval expression of man; it is known in every land, and is so natural and intelligible that white children never fail to adopt it as soon as they have seen it practised by the negroes. Virginia, calling to mind such of the tales read to her by her mother as had most impressed her, would render the more important scenes with much simple art. While Domingo beat a tom-tom she would advance to the sound, over the turf, carrying a pitcher over her head and going shyly to a neighboring spring to draw water. Domingo and Marie, as the shepherds of Midian, forbid her approach and pretended to drive her away. Then Paul flew to her help, beat the shepherds, filled Virginia's pitcher, and, as he lifted it on to her head, crowned her with a wreath of rose-colored periwinkle which showed off the whiteness of her skin. Then I would join in the game to fill the part of Raguel and give my daughter Zipporah in marriage to Paul.
Another time she represented the hapless Ruth returning, poor and a widow to her own land, and finding herself a stranger there after her long absence. Domingo and Marie were now the reapers. Virginia made as though she were gleaning a few ears of corn here and there as she followed in their steps. Paul questioned her with the gravity of a patriarch, and she replied trembling. Presently, moved to pity, he offered a home to innocence and a refuge to misfortune. He heaped Virginia's apron with all kinds of food and brought her before us, as the elders of the city, declaring that he took her in marriage in spite of her poverty. Mme. de la Tour, reminded by this scene of the destitution in which her own parents had left her, of her widowhood, of the warm welcome given her by Marguerite, and of her hope now of seeing these two children happily married, could not hide her emotion; and mingled memories of joys and sorrows made us all shed some tears of gladness and pain.

These little scenes were performed with so much truthfulness that we fancied ourselves far
away in the fields of Syria or Palestine. Nor was there any lack of scenery, lighting, or music suited to the dramas. The theatre was generally a forest glade whence paths cut in all directions were so many leafy arcades; we, in the midst, were screened from the heat all day, but as the sun sank towards the horizon his beams, piercing the gloom of the woods, were parted by the trunks of the trees into long sheaves of fire which had most splendid effect. Sometimes the whole globe was to be seen at the end of an avenue and set it in a blaze of glory. The foliage, lighted from below by the saffron tinted rays, sparkled with flashes of topaz and emerald; their brown and mossy trunks seemed turned into columns of antique bronze, and the birds, which had already lapsed into silence under the leaves for the night, startled at seeing a second sunrise hailed the day-star with a thousand songs.

Night often overtook us on these expeditions; but the purity of the air and the softness of the climate allowed of our sleeping under a hurdle-screen in the midst of the forest, with no fear of
robbers far or near. We could all go home next day, secure of finding our dwellings just as we had left them. At that time such good faith and simplicity prevailed in this island, unknown to trade, that the doors of many of the houses had no keys, and that a lock was an object of curiosity to many Creoles.

There were certain days in the year which were days of high rejoicing to Paul and Virginia: these were their mothers fête or name days. The day before Virginia never failed to knead and bake cakes of wheat-flour which she sent to families of poor whites born in the island, who had never eaten European bread and who, having no negro help, were reduced to living on manioc in the woods while their poverty was not alleviated either by that stolidity which comes of slavery, or by the spirit which is given by education. These cakes were the only gifts Virginia could make from the sufficiency of the household; but she gave them with a sweet grace that added much to their value. It was Paul's part in the first instance to carry them to these families, and
they, as they accepted them, pledged themselves to come on the morrow to spend the day with Mme. de la Tour and Marguerite. Next morning they would appear: a mother with two or three wretched daughters—sallow, emaciated and so shy that they dared not lift their eyes. But Virginia soon set them at their ease; she handed them refreshments of which she praised the excellence by ascribing it to some circumstance which as she said made them all the nicer: This drink had been mixed by her mother—this other by Marguerite; her brother had gathered that fruit with his own hands from the top of a tree. She asked Paul to dance with them; she never left them till she saw them happy and satisfied—they must rejoice in the joys of the family.

"The only way to be happy," she would say, "is to try to make others happy." When their visitors went away she pressed them to take away anything that seemed to have given them pleasure, finding a plea for their necessity for accepting her gifts by pretence of their novelty or their peculiarity. If she noticed that their clothes
were threadbare she picked out, with her mother's leave, some of their own and asked Paul to carry them in secret, and lay them at the door of their cabins. Thus she did good in imitation of the Divine Example, hiding the benefactor and letting only the benefit be seen.

You, Europeans, with your minds filled from childhood with a stock of prejudices antagonistic to happiness, cannot imagine that nature should be able to afford so much enlightenment and so many pleasures. Your souls are shut into a small sphere of human knowledge and must soon reach the limit of their artificial joys. Nature and feeling are inexhaustible.

Paul and Virginia had no time-keepers, no almanacs, no books of chronology, of history, or of philosophy. The divisions of time were regulated for them by the processes of nature. They knew the hour of the day by the shadows of the trees—the seasons, by the time when they bore flowers or fruit—the years, by the number of recurring crops. These pretty associations gave the greatest charm to their mode of speech:
"It is dinner time," Virginia would say: "The shadows of the banana-trees fall just at their feet," or: "Night is closing in, the tamarind leaves are folding."

"When will you come to see us?" some neighbors might ask.

"When the sugar canes are ripe," Virginia would answer.

"Then your visit will be all the sweeter," the girls would reply.

When she was asked her age, or Paul's:

"My brother," was her answer, "is as old as the tall coco-palm by the pool, and I as the small one. The mango-trees have fruited twelve times and the orange-trees have flowered twenty-four times since I was born." Their existence seemed as much bound up with those of the trees as though they had been fauns or dryads; they had no idea of any historical epoch beyond their mothers' lives, of any chronology but that marked by their orchard, of any philosophy excepting that of doing good to all mankind and bowing to the will of God.
And, after all, what need had these young people of wealth or learning after our pattern? Their very wants and ignorance added to their enjoyments. Not a day passed that they did not give each other some help or some teaching. Aye, teaching—and if, mingled with it, there were a few errors, man in his purity need fear none that can be dangerous. Thus these two children of nature grew up. Not a care had wrinkled their brows, no excess had tainted their blood, no fatal passion had corrupted their hearts; love, innocence and piety helped the beauty of their souls to unfold day by day in perfect grace of feature, attitude, and motion. In the morning of life they had all its freshness: such must our first parents have been in the Garden of Eden when, fresh from the hand of God, they met, drew near, and first addressed each other as brother and sister. Virginia, sweet, modest and trustful as Eve; and Paul, like Adam, stalwart as a man with the simplicity of a child.

Sometimes when alone with her—he has told
me a thousand times—he would say to her at the end of his day's toil:

"When I am tired the sight of you rests me. When, from the top of the hill, I see you down in this valley, you look like a rose-bud in the midst of our orchards. When you are walking towards our mothers' home a partridge hurrying to seek her young is less lovely in form and less light of foot. Even when I lose sight of you behind the trees I do not need to see you in order to follow you; something of you—I know not what—fills the air where you have passed and lies on the grass where you have sat. When I go near you you captivate my every sense. The blue sky is less lovely than the blue of your eyes; the warble of the birds is less sweet than the sound of your voice. If I touch you only with the tip of my finger my whole body thrills with delight.

"Do you remember the day when we crossed the rolling boulders of the mountain torrent. I was very tired when we reached the bank; but when I took you on my shoulders I felt as though I had the wings of a bird. Tell me by what
magic you have been able to bewitch me. Is it by your cleverness? — but our mothers have more than we two. Is it by your loving ways? — But they kiss me oftener than you do. I believe it is by your kindness. I shall never forget that you walked bare-foot as far as the Black River to ask pardon for a poor runaway slave. — Here, Sweetheart, take this branch of lemon blossom that I gathered in the wood; you can place it by your bedside at night. Eat this honey-comb; I took it for you from the top of a crag. But first lie in my arms and I shall be rested.”

Virginia would answer:

“Oh, Brother! the morning sunbeams over the cliffs bring me less joy than your presence; I love my mother dearly, and I love yours too, but when they call you their son I love them more than ever. I care less for the kisses they give me than for those they give you. — You ask me why you love me; but beings that have been reared together always love each other. Look at our birds: they have grown up in the same nest and love as we do; listen to them calling and answer-
ing from tree to tree; — in the same way when Echo brings me the tune you are playing on your flute at the top of the mountain I sing the words down here in the valley. You are indeed dear to me, especially since the day when you were ready to fight the slave’s master for my sake. Since then I have said to myself many a time: ‘My brother has a kind heart; but for him I should have died of fright.’ — I pray to God every day for my mother and yours, for you and for our poor servants; but when I breathe your name I fancy my fervor is deeper. I beseech God so earnestly that no evil may befall you! — Why do you go so far and climb so high to fetch me fruit and flowers? Have we not plenty in the garden? See how tired you are, and bathed in sweat . . . .” And she would wipe his brow and cheeks with her little handkerchief and kiss him again and again.

However, for some little time Virginia had been disturbed by an unaccountable disorder. Her lovely blue eyes were streaked with darker lines, her complexion was more sallow; her whole
frame was weighed down and languid. Her brow was no longer unclouded, the smile had vanished from her lips. She was sometimes suddenly gay without gladness and sad for no sorrow. She avoided their innocent games, her pleasing tasks, and the society of those she loved; she would wander up and down in the loneliest spots on the plantation, seeking respite and never finding it. Sometimes, on catching sight of Paul, she would frolic to meet him; then suddenly, as she was about to speak, she would be overcome by embarrassment; the bright color rose to her pale cheeks and her eyes dared not look into his. Paul would say: "The rocks are clothed with verdure, the birds sing when they see you, everything about you is happy, and you alone are sad." And he would try to cheer her with a kiss; but she turned her head away and fled trembling to her mother. The poor child was ill at ease under her brother's caresses. Paul could make nothing of such new and strange whims.

One trouble never comes alone. A summer such as now and again devastates the countries
that lie between the tropics extended its ravages to these shores; it was the end of December, when the sun is in Capricorn and for three weeks sheds vertical fires on the island of Mauritius. The south-east wind, which prevails nearly all the year round, had ceased to blow. Tall, whirling wreaths of dust rose from the roads and hung motionless in the air. The soil was full of cracks; the grass was burnt up; hot vapors rose from the mountain slopes, and most of the brooks were dry. Not a cloud came up from the sea; but during the day a rufous mist brooded over its level surface, looking at sunset like the glow of a conflagration. Even night brought no freshness to the scorching atmosphere; the moon’s disk rose red and unnaturally large from a lurid horizon. The herds lay scattered on the hill-sides with outstretched necks gasping for air and making the valley resound with their melancholy lowing. Even the negro who watched them flung himself on the ground for coolness, but the very earth was burning hot, and the stifling air was full of the buzz of insects
eager to quench their thirst with the blood of men and beasts.

It was one of these fierce nights when Virginia felt every symptom of her disorder with double severity. She rose, she sat down, she went to bed again, but no change of posture brought her sleep or rest. By the light of the moon she found her way to her pool; she could see the spring still trickling in spite of the drought, a silver thread ran down the brown face of the rock. She plunged into the water. At first the coolness revived her spirits; a thousand smiling memories rose before her. She recollected how, in her childhood, her mother and Marguerite amused themselves with bathing her and Paul in this very spot; how, afterwards, Paul had dedicated the bath to her sole use, had deepened the bed, strewn the bottom with sand and sown fragrant herbs round the edge. She could just see under the water, on her bare arms and bosom, the shadows of the two palm-trees planted at Paul's birth and at her own, whose green boughs and fruit met and mingled above her
head. She thought of Paul’s affection for her—sweeter than these perfumes, purer than spring waters, stronger than the united palm-trees—and she sighed. She was conscious of the dark night, of the solitude; a consuming fire shot through her. She sprang out, terrified by these perilous shades, these waters that seemed hotter than the sun of the torrid zone.

She flew to her mother to seek strength against herself. Again and again she tried to explain her suffering and clasped her mother’s hands; again and again she almost spoke the name of Paul, but her panting heart checked her utterance; she could only lay her head on her mother’s bosom and shed a flood of tears.

Mme. de la Tour perfectly understood the cause of her daughter’s anguish, but she could not venture to speak of it. “Appeal to God, my child,” said she. “Health and life are in His hand. He sends you trial to-day to reward you to-morrow. Remember, we are placed in this world only to learn the practice of virtue.”

Meanwhile the fearful heat drew up from
the ocean a body of mist which spread over the island like a huge parasol. The mountain peaks attracted the clouds and long shafts of fire flashed fitfully round the shrouded crags. Presently awful thunder-claps rolled and rattled through the forests, plains and valleys; terrific rain fell like cataracts from the sky. Foaming torrents came plunging down the sides of yonder mountain; this dell was a lake, this knoll on which the cabins stood was a little island, and the entrance to the glen was like an open sluice through which the waters rushed moaning, and bearing with them the soil, trees and stones.

The whole family, trembling with terror, had gathered in Mme. de la Tour's hut to pray, while the roof creaked fearfully under the blast. Though the door and shutters were tightly closed everything could be seen through the cracks in the boarding by the glare of the vivid and incessant lightning. Paul with Domingo bravely went to and fro between the two cabins in spite of the raging of the storm, here strengthening a wall with shoring, there driving in a stake, and only
coming in-doors to comfort the others with hopes that the weather would presently clear. In fact the rain ceased towards evening, the south-east trade wind blew again as usual; the storm-clouds packed away in the north-east and the setting sun shone above the horizon.

Virginia's first wish was to see her haven of rest. Paul shyly went up to her and offered his arm to help her steps. She accepted it with a smile and they went out together.

The air was crisp and ringing. White puffs of cloud were rising from the brow of the hills which were seamed with dashing torrents now fast subsiding. As for the garden it was ploughed through in hideous rifts; most of the fruit-trees had their roots uppermost; huge sand-drifts covered the strips of meadow and had choked Virginia's pool. The two coco-palms, however, were still standing and green, but around them there were neither turf, nor arbors, nor birds, excepting a few Indian finches who had perched on the neighboring crags and were singing a plaintive lament over the loss of their nestlings.
At the sight of this scene of desolation Virginia said to Paul: "You brought the birds here—the hurricane has killed them; you planted this garden—it is ruined. Every earthly thing must perish; Heaven alone can never change."

"Ah!" said Paul, "if only I could give you some share of Heaven! But I have nothing of my own, even on earth."

Virginia colored as she replied: "The picture of St. Paul is your own."

Hardly had she spoken when he ran to fetch it from his mother's cabin. This picture was a small miniature representing Paul the Hermit. Marguerite held it in great veneration; as a girl she had long worn it round her neck; then as a mother she had placed it round that of her child. Indeed in her loneliness before his birth, deserted by every one, the image of this sainted recluse had been so constantly the object of her contemplation that her boy had some likeness to it, and this it was that had made her give him the same name and place him under the patronage of a saint who had spent his life far from men since
they had first reviled and then deserted him. Virginia, as she took the little picture from Paul's hands, said with much feeling:

"As long as I live I will never part from it, Brother—and I will never forget that you gave me the only thing in the world you can call your own."

This friendly tone and unhoped-for revival of familiarity and affection made Paul turn to embrace her; but she evaded him with the agility of a bird, and left him quite beside himself and bewildered by such inexplicable behavior.

Marguerite meanwhile was saying to Mme. de la Tour:

"Why should we not let our children marry each other? They love each other with a passion of which my son is not yet fully aware. But when nature has spoken within him all our watchfulness will be in vain—we can but fear the worst."

"They are still too young, and too poor," replied Mme. de la Tour. "What misery it would be to see Virginia the mother of wretched infants
whom she might not have the strength to rear. Your negro Domingo is much broken; Marie is infirm. I myself, my dear friend, feel much weaker than I did fifteen years since. We grow old rapidly in hot climates and still more rapidly in sorrow. Paul is our only hope. Let us wait till years have settled his temperament and he can support us by his toil. At present, as you know, we have little more than our daily bread. If we send Paul to India for a short time he may earn by trade enough to buy a slave, and on his return home we will marry him to Virginia, for I believe that no one will ever make my dear girl so happy as your son Paul. We will talk it over with our neighbor."

They did in fact consult me; and I agreed with them.

"The Indian seas are very fine," said I. "If you choose a favorable season for the expedition it is a voyage of six weeks at most to India, and the same back again. We will make up a freight of merchandise for Paul on my plantation, for many of my neighbors are very fond of him. If
we give him nothing but raw cotton, which we cannot work up for want of machinery to clean it, with ebony, which is so common here as to be used for fire-wood, and some of the resinous gums that are wasting in the forest—all these things sell well in India and are of no use to us here."

I undertook to apply to Mons. de la Bourdonnais for a permit for Paul to start on this voyage, but first of all I wished to speak of it to the lad himself. What was my surprise when he said, with good sense far beyond his years:

"Why do you want me to leave my family for the sake of I know not what scheme for making a fortune? Is any trade in the world more profitable than the tilling of land which yields sometimes fifty or a hundred fold? If we want to trade cannot we do it here by carrying our surplus produce to the town, without my starting for the Indies? Our mothers say that Domingo is old and broken, but I, at any rate, am young, and I grow stronger every day. — And then if anything were to go wrong with them during my
absence! To Virginia especially, who is ailing already — No, no; I could never make up my mind to leave them."

This reply placed me in a great difficulty, for Mme. de la Tour had made no secret to me of Virginia’s state and of her anxious wish to gain time in a few years of added life to the young people by parting them for a while. I could not allow Paul even to suspect this motive.

Matters were in this state when a vessel came in from France bringing Mme. de la Tour a letter from her aunt. The terror of death had come upon her, a dread without which such hard hearts would never learn ruth. A severe illness had left her in a state of infirmity which at her age was incurable. She desired her niece to return to France, or, if her health did not allow of her undertaking such a voyage, she insisted that she should send home Virginia to whom she would give a good education, and after finding her a husband at Court, leave her all her property. She added that she made the fulfilment of her injunctions the condition of her restored favor.
No sooner had the letter been read to the family circle than consternation fell upon them all. Domingo and Marie began to cry; Paul, dumb with amazement, seemed on the point of flying into a passion; Virginia, with her eyes fixed on her mother, dared not utter a word.

"Could you bear to leave us now?" said Marguerite to Mme. de la Tour.

"No, my dear; no, my children," replied Mme. de la Tour. "I will not leave you. I have lived with you, and with you I will die. I have never known happiness but through your friendship. Though my health is impaired that is the result of long past sorrows. I was cut to the heart by my parents' sternness and by the loss of my dear husband. Since then I have enjoyed more comfort and happiness with you under these humble roofs than I ever could have hoped for even, with all the wealth of my family, in my native land."

This speech made them all shed tears of joy. Paul, throwing his arms round Mme. de la Tour, exclaimed:
"Nor will I leave you. I will not sail for the Indies. We will all work for you, dear Mother; you shall never want for anything with us."

But Virginia, of all the party, was the one who seemed most glad and felt it most keenly. For the rest of the day she was in gentle good spirits, and her recovered brightness filled the cup of gladness for all.

Next day at sunrise, after they had ended the morning family worship which it was their custom to perform before breakfast, Domingo informed them that a gentleman on horseback, followed by two slaves, was coming to the plantation. This was M. de la Bourdonnais. He came into the hut where the whole party were at table; Virginia had just served the meal consisting, after the fashion of the country, of coffee and boiled rice. She had added some sweet potatoes, hot, and freshly-cut bananas. The dishes and cups were calabashes and their only table-cloth was a banana-leaf.

The governor first expressed his surprise at the poverty of the dwelling; then, turning to
Mme. de la Tour, he said that public business sometimes prevented his thinking of private affairs, but that she, at least, had some claims upon him. "You have an aunt," he added, "a lady of rank and great wealth in Paris, who intends that you should inherit her fortune and expects you to go to her."

Mme. de la Tour explained to the governor that her precarious health did not allow of her making so long a voyage.

"Then at any rate," said M. de la Bourdonnais, "for this young lady, your daughter, who is so young and charming... you cannot deprive her of such a large fortune without doing her a serious injustice. I will not conceal the fact that your aunt has employed legal authority to require her presence there. I have official papers enjoining me if necessary to exercise my powers, but as I am anxious to display them only to promote the happiness of the residents in the colony, I expect you of your own free will to sacrifice the few years which will secure your daughter's prosperity and settlement for life. — Why do people come
out here? To make their fortune, is it not? And is it not far pleasanter to go back to a fortune in one's native land?"

As he spoke he laid on the table a large sack of piastres which one of his slaves had been carrying.

"This," said he, "is the wherewithal to make preparations for the young lady's departure; it comes from your aunt."

He ended with kindly reproaching Mme. de la Tour for not having applied to him in her necessity, praising her at the same time for her noble spirit.

Paul then spoke out: "Sir," said he to the governor, "my mother did apply to you, and you treated her very badly."

"Have you a second child then Madame?" said M. de la Bourdonnais to Mme. de la Tour.

"No," she replied, "this youth is my friend's son; but Virginia and he belong equally to both of us and are equally dear to us."

"Young man," said M. de la Bourdonnais to Paul, "when you have had some experience of
the world you will know what the difficulties are of men in high authority; you will know how easily they are prejudiced, and how apt they are to bestow on scheming vice what is rightly due to secluded merit."

M. de la Bourdonnais, on Mme. de la Tour's invitation, sat down to their meal by her side. He breakfasted, Creole fashion, on coffee thickened with plain boiled rice. He was delighted with the neatness and cleanliness of the little cabin, with the perfect union in which the two charming families dwelt, and the zeal of their two dependants.

"The furniture here indeed is only of wood," said he, "but your faces are happy and your hearts are of gold."

Paul, attracted by the governor's affability, exclaimed: "I should like to be your friend, for you are a good man." And M. de la Bourdonnais was pleased to accept this proof of artless cordiality. He clasped Paul's hand and assured him that he might count on his friendship.

After breakfast he spoke to Mme. de la Tour
in private and told her that an opportunity would presently occur of sending her daughter to France on a ship that was ready to sail, that he could put her in charge of a lady who was related to him and a passenger on board; and that she ought to hesitate before losing an immense fortune for the sake of a few years of happy intercourse.

"Your aunt," said he, as he left her, "cannot linger more than two years; her friends have written to tell me so. Consider well. Fortunes do not turn up every day. Think it over. Any person of good sense would agree with me."

She replied that "as there could be no happiness on earth for her but in her daughter's she would leave it entirely to her to decide whether she would go to France.

Mme. de la Tour was indeed not sorry to have an opportunity of parting Paul and Virginia for a season with a view to their ultimate happiness together. She called her daughter aside and said to her:

"My child, our servants are old; Paul is very young; Marguerite is ageing and I am already
feeble; — If I were to die what would become of you, a penniless girl in this wilderness? You would be left alone with no one who could help you much, and only to live you would have to labor incessantly in the fields as a hired servant. I cannot bear the thought."

Virginia replied: "God has doomed us to toil. You have taught me to work and to bless God daily. He has not deserted us to this day and He will not desert us; His care watches more particularly over those who are unfortunate. You yourself have told me so often, Mother — I could not make up my mind to leave you."

Mme. de la Tour was touched, but she went on:

"I have no purpose in life but to make you happy and see you married one day to Paul, who is not your brother. Now, consider; his fortune depends on you."

A young girl in love fancies that no one suspects it. She hides her eyes as she does her heart, and when the veil is lifted by a tender hand all the secret griefs of her love rush forth as
from an opened sluice, and the reserve and mystery in which she had wrapped herself give way to a delicious outpouring of confidence. Virginia, keenly alive to her mother's fresh proofs of devotion, told her of all her struggles unseen by any witness but God, said that she saw the intervention of Providence in that of so good a mother who both approved of her choice and guided her by her counsels; and that now more than ever, as she had her countenance to help her, everything tended to keep her at home, free from anxiety in the present or fears for the future.

Mme. de la Tour, finding that her frankness had produced the opposite effect to that which she had expected, said:

"My child I do not wish to sway you. Think it over at your leisure; but hide your love from Paul. When a young girl's heart is given there is nothing more for her lover to ask.

Towards evening, as she was sitting alone with Virginia, a tall man in a blue cassock came in. This was a missionary priest who had come to the island, and the father confessor of Mme.
de la Tour and Virginia. The governor had sent him.

"Bless the Lord, my children!" said he as he came in. "You are now quite rich. You can listen to thedictates of your kind hearts and do good to the poor. I know what M. de la Bourdonnais told you and what your reply was. As for you, good Mother, your health compels you to remain here; but you, young lady, have no excuse. We must yield to Providence and to our elderly relations, even when they are unjust. It is a sacrifice but it is the will of God. He sacrificed Himself for us, and you must follow His example and sacrifice yourself for your family. Your voyage to France will lead to happy issues — will you not go willingly, my dear young lady?"

Virginia, with downcast eyes, tremulously replied:

"If it is the will of God, I will not attempt to resist. — God's will be done!" she added, sobbing.

The missionary went away to report the success of his errand to the governor. Mme. de la
Tour meanwhile sent Domingo to beg me to call on her, as she wished to consult me about Virginia's departure. I was not at all in favor of their allowing her to go. I regard it as a fixed principle of happiness that the blessings of nature are preferable to all that fortune can give, and that we should never seek abroad what we can find at home; and these maxims are of universal application, without exception. But what could my urging moderation avail against the visions of a fine fortune, or my natural logic against worldly prejudice and an authority which Mme. de la Tour held sacred? In short, the lady consulted me only as a matter of civility; she had ceased to hesitate since her confessor had decided. Even Marguerite, who had strongly opposed Virginia's departure notwithstanding the advantage she anticipated for her son from the young girl's fortune, now made no more objections. Paul, knowing nothing of the decision they had come to, and puzzled by the secret conferences of Mme. de la Tour and her daughter, gave himself up to the gloomiest dejection.
"There is some plot against me," said he, "since they hide from me."

The report that fortune had lighted amid these crags had spread through the island, and traders of every class clambered up to them. Here, in those humble huts, they displayed the richest Indian stuffs: splendid Guddaloor dimities; handkerchiefs from Pulicat and Masulipatam; Dacca muslins—plain, striped and embroidered, and as transparent as daylight; baftas from Surat, exquisitely white; printed chintzes of every hue and the rarest kind, with sprigged grounds and green running patterns. They unrolled magnificent tissues of China silk, brocade stamped out into open work, damasks of sheeny white, grass green and dazzling red; rose-colored sareenet; rich satins; striped silks as soft as cloth; white and buff nankins; even loin-cloths from Madagascar.

Mme. de la Tour wished her daughter to buy whatever pleased her; she merely took note of the price and quality of the goods for fear the dealers should cheat her; Virginia chose every-
thing that she thought her mother might like, or Marguerite and her son: "This," said she, "is nice for furniture—that will be useful to Marie and Domingo."

At last the bag of piastres was empty before she had thought of her own needs. She was obliged to accept her share of the presents she had given the others.

A few days after this Paul came to see me, cut to the heart at the sight of all these gifts of fortune which boded Virginia's departure.

"My sister is going away," said he with deep dejection. "She has made every preparation for the voyage. Come and see us I entreat you; use all your influence over her mother and mine to persuade them to keep her." I yielded to his urgency, though fully convinced that my remonstrances would be of no effect.

If I had thought Virginia charming in her frock of blue Indian cotton with a red handkerchief round her head, it was quite another thing when I saw her dressed like the ladies of the colony. She wore a white muslin lined with pink
silk. Her slight tall figure was well set off by her bodice, and her fair hair, plaited in fine braids, was a charming setting to her girlish head. Her beautiful blue eyes were full of sadness; and her heart, throbbing with suppressed passion, lent brilliancy to her coloring and pathos to the tones of her voice. The very contrast of her elegant dress, which she seemed to wear in spite of herself, made her delicate appearance more touching. No one could have seen or heard her unmoved. All this added to Paul's despondency. Marguerite much distressed at her son's state of mind, took him aside and said to him:

"Why, my child, feed your heart on false hopes which must make your bereavement all the more bitter? It is time that I should reveal to you the secret of your life and of my own. — Mademoiselle de la Tour is related through her mother to a lady of wealth and high rank; as for you, you are the son of a poor peasant girl, and what is worse you are but a bastard."

The word bastard greatly surprised Paul; he
had never heard it till now. He asked his mother what it meant and she replied:

"You have no father who will own you. When I was a girl, love led me to commit a folly which resulted in your birth. Through my sin you have no relations on your father's side—through my penance you have none on your mother's. Wretched boy, you have no one on earth but me!" and she burst into tears.

Paul clasped her in his arms exclaiming: "Oh! dear mother; if I have no other relations in the world I can love you all the more. — But what a thing is this that you have told me! Now I see why Mademoiselle de la Tour has avoided me for two months past, and what had made her decide to-day on going away. No doubt she scorns me!"

At supper time they all sat down, each of the party stirred by different emotions, but they ate little and said nothing. Virginia was the first to leave the table; she came and sat down where we are now sitting. Paul soon followed her and
took a seat by her side. For some time they both were silent.

It was one of those exquisite nights so common in the tropics, of which no brush, however skilled, could represent the beauty. The moon seemed hung in the firmament, surrounded by a curtain of clouds which gradually dispersed before its beams; the light stole softly over the heights of the island and their peaks, which gleamed in a silvered green. The breezes held their breath. From the woods, from the depths of the ravines, from the tops of the crags, came little sounds—the low undertone of birds billing in their nests, gladdened by the glory of the night and the stillness of the air. The grass was full of whispering; the very insects were astir. The stars twinkled in the sky and were mirrored in the sea which repeated their quivering light.

Virginia's absent gaze ranged round its wide, dark expanse, distinguishable from the shore by the red lights of the fishing boats. At the mouth of the harbor she saw a light and a shadow: the beacon and the hull of the vessel in which she
was to embark for Europe. It was ready to sail and only riding at anchor till the calm should be over. She was overcome at the sight and turned away her head that Paul might not see her tears.

Mme. de la Tour and Marguerite were sitting with me at a short distance off under the bananas, and in the silence we could distinctly hear their conversation which I remember well.

Paul said to her:

"So you are leaving, Mademoiselle, in three days I am told. And you are not afraid of exposing yourself to the perils of the sea... the sea which frightens you so much."

"I must obey my relations and do my duty," replied Virginia.

"You are leaving us," Paul went on, "for a distant relation whom you have never even seen."

"Ah!" said Virginia, "I wish I could spend all my life here; my mother would not have it so. My confessor tells me that it is God's will that I should go—that life is a probation—oh! it is indeed a very hard one!"

"What," said Paul, "have you so many
reasons for going and not one to detain you here? — There are others which you do not mention! Wealth has great charms. In that new world you will soon find some one to whom you will give that name of brother which you no longer give to me. You will choose him — your new brother — from among men who are your equals by birth and fortune such as I cannot offer. — But where can you go to be happier? In what land will you find a spot dearer than the place of your birth? How will you be able to live without your mother's tenderness to which you are accustomed? Nay, what will become of her, already past middle age, when she no longer sees you by her side, at table — in the house — out walking, when she always leans on you? What will become of my mother, who loves you as much as your own does? What am I to say to either of them when I see them deploring your absence? Cruel girl! — I will not speak of myself; but how shall I bear it when I see you no more in the morning; when evening comes and we do not meet; when I look at the two palm-
trees planted at our birth and so long the witnesses of our affection for each other? — Since a new fate has come upon you and you must seek other countries than the land of your birth, and other possessions than the fruit of my labor, let me go with you on board the ship that carries you away. I will give your head rest on my breast, I will warm your heart against mine; and in France, where you are going in search of position and fortune, I will serve you as a slave. I shall be happy in your happiness—in the mansions where I can see you worshipped and obeyed I shall still be rich enough, of high enough rank to offer you the last sacrifice by dying at your feet.”

His voice was choked with sobs, and we then heard Virginia’s, though broken by sighs, as she said:

“But it is for your sake that I am going—for yours, seeing you bent down day by day by the toil of providing for two families. If I have lent myself to this opportunity of becoming rich, it is only to restore to you a thousand-fold all the
benefits you have done us. Can any fortune be worth as much as your regard? What is this you tell me of your birth? If I could ever really have a brother, whom should I choose but you? Oh Paul, oh Paul! you are far dearer to me than a brother. What has it not cost me to keep you at a distance! I wanted you to help me to guard me against myself till Heaven might bless our union. Now—I will stay or go, live or die: Do what you will with me. Wretched girl that I am! I could resist your caresses, I cannot endure your anguish!"

At these words Paul threw his arms round her, and clasping her closely he exclaimed in heartrending tones:

"I will go with her; nothing shall part us!"

We all hurried to him. Mme. de la Tour said:

"If you leave us, my son, what will become of us?"

"My son..." he repeated and his voice shook, "my son—What you, my mother!—you who part the sister and brother! You fed us both at your breast; nursed on your knees it
was from you that we learnt to love each other; we have told each other so a thousand times. And now you divide her from me! You are sending her to Europe—to that cruel country which refused you a home, and to hard-hearted relations who rejected you! You will tell me: 'You have no claims on her, she is not your sister.' — She is all in all to me, wealth, family, birth—all I have. I know no other possession. We have shared the same roof, the same cradle; we will share the same grave. If she goes, I must follow her. — The governor will hinder me? — Can he hinder me from throwing myself into the sea? I will swim to follow her. The sea cannot be more fatal to me than the earth. If I cannot live with her here, at any rate I can die before her eyes and away from you. Cruel mother, ruthless woman! May the waves to which you trust her never restore her to you! May the surges bring my body back to you and mangle it with hers amid the pebbles on this beach, leaving you to eternal sorrow for the loss of both your children!"
At this I seized him in my arms, for despair was turning his brain. His eyes sparkled, sweat was streaming in heavy drops down his burning face; his knees trembled and I could feel his heart throbbing wildly in his fevered breast.

Virginia, frightened, said: "Oh, my dear Paul! By all the joys of our infancy, by your griefs and my own, by all that ought to bind two hapless creatures for ever, I declare that if I stay I will live for you alone; if I go, that I will some day come back and be yours! I call you all to witness—you who have trained my childhood, who can dispose of my life, and who see my tears! I swear it by the Heaven that hears me, by the ocean I must cross, by the air I breathe and which I have never sullied by falsehood!"

The young man's impetuous rage melted at the voice of her he loved, as a mass of ice melts and falls before the sun on the heights of the Apennines; his haughty head fell and his eyes shed a torrent of tears. His mother mingled hers with his, and held him in her arms but could not speak.
Mme. de la Tour, quite beside herself, said:

"I can bear no more, my soul is distracted. This ill-starred voyage cannot take place. My good neighbor, try and persuade my son to go with you. No one here has slept for a week past."

So I said to Paul:

"My dear fellow, your sister will stay. We will talk it over to-morrow with the governor. Leave your family to rest, and come and spend the night at my house. It is late—it is midnight; the Southern Cross is upright over the horizon."

He allowed himself to be led away and said no more; after a restless night he rose at dawn and returned to his own plantation.

But of what use is it to go any further in my story? There can be but one pleasant side to be known of human life. Like the globe on which we are spun round, our swift course is but as a day; and if one part of that day is lighted up it is only because the other is sunk in darkness."

"Nay, Father," said I, "I entreat you to
finish the tale you have begun in so touching a manner. Pictures of happiness delight us, but pictures of misfortune are instructive. — Pray what became of the unhappy Paul?”

“The first object that he beheld on his return to the little settlement was Marie, the negress, standing on a high rock and gazing out to sea. He called out to her the moment he saw her from afar: ‘Where is Virginia?’ Marie looked round at her young master and began to cry. Paul, quite distracted, turned back and flew to the harbor. He there learnt that Virginia had embarked before daybreak, that the ship had immediately weighed anchor and was already out of sight. He came back to the plantation and went through it without saying a word to any one.

Though the cliffs which close us in look almost perpendicular, the grassy ledges which break their face are so many platforms reached by steep paths and leading up to the base of that cone of
inaccessible rock known as *Le Pouce* (the Thumb). At the foot of the crag is a plateau covered with large trees, but so high up and precipitous that it is like a forest in mid-air surrounded by frightful chasms. The clouds that gather round the summit of *Le Pouce* feed numerous streams which plunge so far below in the depths of the valley lying on the other side of the mountain, that the sound of their fall is inaudible from the top. From that spot the greater part of the island may be seen with its slopes crowned by peaks—among them those of Peter Booth and the *Trois-Mamelles*, and then wooded ravines; beyond them the open sea and the Isle of Bourbon, at a distance of forty leagues to the westward.

From this height Paul could descry the vessel which was bearing away Virginia. He saw it in the offing, ten leagues and more away, a black speck in the midst of the ocean. He remained there watching it great part of the day; when it had long vanished he still fancied that he saw it, and when it was lost in the haze on the horizon he sat down in that wild spot, incessantly beaten
by the winds which for ever toss the crowns of the palms and Tatamaca-trees. Their hollow murmurous raving sounds like distant organ-music, and encourages the deepest melancholy. There it was that I found Paul, his head leaning against a stone, his eyes fixed on the ground. I had been walking in search of him ever since sunrise; it was with great difficulty that I persuaded him to come down and meet the family. However, I brought him home to the plantation.

His first impulse on seeing Mme. de la Tour was to complain bitterly of her having deceived him. Mme. de la Tour told us that the wind having risen rather before three in the morning, and the ship getting under sail, the governor himself, with some members of his staff and the missionary priest, had come to fetch Virginia in a litter; in spite of her arguments and tears, to which Marguerite joined hers, every one had insisted that it was for the good of them all, and they had carried off her daughter more dead than alive.

"If I had at least taken leave of her," replied
Paul, "I should be easy now. I should have said to her: 'Virginia, if, in all the years we have lived together, a word has ever escaped me that could offend you, tell me that you forgive me before you leave me forever.' — I should have said: 'Since I am doomed never to see you again, farewell, my loved Virginia, farewell!'" — and seeing that his mother and Mme. de la Tour were both weeping, he went on: "Look to some one else now to wipe away your tears — not me!"

He turned away with a groan and went forth to wander hither and thither about the plantation.

He went to all the spots which had been dearest to Virginia; he said to the goats and little kids which followed him bleating: "What are you asking of me? Never again will you see with me her who fed you out of her hand!" He visited Virginia's Rest, and as he saw the birds flying round he exclaimed: "Poor birds, you will never more fly to meet her who was your kind foster-mother!" Seeing Fidèle smelling here and there and trotting before him searching as he
went, he sighed: "Oh, you will never find her again!" At last he sat down on the rock where they had been talking the evening before, and there, in sight of the sea where he had seen the ship vanish that bore her from him, he wept freely.

We meanwhile had followed him step by step, fearing some fatal consequences of such disturbance of mind. His mother and Mme. de la Tour implored him in the tenderest terms not to increase their grief by his despondency. At length Mme. de la Tour succeeded in quieting him by lavishing on him such names as might best revive his hopes. She called him her son, her dear son, her son-in-law, her daughter's intended husband. She persuaded him to go in-doors and to take a little food. He sat down to table with us next the place which the companion of his childhood had always filled; he spoke to her as though she still were present, offering her the dishes which he knew she preferred; then, remembering his mistake, he burst into tears.

He spent the following days in collecting all
that had been especially hers—the last flowers she had worn, a coco-nut-shell cup from which she was wont to drink; and he would kiss these relics of his lost friend as though they were the most precious treasures in the world, and carry them in his bosom. Amber itself has not so sweet a fragrance as the things that have been touched by one we love. At last, seeing that his distress increased that of his mother and Mme. de la Tour, and that the needs of the family required constant toil, he set to work with Domingo to restore order in the garden.

Ere long Paul, though he was as indifferent as all Creoles are to what was going on in the world, begged me to teach him to read and write, in order that he might correspond with Virginia. Next he would learn geography to form an idea of the land where she would disembark, and history to know something of the manners of the society she would live in. In the same way he had previously studied agriculture and made an art of arranging the most rugged ground to the best advantage, prompted by love. Mankind
owes, no doubt, most of the arts and sciences to the joy which that ardent and restless passion hopes to derive from them; while philosophy, which teaches us to make the best of everything, is the offspring of its suffering. Hence Nature, by making love the bond that links all creatures, has made it the first cause of our social instincts and the incentive to both learning and enjoyment.

Paul did not take much delight in the study of geography which, instead of describing the character of different countries, merely lays down their political delimitations. History, and above all modern history, did not interest him much more. He saw nothing in it but wide and periodic disasters of which he could not trace the causes; wars without reason or object; obscure intrigues; nations devoid of character, and princes devoid of humanity. He much preferred to read romances; their closer study of human feeling and interest sometimes represented circumstances resembling his own. Thus no book gave him greater pleasure than "Telemachus" with its pic-
tures of rural life and of the natural passions of the heart. He would read aloud to his mother and Mme. de la Tour all the passages which most strongly affected him; moved by pathetic memories, his voice would break and tears stream from his eyes. He fancied he had seen Antiope's dignity and wisdom united in Virginia to the woes and tenderness of Eucharis. On the other hand, he was utterly upset by reading our fashionable romances full of licentious scenes and principles; and when he was told that these tales contained a true picture of European society, he dreaded—not without some semblance of reason—lest Virginia should be corrupted by it and forget him.

In fact more than a year and a half elapsed and Mme. de la Tour had had no news of her aunt or her daughter; but she had heard through a third person that Virginia had reached France in safety. At last a vessel bound for the Indies brought her a parcel and a letter written by Virginia's own hand. Notwithstanding the caution exercised by the sweet and forgiving
young girl her mother inferred that she was very unhappy. This letter gave such a clear idea of her position and of her character that I have remembered it almost word for word.

"Dearest and much-loved Mamma:

I have already written you several letters in my own writing, and as I have had no answer I have reason to fear that they have never reached you. I hope for better luck with this one, as I have taken great precautions to send you news of me and receive news of you.

I have shed many tears since we parted—I, who had hardly ever shed one before, but for the sorrows of others! My great aunt was much surprised on my arrival when, in answer to questions as to my accomplishments, I told her I could neither read nor write. She asked me what then I had learnt in all the years since I came into the world, and when I said I had been taught to take charge of a house and to do as you bid me, she said I had been brought up like a servant. She placed me the very next day at
school, at a great abbey convent near Paris, where I have all kinds of masters; they teach me among other things history, geography, mathematics and to ride on horseback; but I have so little taste for all these branches of learning that I shall not gain much from these gentlemen. I feel that I am indeed but a poor creature with very little talent, as they understand it. However, my aunt's kindness grows none the colder. She gives me new dresses at every change of season, and has appointed two maids to wait upon me, each as well dressed as a fine lady. She has made me take the title of Countess; but she has also made me give up my name of la Tour, which was as dear to me as it is to you, by reason of all you have told me of what my father went through in order to marry you. She has given me instead the name of your family—which is dear to me too, however, as it was your maiden name.

Finding myself in so splendid a position I implored her to send you some help. How can I repeat her answer? — But you bid me always to
tell you the truth. Well, she told me that a small sum would be of no use to you, and that living such a simple life as you do, a large sum would only be a trouble to you.

At first I thought of sending you news of me by a stranger's writing, failing my own. But, as on my arrival I had no one I could trust, I set to work night and day to learn to read and write. By God's help I succeeded in a short time. I entrusted my first letters to the ladies I live with; I have reason to believe that they handed them over to my aunt. This time I have had recourse to a school-fellow who befriends me, and I beg you will send your answers under cover to her address, which I here give you. My great aunt has forbidden my corresponding with any one, as she says it might prove an obstacle to the great schemes she has in view for me. I am not allowed to see any one at the parlor grating but her, and an old gentleman, a friend of hers, who has, she says a particular fancy for me. To tell the truth I have none for him, even if I could have a liking for any one.
I live in all the splendor of wealth and I have not a sou to spend. They tell me that if I had money I might get into mischief. Even my dresses belong to my maids who quarrel for them before I have done with them. In the midst of riches I am much poorer than I was with you, for I have nothing to give away. When I saw that all the clever things they taught me did not help me to do the smallest kindness, I took to my needle, of which, happily, you taught me the use. So I am sending you several pairs of stockings which I have made—some for you and some for Mother Marguerite; a cap for Domingo, and one of my red kerchiefs for Marie. I have also put into the parcel some seeds and kernels of the fruits I have had to eat, and those of various kinds of trees which I have picked up in the abbey grounds in my play hours. To these I have added the seeds of violets, daisies, poppies, cornflowers, and scabious, gathered in the fields. There are lovelier flowers in the meadows here than in ours, but no one cares for them. I am sure that you and Mother Marguerite will be
better pleased with this bag of seeds than you were with the sack of piastres which was the cause of our parting and of my tears. It will be a great delight to me if one day you have the satisfaction of seeing apple-trees growing by the side of our bananas, and beeches mingling their leaves with those of the coco-palms. You will be able to fancy yourself in Normandy which you love so well.

You charged me to let you know all my joys and sorrows. I have no joys now that I am away from you; as to my sorrows—I make the best of them by reflecting that I am in the place where by God's will, you have set me. But my greatest grief is that no one here ever speaks to me of you, and that there is no one I can talk to about you. My maids—or rather my great-aunt's, for they are hers rather than mine—when I try to turn the conversation on the matters dearest to me say: 'Mademoiselle, pray remember that you are a French woman and that you ought to forget that island of savages.' — Ah! I am more likely to forget my own existence than
to forget the place of my birth — the place where you live! It is this country that is to me a land of savages; for I live alone since I have no one to whom I can speak of my love for you which I shall carry to the grave.

Dearest and best-beloved Mamma,

Your dutiful and loving daughter,

**Virginia de la Tour.**

Be very kind for my sake to Domingo and Marie who took such care of me when I was a child; and pat good Fidèle for me, for finding me in the forest."

Paul was much surprised at finding that Virginia made no mention of him, though in her remembrances she had not overlooked even the house-dog, but he did not know that, however long a woman's letter may be, she never puts her dearest thought till the end.

In a postscript Virginia specially commended to Paul's care two kinds of seeds: those of the violet and of the scabious. She gave him some
information as to the nature of the plants and the suitable spots to sow them in.

"The violet," she wrote, "has a small dark purple flower, and loves to hide under shrubs, but its delicious perfume soon leads to its discovery." She desired him to sow it on the bank by the spring, at the foot of his coco-palm. "The scabious," she went on to say, "bears a pretty flower of pale dull blue with a darker base and speckled with white. You would fancy it was in mourning. Indeed it is called Widow's flower for that very reason. It prefers an exposed situation, blown upon by the winds." She begged him to sow this on the rock where she had talked to him that night for the last time, and to call the spot, in remembrance of her, "The Rock of Parting."

She enclosed these seeds in a little purse of very simple make; but to Paul it seemed priceless, for he saw worked on it a P and a V interlaced, in hair which he recognized as Virginia's by its beautiful color.

This letter from the warm-hearted and virtuous girl moved all the family to tears. Her
mother's answer was to desire, in the name of all the party, that she would stay or return as she preferred, assuring her that they had all lost the best part of their happiness since her departure, and that she, for her part, was inconsolable.

Paul wrote a very long letter, assuring her that he would make the garden worthy of her, mingling the plants of Europe with those of Africa, as she had interlaced his name with hers in her work. He sent her some nuts from the coco-palms by the pool which were now in full bearing. He would not, he said, add the seeds of any other product of the island, in order that her wish to see them once more should induce her to return very soon. He entreated her to yield without delay to their earnest desires, above all to his, since he could never henceforth have any joy in her absence.

Paul sowed the European seeds with the greatest care especially those of the violet and scabious, for their flowers seemed to have some resemblance to Virginia's nature and circumstances, and she had recommended them to his
particular attention; but whether it was that they had lost their virtue during the voyage, or, more probably, that the climate of this part of Africa is unfavorable to them, but very few germinated and those failed to come to perfection.

Meanwhile envy, which can even outstrip good fortune, especially in our French colonies, gave rise to rumors in the island which made Paul very uneasy. The persons on board the ship by which the letter had come announced that Virginia was on the eve of marriage; they mentioned the name of a gentleman at Court who was to be her husband; some even said that it was an accomplished fact and that they had been present. At first Paul scorned this report coming as it did from a trading vessel; for these ships often spread false intelligence in the ports where they touch. But when several of the settlers hastened, with treacherous pity, to condole with him he began to believe in it. In some of the romances, too, which he had been reading he had found such faithlessness treated as a joke, and knowing that those books contained a fairly true
picture of European life and manners, he feared that Mme. de la Tour's daughter might indeed have been corrupted and have forgotten her old pledge. Enlightenment had already brought him sorrow. To crown his anxiety, several ships arrived from Europe within the next six months and not one brought any news from Virginia.

The hapless lad, a prey to all the torments of his heart, often paid me a visit to gain confirmation or disproof of his fears from my experience of the world.

I live, as I told you, at a league and a half from hence on the banks of a little river that flows by Long Mountain. I spend my life in solitude, having neither wife, children nor slaves.

Next to the rare happiness of finding a wife with whom he is well mated a man's least wretched lot in life is, beyond a doubt, to live alone. Every man who has had much cause to complain of his fellow-men seeks solitude. Indeed, it is very remarkable that in all those nations which have suffered most through their creeds, their customs, or their government, nu-
merous classes have arisen of men wholly devoted to seclusion and celibacy. This was the case among the Egyptians in their decadence, and the Greeks of the lower Empire; and it is the same, to this day, among the Hindoos, the Chinese, the modern Greeks, the Italians,* indeed most nations of the East and of Southern Europe. Solitude restores a man in some degree to natural happiness by cutting him off from social wretchedness. In the midst of our communities, torn by such various prejudices, the spirit of man is in a state of constant disquiet; it turns over and over again the hundreds of restless and contradictory ideas by which the members of a society full of ambitions and miseries strive to coerce each other. In solitude it can cast off these disturbing and intrusive phantoms; it reverts to the simple apprehension of Itself, of Nature, and of the Creator. Thus the waters of a turbid and devastating torrent when they are diverted into some little hollow outside their channel, after the mud has settled grow clear again, and reflect not only the banks of the

*Paul and Virginia was written in 1788.
pool but the verdure of the earth and the radiance of the sky.

And solitude restores the harmony of the body as well as that of the mind. It is among recluses that we meet with the men who carry on life to its longest span; for instance the Brahmins of Hindostan. In fact, I believe it to be so necessary to happiness even in the midst of the world, that to me it seems impossible to derive permanent enjoyment from any feeling be it what it may, or to regulate our conduct on any lasting basis, unless we create for ourselves a solitude within, from whence our own thought rarely issues and into which the thoughts of others never enter.

I by no means wish to say that a man should live quite apart: as he is bound to mankind at large by his many needs, he owes them his labor. He owes himself, too, to the rest of nature. But while God has bestowed on each of us organs which are perfectly fitted to the elements of the world in which we live—feet for the earth, lungs for the air, eyes for the light—senses of which
we cannot alter the use—he has reserved for Himself, the Giver of life, its most vital organ: the heart.

So I spend my life far from mankind, whom I only wished to serve and who persecuted me. After travelling all over a large part of Europe and some quarters of America and Africa, I settled here, tempted by the delightful climate and vast wildnesses of this sparsely inhabited island. A hut built by myself at the foot of a tree in the forest, a little plot cleared by my own hands, a stream flowing past my door—these satisfy my needs and supply my pleasures. To these enjoyments I add that of a few good books which teach me to grow better. Through them I extract some delight even from the world I have abandoned; they show me pictures of the passions which make those who dwell in it so miserable, and the comparisons I draw between their lot and my own give me negative happiness. Like a man who has escaped from shipwreck to a rock, I look forth from my solitude on the storms which rack the rest of the world, and my peace is the
greater for the distant roar of the tempest. Since men have ceased to come in my way and I in theirs, I no longer hate them: I pity them. When I meet some unfortunate creature I try to help him by my advice, as a man walking by the side of a torrent holds out his hand to a drowning wretch. But I find that innocence alone ever heeds my voice.

It is in vain that Nature invites other men; each one has made to himself an image of Nature dressed up in his own passions. He spends his whole life in the pursuit of this vain, misleading phantom, and then complains to Heaven of the delusion he has created for himself. Out of a great number of unhappy souls that I have tried, from time to time, to bring home to Nature I have never found one that was not fascinated by its own misery. They listened attentively to begin with, hoping that I could help them to win fame or fortune, but finding that I only aimed at teaching them to do without these, they regarded me with contempt for not running after their miserable happiness; they blamed my lonely life;
they asserted that they alone were useful to mankind, and struggled to drag me into their whirlpool. But though I have something to give to all, I surrender to none.

I often find that I myself am all I need to point the moral to my own soul. In the calm of my present life I recall the turmoil of my past experience—the excitements I valued so highly: patronage, fortune, reputation, sensual delights, and the various opinions which strive for the mastery all the world over. I compare the many men, whom I have seen fighting madly for these chimeras and who are now no more, to the waters of my stream, which break and boil over the stones in its bed, and so vanish never to return. For my part I let myself be carried peacefully down the tide of time to the shoreless ocean of futurity; and as I watch the display of Nature's harmonies I look up to its Creator and hope for a brighter lot in another world.

From my hermitage in the heart of a forest I do not see, it is true, the multiplicity of objects which are visible from the high ground where we
now are sitting; but there are, even there, many interesting details, especially to a man like me who prefers being thrown back on himself to expanding outwardly. The stream which passes my door flows in a straight line through the woods, in such a way as to afford me a view of a long canal shaded by trees of every variety of foliage — Tatamacas, Ebony-trees, and others known here as bois de pomme, bois d'olive and bois de canelle. * At intervals groups of cabbage-palms throw up their naked columns to a height of more than a hundred feet, bearing at the top a tuft of feathery leaves, and towering above the other trees like a forest growing over another forest. Besides these there are creepers with various leaves twining from tree to tree and forming arcades of flowers or long hangings of greenery. Most of these plants give out aromatic scents, their fragrance being so strong as to affect even a man's clothes, so that he smells of the forest for

* These have no English names. French names of plants and places are still in use in the island of Mauritius which was colonized by the French early in the eighteenth century and ceded to England in 1810. — Bois d'olive is Elaeodendron orientale; Bois de canelle Mespilodaphne Meissu.
some hours after having passed through it. In the blossoming season you could fancy they were half covered with snow.

At the end of the summer several kinds of foreign birds are led by some inscrutable instinct, from unknown regions beyond the vast seas, to feed on the seeds of the vegetation of this island, and the splendor of their coloring contrasts with the sun-burnt foliage of the trees. Such, among others, are various species of parrots, and the blue pigeons known here as *Pigeons Hollandais* (Dutch pigeons). Monkeys, who are at home in these woods, play among the gloomy boughs, in which they are conspicuous by their grey and greenish fur and perfectly black faces; some hang by their tails, swinging in the air; others leap from branch to branch carrying their young in their arms. No murderous gun has ever scared these peaceful children of nature. Not a sound is to be heard but cries of satisfaction, or the soft chattering and unfamiliar warbling of the birds of southern climes mocked by the distant echoes of the woods. The stream, which chafes over a
stony bed under the trees, every here and there mirrors in still waters their reverend masses of verdure and shade, and the sports of their happy inmates. At about a thousand paces away it tumbles down several steps of rock, forming ere it falls a sheet of water as clear as crystal which breaks into wreaths of foam. A thousand mingling noises rise from this tumult of waters; wafted through the forest by the winds they are sometimes borne away and then again sound out all together, as deafening as cathedral bells. The air being perpetually renewed by the rush of water keeps up, in spite of the summer heat, a coolness and freshness of verdure on the river bank, which are rare in the island, even on the mountain heights.

At some little distance there is a rock, far enough from the waterfall for the noise of the waters not to be quite bewildering but yet near enough to allow of one’s enjoying the view, the coolness and the murmur. In the hottest days we sometimes went to dine in the shade of that rock — Mme. de la Tour, Marguerite, Virginia, Paul
and I. As Virginia always aimed at the good of others, even in her simplest acts, she never eat a fruit out in the wild without sowing the stones or seeds. "They will grow into trees," she would say, "which will yield their fruit for some traveller, or at any rate for some bird." So one day when she had eaten a papaw fruit at the foot of the rock I spoke of, she put the seeds into the ground. Soon after several papaw-plants came up and among them one female or fruit-bearing tree. It was not so high as Virginia's knees when she went away, but as it grows quickly by two years later it was twenty feet high and the upper part of the trunk was hung round with ripe fruits in many rows. Paul, coming to the spot by chance, was filled with joy at finding so large a tree grown from the little seed he had seen his beloved sow; at the same time he was deeply saddened by this evidence of her long absence. The objects we always have about us do not lead us to note the swiftness of life; they grow old with us, ageing imperceptibly; it is those we see again unexpectedly after having lost sight of them for
some years which warn us of the haste that marks the ebbing current of our days. Paul was astonished and distressed at the sight of the tall papaw-tree loaded with fruit, as a traveller is who, on his return to his native land after long absence, no longer finds his own contemporaries, and sees their children, whom he had left mere infants, now in their turn fathers of families. At first he wished to cut it down because it too keenly reminded him of the length of time that had elapsed since Virginia had left; then, regarding it as a monument of her kind-heartedness, he kissed the trunk and appealed to it in words of passion and regret. — Ah! Tree — whose progeny still live in the wood — I myself have gazed at you with deeper interest and reverence than the triumphal arches of the Romans! May Nature, which every day destroys some memorial of the ambition of kings, multiply in these forests the memorials of a penniless young girl’s benevolence.

Whenever Paul came to my part of the island I was sure to meet him at the foot of that papaw-tree. I found him there one day crushed by grief,
and we had a conversation which I will repeat to you, if you do not find me too wearisome with my long digressions—pardonable at my age and as a tribute to my latest friendships. I will give it you in the form of a dialogue so that you may have an idea of the young fellow's natural good sense; you will have no difficulty in distinguishing the speakers by the bearing of his questions and my replies.

He said:

"I am greatly troubled. Mlle. de la Tour has been gone two years and two months, and for the past eight months and a half we have heard nothing of her. She is rich, I am poor: she has forgotten me. — I am thinking of going on board ship: I will go to France and serve the King and make a fortune; Mademoiselle de la Tour's aunt will allow me to marry her grand-niece when I have made myself a person of importance."

THE OLD MAN.

"But my dear friend, did not you yourself tell me that you were of no birth?"
PAUL.

"So my mother has told me. For my own part I do not know what birth means. I never perceived that I had less birth than any other man or that others had more than I."

THE OLD MAN.

"Lacking birth, the road to high employment is closed against you in France. Nay more: you cannot gain admission into any association of gentlemen."

PAUL.

"You have often told me that one cause of the Greatness of France is the fact that the humblest citizen may rise to the highest rank, and you have named several celebrated men who have started from the lowest and done honor to their country. Did you only mean to cheat my ardor?"

THE OLD MAN.

"Nay, my son, I will never damp it. I told you the truth as concerning the past; but things have now greatly changed. Everything in France
has become sordid; everything now-a-days is the heritage of a small number of families or the privilege of a party. The king is a sun round which those parties stand like clouds; it is almost impossible that a ray should ever fall on you. Formerly, under a less complicated system, such phenomena have indeed been seen. Then talent and merit were evolved on every side, as in virgin soils, but lately cleared, all the juices tend to productiveness. But great kings, who really know and can choose men, are rare. The common run of kings only move under the impulsion of the nobles and the parties who hedge them round.”

PAUL.

“But might I not find a patron in one of those nobles?”

THE OLD MAN.

“To be patronized by the great you must minister to their ambitions or their pleasures. In this you will never succeed, for you are of no birth and you are honest.”
PAUL.

"But I will do such brave acts, I will be so true to my word, so punctual in my duties, so ardent and constant in my friendships that I shall deserve to be adopted by some great man, as I have read of in the Ancient Histories you have given me to read."

THE OLD MAN.

"Oh, my dear fellow! Among the Greeks and Romans, even in their decline, great men still respected virtue; but though we have had a multitude of celebrated men in every walk of life who have risen from the populace, I do not know of one who was adopted by a noble house. But for our kings, virtue would, in France, be condemned to be eternally plebeian. They, as I have said, sometimes give it a place of honor if they happen to discern it; but now-a-days the dignities which once were the prize of virtue are only to be had for money."

PAUL.

"Well, if I cannot find a patron I will try to
find favor with a party. I will adopt its spirit and its opinions; I will make myself liked."

THE OLD MAN.

"You will do as all men do — renounce your conscience to attain fortune?"

PAUL.

"Oh, no, I will never seek anything but the truth."

THE OLD MAN.

"Instead of making yourself liked you are more likely to be hated. Besides, parties trouble themselves very little about discovering the truth. All opinions are alike to the ambitious so long as they rule."

PAUL.

"How unlucky I am. Everything is against me. I am doomed to spend my life in obscure toil, far from Virginia!" And he sighed deeply.

THE OLD MAN.

"Let God be your only patron and all mankind your party. Be faithful in your attachment to both. — Families, parties, nations, kings, all
have their prejudices and their passions; vice is often required to serve them. God and mankind need virtue only.

"But why should you wish to be distinguished above others? It is an unnatural sentiment, since, if all shared it, every man would be at war with his neighbor. Be satisfied to do your duty in the state in which Providence has placed you; bless your lot which allows you to have a conscience of your own and does not compel you either to find your happiness, as great men must, in the opinions of those beneath you, or to crawl, as small men must, at the feet of the great for a bare living. You are in a country, and in a position in which you need not be false in order to live, nor flatter, nor debase yourself, as most men do who seek their fortune in Europe, and in which your circumstances do not prohibit any virtue. You may be kind, truthful, sincere, learned, patient, temperate, chaste, forgiving and pious with impunity, free from all fear lest ridicule should nip your wisdom, at present only in flower. Heaven has granted you liberty, health,
a good conscience and friends. The kings, whose favor you are so ambitious to win, are not so happy."

PAUL.

"Ah! But I want Virginia! Without her I have nothing; with her I should have everything. She, to me, is birth, glory and fortune. But since her relation wishes her to marry a man of great reputation, and study and books make us learned and famous, I will go and study. I will become learned, I will make my enlightenment of use to my country without injuring any one and without depending on others. I will be famous, and my glory will be all my own."

THE OLD MAN.

"My son, learning is even rarer than birth and wealth; and it is no doubt, a greater possession, since nothing can deprive us of it, and wherever we go it conciliates the regard of the public. But it costs us dear. It is only to be acquired through privations of every kind, and a tender sensitiveness which makes us sad at heart
and brings us suffering through the persecution of the men of our time. In France the lawyer does not envy the soldier his glory, nor the soldier that of the sailor; but every one will stand in your path because every one fancies he has parts. You will minister to mankind, do you say? But the man who makes the earth produce a sheaf of corn the more, does them a greater service than he who gives them a book."

PAUL.

"Oh! she who planted this papaw-tree made a more useful and delightful present to the natives of this forest than if she had given them a library!"

And he clasped the tree in his arms and kissed it passionately.

THE OLD MAN.

"The best of books, which preaches only equality, love, humanity, and peace—the Gospel—was for centuries the pretext for the vindictiveness of European nations. And how much tyranny, public and private, is still exerted in its name on the earth. After that who can flatter
himself that he may do mankind any good by means of a book?

"Remember the fate of most of the philosophers who have preached wisdom: Homer, who clothed it in such fine language, begged his living; Socrates, who gave the Athenians so beautiful a lesson by his life and teaching, was judicially poisoned by them; his sublime disciple Plato was cast into slavery by the order of the prince who patronized him; and before any of these, Pythagoras, who extended humanity even to the brute creation, was burnt alive by the inhabitants of Crotona. Nay, what am I saying? Most of these famous names have come down to us with some disfiguring touches of characteristic satire by which human ingratitude takes pleasure in recognizing them; and if, out of the crowd, the fair fame of some few has come to us pure and unspotted, it is that of men who lived apart from their contemporaries: as the statues which are found uninjured in the fields of Greece and Italy have escaped the fury of barbarians only by being buried under ground."
“Thus, you see, to gain the stormy eminence of literary glory a man needs much virtue and must be ready to give up his own life. Even then, do you imagine that rich people in France value that kind of fame? Much they care for men of letters, to whom knowledge brings neither national dignities, nor power, nor a footing at Court! There is little persecution in this age of indifference to everything but fortune and sensuality; but learning and virtue lead to no distinction because everything in the State is the prize of wealth. Of old they found an assured reward in various functions in the Church, the Law or the Administration; now their only use is to fill books. But this result, little as it is valued by men of the world, is always worthy of its heavenly origin. Indeed, it is the special function of these books to shed light on humble virtue, to comfort the sorrowful, to enlighten the nations, and to tell the truth even to kings. This is, beyond a doubt, the most august function which Heaven can grant to a mortal on earth. Where is the man who is not consoled for the injustice or contempt
of those who administer the gifts of fortune when he reflects that his work will live on from age to age, from nation to nation, serving as a barrier to error and tyranny; that out of the obscurity in which he has lived a glory will arise to outshine that of most kings, whose monuments are lost in oblivion in spite of the flatterers who erect them and boast of them?"

PAUL.

"Ah! I crave such glory only to shed it round Virginia and make her dear to the whole world. — But you who know so much, tell me: Shall we ever be married? — I should like to be wise enough at least to read the future."

THE OLD MAN.

"Who would care to live, my son, if he knew the future? A single trouble that we foresee gives us so much vain anxiety! The foreknowledge of certain grief would poison all the days beforehand. It is not well even to seek too closely into what lies around us, and Heaven, which gave us forethought to provide against our
needs, also gave us our needs to set a limit to our forethought."

**PAUL.**

"Money, you say, will procure dignities and honors in Europe. I will go to Bengal and gather wealth to go and marry Virginia in Paris. I will set out at once."

**THE OLD MAN.**

"What, you will leave her mother and your own?"

**PAUL.**

"You yourself advised me to make a voyage to India."

**THE OLD MAN.**

"Virginia was here then. But you are now the only helpmate and comfort of her mother and yours."

**PAUL.**

"Virginia will help them through her rich relation."

**THE OLD MAN.**

"The rich hardly ever help those who are not a credit to them in the eyes of the world. They
often have relations who are much more to be pitied than Mme. de la Tour, since, when such help fails them, they sacrifice their freedom for bread and spend their lives shut up in convents."

PAUL.

"What a place is Europe! Oh! Virginia must come back here. What does she want with a wealthy aunt? She was so happy in these huts, so pretty and so sweetly dressed with a red kerchief on her head or a garland of flowers! — Come back, Virginia! Leave your mansions and your splendors; come back to these rocks, to the shade of these trees and of our coco-palms. — Alas! and perhaps at this moment you are wretched!...." And he burst into tears. "Father, hide nothing from me; if you cannot tell me whether I shall marry Virginia, tell me at least whether she still loves me in the midst of those fine gentlemen who may speak with the king and who go to see her?"

THE OLD MAN.

"My dear boy, I am sure that she loves you
for many reasons, but chiefly because she is virtuous.” And at these words he threw his arms round my neck, beside himself with joy.

PAUL.

“But do you believe that European woman are as false as they are represented in the plays and books you lend me?”

THE OLD MAN.

“Women are false in countries where men are tyrants. Violence always leads to fraud.”

PAUL.

“How can women be tyrannized over?”

THE OLD MAN.

“By making them marry without consulting their wishes: a young girl to an old man, a woman of feeling to a man without any.”

PAUL.

“Why not let those marry who suit each other; the young marrying the young, the lovers those whom they love?”

THE OLD MAN.

“Most young people in France have not fortune enough to marry on and only come into it
as they grow old. While young they corrupt their neighbors' wives; when old they cannot retain the affection of their own wives. This is an instance of the retribution of that universal Justice which rules the world. One excess is always balanced by another. So the greater number of Europeans spend their lives in this two-fold confusion, and the confusion increases in a community in proportion as wealth accumulates in a smaller number of hands. The State is like a garden, where small trees cannot grow if there are too many tall ones to overshadow them; but there is this difference: the beauty of a garden may be derived from a small number of large trees, while the well-being of a State always depends on the multitude and equality of its subjects, and not on a small number of rich owners."

PAUL.

"But why must a man be rich in order to marry?"

THE OLD MAN.

"That he may spend his days in ease without having to do anything."
PAUL.

"But why not work? I work hard enough."

THE OLD MAN.

"In Europe manual labor is thought degrading. It is called mechanical work. The task of tilling the ground is the most looked down upon of all. An artisan is much more highly thought of than a peasant."

PAUL.

"What! the art by which men are fed is scorned in Europe? I do not understand you."

THE OLD MAN.

"It is impossible that a man brought up with nature should understand the depravity of society. He may form an exact idea of order but not of disorder; beauty, virtue, happiness have due proportions—ugliness, vice and misery have none."

PAUL.

"Then rich people are very happy. There are no obstacles in their way, and they can load those whom they love with pleasures."

THE OLD MAN.

"They generally find all pleasures stale for
the very reason that they cost them no effort. Is it not your experience that the pleasure of rest is bought by fatigue; that of eating by hunger; that of drinking by thirst? Well, and that of loving and being loved is only to be learnt through much self-denial and sacrifice. Riches deprive the rich of all those pleasures by preventing all their needs. Add to this the weariness which follows satiety, the pride which comes of wealth and which is offended by the smallest privation even when the greatest luxury can no longer soothe it. The fragrance of a thousand roses charms them but for a moment; the pain of a single thorn lasts long after the prick is over. One pain amid pleasures is, to a rich man, a thorn among flowers; to a poor man, on the other hand, one pleasure amid suffering is a flower among thorns; they enjoy it keenly. Every effect is heightened by contrast; Nature has balanced everything.

"Which lot, on the whole, seems to you the preferable: to have nothing to hope and everything to fear, or almost nothing to fear and every-
thing to hope? — The first is the lot of the wealthy, the second is that of the poor. Still, these two extremes are equally hard to bear; men's happiness lies in a golden mean and in virtue."

PAUL.

“What, exactly, do you mean by virtue?”

THE OLD MAN.

“My son, you who maintain those dear to you by your labor need no definition of the word. Virtue is the control we exert over ourselves for the good of others, with no motive but that of pleasing God alone.”

PAUL.

“Then how virtuous must Virginia be! It was virtue that made her wish to be rich that she might do good. It was virtue that led her to quit the island; virtue will bring her back again!”

The thought of her returning soon fired the lad's imagination and all his anxieties vanished. Virginia had not written because she was on her way. With a favoring wind it took such a short
time to come from Europe! — He counted over the ships which had made the voyage of four thousand five hundred leagues in less than three months. The ship in which she had sailed would not take more than two: shipbuilders were so able now-a-days, and mariners so skilful! He spoke of the arrangements to be made for receiving her, of the new cabin he would build, of the delights and surprises he would contrive for her every day when she should be his wife. — His wife! — The thought was rapture.

"You, Father, at any rate," he would say, "will never do anything more but to please yourself. As Virginia is rich we shall have plenty of negroes who will work for you. You will constantly be with us and have no other care than to amuse yourself and be happy. And away he would go in the highest spirits, to impart to the family the joy that was turning his brain.

Ere long, however, great fears tread on the heels of great hopes. Violent passions always drive the soul to opposite extremes. Paul often would come back the very next day overwhelmed
with dejection: "Virginia does not write," he would say. "If she had started from Europe she must have written to tell me so. Oh! the reports that have reached us are only too well-founded. Her aunt has made her marry some great lord! The love of money has ruined her as it has so many others. In those books which paint woman so well virtue is only a theme for romance. If Virginia had been really virtuous she would never have gone from her mother and me. While I spend my life in thinking of her she forgets me. I am wretched, and she is amusing herself! The thought drives me to desperation! — All toil is weariness, all society palls upon me. Would to God war might break out in India; I would fly to die there!"

"My son," replied I, "the courage that drives us to death is but for a moment; it is often stirred up in us by the vain applause of men. There is a rarer courage and far more needful, which enables us to endure, day by day, without eye-witnesses and without praise, all the crosses of life: that is Patience. It is founded, not on
the opinions of others or the promptings of our passions, but on the will of God. Patience is the courage of virtue."

"Ah!" cried he, "then I have no virtue! Everything crushes me and maddens me."

"Virtue," I went on, "equable, steadfast, and unfailing is not given to man. In the midst of all the passions that distract us our reason waxes doubtful and dark; still, there is a beacon-fire at which we can relight its torch: that is literature. Literature, my son, is a help from Heaven. It is a beam from the Wisdom which rules the universe, and man, inspired by celestial art, has caught it and chained it to earth. Like the sunbeams it gives light, gladness and warmth; it is a divine fire. Like fire itself it fits all nature for our use. By its means we gather round us all things and places, all men and all times. It keeps us in mind of the laws of human life; it calms our passions, checks our vices, incites us to virtue by the noble example of the worthies it has made famous and whose honored pictures it constantly sets before us. It is a daughter of the
skies come down on earth to charm the woes of mankind.

"And the great writers whom it has inspired have always arisen in days that were hardest to bear in every community: those of barbarism and those of decadence. Letters have been the consolation of numberless men far more wretched than you, my son: of Xenophon, an exile from his native land after having brought home ten thousand Greeks; of Scipio Africanus, weary of the calumnies of the Romans; of Lucullus, disgusted by their factions; of Catinat, loathing the ingratitude of a Court. The ingenious Greeks assigned a particular function of our intelligence to be governed by each of the Muses presiding over letters; so we ought to give them our passions to rule that they may hold them as with a yoke and bridle. Their office with regard to our powers of soul should be the same as those of the Hours who harnessed and led the horses of the Sun.

"Read, my son. — The wise men who have gone before us are as travellers leading the way
along the paths of sorrow, who hold out their hands to us inviting us to join their band when all else has deserted us. A good book is a good friend."

"Ah!" cried Paul, "I did not need to know how to read when Virginia was here. She had learnt no more than I, but when she looked at me and called me her friend, I could not possibly feel any sorrow."

"To be sure," said I, "no friend is so delightful as the mistress who loves us; besides, there is in woman an easy gaiety which drives away the depression of men. Her charms expel the dark phantoms of thought. Her face is full of sweet attractions and trustfulness. What pleasure is not the keener for her enjoyment of it? What brow fails to clear before her smile? What wrath can withstand her tears? — Virginia will bring back with her more philosophy than you have. She will be greatly surprised not to find the garden wholly restored — she whose one thought is to beautify it, in spite of her aunt's restrictions, now that she is far from her mother and from you."
The thought of Virginia’s early return again revived Paul’s spirit and led him back to his rural toil, happy in the midst of his grief to look forward to an end which humored his passion.

One morning— it was the 24th of December, 1744— Paul, rising at daybreak, saw a white flag flying from the Look-out. This was the signal that a vessel was in sight in the offing. Paul flew to the town to find out whether it brought any news of Virginia. He waited there till the pilot should return, who, according to custom, had gone out to reconnoitre. The pilot did not get back till evening. He reported that the vessel was the Saint Géran, of 700 tons, commanded by a Captain Aubin; that it was four leagues away and would not cast anchor till the following afternoon, even if the wind were favorable. At the time there was a dead calm.

He handed over to the Governor the letters brought by the ship from France. There was one for Mme. de la Tour in Virginia’s writing. Paul seized it, kissed it rapturously, placed it in his bosom and ran back to the plantation. As
soon as he caught sight of the family, who were watching for his return at the Rock of Parting, he held up the letter, unable to speak, and they all gathered round Mme. de la Tour to hear it read.

Virginia informed her mother that she had endured much unkindness from her great-aunt, who wanted to compel her to marry against her will and then had disinherited her; finally she had sent her home at a time of year when she must reach the island at the stormy season. Virginia had tried in vain to conciliate her aunt, urging what was due to her mother, and to the feelings of a young girl; she had been treated as a silly girl whose head had been turned by reading romances. The only thing she now thought of was the joy of seeing and embracing those dear to her once more, and she would have satisfied her longing that very day if the Captain would have allowed her to return in the pilot-boat, but he had opposed this on account of their long distance from land, and of a heavy swell out in the open, in spite of there being no wind.
Hardly was the letter finished when the whole party, in a transport of joy, exclaimed: "Virginia is come!" — Mistresses and servants hugged each other for joy.

Mme. de la Tour said to Paul:

"Go, my son, and tell our neighbor that Virginia is coming."

Domingo at once lighted a torch of bois de ronde and Paul and he started for my dwelling. It was about ten o'clock at night; I had just put out my light and gone to bed when, through the chinks in the boarded walls of my hut, I saw a light in the woods, and soon after heard Paul calling me. I rose; I had hardly got my clothes on when Paul half-crazed and quite out of breath, threw his arms round me exclaiming: "Come — come — Virginia is here. Come to the port, the ship will be in by day-break."

So we set out at once. As we were making our way through the woods on Long Mountain, and had just reached the highway leading from Pamplemousses to the harbor, I heard some one coming behind us. It was a negro hastening for-
ward at a great pace. When he had overtaken us I asked from whence he came. He replied:

"I have come from the part of the island which they call Poudre d'or (Gold-dust). I have been sent to the town to inform the Governor that a French ship is riding at anchor under the Isle of Ambre. They are firing minute guns for help, for the sea is very heavy." And having told us this he went on his way without further delay.

"Let us go to the district called Poudre d'or," said I to Paul, "and meet Virginia; it is not more than three leagues away."

So we set out northwards. The heat was suffocating. The moon had risen; three large dark circles could be seen round its disk. The sky was appallingly dark. By the glare of frequent lightnings long racks of low cloud, dense and black, could be seen rolling in towards the middle of the island, sweeping up from the sea with amazing swiftness, though not the faintest breath could be felt on land. As we walked on we fancied we heard thunder growling; but on
lending ear we perceived that it was the echo of cannon-shot. This distant firing, with the threatening gloom of the sky, made me shudder. I could not doubt that it was signals of distress from a foundering ship. Half an hour later we heard it no more, and this silence struck me as even more ominous than the mournful sound that had preceded it.

We hurried on without a word, without daring to put our fears into words. Towards midnight we reached the shore near Poudre d'or, bathed in sweat. The waves were breaking with a terrific roar, covering the rocks and sands with foam of dazzling whiteness and sparkles like fire. In spite of the darkness we could see by the phosphorescence the fishers' canoes drawn high up on the strand.

At some little distance further, on the skirts of the wood, we saw a fire round which several settlers had collected. There we went to rest till day should dawn. While sitting by this blaze one of the men told us that, in the course of the afternoon, he had seen a ship out at sea being
borne down towards the island by the current; that night-fall had hidden it from his sight; that two hours after sunset he had heard guns fired for help but the sea was so heavy that no boat could put out to the vessel; that not long after he fancied he had seen beacon fires, and that if it were so he feared that the ship which had come so close in shore must have run between the land and the little Isle of Ambre, mistaking it for the Gunners' Quoin* which vessels must pass to get into Port-Louis; that he could not be certain on this point, but, in that case, the ship in question must be in the greatest peril.

Another settler now spoke and told us that he had several times crossed the arm of the sea which divides the Isle of Ambre from the mainland, and had taken soundings; that the anchorage and bottom were very good, so that the ship could ride in as perfect safety as in the best harbor. "If I and all my fortune were on board," said he, "I should sleep as soundly as on land."

A third declared that the ship could not pos-

* Coin de Mire.
sibly enter the channel where a long boat could scarcely float. He said he had seen the ship cast anchor outside the Isle of Ambre, so that if the wind should rise in the morning it could either make for the open or steer for the harbor.

Others put forward various opinions; and while they were disputing among themselves after the manner of idle creoles, Paul and I spoke not a word. We remained there till dawn began to break, but there was still too little light in the sky to enable us to distinguish any object out at sea; besides which there was a thick mist over it. We could but just make out a darker cloud, which we were told was the Isle of Ambre, at about a quarter of a league from the shore. In this dismal spot nothing was to be seen but the headland of the shore where we stood, and some mountain tops of the interior showing now and then among the clouds which sailed round them.

By about seven in the morning we heard the rattle of drums coming through the woods. M. de la Bourdonnais, the Governor, was arriving on horseback, followed by a guard of soldiers armed
with muskets, and a large party of settlers and negroes. He drew up the military on the beach and bid them fire a volley. Hardly had they done so when a flash was seen out at sea immediately followed by the report of a cannon. Judging that the ship was but a little way off we all ran towards the spot where we had seen the signal, and we could then make out, through the fog, the hull and masts of a large ship. We were indeed so close to it that in spite of the noise of the waves we could hear the boatswain's whistle and the voices of the sailors who three times shouted God save the King!—for "Vive le Roi!" is the Frenchman's cry in great peril as it is in moments of triumph, as though they were calling their Sovereign to their aid or wished to testify, even then, that they are ready to die for him.

From the minute when the Saint-Géran understood that we were near enough to give some help, the cannon was fired every three minutes. M. de la Bourdonnais had fires lighted at intervals along the strand, and sent to all the houses in the neighborhood for food, planks, cables and empty
barrels. A crowd of settlers soon appeared, followed by their negroes carrying provisions and tackle from the plantations of Poudre d'or, Fla-gue and Rempart river. One of the oldest settlers went up to the Governor and said:

"All night, Sir, hollow noises have been heard among the hills; the leaves of the trees in the forest shiver though there is no wind; the sea birds are seeking shelter on land; by all these signs a hurricane is certainly threatening."

"Well, friends," said the Governor, "we are prepared for it and no doubt the ship is too."

"In fact everything gave warning of the immediate approach of a tornado. The clouds overhead were appallingly black with coppery hues at their edges. The air rang with the shrieks of petrels, cut-waters, and frigate birds—a swarm of sea fowl which came flying to the island for shelter, in spite of the murkiness of the atmosphere.

It was about nine when we heard awful sounds coming up from the sea as though torrents of
water mingled with thunder-bolts were being hurled down from the top of the mountains. Every one cried out: "Here comes the hurricane!" and in an instant a tremendous blast of wind swept off the mist that lay over the Isle of Ambre and the intervening sound. The Saint-Géran stood revealed, her deck covered with people, the spars and topmast lying about, her flag at half-mast, four cables out at her bows and another at her stern. She was lying between the Isle of Ambre and the mainland, inside the barrier reef that surrounds the island and which she had made her way through by a channel which no vessel had ever passed before. She headed the breakers which came in from the open ocean, and each wave that rolled up the channel raised her bow bodily so that the keel could be seen up in the air; at the same time the stern went under water, disappearing as far the taffrail as completely as if it had been submerged. In this position, driven landward by the wind and waves, it was equally impossible for her to return as she had come, or to cut her moorings and run on the
beach, from which she was divided by shoals full of reefs.

Every roller that reached the strand thun-dered up the creeks, tossing large pebbles more than fifty feet above high-water mark; then rushing back again it left a wide strip of shore uncovered, grinding the beach with a harsh and hideous din. The sea, lashed by the blast, grew rougher every moment and the whole of the sound between this island and the Isle of Ambre was one vast sheet of white foam broken by dark, deep gulfs between the waves. This spume was swept up the coves into piles above six feet in height, and the wind, catching the top, carried it over the rise of the coast, above half a league inland. Seeing the innumerable white flakes driven horizontally to the very foot of the hills you might have thought that snow was coming up from the sea. The horizon threatened a storm of long dura-tion. Sea and sky were indistinguishable. Clouds of ominous shape rose without inter-mission and rushed across over our heads as swiftly as birds, while others hung low and as
motionless as towers of rock. Not a blue spot could be seen all over the firmament; a lurid olive light was shed on everything on land, at sea, and in the sky.

As the vessel swung with the waves, that which we feared happened. The bow cables parted, and as the ship was now held by only a single hawser she was flung on the rocks at half a cable length from the beach. We all gave one cry of anguish. Paul was rushing into the sea when I seized him by the arm:

"Boy," said I, "do you wish to be killed?"

"Let me go," he cried, "to save her or die."

As despair had bereft him of reason Domingo and I, to prevent his being destroyed, tied a long rope round his waist and held on to the ends. Paul then went out towards the Saint-Géran, now swimming and now wading on the reef. Sometimes he hoped he might reach her, for the sea in its capricious motion would leave the ship almost high and dry so that he might have walked all round her; but a minute after it came leaping back with renewed fury, covering her with vault-
like walls of water which upheaved all the fore-part of her hull and flung the hapless Paul far up the strand, his legs bleeding, and his body bruised, half-drowned. But as soon as he had recovered his wits he started to his feet and set out with fresh ardor towards the ship. Her sides were now yawning under the fearful blows of the waves. All the crew, hopeless of saving her, plunged, as one man, into the sea, seizing spars, planks, hen-coops, tables and barrels.

Then we beheld an object to move the heart to endless pity: a young girl was seen in the stern gallery of the Saint-Géran, holding out her arms towards the youth who was making such efforts to reach her. It was Virginia. She recognized her lover by his daring. The sight of this sweet creature exposed to such fearful peril filled us with grief and despair. As to Virginia she stood dignified and firm, waving her hand to us as though to bid us farewell for ever.

All the sailors had leapt overboard; one alone, remained on the deck, perfectly naked and as sinewy as Hercules. He went up to Virginia
with great respect; we could see him throw himself at her feet, and even try to pull her dress off; but she, loftily putting him aside, looked away. Then a shout, louder than before, was heard from the spectators: "Save her, save her; do not leave her!"

But at this moment a mountain of water of appalling mass came pouring down between the Isle of Ambre and the coast, and rushed towards the ship with a hollow roar, threatening her with its dark chasm and foaming crest. The sailor flung himself into the sea at this terrible sight, and Virginia, seeing that death was inevitable, held her skirts with one hand, laying the other on her heart and raising her clear eyes to Heaven. She looked like an angel about to take flight skywards.

Oh! fatal day! Everything was swallowed up. The surge flung high on shore some of the lookers-on, who by an impulse of humanity had tried to rescue Virginia, and with them the sailor who had meant to swim to land with her. This man, who had escaped certain death, knelt down on the sand exclaiming:
"O Lord! Thou hast saved my life; but I would gladly have given it for that noble young lady who would not take her clothes off as I did."

Domingo and I pulled the hapless Paul out of the surf, quite unconscious and bleeding from the mouth and ears. The Governor placed him in the care of surgeons while we, on our part, sought along the beach hoping the waves might have cast up Virginia's body; but the wind having suddenly changed, as happens in hurricanes, we had the grief of thinking that we might not even pay the unfortunate girl the last honors of burial. We quitted the spot, overwhelmed with horror, our whole souls absorbed in one single loss from a wreck in which a vast number of people had perished; most of us indeed, after seeing so admirable a creature meet such a terrible fate, doubting whether there were a ruling Providence; — for there are evils so shocking and so undeserved that the trust even of the wise is shaken by them.

Meanwhile Paul, who was beginning to recover his senses, had been carried to a neighbor-
ing house till he should be fit to be moved to his own plantation. I turned homewards with Domingo, to prepare Virginia's mother and her friend for the disastrous truth. As we came to the opening into the valley of the Lataniers river we met some negroes who told us that the sea was washing up a great deal of wreckage into the bay in front of us. We went down there, and one of the first things I saw on the strand was the body of Virginia. She was lying half buried in sand, in the attitude in which we had seen her die. Her features were not perceptibly altered. Her eyes were closed but her brow was still unclouded; only the pallid violets of death mingled on her cheeks with the roses of maiden modesty. One hand held her dress and the other, clasped to her heart, was tightly clenched and stiffened. With some difficulty I took from it a small case, and what was my surprise when I found that it was Paul's picture which she had promised never to part with as long as she lived! This last proof of the hapless girl's constancy and love made me shed bitter tears. As for Domingo,
he beat his breast and rent the air with cries of anguish.

We bore the body to a fisherman's hut, and gave it in charge to some poor native women who undertook to wash it.

While they were employed in this melancholy task we went on to the plantation, tremulous indeed. We found Mme. de la Tour and Marguerite engaged in prayer, awaiting some news of the ship. As soon as Mme. de la Tour saw me she cried out:

"Where is my child, my dear child?" And as my silence and tears left her no room for doubt of her loss, she was seized with a sudden attack of breathlessness and acute pain; she could utter no sound but sighs and sobs.

Marguerite cried out: "Where is my boy—I do not see my boy," and fainted away. We ran to support her, and having brought her to consciousness, I assured her that Paul was alive and that the Governor was having him cared for. As soon as she recovered she devoted herself to her friend who fell again
and again into long fainting fits. Mme. de la Tour passed the whole night in these acute attacks and by their duration I could judge that no suffering was so great as that of a mother. Whenever she recovered consciousness she gazed heavenwards with dull sad eyes. In vain did Marguerite and I press her hands in ours, in vain we called her by the most endearing names; she seemed quite insensible to our tried affection, and faint groans alone broke from her laboring breast.

Next morning Paul was brought home, lying in a palanquin. He had recovered his senses, but was unable to utter a word. His meeting with his mother and Mme. de la Tour had a better effect than all the care I had till then been giving them. A gleam of comfort dawned on the faces of the two unhappy mothers. They each took a place at his side, clasped him in their arms, kissed him, and their tears, which had been checked by their excess of grief, now began to flow. Paul's were ere long added to theirs. Nature having thus brought relief to the three unhappy souls, the convulsive stage of their grief
gave way to a long drowsiness, a state of lethargy indeed almost like the sleep of death.

M. de la Bourdonnais sent me word privately that Virginia's body had been brought into the town by his orders, and that it would be conveyed thence to the church at Pamplemousses. I at once went down to Port-Louis, where I found the settlers assembled from every part to attend the funeral, as though the island had lost her whom it held most dear. In the harbor the ships had their yards crossed and their flags at half-mast, and were firing guns at long intervals. The funeral procession opened with a guard of grenadiers with their arms reversed; their drums hung with streamers of crape gave forth only a muffled roll, and grief was legible on the features of soldiers who had so often faced death in battle without changing color. Eight young girls of the best families in the island, dressed in white and with palms in their hands, carried the body of their virtuous companion, quite covered with flowers. After them came a choir of little children singing hymns, and behind these all the most distin-
guished personages of the island, residents and officials. Last of all walked the Governor followed by a crowd of the lower classes.

This was what the government had ordered to do honor to Virginia's virtues. But when the body had been brought as far as the foot of this hill, at the sight of the cabins of which she had so long been the joy and to which her death had brought despair, all the ceremonial got into confusion; hymns and chants ceased and nothing was to be heard but sighs and sobs. Numbers of young girls came running up from the neighboring plantations to touch Virginia's bier with handkerchiefs, rosaries, and garlands of flowers, invoking her as a saint. Mothers prayed Heaven to give them such a daughter; the youths that they might have as faithful sweethearts; the poor that they might find as kind a friend; the slaves for as good a mistress.

When the procession reached the grave negroresses from Madagascar and Caffirs from Mozambique placed baskets of fruit round it and hung pieces of stuff to the neighboring trees, after
the manner of their country; Hindoo women from Bengal and the Malabar coast brought cages full of birds and gave them their liberty over her body; so strong is the feeling in all nations at the death of a lovable creature, and so great is the power of hapless virtue, since it can gather every creed around its tomb.

It was necessary to place a guard round her grave and to keep off the daughters of some of the poor settlers, who were determined to throw themselves into it; for they said they had no comfort to hope for in this world, and there was nothing left for them but to die with her who had been their only benefactress.

She was buried near the church of Pamplemousses, on the western side, at the foot of a clump of bamboos, where she had loved to rest on her way to mass with her mother and Marguerite, seated by the side of him whom she had then called her brother.

On their way back from this funeral ceremony, M. de la Bourdonnais came up here with some of his numerous suite. He offered Mme.
de la Tour and her friend all the assistance that lay in his power. He briefly but indignantly expressed his opinion of her unnatural aunt, and going up to Paul he said all he could think of to comfort him. "I only desired your happiness," said he, "and that of your family, God is my witness. My dear fellow, you must go to France, I will see that you find some appointment. In your absence I will take care of your mother as if she were my own," and he held out his hand; but Paul drew away his and averted his face not to see him.

I, on my part, remained at the plantation to give my unfortunate friends, and especially Paul, all the help I could. In three weeks' time Paul was able to walk, but his grief seemed to increase as his frame recovered strength. He was indifferent to everything, his eyes were dull, and to all the questions we could ask him he made no reply. Mme. de la Tour, who was dying, often said to him:

"So long as I can see you, my son, I shall
feel as though I saw my dear Virginia." And at the name of Virginia he would shudder and leave her, in spite of his mother who would call to him to stay with her friend. He would wander alone into the garden and sit down at the foot of Virginia's coco-palm, his eyes fixed on the spring. The Governor's physician, who had taken the greatest care of him and of the two ladies, said that the only way to cure him of his gloomy melancholy was to leave him to do just as he pleased and never to contradict him; that there was no other way of rousing him from the total silence he so obstinately kept.

I followed his advice. As soon as Paul had somewhat recovered his strength, the first use he made of it was to leave the plantation. As I would not lose sight of him I set off to walk after him, desiring Domingo to pack some food and follow us. As the lad went down the hill his spirits and strength seemed to revive. He first took the road to Pamplemousses, and when he was near the church in the avenue of bamboos he went straight to the spot where he saw the earth
had been freshly turned; there he knelt down, and raising his eyes to Heaven prayed long. This seemed to me to promise well for the recovery of his reason, since such a proof of confidence in the Supreme Being showed that his soul was beginning to exercise its natural functions. Domingo and I knelt down as he had done, and joined our prayers to his. He presently rose and turned his steps towards the north of the island without paying much heed to us. Knowing that he not only had no idea where Virginia had been laid, but did not even know that her body had been rescued from the sea, I asked him why he had come to pray at the foot of the bamboos, and he replied:

"We have so often been here together."

He walked on as far as the skirts of the forest where night overtook us. There, by setting him the example, I persuaded him to take some food; then we slept there under a tree. Next day I fancied he would retrace his steps. He gazed down for some time on the church of Pamplemousses in the plain, and its long alleys of bamboos, and he even made as though he would go
back to it; but suddenly he plunged into the woods, still shaping his way northwards. I guessed his purpose and tried, but in vain, to divert him from it.

About midday we reached the district of Poudre d'or. He hurried down to the shore opposite to the spot where the Saint-Gérán had disappeared. At the sight of the Isle of Ambre and the channel, now as smooth as a mirror, he cried out:

"Oh, Virginia! oh, beloved Virginia!" and fell senseless. Domingo and I carried him up into the forest and with the greatest difficulty brought him back to consciousness. As soon as he had recovered his senses he wished to go back to the sea-shore; but as I implored him not to renew his anguish and ours by such terrible reminders, he went another way.

In short, during a week after, he visited every spot where he had ever been with the companion of his childhood. He trod the path she had taken to go and crave pardon for the slave of the Black River planter; then he went to the bank of
the river of *Trois Mamelles* where she had sat down unable to walk any further, and to the part of the forest where she had lost her way. Every place in its turn touched him to tears as it reminded him of the cares or sports, the festivals or kindly deeds of his beloved: the river by Long Mountain, my little house, the waterfall hard by, the papaw-tree she had planted, the turf where she had loved to run, the woodland glades in which she was wont to sing—and where the elves which had so often mocked their shouts of glee now only repeated the doleful wail: "Virginia! Oh, my dear Virginia!"

Living this wild and wandering life his eyes grew hollow, his skin yellow, and by swift degrees his health gave way. Feeling sure that our sense of sorrow is all the keener for the remembrance of past joys, and that our passions gain power in solitude, I determined to get my hapless friend away from the spots which constantly reminded him of his loss and to take him to some place in the island where there was plenty to divert him. To this end I carried him off to the
high ground behind the plains of Williams * where he had never been.

Agriculture and commerce give that part of the island a great deal of stir and variety. There were gangs of carpenters squaring timber and others sawing it into planks; vehicles passed to and fro on the roads; large herds of cattle and horses were pastured in the wide meadows, and the landscape was dotted with settlements. The height of the land allowed of the culture in many spots of various kinds of European vegetables. Here and there on the plain harvests of corn might be seen, the clearings in the woods were carpeted with strawberries, and hedges of roses grew by the side of the roads. The crispness of the air, bracing the nerves, was favorable to the health of white men.

From these highlands, in the heart of the island and enclosed by vast forests, the sea was not to be seen, nor the church of Pamplemousses, nor anything that could recall Virginia to Paul's mind. The mountains even, which send off sev-

* or Wilhelms.
eral spurs towards Port-Louis, on the side next the plain of Williams form one straight, steep ridge, crowned by several long cones of rock wreathed in clouds.

To these plains I took Paul. I kept him constantly moving, walking with him in sun or rain, by day and by night; losing our way intentionally in the woods, the clearing and the fields so as to divert his mind by tiring his body, and turning the current of his thoughts by his ignorance of the place we were in and the road we had lost. But the heart of a lover sees traces of her he loves, go where he will. Night and day, the silence of a desert or the bustle of human dwellings, time even, which carries away so many memories, nothing can avail him. Like a needle rubbed with the lodestone, shake it as you will, when it settles to rest it points to the pole which attracts it. When I asked Paul after losing our way in the plains of Williams:

"Now, which way shall we go?" He turned to the north and said:

"There are our hills; let us go back to them."
I saw that all the means I could try to divert his mind were useless and that there was nothing left to me but to attack his passion itself with all the powers of my weak reason. So I answered:

"Yes, there are the hills where your dear Virginia lived; and here is the picture you gave her and which she wore next her heart which beat to the last for you."

I put into his hand the little portrait he had given to Virginia by the pool under the coco-palms. A piteous joy shone in his eyes as he looked on it. He eagerly clasped it in his feeble hands and pressed it to his lips. His breast heaved, and tears rose to his blood-shot eyes but could not flow.

"My son," said I, "listen to me, your friend; I was Virginia’s friend too, and in the time of your hopes I often strove to strengthen your reason to meet the unforeseen disasters of life. — What is it that you bewail so bitterly? Is it your own misfortune or is it Virginia’s?

"Your misfortune? — Indeed it is heavy. You have lost the sweetest of girls who would
have been the best of wives. She gave up her own interests for yours and preferred you to a fine fortune, as the only reward worthy of her virtue. But how do you know whether she from whom you looked for such pure happiness might not have been the cause of endless cares? She was penniless, disinherited, and you had nothing to share with her but the fruits of your own toil. Returning hither, more fragile from the education she had had, and yet braver from her evil fortune, you would have seen her failing day by day in the struggle to share your labors. If she had borne you children her sufferings and yours would have multiplied with the difficulty of maintaining single-handed your old parents and a growing family.

"You will tell me that the Governor would have helped you. But how do you know that in a colony where the government is so often changed you would again have had a La Bourdonnais? or whether rulers devoid of kindness and morality may not be sent to this island? whether, to gain some wretched pittance, your wife might not have
had to sue to them? She might then have proved frail and you would have been pitiable; or she would have been virtuous and you would have remained poor; happy if you had escaped persecution for the sake of her beauty and goodness, from those whose liberality you had hoped for.

"'But,' you will say, 'I should still have had the happiness, which fortune cannot alter, of cherishing the dear one who clings the closer in proportion to her weakness — of comforting her by my own alarms, of gladdening her by my anxiety, of increasing our love by our common cares.'—It is true that virtue and true love find joy in these bitter-sweet experiences. But she is gone, and you have left to you those whom next to you she loved best: her mother, and your own. Your heart-stricken grief will bring them to the grave. Make it your happiness to comfort them, as she would have done. My son, loving kindness is the one happiness of virtue; there is none on earth greater or more certain. Schemes of enjoyment, of rest, of luxury, of abundance, of glory, are not made for man — a feeble, fleeting wanderer. See
how a single step to meet fortune has hurled us all from depth to depth. You, to be sure, were against it: but who could have doubted that Virginia's voyage was certain to end happily for her and for you? The bidding of an aged and wealthy relation, the advice of a wise Governor, the concurrence of a whole colony, the exhortations and authority of a priest sealed Virginia's sad fate. Thus so we run to our ruin misled by the wisdom even of our rulers.

"It would have been better, of course, not to believe them, not to trust the voice and hopes of a delusive world. But after all, among the many men whom we see toiling busily in these plains, the many more who go to seek their fortune in the Indies, or who dwell quietly at home in Europe enjoying at their ease the fruit of the labors of others, there is not one who is not doomed to lose some day all he holds dearest — dignities, fortune, wife, children, friends.

"You, at any rate, as you look into your heart have nothing to blame yourself for. You have been true to your faith. You, in the bloom of
your youth, had the wisdom of a sage inasmuch as you would not disobey the dictates of nature. Your views alone were the legitimate views, because they were pure, simple and disinterested, and you had a sacred claim on Virginia which no fortune could outweigh. You have lost her; not through any imprudence or avarice or perversity of your own, but by the act of God himself who has made use of the passions of others to take from you the object of your love—God, to whom you owe everything, who sees what is fit for you, and whose Wisdom leaves you no room for the repentance and despair which follow on the heels of misfortunes caused by our own fault.

"You may say to yourself in your sorrow: "I have done nothing to deserve it." —Then is it Virginia's misfortune, her death, her present state that you mourn over? She has met the doom which overtakes birth, beauty and even empires. The life of man with all its schemes stands like a little tower whose pinnacle is death. The mere fact of birth doomed her to die. She is happy in having loosed the bonds of life before her mother
and before you—that is to say in not having died many times before the end.

"Death, my son, is a boon to all men; it is the night of that unquiet day called life. In the sleep of death the diseases, and pains, sorrows and fears that torment the hapless living soul are at rest for ever. Consider the men who seem happiest: you will see that they have paid very dear for their vain happiness: for public respect with domestic misery; for wealth with loss of health; for being loved, that rarest joy, with constant sacrifices. And often, at the end of a life devoted to the interests of others, they see around them only false friends and ungrateful relations. Virginia was happy to the last. While she was with us the gifts of Nature made her glad; away from us she was happy in her virtue; nay, even in the fearful hour when we saw her die she still was happy, for whether she looked at the whole colony assembled there and unanimous in their grief, or on you, hastening so bravely to her rescue, she saw how dear she was to all. She had found strength for the future in recollecting how innocent her life
had been and had been rewarded with the prize bestowed by Heaven on virtue: the courage which rises superior to danger. She met death with a calm face.

"My son, God sends every vicissitude of life to try the virtuous that it may be seen that virtue only can turn them to account and find in them happiness and triumph. When He intends it to achieve a great reputation, he sets it on a lofty stage and matches it against death; then the strength of Virtue serves as an example, and the memory of its woes commands a perennial tribute of tears from posterity. That is the eternal monument granted to it on earth, where all else passes away and where the memory even of most kings is soon buried in utter oblivion.

"But Virginia still lives. You see, my son, that everything on earth changes and nothing is lost. No human art can avail to annihilate the smallest particle of matter; and can that which was rational, sentient, loving, virtuous, pious, have perished, while the elements which enclosed it remain indestructible? — Ah! if Virginia was
happy with us she is far happier now. There is a God, my son: all Nature proclaims Him; I need not argue to prove it. It is only the wickedness of men which leads them to deny the Justice they dread. His works are before your eyes and you are conscious of Him in your heart. Do you think, then, that He has left Virginia unrewarded? Do you think that the Power who clothed so noble a soul in so fair a form, instinct with Divine art, cannot have saved it from the waves? That He who dispenses the immediate happiness of mankind in accordance with laws of which you know nothing, cannot grant another kind of happiness to Virginia under other laws equally unknown to you? When we as yet were in nothingness, supposing we had been capable of thought, could we have formed any notion of our earthly existence? And now that we are in this darksome and transient life can we foresee what lies beyond death through which we must quit it? Does God, like man, need this little globe—our earth—as the scene for the display of his wisdom and goodness? Can He maintain the human life
nowhere but in this realm of death? — There is not a single drop of water in the ocean that is not full of living creatures subject to us; and is there nothing for us among the myriad stars that circle over our heads? What, are supreme Wisdom and Divine Goodness restricted to the very globe on which we move, and in those unnumbered radiant spheres and the limitless fields of light around them, never darkened by storm or night, is there only empty space and eternal void? If, indeed, we, who have given ourselves nothing, could dare to set limits to the Power from whom we derive all things, we might rather believe that we are on the outer frontier of His realm, where life must struggle with death and innocence with tyranny.

“Somewhere, no doubt, there is a place where virtue finds its reward. Virginia is now happy. If she could send you a message from that home of the angels she would say to you, as her farewell words: ‘Oh Paul! Life is but a trial. I have been found faithful to the laws of nature, of love and of virtue. I crossed the seas in obedience to
my relations; I gave up wealth to keep my word; and I preferred to yield up my life rather than to violate modesty. Heaven deemed my race duly run. I am for ever free from poverty, calumny, storms and the sight of the sufferings of others. None of the evils at which men quail can henceforth touch me—and you pity me! I am pure and imperishable as an atom of light and you would call me back to the night of existence! Oh Paul! Oh my love! Remember those days of happiness when from early dawn we revelled in the lavish beauty of the heavens as it rose with the sun above the crest of those cliffs, and was shed with his rays into the heart of the forests. We were filled with rapture of which we knew not the cause. In our innocent passion we longed to be all eyes to enjoy the gorgeous hues of dawn; all nose to inhale the fragrance of our plants; all ears to hear the concert of our birds; all heart to be grateful for these mercies. My soul, now dwelling at the fountain-head of beauty whence flows all that is delightful on earth, sees, tastes, hears and knows joys which it then could only
apprehend through feeble organs. What tongue can describe these shores of eternal morning where I now sojourn for ever? Everything which infinite Power and heavenly Goodness have been able to create for the consolation of the wretched; everything that the companionship of a myriad of beings rejoicing in the same happiness can add to the harmony of a common ecstasy, is ours without alloy. Bear up under the trial that is sent you so as to crown your Virginia’s bliss with love that shall have no end, and a marriage of which the torch shall never die. Here I will soothe your griefs; here I will wipe away your tears. Oh my love, my young husband! Lift up your soul to the infinite so as to endure the pains of a moment.’”

My own emotion checked my speech. As for Paul, he looked at me with a fixed gaze exclaiming: “She is no more, she is no more!” and after this cry of anguish he fell into a long swoon. Presently recovering himself, he said:

“Since death is a boon, and Virginia is happy I, too, will die, to be again with Virginia.”
Thus my reasons for being comforted had only served to feed his despair. I was like a man who longs to save a friend sinking in the middle of a river and refusing to swim. Sorrow had overwhelmed him. Alas! the troubles of infancy prepare a man for entering on life and Paul had never known any.

I brought him home to the plantation. There I found Mme. de la Tour and Marguerite in a state of dejection greater than ever. Marguerite was the most cast down. Easy natures, over which minor griefs glide lightly, are least able to resist great sorrows. She said to me:

"Oh, my good neighbor! Last night, in a dream, I fancied I saw Virginia in white robes in the midst of delicious groves and gardens. She said to me: 'I am in a state of enviable bliss.' — Then she went up to Paul with a glad look, and lifted him up with her. As I tried to hold my son back I felt myself rising, too, from the earth and following him with indescribable rapture. Then I wished to say good-bye to my friend, and I saw her, too, following us with Marie and Do-
mingo. But what is strangest of all is that Mme. de la Tour had a dream last night with exactly the same details."

I replied. "My dear friend, it is my belief that nothing happens on earth but by God's consent. Dreams sometimes portend the truth."

Mme. de la Tour told me her dream, which was precisely identical. I had never noticed the least tendency to superstition in either of these ladies; I was therefore much struck by the coincidence of their dreams, and I had in my heart no doubt but that they would find fulfilment. The belief that the truth is sometimes revealed to us in sleep is widely spread among all the nations on earth. The greatest men of antiquity have put faith in it, among others Alexander, Cæsar, the Scipios, Cato the elder and younger, and Brutus — none of them weak minds. The Old and the New Testament afford numerous examples of dreams that have been fulfilled. For my part, I need nothing more than my own experience in the matter; more than once I have known that dreams are warnings sent by a Power that cares
for us. To dispute or defend by argument things which transcend the light of human reason is a thing impossible. At the same time, if Man's reason is but the image of God's, since man has means of communicating his purposes to the farthest ends of the earth by secret and private means, why should not the Intelligence which rules the Universe make use of similar means to the same end? A friend comforts his friend by a letter which crosses a number of kingdoms, moves amid the feuds of nations, and carries joy and hope to a single man; and why should not the Omnipotent Protector of the innocent come by some occult path to the rescue of a virtuous soul whose only trust is in Him? Can He need to employ a visible sign for the fulfilment of his will. He who is perpetually moving in his works by a hidden travail?

Why not believe in dreams? Life itself, so full of transitory and vain scheming—what is it but a dream?

Be this as it may, my unhappy friends' dream soon came true. Paul died two months after the
death of his beloved Virginia whose name he incessantly murmured. Marguerite met her end, eight days after her son's, with a joy which it is granted to virtue only to know. She took the tenderest leave of Mme. de la Tour, "in the hope," as she said, "of a happy and eternal reunion." "Death," she went on, "is the highest blessing; we ought to long for it. If life is a punishment, we should look forward to its end; if it is a trial, we should pray that it may be short."

The Government took charge of Domingo and Marie who were quite past service and who did not long survive their mistresses. As to poor Fidèle, he had pined to death at about the same time as his master.

I took Mme. de la Tour home to my cottage. She had borne up under such terrible losses with amazing greatness of soul. She consoled Paul and Marguerite till their last moments as though she had had no grief to bear but theirs. When she could see them no more she spoke of them to me day by day as of dear friends still close at hand; and she did not survive them more than a
month. Far from blaming her aunt for the ill she had caused, she prayed God to forgive her, to mitigate the fearful anguish of mind she had fallen into immediately after sending Virginia away in so inhuman a manner.

That unnatural relation did not long await this punishment for her hard-heartedness. I learnt, through several vessels which arrived one after another, that she was tormented by fits of melancholy which made life and death equally terrible to her. Now, she would reproach herself for the premature loss of her charming grand-niece, and for her mother's death in consequence. Now, she prided herself on having repelled two wretches who, as she said, had disgraced the family by their low connections. Sometimes, flying into a rage at the sight of the vast number of wretched beings who crowd Paris, she would exclaim: "Why do they not pack off these idlers to perish in the Colonies?" And she would add that the notions of humanity, virtue and religion which are accepted among all nations are but devices of the policy of their rulers. Or else, rush-
ing into the opposite extreme, she would give herself up to superstitious terrors that racked her with mortal dread. She then hastened to give splendid alms to the monks who were her spiritual directors, imploring them to propitiate the Divine Judge by the sacrifice of her fortune; as if the possessions she had refused to the wretched could find favor with the Father of mankind! Her fancy often painted fields of fire and burning mountains, where hideous spectres wandered shrieking for her to come. She would fall at the feet of her confessors and invent tortures and penances for herself; for Heaven, just Heaven, sends awful creeds to cruel souls.

Thus she lived for several years, by turns an atheist and a bigot, dreading life no less than death. And what at last put an end to this deplorable existence was the very object to which she had sacrificed all natural feeling. She foresaw with chagrin that, after her death, her fortune would pass into the hands of those whom she hated. She therefore attempted to alienate the greater portion of her estates, and her heirs, tak-
ing advantage of the hallucinations to which she was liable, had her shut up as a mad woman and placed her property in the hands of trustees. Thus her riches were the cause of her ruin; and as they had hardened the heart of their owner, so they vitiated the hearts of those who coveted them.—She died; in the crowning misery of still having enough reason to know that she was robbed and scorned by the very persons whose opinion had been her guide all her life.

Next to Virginia, at the foot of the same bamboos, lies Paul, her lover; and near them their tender mothers and their faithful slaves. No marble rises above their humble mounds, no graven inscription tells their virtues; but their memory remains indelible in the hearts of those they were kind to. Their shades do not seek the fame which they in life avoided; but if they still can care for what takes place on earth, no doubt they love to visit under the thatch that shelters virtuous toil, to comfort the poor who find their lot too hard, to cherish a lasting flame in young
lovers, with a taste for natural joys, a love of labor and a fear of wealth.

The language of the people, which is silent about monuments raised to the glory of kings, has given to various spots in this island names which will always commemorate Virginia’s death. Near the Isle of Ambre, in the midst of the reefs, there is a channel known as Saint Géran Passage, from the name of the vessel which foundered when bringing her home from Europe. The extreme point of the long promontory which you may see about three leagues away, half-covered by the surf, and which the Saint Géran failed to get round the night before the hurricane so as to reach the port, is called Cape Malheureux; and just before us, at the end of the valley, is Tomb Bay, where Virginia was found half-buried in the sand—as though the sea had felt impelled to restore her body to her family, and pay the last honors to her purity on the strand she had made beautiful by her innocence.

Young creatures, so fondly attached! Hapless mothers! Loving family! The woods which
gave you shade, the springs which flowed for you, the hills on which you rested together, still bewail your loss. Since you, none has dared to cultivate this deserted spot or rebuild these humble cabins. Your goats have run wild; your orchards are destroyed; your birds have fled, and nothing is to be heard but the scream of the hawks as they wheel above the glen among the cliffs. As for me, since you have been lost to sight, I am like a friend bereft of friends, a father who has lost his children, a traveller wandering on the earth, where I am left alone. — And as he spoke the good old man turned to go, his eyes full of tears. Mine, too, had flowed more than once in the course of this melancholy tale.

THE END.
This little book is but a relaxation after my "Studies of Nature" and the application of her laws to the happiness of two unfortunate families. It was published in 1786, and the welcome it met with surpassed my expectations; songs and idyls were written on it, and several plays. A great number of mothers gave their children the names of Paul and Virginia, and finally the fame of my pastoral spread throughout Europe; it was translated into English, Italian, German, Dutch, Polish, Russian, and Spanish. There can be no doubt that I owe this unanimous approval, throughout nations so dissimilar in their views, to women, who in all lands do their utmost to bring men back to the laws of nature. They have sufficiently proved this, inasmuch as most of these translations have been made by married or unmarried ladies. I confess that it has been a delight to me to see my adopted children clothed in a foreign dress by motherly or maiden hands, and to these, no doubt, they owe a reputation which seems to promise to last, henceforth, to posterity.

Several persons have questioned me about this work: "Did the old islander really tell you the story?" they ask. "Have you seen the places you describe? Did Virginia meet so disastrous a death?"
How could a young girl make up her mind to lose her life rather than part with her garments?"

I can but reply: Mankind is like a child. Give a child a rose; at first he is delighted, but soon he wants to examine it. He looks at each petal, then he pulls them off one by one; and when he knows all about it he no longer has the rose. *Telemaque, Clarissa* and many other tales which incite us to virtue or move us to tears—are they true?

I feel sure, however, that these readers have put their questions rather from an impulse of humanity than from curiosity. It grieved them that a pair of such tender and happy lovers should come to so miserable an end. Would to God that I had felt at liberty to paint a career of perfect bliss as the meed of virtue on earth! But I can only repeat that I have described real places and a state of society of which examples may perhaps still be found in some remote spots of the Isle of France, or the neighboring Isle of Bourbon; and I have depicted a real catastrophe, of which unimpeachable witnesses can be produced even in Paris.

One day when walking in the *Jardin du Roi,* * a very interesting-looking lady who was with her husband on hearing from M. Jean Thouin, the Director of the Gardens, that I was the author of Paul and Virginia, came up to me saying: "Ah! Sir, you have cost me a terrible night. I have never ceased sighing and melting into tears. The young girl whose melancholy end you have so vividly described in the wreck of the *Saint-Gérard* was a relation of mine. I am a creole from the Isle of Bourbon." I subsequently learnt from M. Thouin that this lady was the wife of M. de Bonneuil, gentleman in waiting to Monsieur. ** She has

* The gardens of the Tuileries.
** The title given to the next eldest brother of the Kings of France. At the time when "Paul and Virginia" was published, "Monsieur" was the Count of Provence, brother to Louis XVI.
since been good enough to give me leave to publish her testimony to the truth of the catastrophe, and has given me many details which would add still further to the interest we must feel in this sublime victim to her modesty and in her hapless lover.

Other enquirers having expressed a wish that I should give them some information as to the history of M. de la Bourdonnais, my acquaintance with his family enables me to satisfy them.

"His greatest virtue was his humanity; the institutions he founded in the Isle of France are a sufficient evidence of this fact."

I myself indeed have seen in that island—where I served as a royal engineer—not merely the batteries and redoubts which he had erected where they were needed, but hospitals and stores very judiciously placed. To him the island owes in particular an aqueduct above three-quarters of a mile in length, conveying the waters of the Little River to Port Louis, where, before his time, there was no drinking water. Everything of great utility and sound construction that I saw in the island was his work.

His military talent was in no respect inferior to his virtues and merits as an administrator. When he was appointed Governor of the Isles of France and Bourbon he, with nine vessels, defeated Admiral Peyton who was cruising on the Coromandel coast with a very superior armament. After this victory he besieged Madras with a land force of only 1800 men, white and black; and having captured that metropolis of English commerce in India* he returned to France. A difference had arisen between him and M. Dupleix, Governor of Pondicherry. On his arrival at home he was accused of having embezzled the wealth obtained by

* September 14th, 1746. It was restored to the English in 1749 by the treaty of Peace of Aix la Chapelle.
the conquest, and was thrown into the Bastille without further enquiry; the chief witness against him being a common soldier. This man declared on oath that after the taking of Madras, as he was keeping sentry on one of the bastions of the fort, he had seen boats putting off at night and carrying a quantity of cases and bales on board M. de la Bourdonnais' ship. This calumny found supporters in Paris in a crowd of jealous rivals, who had never been to India, but who like others of their race, in every land, were ready to vilify the fame of another.

The hapless conqueror of Madras declared that even if such a conveyance had been effected it was impossible that the soldier should have seen it from the bastion he specified. But proof was needed, and the tyranny at that time exerted over all state prisoners deprived him of all means of defending himself. He nevertheless procured proof and in abundance, by very simple means, which will give an idea of the resources of his ingenuity. He made a knife-blade out of a sou (a copper coin) which he ground and sharpened on the pavement, and with it he pointed some twigs of box, which had probably been distributed to the prisoners for the Festival of Easter. He thus made a compass and a pen. To supply the place of paper he used his white handkerchiefs stiffened with boiled rice and dried in the sun. Ink he made of burnt straw and water. Colors were what he most needed to sketch a plan of Madras and the environs; for yellow he used coffee, and he made green of verdigris off some copper coins boiled in water. I have all these details from his devoted daughter, who still reverently preserves these memorials of the genius which resulted in his liberation. Thus provided with a knife, a compass, a ruler, a pen, paper, ink and colors of his own contriving, he traced from memory the map of the conquered town,
wrote his defence, and proved conclusively that his accuser was a false witness who from his post on guard could not have seen the commandant's vessel or even any portion of the fleet.

He privately entrusted these documents to the lawyer who was his counsel. This gentleman laid them before the judges. It was a flash of light to their minds. He was brought out of the Bastille after three years of imprisonment. For three years more he lingered on, a broken-hearted man; seeing all his fortune dissipated, while calumny and persecution were the only meed of his important services. He was, no doubt, more cruelly hit by the ingratitude of the State than by the triumphant envy of his detractors. They had never been able to quell his veracity and courage, even in captivity. Among the many accusers who came forward to impeach him, a Director of the India Company fancied he had made an unanswerable point when he asked him how it was that he had managed matters so profitably for himself and so badly for the Company. "Because," retorted la Bourdonnais, "I did my own business after my own lights, when I worked for the Company I followed their instructions."

Bernard François Mahé de la Bourdonnais was born at Saint Malo in 1699 and died in 1754, at the age of fifty-five. All ye who devote yourselves to the happiness of mankind expect no reward during your life-time! Posterity alone will do you justice. It has done it at length to the conqueror of Madras and the benefactor of the Isle of France.*

Joseph Dupleix, his rival in fame and fortune in Hindostan, and his most relentless persecutor, died not long after him, having, through the just retribution of Providence, suffered similar reverses in the later years

* Now Mauritius, and, like Madras, an English possession; taken in 1810 and further secured by treaty in 1814.
of his life. The French government bestowed a pension of 2,400 livres on the widow of M. de la Bourdonnais, and did honour to his illustrious memory; and now his excellent daughter informs me that the inhabitants of the island have of their own unsolicited impulse voted her an annuity in memory of the services rendered them by her father.

My readers, I am sure, will owe me no grudge for having digressed from my subject to do justice to the virtues of a great but unfortunate man and his daughter, and to those of a grateful colony.

I am now old. My life's voyage is nearing its end; but if Providence, who has guided my frail bark through so many storms, should still delay for some years my reaching the last harbor, I shall spend them in gathering further studies. The later blossoms of my spring-tide promise an after harvest for the autumn of my life; and if the former opened under the sun of a stormy dawn, the latter will ripen under the warmth of a peaceful evening. I have depicted the brief felicity of two children brought up in the very bosom of nature by unfortunate mothers; I will endeavor next to paint the more durable happiness of a community brought back to her eternal laws by revolution.

Let us hope for future content as the outcome of past woes. Even the Divine Intelligence develops its works through revolution, carrying them on from perfection to perfection. Every people has passed through its foolish childhood, its credulous youth and its unbridled early manhood. Read the histories of Europe. We see it overrun by Gauls, Greeks, Romans, Cimbri, Goths, Visigoths, Vandals, Alani, Franks and Normans, each in turn, exterminating each other in succession and devastating it like the waves of a overwhelming tide. The history of each nation is no more than an unbroken chronicle of wars, as though man had been
placed on earth to no other end than to destroy his fellow-man. Those ancient days, so belauded for their innocence and heroic virtues, were in fact a period of crimes and wrong-doing most of which have, for our happiness, ceased to exist. A monstrous idolatry, with magic, fortune-telling, and oracles; the worship of demons, human sacrifice, cannibalism, incessant warfare, conflagrations, famines, slavery, polygamy, incest, mutilation, droits de naufrage, *droits d’aubaine*, etc., then ravaged our unhappy lands, and are now left to the natives of Africa’s inhospitable shores or buried in the dark forests of America. The same is true with regard to several maladies of the flesh, which were formerly as common as those of the soul, such as various forms of plague, leprosy, scurvy, possession by a devil, and others. Again, what are we to say to the pious lies which made crimes illustrious and sanctified certain absurd and iniquitous traditions, regarded as venerable to this day? Think of the heroes we are taught to admire in our schools: revengeful Achilles, perfidious Ulysses; Agamemnon the parricide, the whole family of the Atrides, and many more equally criminal, who pretended to have descended from gods and goddesses—most frequently under the guise of beasts. It makes us fancy that the moral world, like the physical globe, must at one time have turned on a different axis.

From age to age, however, benefactors to mankind arose. Hercules, Aesculapius, Orpheus, Linus, Confucius, Lokman, Lycurgus, Solon, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and others, gradually civilized the barbarian hordes. They introduced the elements of concord, of law, of industry, and of more humane religions. They

* The *droit d’aubaine* in France was a right of the king to the goods of an alien dying within his jurisdiction; the king standing in the place of the heirs. This claim was abolished in 1819.
stand forth in past ages as superior to the nations they belonged to, as inexhaustible springs of wisdom, enlightenment, and virtue which have flowed on from generation to generation down even to us, like those rivers which descend from the aerial heights of distant mountains and have held their course for centuries through rock, marsh, and sands to irrigate our plains and valleys. Ere long, philosophers were inviting men to behold the torch of reason on the very spots where Druids had burnt their human sacrifice. The Muses of the North and West, especially those of France, soared over Europe, struck their lyres in harmony, and united their tuneful voices, enthralling the hearts of the inhabitants by their concert. They it was who, in America, broke the fetters of the black sons of Africa and cleared its forests by the help of free hands. They have brought from thence a multitude of delights, and have introduced from Europe and from Asia useful crops and flocks, new vegetables, more humane inhabitants, and the law of the Gospel. Oh virtuous Penn, divine Fénélon, eloquent Jean-Jacques! Your names will one day be more revered than those of Lycurgus and Plato!

No longer does superstition raise, as of yore, temples to God through dread of devils; philosophy has exorcised them. Philosophy points to a world covered with the blessings of a divine Father, and a sky full of his suns! What useful discoveries! What bold inventions! What humane institutions, unknown to the ancients! The virtues of great men brought the torch of truth down from heaven to earth; but alas! those virtues have too often been persecuted fugitives, and have not shone upon the world till after long vicissitudes and many revolutions.

But, more than philosophy, women have chiefly contributed to form and to reform the nations. They
indeed, have not grown pale with sitting through the night to write treatises on morality; they have not ascended tribunes to fulminate laws. It was in their fond embrace that they led men to taste the joys of being, by turns in the round of life, happy children, faithful lovers, constant husbands, and virtuous fathers. They laid the foundations of the laws of nature. The first founder of a human community was the mother of a family. In vain might a lawgiver, book in hand, declare as a message from Heaven that nature was odious to its Creator: woman appeared on the scene in all her charms and the fanatic himself was at her feet.

It was round women, as a centre, that, in the first ages, wandering men gathered and settled. Geographers and historians have not, to be sure, divided them into castes and tribes; they have not treated of them as forming part of any monarchy or republic. Men are born Asiatics or Europeans, French or English; they are husbandmen, merchants, soldiers; women in every land are born, live and die—women. They have other duties, other occupations, other lives than men. They are scattered among men, above all things to remind them that they are men, and to uphold, in spite of political legislation, the fundamental laws of nature. Like those winds which blow in harmony with the presence or absence of the sun’s rays and which affect the temperature of the countries they fertilize by warming them or refreshing them; they cannot be defined on maps nor be ascribed to any realm. These winds belong to the atmosphere alone. Thus women belong to the whole human race; they constantly keep it at the true level of humanity by their natural feelings—nay, even by their passions.

This influence has often preserved a nationality from its beginnings to its last remains. Some, have
now no altar, no throne, no capital, as for instance the Guebres, the Armenians, the Jews, the Moors of Africa; in the course of time and events they have been tossed from land to land; but their women still bind the survivors together by the multiple lodestone of daughters, sisters, wives and mothers. They keep the peoples alive by the same laws which first brought them together. These nomad hordes remind us of the ancient monuments of their empires, which now lie prone in spite of the iron bolts which held the stones together. But in vain does the ocean roll the granite blocks in its surges; not a fragment splits off, so strong is the natural cement in which the granules were imbedded in the quarry.

Nor is it by natural ties alone that women bind men together but also by social ties. Being filled with the tenderest love for them, they connect them with that of the Divine Father who is the fount of love. They are the first and last apostles of every form of religious worship and instil it into the minds of men from their tenderest years. They lend beauty to the whole course of their lives. To them men are indebted for the discovery of all the primary and most necessary arts as well as the arts of ornament. They invented bread, pleasant drinks, textiles for clothing, spinning, linen, etc. They were the first to tame those useful and timid beasts which men frightened by men's weapons, and which women subjugated by kindness. To please men they devised gay songs and innocent dancing, and inspired those who wished to preserve precious memorials of them, with the arts of poetry, painting, sculpture and architecture.

Then men felt heroism and pity mingling with the ambitious passions. In the midst of their interminable and cruel warfare they had conceived only of threatening divinities: Jupiter the Thunderer, Pluto King of
Shades, Neptune ever wrathful, sanguinary Mars, thieving Mercury, Bacchus perpetually drunk—but the sight of their wives, chaste, gentle, loving and laborious—led them to conceive of beneficent divinities in Heaven. Filled with gratitude to the companions of their existence they raised in their honour monuments more numerous and more enduring than temples. First of all they bestowed feminine names in every language on all that was sweetest and fairest on earth—on their native lands, on most of the rivers that water them, on the most fragrant flowers, the most delicious fruits and the birds of sweetest song....

To everything in nature which, by its supreme beauty or utility seemed to deserve the highest homage, they gave the name of a goddess: that is to say of an immortal woman. These had their seat in heaven and their special province on earth. Thus light was deified, the stars, and night, and dawn. They ascribed the springs to Naiads, the blue waves of the sea to Nereids, the meadows to Pales, the woods to Dryads. The grander phenomena were assigned to goddesses of higher rank: the firmament and its clouds belonged to Juno, the calm ocean to Tethys, the earth and its wealth of minerals to Cybele, forest beasts to Diana and the harvest to Ceres. They personified the faculties of the soul which were the source of their enjoyment, as they had the powers of nature, making goddesses of the virtues which lent them strength, of the graces which gave them taste and feeling, and of Prudence—the parent of all industry. Finally they gave the name of Venus to a goddess who united in herself every charm of womanhood—a name more expressive no doubt than that of any other divinity. Her father was Saturn, or Time, her cradle was the Ocean; the companions who attended her birth were Sports, Laughter and the Graces; her hus-
band was the god of Fire, her offspring Love, and all Nature was her realm.

In fact, every lovable object has its enticement, some share of that seductive beauty which inflames love. Of these the most attractive no doubt is sensibility, that soul of the soul which gives life to all its faculties. By this it was that Venus vanquished the indomitable god of war.

Oh woman! it is your sensibility which enrathals the ambitions of men. Wherever you have been free to enjoy your natural rights you have abolished barbarous training, slavery, torture, mutilation, the cross, the rack and the stake, stoning, hewing in pieces, and all the cruel deaths of antiquity, which were not so much the infictions of equitable justice as the revenge of the implacable polity. In every land you have been the first to honor the victims of tyranny by your tears, and to bring remorse home to the tyrant. Your natural pity gives you an instinct both for innocence and for true magnanimity. Your memory has embalmed and beautified the fame of those noble conquerors whose generous virtues protected the weak and especially those of your sex. Such was Cyrus, Alexander, Charlemagne; and but for you we should hold them no higher than Tamerlane, Bajazet, or Attila.

You are the blossoms of life. In your bosom does Nature renew the generations and the primary affections which develop their youth. You civilize the human race, and knit nations together more closely by marriage than diplomacy can bind them by treaties. You are the soul of industry and of commerce. It is to procure fresh pleasures for you that the maritime powers bring from India the richest products of the soil and sun. Pliny tells us that even in his day that trade was carried on chiefly on your behalf. You form, as it were, a vast network over all the earth, of
which the threads correspond in the past, the present and the future, and strengthen each other mutually. You cast fetters of flowers over the globe while the cruel passions of men are disputing for its empire.

It is for you, women of France, that the Indian girl of to-day produces the transparency of muslin and the brightest sheen of silk. It was for you that the daughters of Athens devised that convenient and graceful attire so admirably suited to modesty and beauty that the sage Fénélon preferred it to the stiff and gorgeous costumes of his time. The present fashion bids you wear it again and it adds to your natural charms. Mothers and nurses of our childhood, what influence your beauty superadds to your virtues! You are the queens of our opinions and our moral rule; you have perfected our tastes, our fashions, and our customs, by giving them simplicity.

You are the born judges of all that is decorous, gracious, good, right and heroic; you extend the influence of your judgment to all Europe and you have made Paris its centre.* It is within its walls, and under your eyes or inspired by memories of you, that our soldiers are fired to defend their country, and within those same walls foreign warriors, who have borne arms against them without success, come in crowds in the intervals of peace to forget their resentment at your feet.

Our language owes its clearness, its purity, its elegance and sweetness to you—all that is characteristically fresh and pleasing. You inspired and formed our greatest poets and most famous orators. You extend the protection of your circle to the lonely.

* This, it must be remembered, is the picture of a time when an Englishman completed his education by making "the grand tour;" when Italy and Germany were composed of several minor dominions, and Russia was still to a great extent barbarous.
writer who has had the good fortune to please you, and the misfortune to provoke adverse faction. Under your diffident glances, at the sweet tones of your voice, the boldest sophist is abashed, the fanatic feels that he is human, and the atheist that there is a God. Your appealing tears quench the torches of superstition and your heavenly smiles confute the cold arguments of the materialist.

Thus, on the Icelandic shore, after a long winter, Hecla, the volcano-crowned queen-mountain of those northern seas, vomits swathes of fire and smoke from her pyramids of ice which seem to defy the very skies. But as soon as the globe, under the sign of the Twins, turns the arctic pole towards the sun, the spring breezes which are born under the influence of the day-star add their warm breath to its scorching rays. Then the sides of the mountain thaw, a subterranean glow diffuses itself up to the frozen cupola and ere long undermines its hold. First its proud peaks topple headlong into the burning crater, putting out the fires, trickling through underground channels, and bursting out round its base in tall jets of black and boiling waters. The cavernous foundation totter on their pillars, slip and fall in immense blocks into the seas they had threatened to encroach on. The fearful thunder of their fall, the hollow roar of the torrents, the bellowing of the seals and sea-bears which inhabit them, are echoed in the distance from the cliffs of Horrillax and Waigatz. The nations dwelling on the Atlantic shore gaze with horror at these earth-stained icebergs as they float upside down along the coast. Swept down by their own currents, and taking fantastic shapes of temples or castles, they travel on to cool the torrid seas; and in those warmer waters these rocks, which returning winter will find no more, gradually melt away.
Meanwhile the mountain, bare and hideous, looms through the mist of melting snows and the last smoke of its volcano, showing its wasted slopes and primæval skeleton. Then the zephyrs, which have bereft it of its winter mantle, clothe it in the garb of spring. They fly in haste from the temperate zone, bearing on their wings the light seeds of vegetable life; they carpet its riven sides and gaping rents with mosses, grass and flowers. Birds of the land and sea build their nests there. In the course of years vast groves of pine and birch rise from its extinct craters. Renewed youth enters into it under the influence of the sun during a day that lasts for many months.

Nay, and its beauty is even enhanced by that of the long polar night: when, under cover of the darkness, Winter again occupies his throne, casting his ermine mantle over it and preparing the ocean for renewed cataclysms, the Moon completes her whole circle and reflects some rays of the invisible sun. The northern lights crown him with dancing fires and wave their radiant streamers round him. At this sign in the heavens the reindeer flee from even harsher climes; by the doubtful light, they descry Hecla rising from the midst of ice-bound seas and their belling is heard as they hasten to seek fresh pasture in its deepest valleys. Legions of swans trace wide spirals round the summit, and in their gladness at settling on that hospitable shore utter from their airy heights sounds unknown in our climates. The daughters of Ossian listen and pause in their nightly chase to answer these melodious harmonies on their harps, and there long new Pauls come to seek among them new Virginias.