

place with a stranger, would have been but a poor compliment paid to my fortitude, and betrayed suspicions which I thought prudent to conceal. But indeed there was little cause for either suspicion or alarm. A behaviour more distant and respectful I could not have wished for from my companion; who, during a pretty long walk homewards, informed me that he had but just arrived from Paris at his uncle's, Mr Beaumarché; that his stay would be only for a few weeks; during which time he hoped that the happy circumstance which had procured him so unexpected an interview, would be the means of producing a further acquaintance. I made no secret of my family and place of abode; and, before parting, assured him, that, after a proper introduction, I made no doubt of my father's readiness to shew a stranger every attention in his power during his residence in our neighbourhood. This I said without hesitation; from a wish to return a civil answer, and from a conviction that the

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introduction I mentioned would be attended with obstructions not easily removed.

I HAVE been the more circumstantial in relating these particulars (said Madame Bellanger); as they open a door to the most material parts of my history. The young gentleman, whom I am about to introduce to your acquaintance, was nephew to Monsieur Beaumarché, our near neighbour; who, of all men, was the most obnoxious to my father. A number of discordant circumstances, from the near vicinity of their properties, had for several years raised a kind of barrier between every social and neighbourly intercourse; which the opulence of the one, and the family consequence of the other, mutually tended to strengthen and increase. The Count, my father, with all his virtues, possessed that proud dignity which a consciousness of his birth and ancestry had implanted in his mind. His neighbour, on the contrary, had been bred a planter; had gone, at an early period, to the  
West

West Indies; where, having accumulated a large fortune, and left the management of his concerns abroad to a younger brother, had for some years been in Europe, in possession of the property adjoining to my father's estate. Monsieur Beaumarché, altho' destitute of those engaging manners and elegant attractions which constitute the polite gentleman, and mark the man of fashion, was nevertheless possessed of many excellent qualities. Endowed with plain strong masculine sense, he despised the frippery of polished exterior; possessed of ease, affluence, and a liberal mind, he laughed at the unsubstantial shadows of *title* and *ancestry*; and contented himself with a candid blunt demeanour to all men, however elevated or splendid their station. It may therefore be easily conceived, that two persons, so nearly situated, and so very opposite in their sentiments and manners, could hardly assimilate. The very first interview produced impressions highly repulsive to each; which finally ended in a total estrangement

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and mutual contempt. It was this situation of affairs which induced me to suppose, that every attempt to procure an introduction to the nephew of a man so disagreeable to my father would prove abortive ; nor was I mistaken in my opinion. A week had elapsed without my having heard any thing of young Beaumarché ; when early one morning my maid brought me a letter, which she said had been delivered by an unknown servant, who rode off immediately, saying it required no answer. On opening it, I found it was from my elegant intruder ; regretting, in the most disconsolate terms, the misunderstanding which so effectually precluded him from visiting me at my father's house ; and eagerly intreating another interview that evening in the same place ; where, to use his own words, he had lately been blessed with my society. A short struggle between *prudence* and *inclination* soon gave way to the latter. I had indeed, ever since my interview with this young stranger, experienced a restless inquietude of mind,

mind, till then unknown to me. My daily and my nightly thoughts still turned on the pleasant picture I had lately seen ; and even the certainty of the obstacles which obstructed our acquaintance, only served to quicken the ardour of once more seeing and conversing with a person who had prepossessed me so much in his favour. Secrecy and circumspection, however, were indispensable. I knew my father's sentiments and temper too well to doubt of severity if detected ; but as my constant evening excursions had in a manner sanctioned my absence, I was not without hopes that the interview requested might be granted with perfect safety.

ON repairing to the place appointed (which was the scene of our first interview), I found young Beaumarché waiting anxiously for my arrival. His appearance, although still more engaging if possible than formely, was, however, attended with a change of look and manner which struck me forcibly. In spite of an



assumed cheerfulness, it was evident that something had affected his mind since we last parted. A melancholy hung over him, which obscured, while it softened, the brilliancy of that vivacity which lately brightened his aspect : a pensive thoughtfulness accompanied every word and action, which, while it interested the feelings, gave an additional influence to all he said. When arrived at our favourite grotto, and seated with all the former beauties of object around us, he entreated I would once more favour him with a repetition of the musical air which at first attracted him, and had been the happy means of producing our acquaintance. “ It has dwelt on my mind and vibrated on my ear (said he, with a sigh) ever since I heard it!—it has been my companion by day and by night, and has occasioned sensations which it were in vain for me to describe.” But I shall not tire you (said Madame Bellanger) with a conversation which would be insipid to you, although at the time particularly interesting to me. I shall only, for connection’s sake, mention briefly what  
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what passed relative to his situation in life, his future prospects, and immediate engagements; all which he mentioned with an unpremeditated sincerity, which destroyed every suspicion, and with a pathos and passion which left lasting impressions behind.

His father, as I before observed, had, on the departure of his elder brother from Guadeloupe, been left sole manager of his property in that island; in which property he was jointly concerned. Having acquired an easy independency, and having no child but one son to inherit his fortune, he was desirous of giving him an education suited to his rank and expectations in life: for which purpose, he had, about five years ago, sent him home to receive all the advantages of the metropolis, and to improve himself by travel. Young Beaumarché had but just finished a two years tour through France, Spain, and Italy; and having arrived at an age which requires some eligible and permanent establishment, his father had pressingly written

for his return, which was finally fixed at the distance of only a few weeks. “It is this short period (said he), Mademoiselle de V——, which has induced me to use every method in my power to obtain an introduction to your family; and which having failed to procure, impelled me to solicit this interview, for which obliging condescendence, on your part, I have not words to express my gratitude. All I have to request is, that since our acquaintance has been brought about by so unforeseen, and to me so fortunate, an accident; since it has already yielded me so much pleasure, and since it is to be of such short duration—let me entreat that it may not be interrupted. Do not, Mademoiselle (said he, taking my hand in the most expressive, yet submissive manner), do not deprive me of the happiness of seeing you daily, and enjoying the innocent luxury of your conversation, during my short residence in this country! I know this is a favour I have no title to expect. I am an entire stranger to you; and the unhappy misunderstanding subsisting  
between



between the Count your father and my uncle, perhaps may induce you to shun the society of so near a connection. The last idea I cannot prevail on myself to entertain, as it is an injury at once offered to your goodness and your understanding. As to the first obstacle, I am hopeful it will soon be removed. I have been made to understand, that an intimacy and epistolary correspondence subsist between you and my particular friend Madame ——. To her I have already written; and I flatter myself, that by to-morrow morning you will receive, from under her own hand, such intelligence relative to me and my family as will not displease you."

WERE it not for a little prudery, in other words *insincerity*, we women, Madame Penguin, in all likelihood, would succeed less with the men, and become still greater dupes to flattery and deceit. Although nothing could have been more agreeable to me than a compliance with Beaumarché's request, a sense of propriety,

propriety, joined to a secret pride, which should never forsake us, enabled me to reject his entreaties on the score of imprudence, and the risk of incurring a father's displeasure. "I see no absolute harm, Monsieur (said I), in a lady meeting a gentleman of honour and character, and enjoying the innocent pleasure of rational and agreeable conversation in any place ; but, independent of the door which secret interviews with a stranger would unquestionably open for calumny and general criticism, what purpose could such interviews possibly answer between you and me ? You seem perfectly acquainted with the cause which prevents a correspondence and cordiality between our connections. Why, therefore, should we furnish subject for observation to others, displeasure to our friends, and pain to ourselves, merely to indulge an idle and unimportant propensity to enjoy each others company for a week or two ? You certainly have not weighed the consequences annexed to a compliance with your request, otherwise you never would have

have made it. The thing is impossible. *Prudence, propriety, decorum*, forbid it ; nay, every thing is against it."

THESE observations, which I thought unanswerable, produced no other effect on Beaumarché than an increased melancholy and gloom. After a solemn pause of some minutes, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his whole countenance expressive of despondency and affliction, "What slaves ! (said he) what wretched slaves does CUSTOM make of us all ! Here, while bounteous Nature revels in delight, and while universal love and harmony reigns around, are we debarred from the participation of enjoyment, which neither virtue can disapprove, nor innocence condemn, merely because custom has established laws for decorum, and grovelling suspicion awakened sentiments repugnant to every liberal and dignified mind ! And what (said he), after all, do those sage and admirable regulations produce ? Do they make women more virtuous, or men  
more

more honourable? Are the first rendered more tender, faithful, and affectionate; or the other more loving, constant, and sincere? Alas! that warbler that sings on the spray to cheer the solitude of his sitting mate; yon turtle that daily cooes fondly in the shade; and the nightingale that, in the absence of his lost companion, mourns nightly through the grove;—may answer the question. CUSTOM never regulated *their* affections; *Slander*, or *Malice*, never checked the ardour of their flame. NATURE, and Nature alone, made *them* tender, faithful, and attentive: but it would seem, that woman, without culture, is incapable of such virtues; or that man is the most treacherous and savage monster of the field!"

"COME, come, my good Sir (said I, willing to conceal the effects which the ardour and dignity of his sentiments had produced), come, come, we must not quarrel with restrictions which experience has established, merely because they may interfere with the temporary objects of  
our

our gratification. Institutions of decorum are as necessary to regulate human conduct, as laws to prevent and punish the commission of crimes. If they do not make the virtuous better, they at least tend to prevent the vicious from growing worse.”—“ True, Madam (said Beaumarché); but is it consistent with justice, equity, or reason, to treat the virtuous and the flagitious alike? The infliction of punishment, however mild, is surely authorised by no law till after the crime is committed and proven; but according to the institutions which malice and illiberality establish as the guardians of female virtue, *suspicion* alone is sufficient to constitute the crime; and the jury, without hearing evidence, or examining proof, instantly bring in their verdict GUILTY. How monstrous! how absurd (said he), for instance, are the regulations established in this country for the conduct of women in different stations! Here, while a *married* woman may with impunity indulge in liberties which, I do maintain, are not only scandalously indelicate,

but



but altogether repugnant to the nature of a state where decency and decorum ought invariably to preside ; a young girl dare not, without immediate loss of character, gratify inclinations which, in the eye of reason, virtue, and nature, are harmless and irreproachable. Instead of a behaviour which, on all occasions, ought to mark a preference, and an unmixed affection for the object of her choice, a *married* woman in France proclaims, in the face of the world, her favourites and paramours ; who, at all times, are admitted to her presence, and lay claim to privileges which none but a husband has a title to expect.—They visit her in secret ; they attend her to select parties where a husband's face never appears ; they are admitted to her toilet at the hour she is dressing ; nay, to her bedchamber previous to her getting up ; and all this with the most unblushing familiarity on her part, and without the smallest censure from her fellow-citizens. To reprobate, or to dispute, these shameless practices, would be to raise a whole host of

matrons

matrons against us; and yet a poor affectionate girl cannot take a private walk with the object of her regard, or grant one stolen interview to the man of her heart, without the immediate risk of receiving a stab to her reputation; which, to a delicate and susceptible mind, can never be repaired. No! (said Beaumarché, warmed with the subject) No! it is impossible to defend such barbarous absurdities. CUSTOM has ever been a monster that has tyrannized over reason, justice, and humanity; and, in all its barbarities, it has ever been the most savage and tyrannical to LOVE. I have often bestowed serious thought on this subject; and I have not a doubt remaining, that, so far are these unnatural severities favourable to female virtue and purity of mind, effects diametrically opposite are often the immediate consequence. A young creature, subjected from a certain age to incessant suspicion, and governed by restraint, can never acquire that dignity of mind which springs from conscious rectitude and self applause, grafted

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on the approbation of others. To withhold confidence, is to suspect purity; and that is the most effectual way to undermine it. It debases her in her own opinion, blunts the finer sensations of delicacy and honour, and strips the mind of that elevation and pride which aid and accompany true virtue. But, independent of these, I do maintain, that such unjust and absurd restraints tend materially to injure and destroy the best and brightest ornament of the sex. Unreasonable severities on one side, must necessarily produce *artifice, deceit, and falsehood*, on the other. And what is WOMAN (said Beaumarché, in a solemn tone) without TRUTH? What the fairest face without the heavenly traits of sincerity and candour? Can we clasp such a fancied jewel to our hearts without feeling its coldness and impurity? Can we deposit in such a casket our most precious treasures, for a moment, without trembling for their safety?

“ BUT I mean not (continued Beaumarché),  
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by what I have said, to overturn your sentiments, Mademoiselle, far less to subject you, on my account, to any thing disagreeable, or injurious to your reputation. God forbid I should ! I cannot, however, help observing, that our meeting here, occasionally, is very unlikely to produce the last circumstance. A different path to that by which you return home leads me to my uncle's house ; so that our interviews in this spot can never be suspected by those who may chance to observe our evening or our morning excursions. At all events, you cannot refuse me the satisfaction of knowing if you have heard from my friend Madame ———. I shall therefore hope, at least, for the happiness of seeing you here to-morrow evening at the usual hour." My silence, which proceeded from a total inability to answer such a torrent of passionate eloquence, wearing the semblance, if not of consent, at least of hesitation ; he very artfully precluded an answer, which might have led to farther obstacles, by taking an abrupt departure.

It may well be supposed, that the foregoing doctrine of Beaumarché's was not heard by me with indifference. Whatever were the truths it contained (and I doubt much if the most rigid moral casuist can altogether overturn them), it was principally the manner and manly sentiments of the speaker, that left impressions which I could not obliterate. If this young stranger (said I to myself as I returned pensively home) is not a man of pure principles and honour, he must be one of the first hypocrites on earth.—But it is ungenerous and unkind to suspect him. Every word and look, expressive of his feelings, evince the sincerity of his sentiments. But, alas! (said I, reflecting on his connections and approaching departure from Europe) what are his principles, his looks, or his sentiments, to me! At supper, my father observed my melancholy, and inquired after my health. All night on my pillow did the day's animated scene dwell on my remembrance. All night, till the morning sun broke through my casement, did I struggle



struggle against my inclinations, and seriously examine the impropriety of my late conduct; nor did I drop into slumbers till (convinced of my danger) I determined in my mind not to meet the bewitching youth again. But these, alas! were only the commencement of my inquietudes, afflictions, and broken repose!

THE next morning brought me a letter from Madame ———, who gave me an account of young Beaumarché and his connections which I little expected. His family was noble; but the grandfather, from a train of unfortunate events, having been obliged, about fifty or sixty years back, to dispose of the family estate, had judiciously dropt the idle sound of title, and, establishing himself in the wine business at Bourdeaux, educated his two sons to the profession of merchants. The picture she drew of my young West Indian friend was flattering in an eminent degree. No young gentleman, she said, had ever reflected more honour on his friends, or had given more delight to

his acquaintance. He was respected by the honourable, admired by the generous, and beloved by the humane. His life (said Madame —), young as he is, has been a series of actions dignified and benevolent; while the excellence of his understanding, and the brilliancy of his wit, make his society courted by all, but particularly by our sex. We are about to lose him; and every brow is overclouded on the occasion, for his loss will be irreparable.

THIS letter was a bad cordial to enable me to carry into execution my late determination, to withdraw myself in time from a temptation which I easily perceived was increasing, and which, I plainly foresaw, might lead to consequences at once disagreeable and distressing. But weak and ineffectual are the suggestions of *prudence*, when opposed by *affection*. A temporary struggle may indeed occur; but it is like the resistance of the winds to the waves of the ocean. They may retard, for a short time, their course; but it only serves to raise them

them higher and higher, till, disdaining every obstacle, they break with redoubled violence on the shore ! Such, at least, was my case. Every day produced a new interview ; at every interview affection grew stronger, till love, tenderness, and compassion, rose uncontrolled, and bore down all resistance before them. Reflections, however, and these not of the most pleasant nature, would frequently obtrude, even in the hour of felicity, and poison every enjoyment. Something eternally whispered me, that our interviews, sooner or later, would be discovered, and produce consequences injurious to my character, or destructive of my peace. On these occasions, I seldom failed to remonstrate seriously with Beaumarché on the impropriety and folly of our meetings : but he either reasoned down my objections with his eloquence, or dissipated my apprehensions with his vivacity. My inquietude, however, did not fail to affect a mind like his sensibly ; and, as he contrived every expedient to banish my fears and soothe my agitations, he one morning

ing presented me with the following effusion of his pathetic muse ; which, independent of the passion and sentiment it breathes, conveys such a picture of the writer's mind, that I have ever since kept it as one of the most precious relics of our affection. In saying this, Madame Bellanger pulled out her pocket-book, and read "*La Remonstrance* ;" of which the following, I am afraid, is but a faint and feeble translation.

### THE REMONSTRANCE.

" Haste ! haste ! my lov'd LAURA !—away to  
the grove,

One evening, enraptur'd, I said ;  
Mild beams gild the upland, the mead, and al-  
cove,

And melody bursts round the glade !

The lark, with his female, soars warbling on  
high ;

The thrush cheers his mate in the dell ;

The

The stream from the mountain foams murmur-  
ing by,  
While Echo repeats from her cell.

The turtle's fond cooings come soft on the  
gale,  
With fragrance flung fresh from the thorn;  
And soon Philomela will pour her lone wail,  
And call her lost lover till morn.

—Haste! join the full chorus with lute and  
with song,  
Ere eve spreads her mantle of grey;  
—Haste! haste! my lov'd warbler—we've tar-  
ried too long:  
See!—*Vesper* proclaims parting day!"

"Ah, EDMOND! (the fair one replied with a  
smile)

How warm! how persuasive thy strain!  
'Tis the language of NATURE! (a stranger to  
guile)

And Nature should ne'er plead in vain.

If



If with passion so ardent my Edmond can  
plead,

When distant from streamlet or grove,  
What ! what will he say, when around bower  
and mead

All Nature breathes fragrance and love ?

When the *lark* with his consort soars blithe-  
some and free ;

When the *thrush* cheers his mate on the  
thorn ;

Will my Edmond not envy each pair that we  
see,

Unchill'd by cold prudence or scorn ?

When the *turtle* bills fondly, or cooes thro'  
the shade,

Wilt thou cease then thy love-melting lay ?  
And when Philomel plaintively mourns round  
the glade,

Ah ! what will my moralist say ?”

“ O !

O, LOVE ! how bewitching ! how *constant*  
thy power !”

(It is thus thou would’st sighing complain)

When present, soft melody fills every bower ;

When absent, ’tis sorrow and pain !

For thee, lonely mourner \* ! who pour’st thy  
sad lay,

No partner with love beats the wing !

Yet hark ! how yon choristers sport on each  
spray ;—

Hark ! hark ! how they flutter and sing !

No sorrow—no plaining, *their* transports annoy ;

’Tis harmony fills all the grove !

No female affects to be distant and coy,

But each chirps the language of love.

Ah ! why then should Nature (sweet nurse of  
delight !)

Ah !

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\* The Nightingale.

Ah ! why should she e'er be suppress'd ?  
And why, my lov'd Laura, when transports  
excite,  
Conceal the best joys of the breast ?"

" 'Tis thus thou would'st reason—thus pen-  
sive complain ;  
Thus falsely Love's sufferings rehearse ;  
For say, when did passion adorn Edmond's  
strain,  
That Laura was deaf to the verse ?

With thee should I wander the woodlands  
among,  
And hail the full choir on the spray ;  
Enrapt join the concert, with lute and with song,  
Till eve spread her mantle of grey.

But, ah ! my false reasoner ! will transports  
repel  
The shafts that too quickly will wound ?

Will

Will SLANDER's shrill pipe not be heard in  
the dell,

When Echo reverb'rates the sound?

Will the dove's cooing murmurs each whif-  
per controul,

Falſe—cruel—illiberal, and mean?

Will the warm throb of Nature expand ev'ry  
ſoul

Contracted with envy and ſpleen?

No! no, fond declaimer! nor tranſport, nor  
youth,

Nor Nature's ſoft mandates avail;

Nor all the mild dictates of virtue and truth,  
While cuſtom's ſtern precepts prevail.

For theſe (by inſtancy render'd unkind),

Strict limits have mark'd for the fair;

Cold *prudence* muſt triumph o'er *paſſion* refin'd,  
Till Hymen the chaplet prepare.

Alas! does decorum then reſt on a vow?

O

Or

Or modesty spring from a tie ?  
Do truth, love, and constancy, dwell on the  
bough,  
And from *woman* alone do they fly ?

Sing on, then, sweet warblers !—ah ! cease not  
the strain !

Go—flutter and bill through the grove !  
But talk not, my Edmond, of woman's disdain,  
While *Custom's the tyrant of Love !*"

BUT the day now approached when my dear  
and valued companion was to depart ; and the  
nearer it approached, the more urgent was he  
to obtain my consent to make me his for ever.  
“ He claimed not (he said) any thing but the  
power of calling me his own. He only wished  
to secure me, previous to his departure, be-  
yond all the chances and risks of Fortune. He  
had prepared his uncle for the occasion ; who  
had given his consent, and would himself wit-  
ness our union. His stay in the West Indies  
would



would not be for any length of time. Letters which he carried out from his uncle to his father, would finally settle and arrange matters so as to enable him to return to Europe in less than a twelvemonth; and then (said he) should all conciliating measures fail with your father, I shall claim you as my lawful wife in defiance of every opposition. I wish not, my dear Harriette (continued he), to break through the established laws of society; far less to destroy the bonds of duty and filial affection; but *I cannot think* of leaving carelessly behind me such a jewel to be crushed by the unrelenting hand of pride and caprice, or cast upon a polluted soil, where its lustre will never appear." It was now I experienced the effects of a situation which I once foresaw, once dreaded, but could not shun. The thoughts of a clandestine union, without the approbation of my parents, or the knowledge of any of my connections, filled me with horror; and yet the idea of parting from the object of my fondest affections, on whose sincerity and honour I reposed the

utmost confidence, inclined me to bind myself nearer and more firmly to all I held dear and valuable on earth. In short (said Madame Belanger), in a rash moment I yielded consent; and early on the morning preceding the day of his departure, a priest, in the presence of old M. Beaumarché and his wife, united us, in the favourite grotto, for ever.

THE ceremony was hardly over, till I experienced a depression of spirits which I had never before felt, and which I could by no means account for. A cold lifeless torpor seized my heart, chilled every comfort, and deadened every joy. “ *The lark, with his female, soar’d blithesome and free;*” and the turtle, in an adjoining thicket, “ *bill’d fondly, and coo’d through the shade;*” while I remained insensible to love, and seemed stupified with the very event which so lately I so ardently wished for. A mental monitor still told me that I had done wrong; a secret admonisher whispered to me to beware of the consequences. I had, like a thief  
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in the night, clandestinely done what should have met the face of day. I had executed, irrevocably, a deed repugnant to the duty of a child, and ungenerous to the best of parents. These reflections and sensations continued to occupy and distress my mind during my return home through a long and lonely wood, at the outskirts of which I met my father. A gravity, mixed with severity, sat on his brow; and, as he approached me, I thought I perceived an evident suspicion in his eye. "Where have you been, Harriette (said he, with a look that seemed to search my inmost thought)? where have you been so early?"—"Taking my morning's walk, Sir" (said I).—"Your *morning* walks (said he) used not to be so frequent; but of late both your morning and your *evening* walks have been wonderfully regular. But it is near the time of breakfast; go home and prepare it: when it is over, I shall expect some private conversation with you." To a mind impressed with guilt, or impropriety of conduct, every thing is alarming. My father's

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look,

look, manner, and address, convinced me that I had been detected; which occasioned such a tremor, that it was with difficulty I reached home. At breakfast you may be sure appetite was not keen. As soon as it was over, my mother retired, and left me alone with my father; who addressed me nearly in the following terms :

“ I BELIEVE, Harriette, since your earliest remembrance you have found me a kind and an indulgent father. From your infancy, my unwearied endeavours have been applied to the improvement of a mind, where I wished to implant the sentiments of virtue with those of a becoming dignity, and the feelings of true honour with that of a proper pride. It is but justice to say, that in all your conduct you have hitherto amply repaid me for my labours; and the comforts which I have derived from your obedience, virtues, and acquirements, have shed a healing balm on every pain, and given pride and exultation to my heart. Judge, then,

then, how sensibly I must feel should the smallest speck fully the purity of a conduct which till now has remained irreproachable. Judge what tortures I should experience, were any part of your behaviour tinged with levity, meanness, or disgrace.—The purport of this introduction I shall now explain.

“ A YOUNG man for some weeks past has visited these parts, whom I am informed is nephew to that fellow Beaumarché. I have met him occasionally; and it must be confessed that appearance is in his favour, and had he not been connected with such a brute as his uncle, I should have marked him as a gentleman, and as a stranger invited him to my house. I have been informed, that some time ago, you was seen walking on Beaumarché’s property with a gentleman, who, by the description, could have been no other than the person I have mentioned; and I have been further informed, that this happened at a pretty late hour in the evening. It is to obtain full  
informa-



information relative to these particulars that I have now demanded this private interview; and I warn you (continued he, with a look of severity), as you value your peace, and dread my displeasure, to beware of a deviation from the strictest veracity."

HAD not the commencement of my father's address (which was kind and affecting) drawn some tears from me, I should not have been able to have spoken at all: these, however, joined with certain circumstances, which induced me to suppose that only *part* of my conduct had been discovered, enabled me to return the following answer; which, though literally true, illustrated but too well Beaumarché's strictures on *duplicity*:

"My being on M. Beaumarché's property, Sir, was merely accidental. The fineness of the evening invited me to extend my walk, farther than I usually do, to the opposite bank, so remarkable for its beauties, and so favourable  
for

for retirement. On my return home, I met a young gentleman whom I had never, till that moment, seen, and whom, perhaps, after to-morrow I shall never see again. I knew nothing either of him or his connections; consequently I could have had no premeditated intention of meeting him: and those who have been officious enough to communicate the intelligence, might have been better employed, than in filling your ears with such insignificant circumstances, and your mind with suspicions to my prejudice.”—“And this is *all* (said my father, gravely)?”—“*All!* (said I, with some hesitation) The young gentleman walked and conversed with me till I was out of his uncle’s property, and then left me.”—“And you have never seen him since?”—“Yes (said I), repeatedly.”—“Where (said my father, eagerly)?”—“On his uncle’s property while I was walking on the opposite bank.”—“And who told you (continued my father), that he was to depart hence to-morrow?”—“Himself (said I); he informed me at our first meeting, that his  
time

time was limited to a certain day, when he was to leave this country, and sail for the West Indies.”—“ And, pray, how came such minute intelligence to be communicated on so short an acquaintance, Harriette ?”—“ I really do not recollect the circumstances which led to it, Sir (said I), but I presume it is of very little consequence.” My father looked stedfastly in my face for above a minute, and then, without saying a word, got up and walked out of the room.

I COULD not help ruminating on the narrow escape I had made, while a secret compunction told me that I had acted unworthily. Ah! (said I to myself) Beaumarché in this, as in every thing else which regards *honour* and *veracity*, is right! Nothing can be more scandalously mean than subterfuges to gloss over truth and mislead sincerity; and certainly nothing more likely to contaminate and debase the female mind, than a repetition of such artifices! But these reflections continued not long.

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The evening, which was to put a final close to a delightful and tender intercourse, and which was appointed for our last farewell, dwelt on my mind, and banished every other consideration. At dinner, my father's gravity still continued; his eye seemed to watch my every look and action; and I believe it was but too evident from both that all was not at peace at home. At the hour appointed, I hurried to the place, where I was confident I should meet affliction. As I approached the grotto, a shivering seized me, which nearly bereft me of the power of motion. My faithful and affectionate friend had been waiting with impatience; and running with ardour to meet me, was astonished at the paleness which o'erspread my countenance, and at the lifeless coldness with which I received his caresses. "What is the matter, my love? (said he, with emotion) Whence this trembling, paleness, and dejection?"—"O, Beaumarché! (said I) I know not what it is; but something lies at my heart which overpowers me, and fills me with terror.

I know not what to think of it ; but ever since the ceremony this morning, it has hung heavily upon me ; and something still tells me, either that we shall meet no more, or that some dreadful event is to befall me.”—“ Away with such chimeras (said Beaumarché, clasping me to his bosom) ; it is but the idea of *parting*, my love, that operates on the gentleness of your nature, and fills you with apprehensions. But be comforted, my dearest Harriette ! the time will soon arrive when all these dismal phantoms will vanish, and a sun of happiness break through the gloom that now surrounds you. A few months will soon pass over ; a few months *re-unite and bind us for ever !*” These endearing and reviving sentiments were accompanied with the most passionate embraces ; in the midst of which (Merciful heaven ! I can hardly think of it now without shuddering) who should rush into the grotto but—my FATHER !

My terror and confusion were such, that I remained stupified and immoveable, while circumstances



cumstances occurred that might well have roused me—I remember to have heard my father address Beaumarché by the epithet of *villain*—I remember to have seen them both suddenly leave the grotto—I likewise remember to have heard the clashing of swords; and Beaumarché, with a loud and solemn voice, exclaim, “Hear me, Monsieur le Comte—urge me not to what my heart recoils from;” and yet I remained petrified and immoveable, like the insensible mass of rock on which I sat. How long I continued in this agitated dream I know not; but Beaumarché’s re-entering the grotto, pale and bloody, effectually awakened me. “Run, my dear Harriette (said he hastily); run to your father. His rashness, I much fear, has undone us all! Haste, my love! attend him till I send assistance: you shall soon see me again. In distraction, I flew out of the grotto; (but may no such spectacle ever meet the eye of a daughter!) I found my father, at the distance of some paces, lying on his right side, half raised on his elbow; his face inclined to

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the ground; his left hand placed near his heart; his clothes drenched in blood. On my approach, he raised his head, and giving me a look, which I can never banish from my remembrance, exclaimed, in a languid voice, "*Ah, Harriette! Harriette! Is this the reward of my kindness?*" I had but just strength sufficient to stagger to the dreadful spot, lay my cheek close to his pallid face, and sink senseless by his side. What followed I know not. The first circumstances I recollect were my being in bed in my own apartment, my maid weeping by me, and my mother chafing my temples. A short time disclosed a scene which my recent situation had shut out from me; and which, as soon as my strength and spirits would permit, my mother communicated to the following purport:

My father, on his being carried home by those whom Beaumarché had dispatched to his assistance, and on the surgeon's dressing the wound without pronouncing any thing decisive

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five relative to the event, addressed his attendants in these words: "As it is uncertain what state of body and mind I may be in a few hours hence, and as I am now enabled to reveal the cause of my present situation, I conceive it but justice to disclose what, if kept secret, might perhaps hereafter affect the life and character of a fellow-creature." He then briefly related, that, impelled by an ungovernable fury, he had first given Beaumarché abusive language, and then insisted on his drawing his sword on the spot: That Beaumarché had repeatedly intreated him to listen for a few moments to what he had to declare, but to no purpose; and that while my father advanced to attack him, Beaumarché continued retreating on the defensive, still urging him, for God's sake, to attend to what he had to communicate: That, in retreating, Beaumarché's foot having encountered the stump of a tree, occasioned him, after staggering a few paces backwards, to fall; and that my father, hastily advancing, and encountering the same obstruction, fell likewise,

and, in his fall, the extended sword of Beaumarché entered his left side near his heart: That when Beaumarché had disengaged himself, and found how matters stood, his conduct (to use my father's own words) was humane, manly, and affecting. "Had I known (said he) as much of this young man previous to this rash action, I might have acted otherwise; but it is now too late to reflect. All I have to add is, that whatever may be the consequence of my imprudence, the fault was all my own; the young man was perfectly innocent."

As my poor father had foreseen, a short time made a very considerable change on both body and mind. A fever, accompanied with delirium, continued for eight days; at the end of which, having recovered the use of his reason, I received a message to attend him. On my entering his chamber, he desired every one but my mother to leave the room; and having seated myself, by his desire, at the side of his bed,

bed, he addressed me nearly in the following words :

“ I have sent for you, Harriette, previous to my dissolution, that you might receive from my own lips a declaration that I die in peace with a child whom I have ever tenderly loved, and to whom, notwithstanding the impropriety of her late conduct, I wish every future happiness. All I have now to intreat is, that you will plainly and candidly relate what has passed between you and the young man who has accidentally been the cause of my present misfortune, as I cannot compose my mind to perfect serenity while an ambiguity hangs over the honour of my family. You have already dealt disingenuously with me ; I hope you will not now, as there is nothing from a dying father you have to fear.” As soon as the excess of grief allowed me utterance, I, without disguise, disclosed every circumstance which had passed between Beaumarché and me, not even concealing our marriage ; and having Madame



———'s letter in my pocket, I took it out and read it, together with one I had likewise received from a near relation of our own, relative to Beaumarché's character and connections. "Read that letter over again" (said my father, meaning Madame ——'s). I did so: at the conclusion of which I heard him, with an elevated and emphatic tone of voice, say, "*Bon!*" After a short pause, he stretched out his hand, and taking mine, with a look expressive of resignation and joy, said, "*I now die in peace; my honour is not tarnished by your conduct, nor my family disgraced by the connection.* Had I known these particulars in time, Harriette, my folly would not have been so great; but I feel the hand of death cold upon me. Farewell! Be kind to each other; and may Almighty God make you both happy!" So saying, he extended his other hand to my mother, and in a few moments breathed his last.

SUCH (said Madame Bellanger, with a flood of tears) was the close of a scene of concealment

ment and duplicity on my part; and such the consequences of a clandestine union, entered into without the knowledge and approbation of those who had cherished me with the utmost tendernefs, and treated me with unremitting indulgence! Let none (continued she, looking at her daughter) imagine that a behaviour so difingenuous can ever be confiftent with filial duty, or agreeable to the dictates of morality. Candour in every part of our own conduct, and confidence in those whom we love and have cause to esteem, are never-failing sources of serenity and pleasure; because, *whatever* may be the consequence, something whispers, even in the hour of disappointment, that we have acted our part with propriety. “But what if parents are altogether unreasonable and rigid (said Mademoiselle Antoinnette).”—“It is then time enough to counteract their severity (said her mother). At all events, young women, whose affections are engaged, are very improper judges of their own conduct. By opening their minds to a parent,

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if they meet not with their approbation, they will at least hear their objections; and these often are not unworthy of serious attention. But I have already encroached too much on your patience. (said Madame Bellanger): to-morrow I shall resume my narrative, and conclude a series of trials, the remembrance of which are still painful; and which I shall therefore communicate as briefly as the circumstances will admit."

THE next evening, having again repaired to our former situation in the plantain walk, Madame Bellanger resumed her history as follows.

"A few days after the decease of my father, I received a letter from Beaumarché, intimating his immediate departure for the West Indies. Some months after brought me intelligence of his safe arrival at Guadaloupe, and of his determination to return to Europe the moment he arranged matters with his father, and

and was assured he could return with safety. During this dreary interval of separation, I continued close at Pierpoint; my spirits suppressed with the recent calamity of our family; deprived of the only person who could administer comfort and consolation; and brooding over a melancholy train of ideas, arising from an uncertainty of ever beholding the object of my affections again. My poor mother, as may well be supposed, was, of all others, the least qualified to alleviate my sufferings, and dissipate the gloom that hung over me. My brother, on the death of my father, had returned from the university; and although reconciled to my union, and disposed to entertain favourable sentiments of Beaumarché, was nevertheless too young and giddy to afford those soothing attentions which a mind agitated like mine required. Old Beaumarché, indeed, and his lady did every thing in their power to assuage my sufferings, and kindle a hope of future joy and tranquillity in my mind: and as a perfect harmony now subsisted between their family  
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and our's, my residence was principally with the old people at Bellevue; the near vicinity of which to Pierpoint, enabled me to dedicate a daily portion of my time to my mother. But it was not at Bellevue that my heart could experience repose; every object, every haunt, recalled the remembrance of circumstances, which terminated in melancholy, grief, and remorse! If, inadvertently, I struck into any path that led to the grotto of *love* and *death*, I started back with horror and affright. If, accidentally, I encountered the stream, the harbour, or the tree, where tenderness and worth had often detained me till "*Eve spread her mantle of grey*," my sighs and tears burst instantaneously, and left me a victim to sorrow and despair. At length, after twelve tedious melancholy months, the happy period arrived, when the object of all my fond hopes and wishes returned, and flew to my embraces with the transports of undiminished love. As soon as decency and attention to our friends would permit, we left those



those gloomy abodes of former misfortune, and repaired to Paris; where, for two years, we partook of every happiness which agreeable association, easy fortune, and the most perfect affection, could bestow. In this period, our joys were increased by the birth of this young woman who now listens to this melancholy recital. But the joys of life, and their stability (said Madame Bellanger), are generally in proportion to their ardour, and mine were *too* rapturous to last!

AT this time, letters arriving from Beaumarché's father, acquainting him of his declining state of health, and strongly soliciting his presence in Guadaloupe, we prepared for our immediate departure; leaving this young pledge of our love behind for the benefit of her education.

WE arrived but in time to witness my poor father-in-law's decease.—A mournful welcome to these regions, and an ominous preface of the trials that awaited me! M. Beaumarché, on  
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his father's death, took an immediate charge of the valuable properties he left behind him; consisting of two sugar estates, one of coffee, and about 800 Negroes. Being a man of universal benevolence and humanity, his chief attention was directed to the comfort and happiness of those wretched sons and daughters of adversity, whom misfortune had doomed to perpetual slavery. Accustomed to scenes where festivity and freedom had brightened the pastimes of those with whom he had spent his early days on the continent of Europe, he could not behold the fun of liberty set on thousands around him, without sighing for calamity, and endeavouring, by every indulgence, to meliorate their condition, and cheer their hours of captivity. In vain did his managers and neighbours represent the impropriety and danger annexed to a suddenly relaxed system: In vain did his friends intreat him to introduce *gradually* and *imperceptibly* changes which, as they were unusual and unexpected, might otherwise lead to a want of due subordination among the slaves, and prove destructive

destructive, not only to himself, but to the general safety of the community. Beaumarché, impelled by an enthusiasm of humanity, and an indignation flowing from a sense of oppression, despised suggestions, which he considered in no other light than as the sneaking instigations of interest and callous insensibility to the sufferings of the unfortunate. “No! (exclaimed he) it shall *never* be said that I acquiesce in such detestable doctrines. The love of FREEDOM is implanted in every breast; and comfort, relaxation, and mirth, are privileges peculiar to no set of men upon earth. They are the gifts of heaven, to soothe and deaden the pangs of adversity; nor is it the colour of a skin, or the texture of a frame, that can operate to their exclusion. Since destiny, or chance, or whatever it may be called, has doomed these miserables to the wretched lot of bondage on my property, shall I not endeavour to render that bondage as easy as possible? Shall I not try to lighten the chains that weigh

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them down and gall them to the quick? and shall I not, when the heavy task of labour ceases, make them, by a few comforts, lie down on a bed of repose; and, on the day of relaxation, by a few indulgences, make them rise up to merriment and joy? By the God of JUSTICE and MERCY (said Beaumarché) I will; and, if I err, I am confident that the same justice and mercy will acquit me!"

SUCH were the resolutions of Beaumarché, founded on principles the most generous and benevolent; and these resolutions he carried into immediate execution. Convinced that the usual labour established on sugar properties was too great to insure health, vigour, and spirits to the slave, he remitted two hours daily exertion; namely, one hour in the evening, which enabled the Negroes to prepare their supper in time, and to enjoy a longer, and consequently a more refreshing repose; and half an hour longer at breakfast and at dinner,

ner, as a relaxation from fatigue, and an additional spring to succeeding labour. During these intervals, it was Beaumarché's particular object to light up the Negro mind to cheerfulness; not only to deaden the thought of approaching toil, but to render that toil light-some by the prospect of succeeding comforts. "To hold up an unvaried picture of dreary exertion (said he) is, of all methods, the most effectual to depress the mind, and to plunge it into despondency. To shut out the little joys and pastimes of recreation from those who, alas! have little else to look up to, is to exclude every relief of light from the piece, and to exhibit a successive combination of dark shades, as uninteresting to the eye as it is dismal to the imagination. Let them therefore be happy, poor souls, when they can (said Beaumarché to his managers and overseers); and when the hour of labour commences let them be *busy*: but I will have no cutting and flashing on my property without my immediate knowledge. Punishment must, and shall



be, inflicted for crimes and misdemeanours; but *never* by the wantonness of passion or the caprice of power."

IN addition to these immunities, Beaumarché subjoined the privilege of another day in each week, as a recess from general labour, and as the means of affording the Negro a *complete holiday*. "You give them (said he) Sunday to themselves as a day of rest and recreation; but, pray, how is this accomplished? This is the only day they have to cultivate their grounds, carry their provisions to market, and travel often between twenty and thirty miles before they return with the rewards of their industry. Is this a day of *rest*? can it be called a day of *recreation*? On the contrary, I do maintain, it is one of the most laborious the Negro has in the week. How, then, can he possibly look forward to it as a day of approaching comfort? He shall (except during crop time) have *Saturday* to look after, and arrange, his own little concerns, and Sunday to enjoy

enjoy as he pleases. It may then, with some truth, be said that the Negro once a-week has a *holiday*." This last mark of Beaumarché's philanthropy was the rock he afterwards split upon, and proved the fatal cause of his ruin, and that of all his unhappy connections.—

"That I could have easily predicted (said Mr Penguin, who had joined us a short time before, and who listened attentively to this part of Madame Bellanger's narrative), that I could have easily predicted; for a more wild and imprudent system; I think, I never yet heard of."

"*Pardonnez moi, Monsieur* (said Madame Bellanger); without any partiality to Monsieur Beaumarché, I think I may venture to assert, that, excepting the over indulgence of *two succeeding* days of freedom in the week, which unquestionably was imprudent, every other part of his system was as judicious as it was humane. But I shall hasten to a conclusion, and furnish you with more convincing reasons for my holding this opinion.

FOR nearly twelve months, Beaumarché experienced all the satisfaction which a generous and compassionate mind feels on perceiving the good effects of institutions founded on justice and mercy. His slaves increased daily in strength, health, and cheerfulness; and even his managers and neighbours, while they reprobated the system, were forced to confess that they were the finest looking Negroes in the island. In the meanwhile, every thing went on with alacrity and pleasure. The dance and the song went hand in hand with labour; the sound of the *tom tom* and the *bangah* was nightly heard on the estate; the Sunday was devoted to jollity; and entertainments, such as constitute the Negro's principal delight, generally crowned the weekly toil. But while this excellent man exulted in the increasing happiness and comforts which his benevolence had diffused around him, he little dreamt of the influence which an over-relaxed system had produced on uncultivated minds, destitute of moral virtues, and strangers to the softening ties

ties of gratitude and affection. Had he contented himself with granting a moderate exemption from daily exertion, and allotted a certain portion of time occasionally for the arrangement of the Negro's private concerns, so as to have enabled him to participate of one day's recreation in the week, all might have been well, and his property and slaves have improved under such wise and lenient administration. But by devoting two complete days, immediately succeeding, to the wild ungovernable conduct of a set of beings insatiable in their love for pleasure, and boundless in their enjoyment of it; was laying a foundation for habits inimical to industry, and totally subversive of subordination; and so, when it was too late to apply a remedy, did he, to his fatal experience, find.

INSTEAD of appropriating the time allotted to the cultivation of their grounds, raising their stock and provisions, and carrying them to market, these unhappy votaries to riot and excess

cess thought, at last, of nothing but a gratification of passions originating in savage habits, and grown stronger by daily indulgence. Whole days were consumed in revels; whole nights devoted to intemperance, without intermission or repose. A sudden change in prosperity is too often productive of arrogance among the most civilized nations; can it therefore be supposed that a sudden over indulgence could be productive of good effects on minds uncultivated by ought to enlarge the understanding or humanize the heart? Little philosophy is necessary to enable us to reason justly on this point; yet Beaumarché, with all his philosophy and superior abilities, through the medium of enthusiastic humanity, saw objects indistinctly, and was deceived! While he listened with rapture to the nightly sound of the *bangah* and the *tom tom* on his estate, and indulged himself in the pleasing reflection that the hapless children of bondage were enjoying comforts arising from a melioration of their condition, and burying a recollection of their misfortune

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fortune in the rustic merriment of their hamlet, a very different train of operations was going on; and the very circumstances which he vainly conceived contributed so effectually to the prosperity of his concerns, were the means of diffension, disorder, and final destruction of his property.

THE system of recreation which Monsieur Beaumarché had established on his estate, naturally drew together a concourse of slaves from the adjacent properties every Sunday to *le Moule*. A comparative view of condition as naturally followed, and led to animadversions and murmurs, which may well be supposed could not be favourable to general order or resignation. On the other hand, a constant participation of indulgence was attended with consequences as natural as fatal among those who neither reason with propriety nor act with discretion. From ease, comfort, and recreation, a love of pleasure became the predominant desire. This led to excess; excess to turbulence;

bulence ; and turbulence to *rebellion*. A total disregard to their own concerns, and an unwillingness to execute their usual tasks, were the first symptoms which awakened suspicions in the managers and overseers, and at last roused Monsieur Beaumarché to a sense of danger. He plainly perceived that matters had gone too far, and had continued too long ; that the period of subordination had ceased, and that the dread of punishment was over. The daring demeanour of the Coromantee, and the sullen aspect of the Ebo, told him that they feared not his threats, and disregarded his admonitions. He therefore determined, by one bold step, to intimidate by terror rather than enforce by precept ; and, by the dint of intrepidity, to re-establish subordination, or to perish in the attempt. Having communicated his intentions to his managers and the different white persons on the estate, they prepared themselves accordingly ; and the next morning, at the usual hour of labour, accompanied him to the field.

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WHEN the slaves were all assembled, Beaumarché, in a firm tone, told them, that, seeing they had made such a bad use of the indulgence and favours granted them, he had determined to reduce them to their former state, until, by their behaviour, they evinced a complete reformation; and that whoever, in future, dared to refuse to execute, or to murmur at his task, should be punished with severity. A Coromantee, the ringleader of rebellion, bold and fierce as the tyger of his country, threw down, in token of disobedience and contempt, the bill he held in his hand; and folding his arms, with a fullen and determined countenance awaited the farther proceedings of his master. Twenty more of the same nation followed the example of their countryman. Beaumarché, prepared for the worst, forgot not his resolutions; and stepping up to the first aggressor, ordered him instantly to take up his bill, and proceed to work on pain of immediate death. “And who is to kill me! (returned this undaunted chief, eyeing his  
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master with ineffable scorn) a *white man*?" —“ *I, villain!* (said Beaumarché, drawing a pistol from his pocket, and presenting it) *I will.*” The savage, enraged but not intimidated, snatched up the bill (not as an instrument of *labour* but of *destruction*), and Beaumarché, seeing no alternative, laid him instantly dead at his foot. The sudden and unexpected fate of their leader, joined to the prompt and vigorous conduct of Beaumarché and his followers (each of whom, with cocked pistols in their hands, denounced similar vengeance on all who dared to rebel), struck a panic into the minds of the most resolute; and, for the time, crushed this premeditated and alarming insurrection. The twenty Coromantees, who had thrown down their bills, were immediately seized, and put in irons for future punishment; and the rest, professing repentance and resignation, proceeded, without murmuring, to the labours of the day.

AFTER a confinement of some days, which  
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was judged necessary to impress on the Negro mind a proper sense of recent transactions, the twenty Coromantees were solemnly brought forth, before all the slaves on the plantation, to receive that punishment publicly, which the nature of crimes so atrocious required. Previously to the infliction, Beaumarché addressed the whole body, not as a harsh and sanguinary tyrant, but as a kind master and a friend. He represented to them, in glowing colours, the peculiar indulgences and comforts he had bestowed upon them since he came among them, and their most ungrateful and unnatural return. He reminded them, that, since his arrival, there had not been one public punishment, and that the crack of the whip had scarcely been heard on the estate; but finding that favours were productive of disorder, and gentleness, of disobedience and rebellion, he was determined to convince them that he could be severe as well as lenient, and just as well as humane. He, therefore, left it to their own choice, whether, by their conduct, they were

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to be treated, in future, as good Negroes, or punished as bad ones. If the last, he assured them, that no behaviour, on their side, however daring or desperate, would ever prevent him, for a moment, from inflicting the most exemplary and rigid punishment ; whereas, on the other hand, no consideration wou'd induce him to withhold favours from the diligent and the deserving ; nor would any thing afford him more sincere pleasure than that of once more restoring to them those indulgences and exemptions they so lately enjoyed. The customary punishment of thirty-nine lashes was then applied ; but, from the fullen fortitude with which they bore it, the managers were not inclined to augur very favourable consequences.

For some time, however, matters went on in the usual routine ; and Beaumarché was at length so much convinced of the thorough reformation of his slaves, that the period was fixed upon, and even promised, for the restoration of all their former indulgences ; with  
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this difference only, that, instead of *Saturday*, Thursday was the day allotted for the arrangement of their own concerns. But these regulations never took place; nor did the period ever arrive, when this kind and benevolent master reaped the rewards which his benevolent and humane system so justly intitled him to. The spirit which a twelvemonth's ease and festivity had kindled, could not be easily extinguished in minds prone to every excess of enjoyment, and become impatient under restraint. Former exemptions, excited no other sensations than the desire to extend the unbounded limits of sensuality; while recent establishments of order, restrictions, and punishments, dwelt incessantly on the mind, and filled the savage soul with bloody and ungovernable revenge.

AT the dead hour of night (may no such ever visit the inhabitants of these isles!) the alarming sound of the plantation shell was heard at a distance; and immediately after, one of the overseers, rushing into our bedchamber,

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brought

brought intelligence, that all our slaves and those of the neighbouring estates were in rebellion, and proceeding to instant destruction. Beaumarché had but just time to seize his arms, and give orders for assembling all the whites and the domestic slaves, when the shell blew at our Negro houses, not a quarter of a mile distant. The first thing Beaumarché attended to, was to intrust me and my infant child to the care of a favourite Mulatto domestic, with instructions to convey us with the utmost secrecy and dispatch to Port Louis, whither, he promised to follow as soon as it was practicable. It is utterly out of the power of language to describe what I suffered at this moment. Losing all sense of my own safety in the apprehension of my husband's danger, I clasped him in a frantic embrace ; and declaring I would not stir without him, implored him, by every expression of love, frenzy, and despair, to accompany me. But with this request he, in a few hurried, though endearing words, assured me, it was utterly impossible for him to comply.

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“ If I abandon my property by flight, my dearest Harriette (said he), inevitable ruin must follow. Their first step, on missing me, would be to pursue, and, in all probability, overtake and sacrifice us to their present fury. By remaining here on the spot, undaunted and armed with my attendants, I shall, at least, be enabled to hear their complaints, and, by promises, ward off immediate destruction, till more effectual means can be procured to crush the insurrection.” This, while he tenderly embraced me, was all he could say. Snatching up his son, then but eighteen months old, in his arms, he hurried me out of the room, half dressed as I was, to a back door, where the Mulatto slave and a horse waited to receive us.

TRAVELLING through deep ravines and solitary woods, we had proceeded by unfrequented paths a few miles from le Moule, when, ascending a steep hill, and hearing my guide exclaim, with astonishment and terror; *Mon*

*Dieu ! quel spectacle !* I looked back, and beheld our whole property, houses, works, and plantation, in one blaze. It is needless for me to tell you what my sensations were at that moment. Beaumarché occupied my whole mind ; and had it not been for the remonstrance of my guide, I actually would have returned, and, amidst flames and destruction, ascertained my husband's fate, or have perished in the attempt. The possibility, however, of his having escaped, weighed more with me than any remonstrance or consideration of immediate danger. Arrived at Port Louis, our intelligence spread universal terror and consternation. In a short time multitudes came pouring in from the different adjacent properties ; but neither Beaumarché nor any person from ours were among the number. At length some slaves, who, by skulking among the woods, had escaped the general slaughter, arrived, and narrated a tale which, even at this distance of time, I have not power to recapitulate. Suffice it to say, that, after doing every thing which humanity, prudence,



prudence, and courage, could execute, my dear and ill-fated husband, and all his followers, were massacred, in a manner too shocking for description, by those who had so often tasted his bounty; and who, under a government so liberal and mild, might have enjoyed ease, comfort, and content.

It was many months before general tranquillity was established by a suppression of the revolted slaves. A number of valuable properties were totally destroyed; among which were those of Beaumarché, this coffee plantation excepted; which, from its peculiar situation and distance from the seat of rebellion, happily escaped. During this interval of confusion and alarm, I remained at a friend's house in Port Louis, totally insensible to everything that passed; and, unless it were the charms inseparable from the affections of a fond mother, I may, with truth, assert, that every other enjoyment was a stranger to my breast.

I HAD written home to my uncle an account of my calamity; and having acquainted him, at the same time, with my incapacity to engage in any thing relative to future management, I waited with a patient indifference till he either arrived himself, or deputed some person on the spot, to take charge of the remaining wreck of our fortune. In the interval, however, my friends here were not inactive. As I was, in every respect, by much the greatest sufferer, they exerted themselves warmly in my behalf; and, actuated by the double impulse of commiseration and benevolence, in a very considerable degree, retrieved my affairs from the desperate state in which the recent rebellion had involved them. From the number of revolted Negroes captured, it was judged expedient to make it a general concern; and as a restoration of those to their former residence would, of all plans, have been the most dangerous, it was determined to distribute the revolters in small lots among those whose slaves had escaped infection, and who, on their  
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side, agreed to exchange an equal number in return. By this judicious and humane regulation, a great many of these unhappy wretches were saved from execution, and the different sufferers considerably indemnified for their recent loss. The good effects of this system was experienced by me in particular; for every person being desirous to contribute to my relief, above 500 choice slaves were, on my uncle's arrival, ready to be employed on his property as soon as matters were in a situation to receive them. This, however, could not be accomplished without considerable time and expence; and my uncle, now advanced in life, and unwilling to embark on new and extensive operations, judged it most advisable to dispose of one estate, reserving the other, well stocked and full handed, for the behoof of his grand-nephew, my sweet little CHARLES, the innocent companion of my sufferings, and soother of my distress.

My uncle's generosity stopt not here. Ob-  
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-serving my extreme aversion to engage again in transactions which recalled a remembrance of late calamities, and agitated my mind with horror and alarm, he, unknown to me, arranged a plan of operations, which nothing but the best and most benevolent disposition could have suggested. A short time after his arrival, he proposed, by way of exercise and amusement, a short excursion into the country. During our ride, he took occasion to inquire if I had ever seen our little coffee plantation, which (he said) he had some thoughts of keeping? On my answering in the negative, he informed me, that we were little more than a mile from it; and finding I had no objection, we struck suddenly into a path that winded up a steep mountain, through scenes the most romantic and picturesque I had ever beheld.

ON reaching the summit, and observing nothing that announced habitation, I could not help telling my uncle, that his miles were rather long ones. To which he only answered  
with

with a smile, not altogether so long as you imagine. As we continued slowly descending, my eye, all at once, was arrested by a picture composed of the most interesting group of rural beauties Nature could well produce. A sloping lawn, overspread with the most vivid verdure, occupied about a mile of a charming valley, interspersed with swelling hills, planted with coffee, adorned with the *cabbage*, the *cocoa-nut*, and the *cotton tree*, in all their towering glory, and surrounded by abrupt cliffs and stupendous mountains, whose unmolested forests seemed to wave their lofty branches in the clouds. In the midst of this romantic retreat stood a simple, though neat, habitation, encircled with the orange tree, the shaddock, and the lime, in fruits and in blossoms. The green banana, waving and rustling to the breeze, gave a real, as well as an imaginary, sense of coolness; while the thick umbrage of the spreading tamarind tree, as you entered, cast a sombre and grateful shade around. The stillness and awful grandeur of the scene gave a double



double effect to the mingled sounds that occasionally caught the ear. A small gang of slaves, with laughter and song, were picking coffee on the surrounding slopes. The roaring of the mountain stream came softened at a distance; while a group of little naked savages ran clamorously sporting before the door. On our approach, I was not a little surprised to find CATON, my trusty mulatto guide, ready to receive us; and on entering the house, my astonishment increased, on perceiving two or three favourite female slaves (whom I formerly conceived had perished in the general wreck) come running up to me, with a mingled expression of joy and sorrow in their countenances, which touched me sensibly. “God blefs you, Missis! (said they all in one voice) God *Amighty* blefs you, good Missis! We once happy wid you, Missis; but Massa—good Massa dead!—we neba be happy no more!” My tears were all the answer I could give to these kind and mournful salutations: and my uncle perceiving my affliction, conducted me to a neat hall,  
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handsomely furnished ; where, having called for some wine, he changed the conversation, by enquiring after M. Bellanger. “ And what have you got for dinner, Quashiba (said my uncle) ? ” — “ Me have got peppa pot, Massa (said old Quashiba) — Me know Missis love em — Me have got craw-fish and mountain mullet fresh from de riva — One fine nounge kid be kill this morning, Massa — and me have nice fat capon at de fia. ” — “ Bravo ! (said my uncle, laughing) M. Bellanger, I find, lives like a prince ; and your mistress and I will dine with him to-day, Quashiba. ” — “ God bless you, Massa ! (said Quashiba) me go make ting ready. ” My uncle then informed me that M. Bellanger was the gentleman who superintended the property. “ He has been here (said he) above ten years ; during which time he has, in every respect, given me much reason to be pleased with his conduct. Independently of great worth and modesty, he has a thorough knowledge of the treatment of the slaves, who all adore him, and who, since his residence here, have, in con-

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sequence

sequence of his judicious treatment, increased nearly one half. He has felt the crushing hand of misfortune, poor man! (said my uncle) as well as others; and as he is a gentleman by birth, manners, and education, I have placed him here, in a situation which is not disadvantageous, and with which he is perfectly satisfied. You see he is a man of taste by the neatness and *propreté* of every thing around him. The house, indeed, is much larger than he has any occasion for; but as my brother and I loved the man, we allowed him to act, in every respect, according to his own fancy; and I am really charmed with the improvements he has made since my absence. In the evening we will take a walk, and explore more minutely the beauties of this little spot; which, I assure you, are not few. M. Bellanger can furnish us with excellent beds; and I cannot help thinking (said my uncle), that you will sleep fully as comfortably here as in the burning town of Port Louis.

FOR

FOR the first time, during six months, I sat down to a repast, where comfort, serenity, and peace, presided. There was something in the whole of this day's entertainment that operated on my mind sensibly; something that mitigated my pains, soothed my melancholy, and poured a healing balm into a wounded spirit. The novelty and unexpected beauty of the place; the quiet, content, and apparent happiness, that seemed to reign every where around; the interview with those whom I never expected to have seen, and who all vied with each other in rendering me offices of kindness; the cheerfulness and hilarity of my good uncle's conversation, joined to the mild, sensible, and engaging manners of M. Bellanger—all conspired to deaden the poignancy of recent affliction, and dispose the wearied wo-worn mind to resignation and repose.

IN the evening my uncle, during the influence of a refreshing breeze, led me through a variety of scenery, new, interesting, and delightful.



lightful. The hour of labour had just ceased, and the slaves were returning, with merriment and joy, each to their respective home, to prepare their supper; the Negro's chief and favourite repast. The departing rays of the setting sun, faintly gilded with a softened light the tops of the surrounding mountains, leaving a reviving coolness in the valley below; where the orange, the lemon, the pimento, and the lime, scattered their rich and united fragrance. The brightning verdure of the Guinea-grass pasture, sweetly contrasted the plantain walks deeper green; the stream rolled babbling thro' the banana grove; and, ever and anon, the shaggy goats, that brouzed along the neighbouring rocks, in tender responses answered to their complaining younglings below. But why (said Madame Bellanger) need I describe what you all hear and see at this moment? In this identical plantain walk where we now sit, my uncle, perceiving the increasing pleasure I experienced from an assemblage of objects at once peaceful, picturesque, and sublime, asked  
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me what I thought of M. Bellanger's situation? "I think, Sir (said I), it is perfect paradise: never did I behold any more completely to my taste."—"It is rather retired (said my uncle, with seeming indifference), and will therefore, by many, be considered sombre and dull."—"The *retirement* (said I) is to me one of its principal attractions. The glare and bustle of the world are calculated only for the happy, the busy, or the gay; but to those who have experienced adversity, and from whom the essential sources of enjoyment are for ever dried up, a retreat from general amusement must be a relief; and a security from intrusion, a charm: at least (said I, with tears) they are so to me."—"My dear Harriette (said my uncle, taking me kindly by the hand), I rejoice to hear these sentiments. My scheme, I perceive, has succeeded to my wish; for, to be plain with you, my motive in bringing you hither, was no other than to sound your inclinations relative to your making this spot your future place of residence. Having now ar-

arranged matters so as to be enabled to return and pass the remainder of my days in Europe, I mean to shake myself free of all West Indian concerns, and content myself with the fortune I have already acquired ; which, thank God, is amply sufficient. For this purpose, it is my intention, previously to my departure, to make over the whole of the remaining property, now well stocked and prepared for future improvement, to your infant son : and it rests with you, as a mother and a friend, to render this effectual, by superintending it till he arrive at an age when, with propriety, he can take care of it himself. In the intermediate time, your residence here will be suited to your inclinations ; and, through the assistance of M. Belanger, every thing conducted with ease and tranquillity. I have prepared him for the event ; and, I am persuaded, nothing will be wanting on his part to advance your interest, and render your situation agreeable. The present plantation, as it now stands, with the slaves and every thing pertaining to it, I shall assign

assign over to you and your daughter, my sweet Antoinnette, whom I love with the affection of a father, and to whose education my best and unwearied attentions shall be dedicated. Till this is accomplished, your time here can neither be unpleasant nor unprofitable. It will be chiefly occupied in the agreeable office of an instructor to your young son, and as a guardian of those properties which, at a future period, will devolve to each of your children. Add to this, that by the time education calls one home, the other will be restored to you with every improvement to sweeten your retirement, by the possession of an accomplished companion, to enliven your society, and a confident to soothe and solace your distress.

IT is unnecessary, I presume, to remark, that an address so kind, liberal, and affectionate, filled me with gratitude and esteem, and that the result of my uncle's humanity was my immediate retreat hither. I have now resided in this peaceful retirement about fifteen years; during

during which time I have experienced increasing pleasure; while Time, the grand deadener of affliction, has, in a great measure, softened the acuteness of former distress. One of the principal sources of my happiness has been the growing prosperity of those immediately under my protection; and by the admirable management and assistance of M. Bellanger, who has gone hand in hand with me in all my plans, we have happily established a system which, to every mind endowed with humanity, must afford real and substantial pleasure. From thirty slaves, which, exclusively of a few domestics, were all the Negroes on the plantation when I arrived, the number has now increased to fifty-five. But this (said Madame Bellanger) is a small consideration, when we reflect that all these are surrounded with comforts; are regular, decent, and orderly, in their conduct; kind to one another; and so attached to me, and pleased with their condition, that they prefer it to absolute *freedom*; an offer which they have repeatedly refused. “ God preserve us!



us! (said Penguin, who listened attentively to this last part of the narrative) God preserve us, *Madame!* this is wonderful indeed! How, in the name of necromancy, have you performed such miracles, and produced a revolution in the Negro mind which was never before heard of?"—"The revolution is not so miraculous (said Madame Bellanger), when circumstances are duly attended to. I shall indeed confess, that what I have happily accomplished could not be practicable *every where*; but my situation being peculiarly favourable, I availed myself of the opportunity to introduce a *new mode of treatment*: the particulars of which I shall now explain.

THE condition of the Negro, not only with regard to mere slavery, but to the various miseries annexed to a state of savage and unsocial barbarism, had often struck my mind forcibly, and as often induced me to investigate the cause, with a view to remedy the evil. The more I examined, and the longer I reasoned  
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on this subject, the more was I convinced, that the principal source of calamity was a total neglect of institutions, calculated to wean the mind insensibly from habits of *intemperance*, and make it enamoured of *social and domestic peace*. Could I only convince these poor creatures (said I), that they would gain more by kind and uniform attention to one another, than by a gratification of temporary and precarious indulgence, much might be done. Those unhappy jars and perpetual animosities, which disturb and destroy tranquillity, might cease; and, instead of hatred and dissension, very different consequences ensue. Marriage, properly established between the parties, I well knew was, of all other methods, the most likely to check irregularity, and produce general union: but marriage, without something to render it binding, solemn, and attractive, was next to nothing. A sense of *decency* was first to be implanted, before conjugal fidelity could even be *understood*; and an impression of modesty, justice, and attachment, made on the  
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unreasoning mind, before either shame could attend turpitude, or conscious rectitude spring from decorum. To have attempted this by *precept*, would have been as ridiculous as ineffectual; but as interest never fails to operate in all situations, and as every thing conspired to favour the attempt, I communicated my plan to M. Bellanger; who, heartily approving of it, engaged to contribute, by every means in his power, to carry it into execution.

My Negroes, it must be observed, were few in number, and these all chosen and valuable slaves. Their place of residence likewise was so remote and completely separated from other properties, that little or no intercourse, and consequently few bad examples, could operate to counteract the effects of good institutions. But what I considered as one of the greatest advantages, was the males and females being nearly equal in number; and, except three or four old Creoles, none above the age of thirty. Thus situated, my preliminary steps towards a  
general

general reformation of manners was, first to encourage marriage, and then to render it as binding and lasting as possible. This I attempted, by leaving every one to their own choice, and having the ceremony performed by M. Bellanger with solemnity before me, and invariably in the presence of all the slaves on the plantation, to whom I gave a marriage feast, instituted for the occasion. These ceremonies were always accompanied with donations and advantages to the parties, with promises of additional favours for an adherence to conjugal duty, and with denunciations of punishment and disgrace for the smallest infringement of fidelity. *Ne riez pas*, Monsieur Penguin (said Madame Bellanger); do not laugh. I am convinced, from long experience, that a neglect of these essential duties is the grand cause, not only of all the Negro's misconduct, but of our subsequent misfortune. Let us only for a moment reflect what would be the consequence among ourselves were we reduced to similar situations. If every man  
had

had as many wives, and these as many husbands, as the Negroes, where should we look for honour or attachment on one side ; or modesty, fidelity, or love on the other ? Would not all be envy, rage, and uproar, as it too often is among them ? But, exclusively of every other consideration, how can we ever expect an increase of *population* amidst such unrestrained and scandalous irregularity ? How look for attention and affection among parents, when no parent feels the tie ? Can the husband clasp his reputed offspring to his heart, when he knows not who is the father ? Can the mother watch over and nurture with tenderness her infant charge, when she sees no parent who claims it as his own, feels for its wants, or provides for its necessities ? Impossible ! Yet such is the real state of matters among the ill-fated Negroes ; the fatal consequences of which are in these islands yearly and daily but too evident. While population is unattended to, *importation* necessarily must follow. A fresh succession of ignorant, and,

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for some time, useless wretches, torn from their country and friends, poured in upon us to supply deficiencies; and ere they can be serviceable to us, or useful to themselves, exposed to a variety of sufferings, which, by attention and perseverance on our parts, might be greatly prevented.”—“ And did you experience no difficulties in establishing this system of *matrimonial fidelity* ?” (said Penguin with a sneer)—“ *Many* (said Madame Bellanger). It was of all other tasks the most arduous I had to encounter.”—“ I believe so” (said Penguin, exultingly).—“ Perseverance, however, and, let me add, a little severity, at last prevailed (said Madame Bellanger). Corporal punishment I ever disliked; it degrades, depresses, and hardens, the mind; and, unless for the commission of crimes altogether atrocious or dangerous, I have generally laid it aside. The mode I adopted, on the present occasion, to repress vice and punish disobedience, I have reason to think, was much more effectual.—I shall briefly mention it.

As



As a general encouragement to marriage, and as an inducement to an implicit adherence to its laws, I indulged the parties with an additional day of recreation in every month; and as a farther mark of my favour, I, on the evening of the same day, established an entertainment or little festival, partly as a commemoration of matrimonial union, and partly as an example of cheerfulness, joined with the utmost regularity and temperance. I likewise made a practice of visiting often the houses of the new married pair, enquiring particularly after their little concerns and comforts; and while I examined their hogsties, poultry, provisions, furniture, and articles of apparel, as proofs of my approbation, and as an encouragement to future industry, I used generally to leave some marks of my bounty behind me. These gratifications and peculiar attentions, which (leaving gratitude out of consideration) operate powerfully on the Negro mind, were all withheld from the *unmarried*, and instantly withdrawn from the infringers of matrimonial

peace and decorum. The day allotted for *recreation* was to them a day of *labour*; the hours of festivity, dance, and merry-making, were to them the hours of solitude, dejection, and mental pain. Add to this, that while a growing prosperity attended the meritorious, a stationary and depressing penury accompanied the bad. The bounty, the kind attentions, the presence, and the smiles of their mistresses, no longer decorated their little cabins, ornamented their persons, or cherished their hearts; the happiness and cheerful looks of their fellow-labourers eternally met their eye; the taunts and scoffs of the unfeeling perpetually wounded their ear. All was unprofitable, sad, and insupportable; till, urged by necessity, and overcome by remorse, they used frequently to watch an opportunity, throw themselves on their knees before me, and, with tears and lamentations, exclaim, "*O Missis, me bad Nega! Make me good; me neba be bad no more!*"

It was by such methods as these (said Madame

dame Bellanger) that I at length conquered the obstinacy of habitual intemperance; broke down the barriers to domestic harmony, and weaned the savage mind from scenes of irregularity, to order, industry, and content. I must, however, confess, that before this was accomplished, I experienced much trouble and repeated vexation: and such is the extreme perverseness, and such the natural propensities of this turbulent creature, that, to render my system effectual and permanent, I was forced to dispose of some of the most incorrigible, although otherwise the most valuable Negroes in my possession, in order to preserve the rest from infection. I have now, for some years, reaped the fruits of my labours. While I perceive my property in slaves yearly increase, I have the double consolation of seeing these yearly improve in morals and advance in prosperity. My young Negroes have been all brought up under my own eye; and, next to the joys of maternal love, I declare, before God, that of all the other circumstances an-

nexed to my situation, that of attending to the instruction and comfort of these little wretches, has afforded me the most heartfelt delight. These I have educated in the principles of our religion; and as the piety and excellent qualities of M. Bellanger were admirably calculated for the task, he, at my request, has acted for some years as general pastor to the whole flock. In a short time you will hear, and, if you incline, see them all at vespers; a ceremony regularly performed every evening, together with matins, and a short moral discourse, delivered by Monsieur Bellanger every Sunday morning. I am not (said Madame Bellanger, on seeing Penguin smile contemptuously) enthusiast enough to think that I can make all my Negroes *good Catholics*; far less do I suppose that the principles of our faith can be instilled effectually into the uncultivated minds of a rude multitude imported from the coasts of Africa. But it has ever been my opinion, that before moral precepts can be inculcated, or vicious habits overcome, **EXAMPLE** must  
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first take the lead; and that *no* example can be effectual without a previous conviction in the minds of the instructed, that the instructors are governed by the pure influence of justice, mercy, and truth: an impression not to be made on the ignorant and unthinking part of mankind, if the external appearance of PIETY is totally neglected. There are few minds so completely rude, as to be insensible to some kind of devotion; no description of people, however savage, but who have some object of adoration, to whom they look up for help in the day of necessity, praise in the hour of delivery, or invoke on the ratification of any thing solemn and binding between man and man. To throw therefore the appearance of piety aside, or to neglect those external marks which never fail to operate upon the human mind, is, in fact, to conceal, amidst all the beauty of moral rectitude, and all the precepts of exemplary duty, an object the most luminous and attractive to allure, enlighten, and guide, the darkened multitude to the paths of virtue.



virtue. I have therefore (concluded Madame Bellanger) made it an *invariable* rule, to present to the Negro mind something *superior* to morals, in order to bring these more effectually into practice. I have instituted regular devotion among ourselves, to impress a thorough conviction of our sincerity and worth on the slave; and while I have thus accompanied *good works* with solemn observances, the progress which my young disciples have made, leave no doubt remaining, that my institution has materially tended to a general reformation of manners among them. But it is now near the hour of vespers, and I must attend my charge. Is it agreeable to you (said Madame Bellanger, with a benignant smile) to accompany me, and witness the truth of my assertion?"

END OF MADAME BELLANGER'S HISTORY.

MADAME

MADAME BELLANGER having ended her interesting narrative, we readily accepted of her invitation, and accompanied her to vespers. The spot destined for the performance of this nightly duty was the back yard of the dwelling-house; in the centre of which stood a large tamarind tree, whose shade gave an additional solemnity to the scene which was about to be performed. Under this tree, on our arrival, we found all the Negroes assembled, ranged in rows, and kneeling in a devout and orderly manner. A piazza or back gallery to the house, which rose about eight or ten steps from the ground, was occupied by M. Bellanger, Madame Bellanger, her daughter, and the domestic slaves; and which, from its situation, was extremely well calculated for exhibiting that fervour of devotion, so particularly displayed by the pastor and proprietor during the whole service. I was altogether surprised at the propriety, decency, and correctness of those, whose situation and habits naturally predisposed me to expect something very different.

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All was attention, decorum, and devotion. The responses and accompaniments were performed with the utmost exactness; and as a musical ear is almost inseparable from the Negro, every tone was in perfect unison; every cadence in harmony. In my life I never heard a concert that came so home to my heart! I looked at Mrs Penguin, and found her eyes swimming in rapture: I gave a glance to her husband, whose fullness even evinced satisfaction.

WHEN the service, which lasted about half an hour, was over, Madame Bellanger stepped forward to the front of the gallery, and addressed her sable audience in the following words: “ My good *Negroes!* you have now offered up your thanks to your Maker for the benefits which his mercy bestows on you daily. Blessed are they who maintain his laws by doing good actions to one another; observing decency, order, and sobriety, and a cheerful obedience to their superiors, who will always take pleasure in re-warding

warding their good conduct.—This is the *Marriage feast*.—Go, my good Negroes ! go, be happy and be orderly ; and remember, that your Mistrefs first gave it to make you *kind husbands, loving wives, affectionate parents, and dutiful children* ; and that as long as you continue such, you shall never want the Marriage supper !”—“ *God Amighty bless you, good Missis !*” was the general and clamorous answer.

IN an instant all was rapture and tumultuous joy. The instruments of music sounded to the charge—the circle was formed—the dancers took their station in the centre—fifty voices rose in wild unison ; while the bangah, the tom tom, and the clapping of hands, accompanied the general chorus. At nine o'clock the dance ceased ; and was immediately succeeded by a good supper, suited to the Negro palate, and, for additional comfort, served up in a detached house, where each could enjoy the freedom of the feast unrestrained by the presence of his superior. A draught of generous  
beer

beer and a dram were distributed to every grown person : a bottle of good punch crowned the banquet. At ten, precisely, M. Bellanger's entrance was the signal for departure ; when this joyous and happy assembly broke up, and, singing, laughing, and contented, repaired to their home and repose.

NEXT morning, at breakfast, we could not avoid jointly complimenting Madame Bellanger on the uncommon effects which her admirable and humane institution had produced. For my own part, I was such an enthusiast on the subject, that I could hardly talk or think of any thing else. “ Is it your opinion (said I), Madame Bellanger, that any such plan as that which you have established could be *generally* adopted, or similar consequences *generally* produced ? ” Penguin gave me one of his *pleasant* smiles. I would fain hope (said Madame Bellanger) that, at some future period, it might ; and yet (continued she), from the knowledge and experience I have had of  
Negro



Negro habits and dispositions, I am forced to confess that I have my doubts. I have already specified the very favourable causes which enabled me to introduce innovations in general practice, and bring my system to perfection; not to mention the local advantages of retirement and distant vicinity, which I consider of great consequence. The qualities of my slaves (who were all picked and selected), together with the smallness of their number, are circumstances rarely conjoined, and consequently seldom to be expected. Many of my Negroes likewise were Creoles, brought up as domestics under the eye of Europeans from their infancy; and the few who were advanced in life, were not only eminent for their superior conduct and experience, but placed in situations calculated to present an example to the rest; and by the comforts and wealth they possessed, to impress a sense of the advantages arising from industry: the surest hold we can have of the Negro, and the most effectual charm to attach him to the soil. But what I consider as the

*chief* cause of my reform (said Madame Bellanger), was the possession of such a person as Mr Bellanger; who, exclusive of the justice, benevolence, and inflexible integrity, which uniformly accompanied his administration, exhibited in his whole demeanour such a daily picture of mild piety, temperance, and regularity, as could not fail to stamp on the minds of the most insensible, something deeper than the impressions of SUPERIORITY and COMMAND. Yet, notwithstanding *all* these advantages, and they certainly are great, you have heard how difficult it was for me to effectuate my purpose; and that before I could produce a general adherence to order, decency, and moderation, I was forced to part with some of the most valuable slaves in my possession.

“BUT I hope, Madame (said I, with much simplicity), that what you have done will induce others to follow your example, and effect a general reformation.” At this remark, Penguin burst out into a loud laugh; and giving me a  
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supercilious look, peculiar to him, said, "What the devil, Sir! are you simple enough to think, that what Madame Bellanger has, with such difficulty, accomplished here in fifteen years with thirty or forty slaves, can be done with thirty or forty thousand? Is a manager, or the proprietor of an estate, to give *dances* and *marriage festivals* every month to four or five hundred Negroes, among whom as many hundred vices predominate? Or is it to be hoped, that a savage assemblage of new Negroes from Africa are to be influenced by the ties of *religion, morality, decency*, and all these fine things, the same as a few choice slaves, almost all natives, and tutored with the care and kindness of children? No, no, by Jove! If we mean to succeed, and wish to preserve our throats from being cut, we must pursue very different methods indeed. Instead of *feasts*, we must impress *fear*; instead of *indulgencies*, we must attend to *discipline*. Nothing agrees with this infernal turbulent animal so much as strict subordination; nothing keeps down his cursed

passions so effectually as *flogging*.”—“ Ah ! exclaimed Madame Bellanger, with infinite disgust) *Vous Anglois sont cruel !*”—“ Thank you, Madame (said Penguin); but if we are cruel, your favourite and admired children oblige us to be so; for experience, which I take to be better than *theory*, tells us that it is absolutely necessary.”—“ I deny it (said Madame Bellanger), for without theory I have produced *proofs* to the contrary.”—“ Come, come, Madame ! (said Penguin) we are not to be led away by a particular instance. You have had fifteen years experience of choice slaves; I have had near double that experience of very ordinary ones. We shall allow you every degree of merit for what you have accomplished; nay, I freely confess, that what I have seen has not only pleased but astonished me. The system you have adopted is admirable; but it can never be a *general* one: the thing is impossible.”—“ Why ?” (said Madame Bellanger)—“ Because it is *impracticable* (said Penguin); and this, to every person generally acquainted



acquainted with the nature of West Indian property, is apparent. Your Negroes, my dear Madam, may be said to be a family nurtured and brought up under your own eye, where the wants, the vices, and the virtues, of each individual are watched, detected, and attended to, the instant they appear. But will any person of experience gravely assert, that this can be done on an estate where there are ten times the number of slaves, composed of various tribes, manners, habits, and dispositions? To effect such would require for every manager we have, *ten*; and for every overseer, *twenty*. But even admitting we *could* ascertain such important facts, how are we to apply remedies for each disease? After we have minutely investigated character, so as to enable us to form a just idea of the peculiar faults and excellencies of each, how are we to render the general mass pure? how are we to prevent contamination? Are we to separate the sheep from the goats, as you have done, by disposing of the bad to preserve the good from infection?



Were this mode generally adopted, I am afraid, Madame, we should have very few Negroes remaining to cultivate our properties. I mean not to shock you by saying any thing harsh or illiberal; but with all your partialities, you must allow that, in the present state of the Negro, there are many things ingrafted on his nature so incorrigibly bad and provokingly perverse, as to blast and destroy the few fruits and blossoms which occasionally appear. Their tempers and dispositions ——”

“ I SHALL readily allow (interrupted Madame Bellanger), that there are many unamiable and harsh traits in the Negro character; but what has been done on *our part* to render them a better, a wiser, or a more amiable people? Has one step been taken to polish the ruggedness of their nature?—has a single method been tried to soften the ferocity of their passions, or soothe the asperity of a condition, rendered irritable by bondage, and hardened by despair?—has the hand of benevolence

lence been ever stretched out, to assure them they would be cherished or protected from oppression?—has the tear of commiseration been ever shed, to tell them that we feel for calamities which we cannot remove?—Oh, Monsieur Penguin, Monsieur Penguin (exclaimed the good Madame Bellanger, warmed with the subject), tell me not of specks and tints in the *Negro* character, where there are such dark and dismal shades in *our own*! Let us first rectify our own ways, before we arraign the conduct of others; let us first show an example of virtue, moderation, and justice, among ourselves, before we condemn crimes arising from ignorance and habit; crimes which are doubly rivetted by our own shameless vices and unblushing enormities.”—“What are these, Madame” (said Penguin).—“*What are they!*” (said Madame Bellanger) they are too many. Among us here, I have heard and seen too much to convince me, that a scandalous neglect of morals is every where exhibited to the eye of those whom we have the impu-

pudence

dence to condemn for vice and irregularity; and if what has been said of *your* islands be true, the *example* must still be worse.”—“ For heaven’s sake (said Penguin) let us hear what these horrid crimes and misdemeanours are.”

“ MONSIEUR PENGUIN (said Madame Bellanger, gravely), I hope you will believe me incapable of making invidious comparisons between nations; but since you have forced this subject upon me, I shall freely communicate what I have heard relative to the conduct of the English in the different islands; and as freely deliver my sentiments on the consequences. If I have been wrong informed, you will set me right; for I wish not to disgrace my arguments by prejudice, far less to support them by error. In the first place, Monsieur Penguin, I have been told, that, in all your islands, the CLERGY are not only worthless but abandoned.”—“ O, by heavens! I can say very little for *them*” (said Penguin.—“ *Eh bien* (said Madame Bellanger)—I am likewise informed, Monsieur,

Monfieur, that the confequences of this admirable example in your *paftors* are evident in the conduct of the general inhabitants, with regard to *religious obfervances*; and if we may be allowed (faid ſhe, with a ſmile) to judge of the whole by the few we have here among us, I ſhould ſuppoſe that your churches are not generally *over-crowded*.” Penguin remained ſilent. “In the next place, Monfieur, I have been informed, that, on the whole, your ſlaves are much leſs happy than ours; that is to ſay, that, while you impoſe the ſame hardſhips, you interſperſe not (if I may uſe the expreſſion) the ſame comforts to render thoſe hardſhips more ſupportable; that, while your puniſhments are equally ſevere for crimes, your rewards and indulgences are not equally benevolent to recompenſe and encourage virtue; that, while the command and the frown of ſeverity are kept-up to deter the ſmile of approbation, the tribute of applauſe, and even the relaxation of kind and familiar converſation, are too often withheld.”—“We do not make *compa-*  
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nions of them as the French do (said Penguin), I must confess."—"I understand you perfectly (said Madame Bellanger, nodding her head); but we shall wave this discussion, and proceed to what I conceive of much greater consequence.

You have already admitted that your clergy are extremely bad; that a *regular* and *general* attention to religious duty is neglected throughout your islands: let me now ask you, Sir, what is the general conduct of your managers, overseers, attorneys, and even proprietors of estates, with regard to that *delicate intercourse* betwixt the sexes, so conspicuously notorious here?"—"Much the same, I suppose" (said Penguin, with indifference).—"Then, Sir, allow me to say, that, of all others, the ENGLISH have the least right to complain of Negro vices, passions, and irregularities. What! shall the violaters of what is sacred, decent, and becoming, dare to arraign the intemperance of those whose ignorance they ought to enlighten, and



and whose morals they ought to improve? Is a disregard to religious duties, and a dissoluteness of manners among superiors, to produce a contrary conduct in their slaves? How is it *possible*, Sir, to impress on the minds of the latter a favourable opinion of the honour, justice, or sincerity, of the former, when they see the most awful obligations neglected, and the most solemn duties cast aside? How, in the nature of things, inculcate moderation, or suppress passions, among the savage and the illiterate, who, as often as they look round, perceive such scandalous licentiousness daily practised by those whom they are instructed to reverence; nay, by the very person who wishes to impress them with ideas not only of his superior wisdom, but of his superior worth? Do they not see this white man of power single out the sable object of his desire, and *order* her to his bed? Do they not see this man of *equity* sometimes encroach on the property of another? And while the wife is snatched from the bosom of her husband,

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and the bonds of conjugal affection are broken, do they not hear this man of *mercy and morality* denounce punishment to overcome reluctance, and profer rewards to lure her from the paths of decorum to those of vice and infidelity? Is not every trait of modesty undermined by the emissaries he employs for seduction? Is not every principle of delicacy eradicated by the rapacity of his inordinate pleasures? Does not another, and ~~another~~, and *another*, succeed to the station of infamy? nay, even after the favourite Sultana is chosen and admitted near the throne, is not the handkerchief occasionally dropt day after day in the Haram of his licentiousness, as a proof of the *stability of his own attachment*, and as an *example of moderation, fidelity, and faith to others*? Are *these* the methods, Monsieur Penguin, to reform and civilize the Negro mind to temperance? Are these the pictures to allure the ignorant and inconsiderate to the shrine of harmony, peace, and love? O! how I admire such subtle casuists, who argue so acutely against

gainst themselves ! How admirable their deductions ;—how beautiful their declamations, against vices of their own creation !”

You are an admirable painter, Madame Bellanger (said Penguin, whose countenance during this animated address had undergone several changes) ; you draw with a *glowing pencil*.”—“ Is the picture true or false” (said Madame Bellanger) ?—“ Rather overcharged in some parts (said Penguin) ; but, on the whole, perhaps tolerably just. But what would you have us do, Madame ? Are our managers, &c. to become Anchorites amidst surrounding temptations ? Or would you have them absolutely married to a Black or a Mulatto wench, merely to prove their *conjugal fidelity* ? Can you really seriously believe, that a greater attention to religious duties among the whites, would operate on the minds of those who hardly know the difference between a SUPREME BEING and an *Obi Man* ? Or does your zeal carry you so *very* far, as to conceive that a ge-

neral attention to decency, temperance, constancy, and affection, would ever prevail among such a set of devils as we daily see transgressing every regulation of order, and breaking through every method devised to establish good fellowship among them? The conduct of the whites I shall not attempt to defend; but irregular, and, if you will, *indecent*, as it may be, surely, Madame, after abstracting what is reprehensible, enough remains to afford examples to the blacks to act very differently with respect to harmony among themselves, and attention to their own welfare. What shall we say of a set of mortals who, in defiance of every inconvenience, and in spite of every punishment, will sacrifice and utterly destroy their own health and future comforts, merely for the gratification of a temporary enjoyment? Or how can we expect an adherence to the regular systems of polished society from those whose furious and unconquerable passions prompt them to deeds which, to every person unacquainted with facts, appear altogether impossible?

impossible? Will not a Negro slave, after performing the severe tasks of the day, travel ten, fifteen, nay, sometimes twenty miles, to visit a new mistress; partake of a favourite feast; or meet the object of his hatred and revenge? Will he not, in contempt of every obstacle, and in defiance of nature and necessity, continue to persevere in these habits of excess? Will he not, instead of allotting some portion of time to sleep or repose, remain the whole night devoted to intemperance and riot; and after travelling back his weary way, appear by day-break in the field to execute, with exhausted spirits, and a worn-out frame, the succeeding labours of the day? As to the *women*, if possible, they are worse. Examples of such depravity, and incorrigible debauchery, can hardly be instanced in the history of nations; nor is it easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than to make *one* Negro wench chaste, or commonly decent, in her conduct. Can passions so inordinate, or dispositions so prone to excess, originate in *slavery*? Is op-



*pression* the food of *licentiousness*? Is hard labour and subjection the cantharides to stimulate passions so unusual with man in similar situations? Where shall we find in the annals of mankind instances of unbounded gratification predominant in bondage? Where look for the fever of sensual enjoyment raging amidst exertions which exhaust the body and depress the mind? The NEGRO, however, stands alone as a monument of our astonishment, and an object of our commiseration; and repeated experience tells us, that if we mean to attend to *his* welfare and *our own safety*, we must be vigilant in watching his actions, and cautious in granting indulgences, which may ultimately lead to general ruin. This, in the eye of humanity, is painful; but you yourself have given us a melancholy proof of its *necessity*.”—“ I have also given you proofs of contrary effects proceeding from a contrary system” (said Madame Bellanger, with some warmth).—“ I must again repeat (said Penguin), that this solitary instance, from the utter  
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impracticability of its being carried into general practice, is no proof at all.”—“It proves, however (said Madame Bellanger), that the *Negro*, with certain attentions and proper example, is *capable of improvement*; and that, I think, completely overturns your hypothesis.”—“In other words (said Penguin) it proves, that Negroes of a certain description, that is, all picked and chosen for the occasion, and placed in certain situations peculiarly favourable, *may*, in the course of fifteen years, be brought to a tolerable state of civilization. And even then, what is the *general* inference? If 30 Negroes of the best quality, and the most favourably situated, can, in the course of fifteen years (and, by your own account, with infinite labour), be reduced to order and good conduct, in what time will 300,000, of various vices, habits, and customs, be brought to the same condition?”

“YOUR arithmetical question (said Madame Bellanger, smiling) if not exactly in point,

Monfieur, is certainly in *character*. You have shifted your ground a little as a moralift; I fhall now endeavour to anfwer you as a *merchant*. The improvement of my Negroes was not effected by *time*, but by *circumftances*; without which, fifteen times fifteen years would not have done it. Thefe circumftances (independent of local fituation) I thought I had fully enumerated. That I may not be mifunderftood, and that I may finally clofe this fubject, I fhall take the liberty once more to bring them to your remembrance. I have faid, that the principal evil exifting in thefe iflands, in the prefent ftate of Negro bondage, is the want of POPULATION. I have likewise faid, that this can never be effectually remedied but by inftituting regular *marriage* among the flaves; that to eftablifh this on a proper and permanent bafis, impreffions of decency, decorum, and affection, muft firft be made on the Negro mind; and that the moft likely methods to accomplifh fo defirable a change are, firft, proper *examples among ourfelves*; and, fecondly,

ly, rewards and punishments invariably held out to wean the Negro from habits of irregularity, and to make him enamoured of domestic peace and the blessings of society. What these *examples* ought to be, and what they have already produced on this property, I have already particularly mentioned; and it rests with you and your countrymen, first to adopt and try similar methods, before you pronounce similar effects *impossible*.

“BUT as the first step towards a reform, in both morals and manners (said Madame Belanger, with solemnity), let some attention, Monsieur, be paid to the *first cause* of all human excellence or improvement.—*Let your worthless and disorderly clergy be banished from your islands, and a more virtuous and exemplary set of pastors introduced in their room.*—Let temporary places of public worship be established in different parts of the country, that the Negroes, from each estate, may, once a-week, conveniently convene, and, for

an hour, decently attend divine service.—Let your managers, overseers, and different white persons, on your properties, exchange a dissoluteness of manners, for one more calculated to impress a sense of delicacy and decorum on the minds of the slaves, and exhibit a picture more likely to fix an opinion of their superior excellence.—Let every method be tried to reward conjugal and parental affection; and every expedient be adopted to check irregularity between the sexes.—Lastly, to meliorate a condition which, we must all admit, is too severe, and as one of the principal steps towards an increased population, let every indulgence be granted consistent with safety, and every exemption introduced consistent with subordination.”—“ And this, you think, *will do*” (said Penguin, carelessly).—“ I think it will do a *great deal* at least, Monsieur (said Madame Bellanger), and that surely is not to be overlooked. To humanize the Negro mind, however little, or to effectuate any change in his condition, however small, that may ultimately  
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tend to their additional happiness, and our future advantage, is unquestionably accomplishing a great end. If nothing more were done than an increased population, would not that alone be a wonderful benefit? While we yearly added multitudes of better subjects to our own possessions, would we not of course preclude the introduction of multitudes of the miserable annually among us; and, perhaps, at last be enabled to shut the door of mercy against a traffic, shocking to a humane, and repugnant to a dignified mind." Penguin shook his head. "Admitting, Monsieur, that this last hope is visionary, and that no such happy event ever can be brought about, is it not doing something, during the existence of evil, to lessen the calamity? Since the passions of the native African are so ungovernable, his manners so savage, and his dispositions so bad, is not every method to diminish the number of those plagues among us to be adopted; and is not every attempt to produce a more orderly and polished race in their stead to be applauded?"

ed?"—"But are you sure (interrupted Penguin), that this new progeny will be superior to the African? Is the *Creole*, at this moment, less vicious, or less prone to excess?—is he not equally treacherous, stubborn, irascible, cruel, and revengeful?—and is not his superior experience productive of a superior cunning and address, which render his conduct less liable to detection, and consequently much more to be dreaded?"—"You must, at least, allow (said Madame), that he is much better *prepared* for civilization than the other; and surely that is one material step towards *general improvement*. I mean not to assert, that every thing is to be brought about at once, or that new plans are to be introduced precipitately. Great caution and great prudence, certainly, are necessary, and many years must elapse before a *general reformation* can be expected."—"Centuries, I presume you mean" (said Penguin).—"Well! be it so (said Madame Bellanger); better that centuries should be employed in establishing

establishing a gradual reform, than roll past in total vice, ignorance, and misery."

THUS ended an argument, not badly supported on either side, by two persons who, although very different in sentiments and dispositions, possessed each great experience, and no contemptible share of abilities. It ended, however, like most other arguments; without carrying conviction home to either party. Penguin, unwilling to push matters farther, took Madame Bellanger by the hand, and said, "Madame Bellanger, I believe you are as good a woman as ever lived; but, with all your virtues and *experience*, you are yet to learn a little more of the *Negro character*"—" *Et vous, Monsieur* (said Madame Bellanger, tapping him on the shoulder), with all your superior acuteness and penetration, would not be a bit the worse for a little more — HUMANITY."

I HAD now been at *La Cache* near three weeks;

weeks; and, in consequence of the salubrity and coolness of the mountain air, had effectually recovered my former health and vigour. At the earnest entreaty, however, of Madame Bellanger, Penguin (who departed next morning) agreed to my remaining eight days longer. During this short interval, I was engaged in an employment which yielded me peculiar delight, and for the first time in my life illustrated the sweets annexed to literary composition during a pause in business, or a blank in mental amusement. The history of Madame Bellanger's singular life could not fail to leave impressions on a young mind, alive to the emotions of pity, and susceptible of tenderness and love. I had therefore, partly to amuse, and partly to improve, myself in the French language, conceived an ardent desire to commit Madame Bellanger's story to writing as nearly in her own words as possible; and as the good woman took an interest in every thing I did, I made no secret of my labours, but submitted them daily to her perusal for her correction  
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and amendment. I had nearly completed my narrative, when one evening Mrs Penguin, observing Madame Bellanger and her daughter engaged in some necessary domestic concerns, proposed a walk till supper-time. As her husband was expected the next day, our conversation naturally turned on our approaching departure from La CACHE, and the agreeable society we were about to lose for a considerable time; which as naturally produced a mutual pensiveness that neither of us could shake off. We had seated ourselves for coolness on the bank of the stream at the bottom of our favourite plantain walk; and Mrs Penguin having enquired how far I had proceeded in my narrative, I pulled the manuscript out of my pocket, and shewed her. “Read (said she) the part that relates the misfortune and death of the Count de V———. I was sensibly affected with Madame Bellanger’s relation; I would fain see how you have described it.” I willingly complied; and as I proceeded, the vanity of a young author was highly

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gratified in perceiving Mrs Penguin's compassionate sorrows pay so liberal a tribute to descriptive calamity. She had at the commencement, from an eagerness of attention, drawn close to me; and, in the act of looking over what I had written, had naturally, and I am sure inadvertently, reclined upon me, with her right hand resting on my right shoulder. When I came to that part of the narrative where the expiring father takes leave of his wife and daughter, Mrs Penguin's hand dropped with a convulsive and sudden motion to the ground. This change, which withdrew a partial support to her former position, occasioned her face to come close to mine; and while her head rested on my left shoulder, I had, from an apprehension of her falling, insensibly put my arm round her waist to support her. How long we had remained thus, I know not; but a rustling noise behind us induced me to look around, when, to my no small surprise and confusion, I perceived Penguin and Mademoiselle Antoinnette within a few yards of us.







