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THE  
*Atrocities of a Convent,*  
&c. &c. &c.

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THE  
ATROCITIES, &c.

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CHAP. I.

TO SISTER EUGENIA.

*Paris.*

IF you had not desired me, my dear EUGENIA, to give you a particular account of my life and occupations, and if I had not given you a solemn promise that I would, I should

almost hesitate to do it; for I am afraid that the contrast of your situation, and mine, will distress you more than my letters can amuse you : but let me know in your answer if this is the case, and I shall write to you no more upon the subject.

I will not dwell upon my private happiness with VILLEFRANCHE : it increases every day, and no description of mine can do justice to his affection and tenderness.

Since we came to town, he has introduced me to all his friends; and the kindness they have shewn me, is a proof of the high esteem they entertain for him. This society is more delightful

than any idea the most sanguine imagination could have formed of it, and the private lives of the philosophers is a sufficient answer to all the calumnies of their vile and ignorant detractors, who are neither capable of understanding their principles, nor following their example. This society is gay without being frivolous, serious without being solemn, and learned without being pedantic. I had not an opportunity of judging of all these merits when I was living with my aunt; I was then too young. I have the pleasure of hearing her speak of here with respect, and regret; and of being able to join in her praise; for here, sensibility is not called affectation. What a contrast my present life is with that I led in the

country; there every sentiment was constrained——

But I beg your pardon, my dear friend, for dwelling so long upon my happiness, when I am absent from you. Be assured you are never out of my thoughts; and the more I am delighted with this society, the more I regret yours, and the more I feel that you were made to improve by, and adorn it. Ah! if you would, you might!——But I dare not write to you on this subject, you have forbid me; but you can never prevent me from thinking of it. I had promised to amuse you, and I have begun already to vex you.

We were last night at the theatre:



Mahomet was acted, and the house was crowded. You cannot conceive the effect of the fourth act upon the stage: you know how fine it is to read. I dare say however you have seen it performed; but as you had not then reflected upon the subject, you can have no idea of the effect it produces upon a *Paris* audience. It is received with enthusiasm: every sentiment hostile to superstition and tyranny, is applauded with transport. They are both near their dissolution: this is the opinion of all enlightened men: and their endeavours will be chiefly directed to prevent the fall of those ancient edifices from crushing the innocent.

Farewell my dear friend. Think of

me sometimes. Try to amuse yourself, since you have resolved not to be free. Your ANGELICA embraces you with all her heart.

We are to remain here for some time, and I am not sorry for it. I doubt much whether the society in *England* will make up for the loss of this. This letter will be given you by our friend: try to amuse him, my dear EUGENIA: trust him, console him; believe me he has need of consolation. If you knew what he has suffered you would feel for him. Perhaps he will confide it to you some time or other.

This letter was enclosed in the following one.

FROM M. DE VILLEFRANCHE TO  
M. DE VOLENCE.

*Paris.*

I am so happy here, my dear friend, and my friends are all so kind to me, and so attentive to my dear ANGE-LICA, that I begin to question whether I shall proceed much further on my journey this season. You know the MARQUIS OF C—— is lately married, and his wife is as amiable as himself. Besides the political situation of this land is becoming every day more critical, and it must deeply interest not only every well-wisher to his country, but every lover of mankind. Not that I am deeply interested in the fate of M. DE EPREMENIL, or care much

what becomes of the Parliament. But as the people have taken it into their heads, that this parliament is the safeguard of the little liberty they have left, and resent the treatment they have received from government, this shews that though they do not yet know their rights, they begin to feel they have some; which is a strong presage of a rapid improvement in knowledge, and a warning to our government (if they have the sense to take a warning,) that this long injured people, will not continue tamely to submit to oppression. The despotism, and weakness of the government, keep pace with one another, as indeed they have done for thirty years past, with the exception of the year and a half that the reins were in

the hand of virtue, which is synonymous with the name of TURGOT.

To give you an idea of the despotism of the government, I have only to remind you of its treatment of the parliament; and of its weakness, you have only to recollect that it has not been able to prevent the publication of the lives of TURGOT and VOLTAIRE, which must destroy it, root and branch, in the minds of all reflecting people. The darkness of *Versailles* appears to encrease, in proportion to the light of *Paris*. This contrast cannot last long; and this is one comfort.

My private happiness is at least equal.

to that which the prospect of public affairs affords me. I love ANGELICA with the affection of a husband, a brother, and a friend. The goodness of her understanding, and heart, attach me to her much more than the beauty of her person. The more I enjoy of her society, the more I would wish to enjoy of it: and so far from being obliged to separate (like some young couples, you and I have seen,) that we may not tire of one another, we think every instant we are obliged to be absent, a punishment; and we often repeat together with delight those beautiful lines of VOLTAIRE'S Essay on Man, which you are so fond of, and which he certainly composed for his EMILY.

Ah! pour vous voir toujours sans jamais vous  
déplaire

Il faut un coeur plus noble, une ame moins vulgaire,  
Un esprit vrai, sensé, fécond, ingénieux,  
Sans humour, sans caprice, et surtout vertueux ;  
Pour les coeurs corrompus l'amitié n'est point  
faite.

O divine amitié! félicité parfaite !

Seul-mouvement de l'ame où l'exces soit permis  
Change en biens tous les maux où le ciel m'a  
soumis.

Compagne de mes pas dans toutes mes demeures,  
Dans toutes les saisons et dans toutes les heures,  
Sans toi tout homme est seul ; il peut par ton  
appui

Multiplier son être et vivre dans autrui,  
Idole d'un coeur juste et passion du sage—, &c.\*

\* To live together with renewed delight,  
You must possess a pure and noble soul ;  
A mind sincere, ingenuous, well-informed,  
Without bad humour, and without caprice ;  
But above all you must be virtuous :  
Friendship was never made for sordid hearts.

Love, Love alone, is perfect happiness !

And now, my dear *VOLENCE*, let me speak a little of your affairs. Why are you not with us? Why did you refuse to come to *Paris*, on so bad a pretext as that you could not afford it? Is my fortune not large enough for us both? or do you not love me well enough to think me worthy of conferring on me, the greatest obligation in the world, that of being of service to you? Why is pecuniary assistance considered

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The only feeling of the enraptur'd soul,  
Where no excess can grow into abuse,  
Which changes adverse fortune into bliss:  
O be my kind associate through time,  
In every season, and in every place!  
Without thee man would be forlorn indeed,  
Inspired by thee he multiplies himself,  
And lives in others.

Thou art the idol of the virtuous heart,  
The only passion of the really wise—, &c.



as so great a favor in the world, and why do you adopt that prejudice? Does it suppose any dependence among friends, and will not the obligation be solely on my side? Will you not allow me to repair the injustice of your father, and our government? Have you forgot that we are connected by the closest ties of blood? Had my dear CLARA been alive, it would have been my duty to have assisted her, and will you not allow me to acquit that debt to you? Forgive me, my dear friend, but I cannot help thinking this delicacy of yours a false one. You follow the footsteps of your late, illustrious, and much admired friend D'ALEMBERT. He too rejected all pecuniary assistance, even from his friends, and I think he

was wrong. It is altogether distinct from accepting it from those who are indifferent to us.

But I am afraid you will be very angry with me, for this part of my letter: I will therefore conclude, that I may not be tempted to add any more upon this subject, by assuring you, that whether you accept or reject my offer, you will always find me

Your unalterably attached,

And very sincere friend,

CHARLES HENRY DE VILLEFRANCHE.

P. S. My wife desires to be most affectionately remembered to you. She begs you will give the enclosed to EUGENIA. Pray converse with her as

often as possible, and try to restore her to society, of which she was meant to be the ornament. That my ANGELICA has not given up her poetical pursuits you will see by the following piece, which I hope you will approve.

## VIRTUE ITS OWN REWARD.

## AN ODE.

You may labor and toil, wipe the sweat from  
your brow,

See your wife and your children half starv'd  
and in rags ;

You may dig in the mines, waste your strength at  
the plow,

To enrich and fill insolent money'd men's bags.

You may practise each virtue, each feeling pursue,

Truth prompts, conscience dictates, and honor  
approves ;

You may have in your hearts all that's noble and true,

All that elegant taste and fine sentiment loves :

While worldlings will tell you, with scornful regard,

That *Virtue is ever its own sweet reward.*

While poverty presses you down to the earth,  
 As each dictate of reason and right you obey;  
 Lo! the children of vanity, vice, and of mirth,  
 Pass by you regardless, all flaunting and gay.  
 Each duty of life whilst you are pursuing,  
 Both day and night anxiously spending in toil;  
 While nothing awaits you but famine and ruin;  
 The rich and the worthless, the pension'd and  
 vile,  
 Unheeding your sufferings, though ever so hard,  
 Will assure you that *Virtue's its own sweet reward.*

See where yon proud equipage waits at the gate,  
 Where each riot and luxury crouds the domain;  
 There a bully and wanton, in splendor and state,  
 Lord it haughtily over the neighbouring plain.  
 To support their extravagance, plunder'd behold  
 Those whose suff'rings unceasing, their riches  
 supply;  
 From whose labor and toil is wrung out the gold,  
 Those unprincipled minions and miscreants enjoy.  
 Such with sneers will the children of virtue discard,  
 Which hath ever, they'll say, *its own sweet reward.*

On the public, what paupers, on every side,  
 Blast the means of the wise, the industrious, and  
 good;

Who, trod on by creatures of wealth and of pride,  
 Pine for health and for liberty, raiment and food.  
 Great, great God of nature! amidst all this maze,  
 Say, who can the mode of thy government scan?  
 Who trace out thy seemingly-retrograde ways,  
 And justify evils like these unto man?  
 Who shall say, why the lot of the worthy is hard,  
 And why *Virtue gets only its own poor reward?*

While the bard thus indignantly utters his plaint,  
 Though wounded his feelings, his heart remains  
 true;  
 And, though prompted this general picture to paint,  
 To glorious exceptions his tribute is due.  
 He knows there are some, and he hopes there are  
 more,  
 Who, blest with abundance, abundance bestow;  
 Whose greatest delight is to take from their store,  
 To lessen the burdens of want and of woe.  
 Who the children of need and oppression regard;  
 Nor leave them to get,—*only Virtue's reward.*

Upon the receipt of these letters,  
 VOLENCE (who always kept the name  
 of MONT-JOCE) went to the convent

and asked for EUGENIA. After waiting half an hour in the parlor, EUGENIA came down to him; she told him that the Abbess was returned that day, and that being most fortunately fatigued with her journey, she was gone to bed; that she had been detained to read prayers to her, and had with difficulty obtained permission to see him, for a quarter of an hour; she now feared their interviews would be more difficult than ever.

She promised however to meet him in the chapel as often as possible, whither she would go on pretence of praying. "But it is hard," said she, "to be obliged to keep up constant hypocrisy. In the Abbess's absence I

was left to myself; but now she is returned, I fear I shall be watched more strictly than ever."

VOLENCE then gave EUGENIA, ANGELICA's letter; she retired immediately, fearing that ADELA or some of the nuns might surprize her; and promising to answer her friend's letter, and to meet him in the chapel the first opportunity; near which he said he would walk every evening between six and eight.

Just at that moment, one of the nuns came to summon her back to the apartment of the Abbess. She thrust her friend's letter into her bosom, and went up.

“And who is this gentleman,” said the Abbess, “with whom you have been conversing? It is against the rules of my house to admit male visitors to the grate, and I will not permit it. Who is he?”

“I thought you had permitted it.”

“I used to do it sometimes; but my Director tells me that it is very wrong, and that I am not near strict enough with my nuns. I know indeed that my temper is too easy; but I am resolved to correct myself of that fault. Who is he, I say?”

“His name is MONT-JOCE, he is a friend of M. DE VILLEFRANCHE, who



had heard from him, and came to tell me that ANGELICA was well."

"Well, for this time I shall excuse you; but if he calls again you shall not see him; at least not without me: I do not approve of external communications. I am glad ANGELICA is married, because she is out of your way; but I am sorry she has married VILLEFRANCHE. He is a man of no principle: her salvation is at stake, and I am resolved yours shall run no risk by any communication with her. I have told her mother to forbid her to correspond with you. I am afraid sister CLEMENTINA has not been strict enough in my absence: I shall arrange things better. Retire to your cell for the night."

Next morning the Abbess was not at matins; and the nuns thought she was still in bed: but on their leaving chapel they were summoned into her parlor. The moment they saw her, her threatening looks terrified them, and betokened that some system of punishment was about to be pursued: but the crime, and the criminal, were both unknown. They all looked at one another, but their suspense was soon ended.

“After my long absence,” said she; “I thought fit to visit your cells, that I might see if every thing was there that ought to be, and nothing that ought not, I see you tremble: well you may.”

She then unfolded her apron, in which she had brought all that she had discovered in the cells she had visited, among which it is needless to say, that those of her favorites, or those she had reason to fear, were not, at least she had brought nothing from them that could witness against them. "Look here" said she, "sisters: see the shocking effects of the impiety, and immorality of the age. All those who are not guilty of the same enormities, must pass sentence on those who are."

She then first produced a small box of liqueurs, and desired her who was guilty, to confess how she procured it. All were silent, "sister AGATHA," said she, "this I found in your cell: stand

here." She then produced the *Sopha*, by CREBILLON, and asking the same question, the same silence ensued. "Sister SERAPHINA," said she, "stand you by sister AGATHA." Next followed Rousseau's *Eloisa*. The same question, and the same silence. "Sister CELESTINA, place yourself by the other criminals." Next followed the *Persian Letters*; and the *Maid of Orleans*; and the sisters CHRISTINA and THERESA, to whom they belonged, were desired to range themselves by the others.

Several, and various other articles were found in other cells. Last of all poor EUGENIA's library was produced, consisting of VOLTAIRE's tragedies, his *Philosophy of History*, *Philosophical*

Dialogues, part of his Philosophical Dictionary, his Correspondence with D'ALEMBERT, and his Life by CONDORCET. "And these?" said she.

"These books are mine," said EUGENIA.

"Whence had you them?"

"That can be of no consequence to you. They are out of your reach: you cannot punish them: but I should render myself worthy of it by disclosing their names."

"We shall see that," said the Abbess, coolly.

“Believe me when I say,” said EUGENIA, “that there is not one in the convent who knew of these books being in my possession.”

“I do believe you: there are none so wicked in this convent, though many of them have committed faults, as to have concealed such a horrid crime. O my dear Sisters, my hair stands on end when I think of the horrid blasphemies contained in these works.” Saying this, she threw them into the fire. “As to the books I have found in the other cells, I shall take them with me, to show them to my confessor: I dare not show him the others; I and the convent should be excommunicated.”

On hearing this dreadful word, all but EUGENIA crossed themselves. “May the authors of these blasphemous works burn in Hell as they do in the fire.”

“Amen,” said the sisters.

They then proceeded to pass sentence. All the culprits but EUGENIA were condemned to slight and public penances, and to fast as they do in Lent, for three days. As for EUGENIA she was brought forward into the middle of the room, and a small scourge of cords being put into the hands of each of the nuns, they were desired to give her a stroke with it. This they did with more or less force, according to the meanness and baseness of their characters; and in

proportion as they wished to please the Abbess: for fear can render cruel. EUGENIA, though enraged, submitted with fortitude: she knew resistance would be vain, and therefore attempted to make none.

After this punishment, ignominious for those who inflicted, not for her who suffered it, EUGENIA was ordered to kneel down, and ask pardon of GOD for the scandal she had introduced. She at first refused, but was soon forced by numbers to kneel. "O the wretch!" said they, "she dares not ask GOD pardon, or she does not believe in him."

"It is not that I dare not, but that I



will not," answered she; "and it is because I do believe in him that I will not insult him by a lie: and it would be one of the grossest nature to say that I had committed a crime, when I was sensible I had not. If I have violated the rules of your house, I am willing to ask your pardon; though I cannot see why I have done so more than others, who had what you call profane books in their possession, some of which I have seen you read. And I can call ADELA to witness."

"Hold, wretch: this conduct is the consequence of your reading. You have broken your vow of obedience: and every crime may be expected to follow. I will not suffer you to infect

the other sisters a moment with your presence: come with me. You shall be locked up in your cell, upon bread and water, till you ask GOD's pardon. You may thank my lenity that you are not confined to a dungeon."—Accordingly she led EUGENIA to her cell, and locked the door.

This severity of the Abbess may appear surprising, after we have observed, at the beginning of this work, that she generally treated those under her care with kindness. But it was only when she had not a contrary interest; and here she had one. Her long absence from the convent had given rise to suspicions among the young nuns, of which she was informed by the

old ones at her return. The tourrière who had served the young people in the absence of the Abbess, and had been well paid for it, thought she might make a double profit if she informed the Abbess, that in spite of her, and without her knowledge, she was afraid a good deal of company had got into the convent, that sister CLEMENTINA, had been very indulgent, and that every thing had been in confusion. It was by her advice therefore that the domiciliary visits had been undertaken; and it was resolved that a nun should be made an example of to the convent, to prove to them that the Abbess was *rigidly virtuous*: but the tourrière nor sister CLEMENTINA received the slightest reprimand; for the Abbess had need

of such complaisant friends, and they were both too deep in her secrets, to be offended with impunity.

EUGENIA was chosen for the victim that was to *atone for the sins of the people*. Her crime was much more inadmissible: she had been convicted of the crime of making use of her reason; and that crime in a convent or even in the church, is not to be forgiven. Besides, we have already said the Abbess was afraid of EUGENIA'S penetration, and wished to intimidate her once for all by an exemplary punishment. Even this policy, however, was not very enlightened, for she was only ensuring her enmity.

It is singular that tyrants of every description have not yet learned, that if severity does not intimidate, it prepares their own destruction: but they presume upon the cowardice of mankind, and they are too often right. However when men begin to suspect that they are stronger than their oppressors, and it is not always they can flatter themselves with concealing that truth, though despots have done all in their power to effect it, the oppressors and the oppression must soon fall together.

The Abbess had no reason to fear that her conduct to EUGENIA would be discovered. ANGELICA was gone: no one ever called for her at the convent. But about a week after her confinement

to her cell the Abbess received a letter from M. DE St. ANGE, informing her that he intended to visit his daughter next day; and that he had some thoughts of removing her to a convent in *Paris*, that she might be nearer himself, unless he found that she was uncommonly happy in her present situation.

The Abbess, who feared she should lose EUGENIA'S pension, flew to her cell, and told her that by this time she hoped she had repented of her sins, that she should say no more on the subject at present, and that she was sorry EUGENIA had forced her to punish her, contrary to her custom and inclination. She then told her of her

father's intended visit; and said she would not inform him of her conduct this time. as she would not for the world afflict the good old man.

EUGENIA was far from suspecting the real motives of this change. She thought it was the effect of the Abbess's natural easiness of temper, and only felt rejoiced that her confinement was at an end, and that no degrading concession was to be the price of her liberty.

Her father came, and was first introduced to the Abbess alone, who expatiated upon the devotion of his daughter, and her happiness in this convent; and she was believed. EUGENIA was then sent for: the interview

was short, and cool. M. DE ST. ANGE said that if he had not found her so remarkably happy where she was, he intended to have removed her to a convent in *Paris*, to be near him. But as EUGENIA had not the least wish to be under the influence of her step-mother, she declined the proposal. This confirmed her father in his idea of her happiness; and he left her under this persuasion.

It was not to him EUGENIA could have unbosomed herself: he had been long estranged from her by her step-mother: fear of him had become her predominant sentiment; and confidence once lost is never to be regained. Yet she felt it hard not to be able to trust



him, to complain to him, to tell him why she had gone into the convent, how she had been deceived, and what she had suffered. Her heart was oppressed.

ANGELICA was not near her; it was impossible to meet VOLENCE, for her steps were narrowly watched. Since her disgrace the nuns all shunned or calumniated her: every thing that was done wrong in the house was done by her: they knew that every tale against her would be acceptable. The Abbess had treated her too ill to be reconciled to her. Her existence became insupportable. How much did she regret not having followed ANGELICA's advice!

The week she had been shut up was worth a year's experience. How often did she wish it was in her power to see

VOLENCE, to write to him! but this was impossible: she had no paper, no one with whom she could entrust her letter: her mind tortured itself: she became restless, uneasy, miserable; she could neither eat nor sleep. She read ANGELICA'S letter over and over again, when she was alone, and wept over it.

## CHAP. II.

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As EUGENIA was ruminating over her forlorn and afflicting situation one evening, she heard a gentle knock at her door, and rising to see who it was she saw MADEMOISELLE DE VALVILLE, a boarder in the convent, a very amiable girl, about twelve years old. "Sister EUGENIA," said she, "I dare say you are surprized at my visit. But you would have seen me much

sooner had I not been afraid of being observed by the Abbess, she is at present with her Confessor: I think we are safe for some time, and I am come to ask you what makes you so unhappy. I cannot bear to see you look so melancholy: and you have always been so kind to me, that I should be happy if I could in any manner shew my gratitude."

"You are very good, my dear LOUISA," said EUGENIA, "but you cannot make me happier."

"I do not ask you to trust me with your secrets; I am too young for such confidence. I have no right to expect it: but I know you are strictly watched

here; that you have not liberty to see or correspond with any body. Your friend has left you, and the nuns don't seem to love you; though I don't know why. Some of them are very malicious, my dear Sister: they tell many wicked stories against you to the Abbess. I have sometimes observed you reading a letter: pray be cautious: I know they are very anxious to get possession of it."

"I should be ruined were that to happen: and yet of what use is it to me? I cannot even answer it."

"When all the nuns are asleep," said LOUISA, "I will come to your cell with some paper; and if you will trust me

with your answer, I will convey it to whom you please. I have leave to see my relations in the neighbourhood: I am not a nun, thank GOD, and I never will be one."

"How happy you are!—but I will not suffer you to run such a risk on my account."

"What risk can I run? The worst that can happen to me is that I may be obliged to say longer prayers for a week, or some such penance. But there is even no great chance of that: My father is rich, and the Abbess has an interest in pleasing him: she knows that I should be removed on the slightest application."

“ In that case, my dear, I will accept your offer with pleasure ; and since you are so good, if you could contrive to take a walk in the chapel this evening —but no ; I will give you a letter to deliver from me to-morrow evening.”

According to promise, that night LOUISA brought paper, pen, and ink ; and EUGENIA wrote to VOLENCE, informing him of the reason of her absence, the constraint in which she lived, and her regret at not having followed the advice of ANGELICA ; but that if he would again wait for her in the chapel at the same hour, four days after, that she would endeavour to meet him : that as that was the eve of the profession of a nun, niece to the Abbess,

she would probably be shut up in her apartment with her, and some of her other favorites for some hours, and that she should then be able to come unobserved to the chapel.

EUGENIA then informed LOUISA at what hour, and in what part of the chapel, she would meet the gentleman. "Believe me," said she, "I would not ask you to execute this commission for me, I would not even accept your offer; were there any thing criminal in my intentions: I would not thus abuse your confidence."

LOUISA promised to deliver the letter, which she did next evening, and VOLLENCE desired her to inform EUGENIA,



that he would meet her at the appointed hour."

Accordingly at seven o'clock on the eve of ADELA'S profession, EUGENIA repaired to the chapel, where VOLENCE waited for her. EUGENIA informed him of every thing that had happened to her, of the seizure of her books, her confinement, her father's visit, the present constraint in which she lived, and the thoughts that had filled her mind during her confinement."

"And after all these thoughts," said VOLENCE, "do you still think it is a crime to break your vows?"

"I have broken them all already in

my heart; it can therefore be nothing but fear that prevents me from breaking them in reality."

"But are you convinced in your heart that you have a right to do so? If you are not I would not advise you to violate principle, however strong the motives might be for your doing so."

"In my confinement I have reflected deeply. I have often recalled to my mind, what ANGELICA said to me upon the subject. I then thought my vows sacred and inviolable; I am not now so certain of it. But you will say, that my interest to think they are not, was too great to allow me to reflect coolly on the subject. I will tell you some of

my thoughts, and you will enlighten my mind, if I am wrong.

“When I see the Abbess and these nuns, that preach the strictness of our vows to me, violate every one, I have often said to myself, have they a right to violate the rules of morality within the convent, and have I not a right to escape from tyranny by quitting it? as ALZIRA asks if the *Spaniards* have a right to destroy the world, while she has not a right to dispose of her own life.”

“As to the right of doing wrong,” said VOLENCE, “that can exist for no one on earth: and there is no apparent good that would accrue from it that

could justify it. Their example, therefore, goes for nothing. The only question is, whether leaving the convent would be wrong? Let us examine this coolly.

“ In the first place, even when the laws of society command an action palpably unjust, it becomes a great question whether they ought to be obeyed. But we have no need to examine this at present. Few will be so bold as to maintain that the existence of convents is useful, or even indifferent to society, any more than the slavery of the negroes in the *West Indies*. Who would not applaud the government that should abolish them to-morrow? and as they have not done this, who would

condemn the individual who should escape from slavery? Besides your vows can hardly be called voluntary. You would not have been allowed to dispose of the smallest sum of money at the age that you disposed of your liberty. Your escape would injure no one: and even if you still think that the sacrifice of your liberty is acceptable to GOD, the moment it ceases to be voluntary it must cease to be acceptable; and you have already declared that you have renounced your vows in your heart."

"Your reasoning is perfectly conclusive. I feel that my escape would injure no one, that I am miserable here, that I was deceived, that my vows cannot in justice be considered binding,

though they are in law, though they are in the world."

"If you have resolved to escape, you must resolve to renounce that world, at least in this country: this I cannot conceal from you. You will be liable to the punishment of the law: but in catholic countries only. But your conscience will be free if you feel that you have done no wrong. And this is the difference between a civil, and a real crime; a difference which if it does not soon diminish, will throw society into incalculable confusion, and unhinge every principle of social order: for it is tyranny that unhinges it, and not liberty. And while the laws of nations are so opposite to those of nature, the laws of

nature will be followed, in spite of every obstacle: the boundaries of right and wrong will be confounded; and every attempt to palliate will only increase the evil.

“Now, my friend, weigh well what you have to do. If you prefer living in concealment in a foreign country to living here, decide: I will assist you to escape, as far as it is in my power.”

“But can I not protest against my vows?”

“The laws would reject your protest. The letter you wrote to your father still exists, and may be shown against you. You took your vows voluntarily in

appearance, therefore you have no alternative but to make your escape into a foreign country, or remain here for life."

"But even if I were to make my escape, where could I go? ANGELICA is not in *Switzerland*; she is in *Paris*, where I dare not appear."

"I will write to her to-night, and consult her upon your future plans. If you could promise to meet me a week hence, I shall certainly have the answer, as I shall send my letter by express."

"I shall expect you with impatience," said EUGENIA, "and will meet you here at eleven o'clock at night; or if



that is impossible, I will send you LOUISA, who gave you my last letter, and you can write to me by her."

EUGENIA retired in safety to her cell, and VOLENCE returned home, where he wrote the following letter.

TO M. DE VILLEFRANCHE.

*Scellières.*

I should have answered your letter long before this time, my dear friend, had I not been in hopes of being able to give you and your wife an account of EUGENIA. I have waited often in the chapel in hopes of meeting her since I delivered ANGELICA's letter to her, but have been disappointed till to-night. The account she has given

me, of the reason of this delay, is very distressing; but I must inform you of it that she may have your advice upon the steps she ought to take, and you can conceal it from ANGELICA if you think proper.

The books she had lent her were seized in her cell, on which account she was confined for a week; and though liberated by the Abbess on a visit from M. DE ST. ANGE, she has ever since been treated with so much harshness, that she bitterly repents not having followed ANGELICA's advice, and not having escaped with her to *Switzerland*. Her mind is quite reconciled to the justice of such an attempt; and it only now remains to be settled, how it is to

be accomplished; or where she is to go, since she has let the opportunity of the Abbess's absence, and your going to *Switzerland*, escape. Pray answer me upon this subject as soon as possible. You may depend upon my doing every thing for her in my power; but you know it is impossible EUGENIA should come to *Paris*. I even see great difficulties attending her flight with me, should it be possible to effect her escape.

I am so much interested in this subject, that I cannot write to you upon any other.

I embrace you with all my heart.

JOHN LOUIS DE VOLENCE.

Four days after, the messenger returned with the following answer from VILLEFRANCHE.

TO M. DE VOLENCE.

*Paris.*

I am much affected with the misfortunes of EUGENIA, my dear friend; and I did not dare trust ANGELICA with them all at present. She is not in a situation to bear such a shock. I only told her that EUGENIA was now anxious to make her escape: and she wished much that we should return to the neighbourhood of *Scellières*, and wait for her at the distance of a post or two. But besides that I by no means wish her to travel at present, our leaving *Paris* so near the time that EUGENIA

must be missed, would only make it easier for her to be traced: and if she was ever retaken, her fate might be much worse than perhaps under any other circumstances. How sincerely do I wish she had taken this resolution a little sooner! You say you see great difficulties in her travelling with you. There is a way of obviating these difficulties —but I dare not propose it to you. Consult yourself well, my dear friend; consult with her. If she finds it impossible to remain in her present situation, and if you find it impossible to adopt any other scheme, I will send a maid-servant to wait for her at the nearest village, and to conduct her to *Switzerland*, to the house of a friend on whom I can depend, where we will join her as

soon as ANGELICA can travel with safety. I am impatient to hear from you.

Ever yours,

CHARLES HENRY DE VILLEFRANCHE.

P. S. Perhaps if she can put up with her situation a few months longer, and appear more reconciled to it, she will find her escape easier. But she must be the best judge of the time, and means.

At the end of the appointed week VOLENCE went with VILLEFRANCHE'S letter to the convent, and EUGENIA, after having considered some time, agreed to put up with her situation for some time longer, till her friends should be in *Switzerland*; for she wished as

much as possible to avoid every suspicion that she had left the convent for any other reason than being discontented with her situation. She then agreed with *VOLENCE*, that it would be better he should not come to the convent till near the period when she was to prepare for her escape.

“ Though the time will appear long to me,” said she, “ yet as I have the certain hope of escaping from my confinement, I shall be able to endure, easily and patiently, any temporary inconvenience to which I may be subjected: and I would not for the world that you should run any risk on my account. Besides, it will be prudent in me to appear as little at the grate as

possible; but if you will do me the favor to call once before you leave the country, and ask for *MADemoiselle de Valville*, on any pretext whatever, you will hear of me from her; and I will give her a letter to give you, for *Angelica*." This he promised to do, and praising her patience, took leave of her.

As *EUGENIA* retired through the convent to her cell, she observed the Director coming out of the Abbess's apartment, with a dark lanthorn in his hand. On seeing her he instantly re-entered it, and *EUGENIA* made the best of her way to her cell, flattering herself that he had not had time to recognize her.



She could not however sleep; though she still flattered herself she was not discovered, this accident troubled her. She walked round and round her narrow cell: she thought of the morals of those who have erected themselves into the judges and directors of others: she compared the purity of her own principles and conduct with theirs. “And yet,” said she, “it is I who should have been punished if I had been seen. But what is my crime? I only wish to escape from tyranny, and I shall soon.”

This hope consoled her, and she laid herself down upon the bed to endeavour to sleep, when suddenly the door opened, and the Abbess attended by her favorite *tourrière* entered the cell. “Rise,”

said she to EUGENIA. EUGENIA had only lain down in her clothes, and rose instantly. "How came you out of your cell at twelve o'clock last night?"

"I was in the chapel"

"And why in the chapel? You are not usually so very devout."

"Is it you who blame my devotion?" said EUGENIA.

"Devotion! hypocrisy! You had an assignation in the chapel. Profane wretch, in the temple of God! But I shall have your infamous lover watched, and denounced to public justice."

“You may search, you may watch,” said EUGENIA, “you will find none. You judge of me by yourself. Who saw me pass last night?”

“Who saw you pass? it was I.”

“You know it was not. It was the Director of our convent.”

“I despise such an assertion: this is but recrimination. But you shall have leisure to recriminate by yourself long enough.”

She then ordered the *tourrière* to take her in her arms and follow her. EUGENIA was strong, she at first resisted; but her hands were bound.

She then entreated, but she was not listened to; she was treated with scorn and derision: She then screamed. "Your screams will be unavailing," said the Abbess, "no one can come to your assistance. The more resistance you make, the longer will be your punishment. I only desire you to come with me to the chapel to hear your sentence there."

"I will know your reason for going there."

"The Grand Vicar waits there to interrogate you."

"If it is only to the chapel," said

EUGENIA, "there is no need for carrying me; I will follow you."

She followed then without any further resistance, and when she came to the altar a trap door was lifted up. "Take her down," said the Abbess. The infamous *tourrière* obeyed, and the inhuman Director stood by, and saw it: he even assisted in pushing her down, and shutting the trap upon them. It would have been in vain for EUGENIA to call out for assistance; no one could have heard her: indignation and grief almost suffocated her: she remained senseless in the arms of the *tourrière*, who having dragged her down the stairs stopped at another trap, which led down another dark stair-case into a sort

of cold and damp cellar, at one end of which was spread a mat, upon this the wretch threw EUGENIA, and left her.

When she recovered, and found herself in this dreadful place, she was almost frantic. She tore her cloaths, she beat her head against the wall. This paroxysm of despair lasted till the evening, when the tourrière entered her dungeon with some bread and water.

EUGENIA spoke to her, she did not answer her; she fell at her feet, she entreated her; "leave me, wretch," said she, "your touch is death: you are a heretic, an atheist."

EUGENIA was going to answer, but

she perceived the Abbess was following her. She was therefore silent, but indignation, not fear, kept her so.

For two or three days the Abbess constantly attended the *tourrière* to see that she did her duty well. At last, however, the *tourrière* came alone, and then EUGENIA ventured again to speak to her.

“Is it possible,” said she, “you can use me so cruelly, I who have never done any thing to injure you?”

“I am only doing my duty; I am here to obey the Abbess, and it is not my business to enquire whether you are right or wrong.”

“ Ah, MARGARET! I could not have used you so cruelly, though she or any one had ordered me.”

“ But what can I do, sister? my livelihood depends upon my obedience. I was taken in from charity, and am liable to be turned out every day.”

“ But the Abbess can never know if you treat me better than she has ordered you, and I am sure you must feel happier yourself.”

“ If I was sure she never would. But what would you have me do for you? Don't ask me to carry any letters or message from you to any body, without the convent, or indeed within



it: nobody shall know you are here from me. But I am staying too long, the Abbess will wonder where I am." Saying this she left her.

EUGENIA thought upon these words of the tourrière's, '*nobody shall know you are here from me.*' "If this is resolved upon" said she, "then nobody is ever to know it! My confinement is to be eternal! Good GOD! what will become of me?"

These reflections were too painful to be dwelt upon: she remained in a sort of stupor till the return of the tourrière next morning. She had brought with her that morning milk, instead of water, and a blanket to throw upon the mat.

“ You see,” said she, “ I am not so ill-natured as you think me.”

“ Ah!” said EUGENIA, “ you would have been much more merciful if you had brought me a dagger, or a dose of poison.”

“ People must put up with the fate they prepare for themselves. If you had kept your vows, or been more prudent, you would not have been here.”

“ How can you say so? You know it was because I saw the Director come out of the Abbess’s room?”

“ I know you said so; but how do I know that is true? Besides it might have

been for spiritual affairs. And if it had been the case, what had you to do with it? Abbesses may do many things that nuns cannot do, and nuns do many things that we poor servants dare not do. You should have kept your own counsel. If you had answered the Abbess humbly that you had been at prayers, and said nothing about who went in or who came out of her room, you might still have been free."

"Free! in a convent!" said EUGENIA.

"As free as any nun is: what would you be at? And let me tell you, sister, it was very foolish of you not to trust me with your love secret. I could have procured you meetings with your friend,

I would have sworn it was not you ; in short, I could have done twenty things : but you would depend upon yourself, and you see the consequences of it."

" I had nothing to trust you with."

" Come, this is nonsense, you need not conceal it from me now. I assure you I won't tell the Abbess. I like her no better than you do : I know she is a malicious, intriguing woman. Were I to tell her any thing you tell me, it would prove that I spoke to you, which would be as much as my place is worth, though after all she does not use me ill : she knows that I know her tricks ; she knows that I could tell why she left the convent this summer."

Thus this woman went on babbling for a long time. At last EUGENIA interrupted her: “of what consequence is her infamy to me? what consolation is it for me to hear that my oppressor is as licentious as she is cruel and wicked? I have already told you that I have nothing to trust you with.”

“You will not persuade me of that: I have traced you several times to the chapel, and seen a man there, waiting for you.”

“This I will not deny,” said EUGENIA; “but believe me, I had no criminal intention.”

“Criminal intention! a great crime

it is for a nun who is not allowed to marry, to have a lover!"

"I assure you I had none; but since I see you suspect me, I will tell you the real reason why I went to the chapel: I wanted to make my escape."

"I told you so. Wanted to make your escape with a man, and yet he was not your lover!"

"I assure you this is true, however ridiculous it may appear to you."

"Then why escape?"

"Because I was tired of confinement."

“ It was your own fault you did not amuse yourself better in the convent. I know some of the nuns that lead very merry lives.”

“ It was liberty I wanted : but I must tell you I would rather be here than lead the life you mean.”

“ You have a very singular way of thinking.”

Many conversations of this nature gave EUGENIA a new and dreadful view of convents. The contrast of her ideas, and the tourrière's, shewed her how reason may be perverted by bad education, and bad institutions. But though the tourrière was a corrupted character,

she was not so profoundly malicious as some of them. It was more that she thought it her interest to be wicked, than that she was inclined to be so. She did not uselessly torment EUGENIA, she even procured her some little comforts, and EUGENIA could not entirely exclude the idea that she might one day prevail on her to assist her escape: it was this hope alone that prevented her from sinking into absolute despair.



## C H A P. III.

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WHILE these things were passing in the convent, VOLENCE, according to his promise, the day before he went to *Paris*, which was about a month after EUGENIA'S confinement, called at the gate, and asked for MADEMOISELLE DE VALVILLE. LOUISA came to the grate. VOLENCE asked if she had any letters from EUGENIA for him.

“EUGENIA,” said she, “I have not seen her for a month.”

“ Not seen her ! what is become of her ? ”

“ That is what I cannot tell. I have asked for her often, and been told she is sick. ”

Whatever regret VOLENCE felt at hearing this, it was impossible for him to wait, as he was obliged to go to *Paris* upon very urgent business. However he told VILLEFRANCHE what he had heard, with his suspicion that it was not true. VILLEFRANCHE instantly told ANGELICA, that he was informed that EUGENIA was sick, and that he himself would go to see her. She wished to go with him to *Scellières*, but upon his representing that the roads were bad,

and that she was not in a situation to undergo much fatigue, and knowing that she might depend upon his attention to EUGENIA, with as much confidence as if she had been there herself; she consented to remain at *Paris*, and VILLEFRANCHE set out for *Scellières*.

Instead of enquiring for EUGENIA, at the convent, he desired to be admitted to the Abbess. She received him with the most apparent pleasure, and the most studied politeness, to which he paid no attention. "I am come to see EUGENIA DE ST. ANGE," said he, "her friend has heard she is sick, and is uneasy about her."

"Sick! who told you so?"

“ I had my information from a friend of mine, who is acquainted with one of the boarders in this convent.”

“ It is true she was indisposed some time ago ; I had forgot ; but it was nothing of consequence.”

“ Then let her be called : I wish to see her.”

“ That is impossible : her conduct has of late made it necessary to be more strict with my convent than ever. If your wife has any thing to communicate to her, let her address her letters to me, and I will transmit to her EUGENIA'S answers. You may tell my niece that she is in good health : don't im-

portune me. If I make complaints to the Grand Vicar of what I know, neither you nor your wife will ever again be permitted to enter this convent. After I have kept EUGENIA secluded from society for a twelve-month, and when I am convinced she has sincerely repented of her late conduct, you may perhaps be admitted as usual."

VILLEFRANCHE, though much distressed, and far from being satisfied, insisted no farther. He thought by the Abbess's style of conversation that his wife's letter to EUGENIA had been seen, or that the intention of her escape had somehow or other been discovered. Whatever it might cost him, therefore, he thought it more prudent to wait the

twelve-month, than to hazard every thing by present violence. "Take care that I do see her then, when I return," said he, "or depend upon it, the civil magistrate shall be informed."

"The civil magistrate! Thank God," said the Abbess, "the church is not reduced to such extremities, in spite of the efforts that you and your infamous masters, the philosophers, the deists, and the atheists, have made to the contrary. But have a care, Sir; I know your dangerous practises: It was your principles that ruined your sister, that made her elope with a wretch on the eve of her profession, and brought her back to die unconfessed and damned, in the convent which she dishonored."

“ Hold wretch ! How dare you pronounce my injured sister’s name ? But you and your church have not so much power as you suppose. We have no inquisition in this country, and perhaps — But it is not worth while to reason with you.” Saying this he left her abruptly.

When he returned to *Paris* he informed his wife that **EUGENIA** was now better ; but that it would be prudent to wait for a twelve-month at least, before they again re-visited the convent, that they might secure her escape the more easily : but he gave her no hint of the numerous suspicions that tormented him, for fear of alarming her. He communicated them however to **VOLENCE**,

and they both agreed that it would be better to wait till the expiration of the year before they made a noise about this affair, lest, while they were endeavouring to secure EUGENIA'S liberty, they should only make her confinement the harder. It was therefore determined that VOLENCE should go to *Scellières* in the spring, and endeavour by every means to obtain information concerning the fate of EUGENIA, and that VILLEFRANCHE and ANGELICA should set out for *England* as soon as she had recovered from her confinement, which she expected to take place in April.

When the Abbess had given a twelve-month to VILLEFRANCHE, it was not



that she had resolved to liberate EUGENIA at the end of that period, but that she wished to gain time. Her proceedings were too base to be acknowledged: wickedness is as cowardly as it is cruel: and though she affected to be so certain of the power of the church, she was by no means so in reality. But as nobody knew of the confinement of EUGENIA, except the Director, and the tourrière, of both of whom she thought herself sure, she imagined herself safe for the present, and resolved to wave disagreeable reflections in the mean time. Such is the calculation of vice, and weakness!

EUGENIA began to find her prison insupportable. Every day the hopes of

prevailing upon the tourrière to assist her escape diminished; though she had never attempted it, yet she thought this woman seemed to have more the wish to reconcile her to her situation than to free her from it, which would involve her in some danger: and though she did not seem to be absolutely wicked, yet she was by no means disposed to incur even a temporary personal inconvenience to perform a virtuous action. Her mind was degraded by servitude and superstition: she was accustomed to see all those she considered as her betters elude what they called virtue, and addict themselves to what they theoretically considered the most shocking vice. She was accustomed to connect the idea of profit, with the violation of

the only virtue she knew, and how could she love it? But it was not her interest to hate EUGENIA, or treat her ill: on the contrary; she was amused by her conversation; and as she thought herself certain that EUGENIA would never be liberated, and consequently could never reveal any thing with which she might entrust her, she gave way to her love of talking, without restraint; and EUGENIA was soon informed of every scandalous story that had taken place in the convent since MARGARET'S entrance to it.

EUGENIA'S indignation and sensibility were roused by turns. Among other relations the tourrière told her the story of the unfortunate CLARA DE

VILLEFRANCHE; that her lover came to enquire for her, and was told that she was dead.

“And is she not dead?” said EUGENIA.

“No, she is here.”

“Good God! here! O tell me where.”

“Not far from you.”

“For Heaven’s sake tell me where.”

“In the next dungeon; but it is universally believed she is dead.”

“ Since it is true that she is not, perhaps her child is still alive.”

“ For aught I know. I had not the heart to destroy it: I left it without the garden wall, and I know it was taken up, for the woman came back to the convent with it.”

From all that EUGENIA heard she was certain that the child was the same that ANGELICA had adopted: but she said nothing.

“ O let me see my fellow-prisoner,” said she; “ you will run no risk.”

“ It is true,” answered the *tourrière* coldly, “ that it will never be in your

power to inform against me. I may therefore do it. But promise me that if the Abbess should ever come down to see you, you will deny you have been out of your dungeon.”

“ I promise you I will. O ! let me comfort my friend’s sister.”

“ Come then. Poor things, it will amuse you : do you know I sometimes cannot help being very sorry for you both. Perhaps it will make me happier if I let you meet sometimes ; and nobody can ever know that.”

Saying this she opened the door of the dungeon, and taking the lamp she had brought with her, she desired EU-

GENIA to follow her. This she did with difficulty, for by long confinement, and the damp, she had almost lost the use of her limbs.

They went down a dark and narrow passage, about ten yards beyond EUGENIA'S dungeon, and stopped at another door, which the tourrière opened.—“Here,” said she, “is a fellow-prisoner whom I have brought to console you.”

“Can I be consoled by the misfortunes of another?” said CLARA.

EUGENIA went forward trembling towards her:—extreme misfortune inspires awe. By the glimmering light of the lamp she saw a pale emaciated

figure, extended upon a mat, at the upper end of her dungeon. Her head was leaning upon her hand.—Upon EUGENIA's approach she endeavoured to raise herself up a little, to receive her, but could not.—EUGENIA knelt down upon the mat beside her, threw her arms round her to support her, and wept for a long time, without uttering a word.

“Whoever you are, compassionate stranger,” said CLARA, “who sympathize thus with my misfortunes, do not distress yourself on my account: my miseries will soon be at an end. I have nothing in the world to regret; I have been dead to hope for these two years.—For these two years I have



lived in agony.—But I shall soon bury my misfortunes in eternal oblivion.—I shall soon quit them for ever.”

EUGENIA could not answer her, her heart was oppressed. Even the tourrière could not support this affecting interview: she told EUGENIA she would leave them together till the evening, and then retired.

After a long silence, CLARA asked EUGENIA to whom she was indebted for this friendly visit, and how she came into these dreadful dungeons.

EUGENIA told her history in a few words. “How I pity you, my child!” said CLARA. “But you are not so

wretched as I am: you have not left a husband, and a child in the world, of whose destiny you are ignorant; and who are perhaps even more miserable than I am."

"As to your child," said EUGENIA, "I can make you easy with regard to her fate: she is under the protection of my most intimate friend, a most amiable girl, who is lately married to your brother."

"O Heavens!" said CLARA, "is it possible? I did not think I could have experienced pleasure again. My brother I know is virtuous; his wife I am sure must be so: my child will be happier

than I have been: and if I knew the fate of VOLENCE I could die in peace."

"VOLENCE!" exclaimed EUGENIA, "I have seen him: but he doubtless believes that you are dead: this is your brother's opinion."

"It will soon be true. But it is some consolation to think that VOLENCE is not in a dungeon, that he has already mourned my death, and that consequently the most violent effusions of his grief are already over: his child will comfort him."

"Alas! he does not know it is his child. I myself did not till this day."

CLARA had been so much agitated by different feelings, and was so weak, that she fainted. EUGENIA brought her to her senses with difficulty: she was already in a deep consumption, and EUGENIA perceived with regret that she could not long enjoy the society of her new friend, and that all her kind attention could not save, or even prolong her life.

The tourrière allowed them to meet every day, but every day the health of CLARA declined, and in about a month she expired in the arms of her friend, after having assured her, that she had considerably softened the agonies of death, and entreating her if ever she should again see her husband, to tell

him, that she died happy in thinking that he was safe, and that her last thoughts had been employed on him.

After the death of her friend, EUGENIA sunk into despondency. As long as CLARA lived her mind had been occupied with her misfortunes, but now she felt her own with redoubled violence. "Alas!" said she, "I too shall die like her in a dungeon; but I shall not like her have a friend to close my eyes, or to regret me when I am no more."

The tourrière now found it impossible to amuse her by any intelligence of hers. She heard with equal indifference of the devotion of some nuns, and the libertinism of others; and she was not

much surprised to hear that ADELA'S conduct was of the latter description. She knew her to be born with strong passions, and unprovided with adequate motives to combat them. She had taken the veil from enthusiasm of devotion, and she took a lover six months after from enthusiasm of love. This lover was no other than a natural son of the Abbess, the offspring of the intrigue with the young officer, which we have mentioned as the cause of her retiring into a convent. This young man being in the army himself, and brought up as a dependent upon a profligate nobleman, had all the vices of his profession, and all those of a slave. Admitted into the convent as a cousin of the Abbess's, he had frequent opportunities of seeing

ADELA: he first seduced, and then abandoned her.

The tourrière informed EUGENIA that she had often procured them interviews, from what she called good-nature: and the only fruit EUGENIA reaped from her long harangues on this subject, was, that she would rather be the unfortunate EUGENIA in the bottom of a dungeon, thinking as she thought, than the slave of passion, or superstition in a palace.

Yet, after all, this happiness is but comparative; it still remains true, that the sufferings of virtue are sufferings, though the consciousness of it enables its votaries to support them with

firmness, and to prefer them to the triumphs of vice, however apparently prosperous. But as virtue consists not in stoicism, or insensibility, and as an active and tender compassion for the sufferings of mankind is its most predominate feature, the virtuous, who suffer from vice and folly, unite the painful feeling of the sufferings of their fellow creatures, which are occasioned by that vice and folly, to that excited by their own; and this is a source of deep affliction, even to the good.

As the tourrière knew that the Director was informed of EUGENIA'S confinement, she sometimes indulged her love of talking, by speaking of her to him. As he was already tired of the



Abbess, who had besides formed a new connection with a young officer, who attended her son, he thought he could not do better than follow her example, and seek some new engagement for himself. He knew EUGENIA was handsome, that her mind was weakened by confinement, that she was anxious for liberty, and therefore had no doubt of succeeding in the infamous scheme he had formed; but it was too base even to be communicated to the tourrière; and however he might have depended on her wish to serve him, he was afraid that her love of talking might betray him. He therefore told her that he was anxious to be admitted to the prisoner, that he might administer spiritual consolation to her, and that he

was in hopes to prevail upon her to ask pardon for past offences, and obtain her liberty.

Whether the *tourrière* gave credit to this story, or whether she thought it her interest to appear to do so, she promised to admit him, on consideration of a considerable sum of money. Thus, whatever happened, she was sure to profit by it, and it was of no consequence to her what that was. She therefore admitted him to EUGENIA'S dungeon, and left him alone with her, according to agreement.

EUGENIA was astonished to see him; but as she had been long accustomed to misfortune, she augured no good

from his visit. She thought he had been sent by the Abbess to torment her, or induce her to some shameful compliance, in order to obtain her liberty, if liberty it might be called. What then was her surprise, to hear father SERAPHIM lament the hardships of her captivity, express his abhorrence at the cruelty of the Abbess, and declare himself ready to assist her escape, as from the cruel treatment she had experienced, she could never hope to obtain liberty without quitting the convent.

EUGENIA thought she dreamed. "What!" said she, "is it you who interfere in the favor of one whom you must have been taught to believe criminal, one who calumniated you with

the Abbess, for it must have been calumny since I see you are so good."

"I hope you do not think, my child, that I am so mean as to punish you for a mistake, which any one might have committed: it was a suspicion any one might have entertained, and which I confess my conduct apparently justified. No, my child, I thought that you were engaged in some criminal intrigue, and that it was my duty to punish vice; but I have since learned from the tourrière, that this is not the case; and I now think it my duty to assist you, since you are innocent."

Had EUGENIA been a little older, and more hackneyed in the ways of the

world, this story would have appeared to her very improbable; but she was young, inexperienced, and ingenuous: she had no idea of crimes herself, and could not attribute them to others. It was natural therefore that she should express her gratitude to father SERAPHIM in the warmest terms, and accept of his offer with delight.

This father SERAPHIM was a man about thirty, whose person was agreeable, and manners engaging. He had lived a good deal in the world, was the favorite of the Grand Vicar, and before he was appointed Director to this convent had been Confessor to many devotees of quality, anxious to palliate the sins of their youth, by their real or affected

devotion, and thus escape from one ennui by another. He had two characters, and two sets of opinions, one for the convent, the other for good company; though perhaps he had never made up his mind on any one principle. In the world he passed for a tolerant priest, in the convent for a holy man. His passions were naturally strong, his mind weak; he was therefore dark and dissembling, for as he had always accustomed himself to gratify his passions, cost what it would, and as in his profession it was more difficult than it would have been in any other, he was obliged to accomplish by low, unworthy means, what, had he been in the world, he would probably have carried by open and flagrant wickedness.

It was not astonishing that such a character should impose on EUGENIA.

“ But where am I to go,” said she, “ should I make my escape ?”

“ I will conceal you,” said the artful priest, “ in the neighbourhood, till you inform your friends, for the tourrière has told me you have some who will receive, and conceal you in a foreign country ; we will gain the tourrière to our interest ; and in short there is no doubt that all will go well.”

Next day he came again with the tourrière, who, upon the Director's promising to take all the blame upon himself, if ever the Abbess should dis-

cover her escape, made herself easy about it.

EUGENIA was so perfectly unconscious of any design being entertained against her, that she paid no attention to the significant looks, and shrugs that were interchanged between the priest and the tourrière. She was solely employed in making up her little packet for her escape, in which she was assisted by the tourrière, the priest promising to return when it was dark.

He came accordingly, and taking hold of EUGENIA'S hand, led her through many dark passages. She felt no other emotion than joy, and was every moment expecting to arrive at the



trap door, which the tourrière had told her led to the road: they reached one at last, but how great was her surprize on seeing that, instead of leading to the road, it conducted to the convent of monks: “Where are we going?” said she, “I thought this trap had led to the road.”

“Be silent;” said the priest, “if you speak a word just now, you may be ruined.”

She followed him therefore in silence, but by no means satisfied, till they arrived at the door of a cell. “Good God!” said she, “where have you brought me?”

“It was impossible, at present, to procure you an asylum out of the convent: I will therefore conceal you here, where you will be perfectly safe, till I can find one for you, which I hope will be soon.”

The tone of voice in which he pronounced these words, was so soothing, that EUGENIA was instantly tranquilized. All her suspicions vanished in a moment, and she cheerfully entered her new habitation, which she found neatly and comfortably furnished, with every convenience, even every superfluity.—The monk of course locked her in, to prevent her being discovered, but as she considered herself already free, she

enjoyed that night a most delicious and tranquil sleep.

In the mean time *VOLENCE*, who had spent the winter at *Paris*, returned to the neighbourhood of *Scellières* in the month of *March*, as he had intended, and soon after wrote the following letter.

From *M. DE VOLENCE* to *M. DE*  
*VILLEFRANCHE*.

*Scellières.*

You wished, my dear friend, that I might repent leaving you so soon, and your wish has been already accomplished. The weather has been so bad since I came here, that I have not been able to enjoy the pleasures of the

country; for even still it has charms for me, especially in spring. I have nothing now to distract me from my melancholy thoughts. I wander about the environs of the cursed convent. Last year I could meet your amiable ANGELICA in my walks, with whom I could converse; after her departure I could still see her friend EUGENIA, and interest myself in her fate.

I called the other day at the convent, and enquired for MADemoiselle DE VALVILLE; she is gone from thence: but I did not ask for EUGENIA, for fear my indiscretion might injure her, and prolong her confinement.

I then introduced myself to ANGE-

LICA's mother, on pretence of bringing her accounts of her daughter, but in reality to endeavour to discover if she knew any thing relative to EUGENIA : but if she knew any thing of her she keeps her sister's secrets so close, that I was unable to form the least conjecture concerning her situation.

The loss of her society distresses me more than I thought it could have done. This confession of mine, my dear friend, I am aware will encourage your hopes that I may yet form another attachment; and that that attachment may be to EUGENIA. But believe me, my friend, you are mistaken; this can never be. If it were possible that EUGENIA should consent to unite her

destiny to mine, I never could agree to make her miserable, by uniting mine to hers, which I certainly should do, if she loved me sufficiently to be affected by my melancholy, and if she did not, such a connection would be insupportable to me; I once possessed a heart so completely——O my friend, the idea of the two months I passed with my CLARA in a cottage, and which are never never to return, sometimes distracts me. When this is the case (for it sometimes on the contrary is pleasing to me) I endeavour to employ my mind in study; but I do not always succeed. I find infinite pleasure in writing to you. I know you will say, ‘Then you would have found more in remaining in our society?’ I believe I should, but I

could not resist the desire of coming to this place: you know the unfortunate are restless. I should be sorry, however, that you thought that the kindness and friendship you showed me last winter had been lost upon me. On the contrary, my only pleasing contemplations are employed on the delightful society round your fire; on the interesting conversations that there passed; on the happiness there enjoyed. I think I see your lovely and virtuous ANGELICA caressing the little orphan she so beneficently adopted. But then the idea that I might have been the father of a child of the same age, and perhaps equally beautiful, comes across my mind, and damps all the joy of the picture. Forgive me, my dear friend,

I am going to relapse. You will soon know the happiness of being a father in reality. It is cruel of me to attempt to dash your joys with my sorrows; and that every joy the world can afford may be yours, is the ardent wish of

Your affectionate, though unfortunate  
friend,

JOHN LOUIS DE VOLENCE.

To this letter VILLEFRANCHE soon returned the following answer.

From M. DE VILLEFRANCHE to  
M. DE VOLENCE.

*Paris.*

Your letter, my dear friend, makes me regret more than ever, that



you left us so soon, and the more so, as I flattered myself your mind was daily gaining strength amongst us; besides, we feel the loss of your society very much. My wife and I frequently pass many hours in speaking of you.

Do not fear, my dear friend, that you shall have to suffer any importunities from me, with regard to your forming a new attachment. I should think I encroached upon the rights of friendship, were I to hint another word upon the subject. You are the best judge of your own happiness. You know our house is your home, whenever you will do us the favor to consider it so. But since you say your solitude already becomes irksome to you, why

will you not come to *England* with us? Why will you persist in refusing——? But I am again transgressing positive orders. However I must say, that you have never given me a satisfactory answer upon this subject.

As most of our friends have already left town, and as my dear ANGELICA is too near her confinement to go out, I have lately read a good deal to her, while she has been employed in preparing with delight for the reception of our dear little infant. I know that most men of my age would look upon this as ridiculous: I cannot tell you how I pity them for being insensible to such a pleasure. They do not enjoy happiness in the world; and when they

pretend to do so, their ennui betrays them in spite of themselves. They run round a perpetual circle of follies and vices; and if they were to do the same thing for two evenings together, they would think themselves the most unfashionable creatures in the world, and consequently the most unfortunate.—

The relish for domestic pleasures, on the contrary, increases every time they are repeated. This is already the case with me. What will it then be, when the society of my child is added to that of its amiable mother; when we mark together the progress of its reason, and join to form its understanding, and its heart.

My ANGELICA is every day more

worthy of such a task ; for though at our marriage she had got rid of more prejudices than almost any young person of her age, yet a few still remained ; but as she was acquainted with every truth necessary to destroy them, and is far from being obstinate, I have day by day the pleasure of seeing these few fall to the ground ; and she is now surprised how she could have retained them so long. As I am twelve years older than her, she gains by the advantage of my experience ; but I assure you I profit more by her correct taste, brilliant imagination, and exquisite sensibility.

We have read the works of many of our own, and some foreign poets

together, for you know my wife is an excellent Italian and English scholar. She is very fond of many parts of ARIOSTO, some of TASSO, PETRARĀCH, and METASTASIO. In English we have attempted SHAKSPEARE and MILTON, but can only enjoy some passages of both: we dwell with more pleasure on POPE, GOLDSMITH, Gay, and GRAY; but she prefers the poets of her own country; VOLTAIRE in particular, you know, is her decided favorite, because he unites the most sublime and beautiful poetry, to the solid charms of good sense, philosophy, and philanthropy.— We are never weary of reading over his tragedies; and though I have them almost by heart, she has often made me remark beauties which had before

always escaped me. That her pen too  
is not idle, the inclosure, I send you,  
will prove.

### THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

#### AN ODE.

Ah! see where the leaves are all falling around,  
And the forest looks ragged and bare;  
So the vigor of man only tends to the ground,—  
After summer's the winter of care.  
Let me catch from the scenery, gloomy and sad,  
A theme for the children of grief;  
For common to all, whether sorry or glad,  
Is the fate of the Fall of the Leaf.

Ye beauties high finished, all grace and delight,  
Oh! be not of these quite so vain;  
For to you will come age, diseases, and night;  
Debility, sickness, and pain.  
Presume not on what is unstable, ye fair,  
For your fine white and red will be brief;  
But manage your beauties with prudence and care;  
And provide 'gainst the Fall of the Leaf.

And ye, sons of mammon, adorers of gold,  
Here see the vile end of your care :  
Yourselves in the leafless stript branches behold ;  
For thus you'll be left sad and bare.  
Your riches, wide spreading, will from you depart,  
And to thousands perhaps give relief ;  
And this thought harrows up each gold-hoarding  
heart,—  
They must fly like the Fall of the Leaf.

Ye children of honor, of power, and praise,  
Full of fancied and self-puff'd up worth,  
O ! see 'tis the same fickle wind that can raise,  
That dashes you down to the earth.  
Ye Kings, and ye Consuls, your reign's insecure,  
Your state and your tyranny brief,  
For to gladden the hearts of the good and the poor,  
You must fall too as falleth the Leaf.

Ye young, gay, and splendid, whose blood mantles  
high,  
In whose features beam health's ardent ray,  
Ah ! seize with avidity each licens'd joy,  
And frolic and sport while 'tis May ;  
For December will come, all hoary and sad,  
And bring its full measure of grief,  
When the spirits no longer exulting and glad,  
Shall flag, droop, and fall like the Leaf.

Ye lovers, who riot on beauty's bright form,  
Each endearment that's mental who taste ;  
Ah ! ye too may know the terrible storm,  
That lays all your happiness waste ;  
Death seizes relentless, the loving, and loved,  
(I've known such a trial of grief,)  
Then each happy prospect is far, far removed,  
Of the tree of bliss then falls the leaf.

But let not discouragement dwell on the face,  
Nor begloom the pursuits of the wise ;  
For such should with cheerfulness run thro' their  
race,  
Who from falsehood are free, and disguise ;  
And those, who wise acting on rectitude's plan ;  
Will in every state find relief,  
Will rejoice and exult in the vigor of man,  
Nor despond in the Fall of the Leaf.

Thus, surrounded by objects all cheerless and sad,  
As the branches their treasures let fall ;  
Remembrance will dwell on the friends we have had,  
To the house gone appointed for all ;  
One after another, they've dropped from our sight,  
And loaded our bosoms with grief ;  
Yes, those who late flourish'd in bloom and delight,  
Are gone like the Fall of the Leaf,



Busy memory dwells on endearments long past,  
On scenes, fraught with every joy ;  
And trembles to drink of the horrible blast,  
That did all those endearments destroy ;  
To join these again where spring ever blooms,  
Alone gives the anguish'd relief ;  
We shall meet you, we sigh, as we weep o'er their  
tombs,  
Where there is no Fall of the Leaf.

To be happy and blest, thro' life's varied gale,  
Let us rest on Philosophy's tree ;  
Still giving more canvas, or short'ning our sail,  
As time and occasion may be ;  
With truth for our pilot, our voyage let us steer,  
Whether doom'd to be tedious, or brief ;  
And " seek peace, and pursue it," thro' all our  
career,  
So shall smiles greet the Fall of the Leaf.

Our studies in prose generally consist  
in moral and political philosophy.—  
Among the books I have read to her  
on these subjects, I the other day began

the System of Nature; but I must confess we did not read much of it. In her present situation I wish to amuse her, and this book is certainly not calculated for that purpose. I cannot conceive how its reputation has lately got so high, especially in this country; and I must confess I am sorry for it.

My ANGELICA says, and I am sure she is right, that she thinks this book calculated to throw all those possessed of feeling hearts, and who do not reflect deeply, into gloom and uneasiness. She says, that if she had not founded her conviction upon other principles than those generally laid down in this book, she should never have got rid of her prejudices.

Whoever the author is, and you know it is generally believed to be DIDEROT, though he may be, and we know he is, a virtuous man, he certainly feels less pleasure in being so, than most virtuous men do: he is too phlegmatic; he talks of the utility, and never of the pleasure of virtue; he waves first principles entirely; he has confounded them with innate ideas, though nothing can be more different. No persons in their senses will admit innate ideas; but it appears to me almost as unreasonable to deny that the sentiment of pity exists, and that it acts even previous to reason. Why did he not dispute the existence of the appetites of hunger and thirst? he might as well call them *innate ideas*. He says that man is neither born good

nor bad. If this were true, according to his own account of the bad institutions of society, virtue must long since have disappeared from the earth; and yet we see that it exists, and is daily making progress.

To console my wife for this gloomy view of human nature, I have been reading to her the lives of TURGOT and VOLTAIRE, written by the illustrious CONDORCET, whose profound philosophy has increased instead of lessening his sensibility. He has favored us with that manuscript *essai*, you know so well, upon the question whether it ever can be useful to deceive the people. These works enchanted her as much as the System of Nature disgusted her.

In them she found her love for mankind increased, while her reason was fortified. The horror inspired by superstition and tyranny is as great, but not so distressing as in the System of Nature, because CONDORCET shews mankind the secret of their force, and instructs them how to make use of it, while the author of the System of Nature almost denies (and indeed for common readers entirely denies) that they have any, and never shews them how to make use of the little he is obliged to allow.

May not one admit that man has the power of changing his habits, and counteracting his passions, without admitting that he has the power of violating the general laws of nature? This power

certainly does exist, though in greater, or smaller degrees, according to the strength of mind and character. It may, it is true, be almost destroyed by bad habits, but it may be equally improved by good ones; and this power is itself one of the general laws of nature, and is the source of the perfectibility of mankind; a doctrine which I think can scarcely be disputed, even by those who only reason from experience.

By the author of the System of Nature denying that man has any liberty, or, more properly speaking, any power over his own actions, he has given the enemies of necessity the only advantage the opposite system seems to

possess, and subjected his opinion to some very important censures.

But I perceive, my dear friend, that I have written you a volume instead of a letter, for which I have no other excuse than the pleasure I take in communicating my thoughts to you.

My wife and I embrace you with all our hearts. Vale.

CHARLES HENRY DEVILLEFRANCHE.

From the same to the same.

*Paris.*

How shall I express to you my joy, my dear friend? This day my dearest ANGELICA has made me the

father of a charming little girl. Both mother and child are doing as well as possible. I cannot stay long enough absent from her to say any more. I know how sincerely you will share in the happiness of

Your most affectionate friend,

VILLEFRANCHE.

From M. DE VOLENCE to M. DE  
VILLEFRANCHE.

*Scellières.*

You did me justice, my dear friend, in supposing I should share your happiness. I do indeed most sincerely. May you never know the misfortune of losing either your wife or child! I know what that inflicts——Forgive me, this is unpardonable.



I am much obliged by the ode in your last; it does honor to the head and heart of its amiable author.

You are too agreeably employed at present, to be able to attend to any other subject but your happiness. I will therefore defer answering your letter of the third, till your present feelings are a little subsided. Let me hear accounts of your wife's health; and when you embrace her, and your dear little infant, think that there is none that share more completely in your felicity than

Your faithful and grateful friend,

VOLENCE.

From M. DE VILLEFRANCHE to  
M. DE VOLENCE.

*Paris.*

I know what pleasure it will give my dear friend to hear that my ANGELICA's recovery continues to be rapid, beyond my most sanguine hopes. My little CLARA too has been getting stronger every day: I could not resist the pleasure of giving her this name, so dear to us both. I thought it would still increase your attachment to my child. My ANGELICA had resolved upon this long before its birth, should it prove to be a girl. There was only one circumstance attending the naming of my child that distressed me, I mean its baptism.

Happily I was not obliged to stand sponsor for it myself, our *faith* fortunately dispenses with that ceremony. I would not even allow your name to appear as her god-father, though you could only have acted by proxy.— Perhaps you will think this scrupulous, but I could not bear that either you or I should be supposed to promise what that ceremony engages to perform. I therefore sent her privately to church with LOUIS and his wife (who has the charge of her), as I had no right to deprive my child of a ceremony, which, under our unjust government, is necessary to give her the rights of a citizen, any more than I had that of dispensing with the ceremony of marriage with her mother, for the same reason.

This was an artful contrivance of the priests thus to interweave the practice of their superstitious ceremonies with civil rights, with which they have naturally no connection. They cannot even alledge that a trace either of the marriage ceremony, or the baptism of infants, is to be found in their sacred books. These forms were introduced in the times of superstition and darkness. What man in his senses can pretend, that a child is bound to keep a promise that was made for him when he was unconscious of its being made? If their religion is as convincing as they pretend, it is time enough for the child to adopt it when it comes to the age of reason; and if they maintain the contrary, it is a proof that they themselves

not only think it unreasonable, but do not believe it in their hearts, even when they say, or even suppose they do.

But why do I talk of these unworthy chimeras? Let me return to pleasing realities. I cannot resist the pleasure of painting to you the family picture that presents itself to me at this instant. My dear ANGELICA, who is looking more beautiful than ever, is seated in an arm-chair by the fire, with her lovely infant at her breast. The little MARIA, whom ANGELICA's maternal tenderness for CLARA has not taught her to forget, is standing before her, caressing the child.

Come to *Paris*, my dear friend, to

enjoy this scene with me, for a few days, before we go to *England*. My wife joins her entreaties to mine. In the midst of her happiness she still regrets your society, and that of EUGENIA. I cannot entirely quiet her uneasiness concerning her.

You ask my pardon, my dear friend, for poisoning, as you say, my joy by your melancholy reflections. I ought to ask yours a thousand times for dwelling so much upon my own happiness; it is unkind, it is selfish. That I may not add to my transgressions, I will conclude by embracing you with all my heart, in which I am joined by my wife, whose situation as a mother, and a nurse, has given rise to the following

sonnet, which I expect will gratify you both for its matter, and manner.

## SONNET,

TO

## AN INFANT AT THE BREAST.

DEAR, lovely babe! equal by birth to all,  
While thus thou drain'st my breast; my blood  
runs chill;

I ask, if thou some future day must fall,  
And despots send thee to be kill'd or kill?  
For thousands daily drop, who each, like thee,  
Once claim'd a mother's ever anxious love;  
Hung on her bosom, sported on her knee,  
And valued were, a world of kings above.

Tormenting thought! oh! ere thou grow'st mature,  
May all wars cease, or tyrants, if there be,  
Fight their own battles, and each man secure,  
By equal rights, and equal laws be free.  
So may no mother's care be thrown away,  
Nor one hurl millions from the face of day.

From M. DE VOLENCE to M. DE  
VILLEFRANCHE.

*Scellières.*

No, my dear friend, you must not ask my forgiveness for dwelling upon your happiness : it is for supposing that you did wrong in so doing, that you require it. My heart is not so dead to humanity as not to sympathize with your's : if it were, I should be better out of the world than in it.

When I poison your joy, by my melancholy reflections, I do wrong ; while you, on the contrary, do right when you endeavour to amuse me by dwelling on your joy. It is our duty to cultivate the pleasing feelings of the



mind, and to endeavour to subdue those that are not so; at least, to contain them within our own breasts. It can only be the opinion of the superstitious, that man was born to torment himself; and it can only be the wish of the wicked to torment others.

To convince you that my misfortunes have made me neither, I shall certainly come to *Paris* for a few days before you leave it, to enjoy the delicious scene you have painted to me; and if some tender recollections should force tears from me, your sympathy will make these tears delicious. Whatever the author of the *System of Nature* may say, I am conscious man has some power over his emotions; at least sometimes. I know

that misfortune and sickness may occasionally deprive us of it; but, as VOLTAIRE says, the very feeling of this privation, is sufficient to prove that we sometimes possess the power.

I cannot express to you my sensations of gratitude for the name of your child. Believe me I appreciate the value of this sacrifice, for I am sure you must have wished to have given it that of your wife. Your reflections on baptism are certainly unanswerable. You know a philosopher says, that there are some people who require more than three centuries to begin to perceive an absurdity. Our nation is certainly among this number, though I hope, indeed I think, that it will soon cease to be so.

You call these superstitions unworthy chimeras: they are indeed so to every one who makes use of his reason; but there are so many who do not, that the philosopher must, I fear, long be obliged to stoop to combat them. While they are dangerous they are certainly worthy of exercising his talents in endeavouring to destroy them, and root them for ever from the human heart. There are some who think this is already done; this cannot be the case so long as these corrupting institutions exist. There are many more who say it is done; this is the language of indolence, and too often of machiavelism. They are willing to despise superstition themselves in silence, but they are by no means willing to run the risk of being known

to do so. But as this motive is too base to own even to themselves, they are obliged to suppose, or at least endeavour to make others believe, that it is now no longer necessary. This, however, shows the progress of reason, since these people are reduced to their last strong hold. They are, however, certainly betraying the cause of truth as much as is in their power, and whatever happens they will not share the glory of having forwarded the reign of reason. They have certainly made a very bad calculation: they have incurred the hatred of fools without having secured the love of wise men, or even the applause of their own consciences.

I agree with you that the System of

Nature is not one of the books that will advance the progress of reason; it is by no means a popular work, and if it has any influence at all, it can only have a bad one over those who adopt the whole of the system, by touching with an icy hand the finer springs of the soul, or animating principle, whatever it is; I do not mean to maintain that it possesses a separate existence: that question is insolvable for us. But whether it is from the author's vague way of expressing himself, or from his phlegmatic disposition, he has certainly materialized man too much. He knows not the enthusiasm of virtue; in this he deserves to be pitied; but he certainly deserves blame for being so dogmatical as he is. He should have proved his

opinion by analysis; but he wants the spirit of it entirely. Hence those who adopt his opinion will only have adopted a prejudice, for *they can give no reason for the faith that is in them*. Hence the amazing number of atheist petit maîtres, and their fair mistresses, that now overwhelm one with their declamation, and talk almost as much nonsense as their predecessors used to do upon religious subjects.

Why did the author not admit intelligence as a part of the general laws of nature, without attempting to account for it any more than the law of gravitation? It was not at all more necessary to do so, and would not in the least have changed the result of his book.

We shall discuss this subject when we meet.

It is singular how nearly those who pursue the same course of studies draw the same conclusions almost on every subject! This is another truth that the author of the System cannot get rid of, in spite of all his efforts, though he goes so far as to say, that no two people ever saw the same thing exactly in the same light. Will he pretend to say that a mathematical truth never struck two people in the same manner? See to what the love of system-building will lead! It was nothing but the fear of occasioning a schism among the philosophers, and thus encouraging their

enemies, and the respect for the incontestable truths contained in his book, that prevented its being answered by the most celebrated men of our time. I trust truth will soon be strong enough for those who profess it not to fear the desertion of those who adhere to some insulated branches of it. TURGOT was certainly right when he said, *that the obligation of forming parties, was the greatest misfortune that could happen to the friends of truth, because they then think themselves obliged to defend all the errors of those who compose that party.* Unfortunately the friends of truth are not yet strong enough to be able to stand alone. That time, however, is fast approaching; and



it is probably in our country that the reign of truth will commence. Farewell: in a week I shall be with you.

Ever your's,

VOLENCE.

The Sonnet of your ANGELICA's to an Infant at the Breast, I am indeed gratified with; and wish I could distribute it to all the mothers and soldiers in the universe.

## CHAP. IV.



IN a week *VOLENCE* set out for *Paris*, where he spent a fortnight with his happy friends, who in vain endeavoured to prevail upon him to accompany them to *England*. He was prevented by his literary engagements; and besides he was anxious to learn the fate of *EUGENIA* at the end of the twelvemonth which had been prescribed by the Abbess. This last motive prevailed; and *ANGELICA* entreated him to make use of

every means to learn what was become of her, and to endeavour to restore her to liberty should he obtain admission to her; this he promised: and VILLEFRANCHE and his family set off for *England*, about the middle of May, from whence he wrote the following letter.

From M. DE VILLEFRANCHE to  
M. DE VOLENCE.

*London.*

I did not write to you sooner, my dear friend, because I had nothing particular to say to you. My journey from *Paris* to *London* afforded nothing worthy of remark; and even now we have not been long enough here to pretend to give you any picture of the

manners of the inhabitants. Nothing appears to me so ridiculous as travellers after one week's residence in a foreign country, attempting to delineate the manners of a nation, with as much confidence as if they had resided there as many years as days; though, perhaps, they have not seen a soul but their inn-keeper, and a few tradesfolk. Even those who are admitted into the higher circles, and this is perhaps more difficult in *England* than in any other country in *Europe*, can only observe the slight shades of difference that distinguish the follies and vices of the courtiers and populace of all nations.

There certainly, however, exists a difference of national character between

us and the English; but it is in the well-educated and middle classes of society where this difference is to be studied; and this class is not apt to obtrude themselves upon the observation of foreigners in any country. They employ themselves in procuring their own happiness, that of their families and friends, and in cultivating their minds, and are by no means anxious to attract attention: they must be sought out, and the impression they generally entertain of our nobility is not very favorable to introduction. As I have the misfortune to be one of that class, I shall have a chance of being better received among those about whose opinion I am indifferent, than among those whose good opinion I wish to cultivate.

General facts, however, may always be studied; and I am resolved to spare no pains to collect all the observations in my power. I wish to study the constitution, I wish to know whether the people really enjoy the advantages the constitution holds out, or whether, as I suspect, it is only a brilliant chimera, held up by government, to dazzle them and prevent them from wishing for any thing better. I shall send you the result of my observations.

My ANGELICA has never been in public since we arrived here. She had some inclination to go to HANDEL'S Commemoration, but the crowd is to be so great, that as she is a real not a fashionable nurse, she will not hazard

the health of her child for a temporary gratification. She unites with me in every sentiment of affection and regard for you. Write soon and often. Remember me to all those that think of me in our dear little society, and tell C——, if he has nothing better to do, that I hope he will remember his promise of writing to me.

Ever yours,

VILLEFRANCHE.

From M. DE VOLENCE to M. DE  
VILLEFRANCHE.

*Paris.*

Your reflections on the difficulty of a traveller's acquiring knowledge, my dear friend, are very

just, but there is another reason still for our having so few travels that one can read through; it is the little sense, and information of travellers. They see every thing not only through their own prejudices, those of their age and country, but those of every one with whom chance has connected them.

As your opinion does not seem to be very high of the British constitution, I am glad to think that your disappointment will not be great. In all countries the disproportion between the rights acknowledged by the law, and those enjoyed by the people, is very great; but in *England* it is certainly greater than any where else. It is always much, however, that these rights are



acknowledged by the law: we know countries where this is not the case. But as the disproportion continues daily to encrease in *England*, governors will soon think it necessary to lesson this disproportion as much as possible; not by decreasing the grievances, to that they are not disposed, but by destroying the laws, that they may attain the beautiful *regularity* and *simplicity* of the despotism of neighbouring states.

Whoever attends candidly to the politics and conduct of the English government, since the beginning of the American war, must be sensible that all is not as it should be. That war was against all principle, an open

defiance of all those rights the government of *England* used to hold so sacred. Never shall I forget the feelings that agitated my mind, while my countrymen were engaged in fighting for the liberties of *America*, and I wished that they might soon be engaged in the same cause on their own account : it rivetted every principle of liberty, already dear to me, more deeply in my soul. Fortunately our government did not suspect the effect the spectacle of this struggle for liberty would produce on the instruments of their despotism, and national prejudice ; for whoever does our government the honor to suppose that they were actuated by any other motives, would certainly be wrong. It is difficult indeed to conceive how they

did not see farther, but they certainly did not.

The minds of men here continue to be more upon the ferment than when you left us. Our government is reduced to a state of uncertainty that presages its approaching fall. It is now as weak as it has been obstinate: the reins are in very slack hands. It is rumoured that the states are to be called, but I can hardly hope that our governors will be such fools.

I have no private intelligence to give you, except that M. DE ST. ANGE is dead, and that his daughter EUGENIA is not mentioned in his will: but indeed she was buried before him. His wife is

a very gay widow, and will probably not remain one for three months.

The English ladies will no doubt be much astonished at the domestic character of your young and beautiful wife. They flatter themselves that there are no chaste matrons to be met with but among them: they form their idea of our countrywomen from their travellers who, in general, are only acquainted with the two extremes of prostitution, the women of the court, and the women of the town. We should judge as fairly were we to form our estimate of their character, from the scandalous stories in the newspapers, and the frequent prosecutions for damages, which, without saving that moral virtue, destroys every other.

Which is most contemptible, the husband who shuts his eyes upon his wife's follies, that he may enjoy his own; or he who publishes his wife's infamy or weakness, and his daughter's distress, for the advantage of gaining five or six thousand pounds, to be spent in continuing the same course himself for which he exposes his wife to shame and ridicule? Surely if all religions should tolerate each other, the fools of all nations should mutually practice the same indulgence: censure belongs alone, of right, to the wise of all nations.

I shall return shortly to the country, and remain there till winter. I have a presentiment that your stay will not.

be long in *England*, and that your presence will soon be wanted in your own country; when it will be the duty of every honest man to exert himself to prevent or lessen the inevitable dangers attending a great revolution.

I embrace you with all my heart, as well as your wife.

From M. DE VILLEFRANCHE to  
M. DE VOLENCE.

*Hampstead.*

We have removed here, my dear friend, for the benefit of country air for our children. You will say this is an excellent way to study the manners of a country! But I am in *London* every

day; indeed we are close by it: But my wife, who, you know, only liked *Paris* for the sake of our society there, cannot bear *London*. She has hitherto no acquaintances. The English ladies are, in general, so reserved, that she is quite afraid of them, though she has certainly no reason to be so. But she finds little inducement to converse with them, for it is quite unfashionable here to speak of any book deeper than a novel; the news of the day, tea-table scandal, and birth-day suits, take up the rest of the conversation, at least when the men are with them; and when they are not, ANGELICA says they are as happy as boarding-school misses, when the governess is out, and that their conversation is not in the least more

instructive. The joy is quite mutual. I had occasion to remark this the other day at an English nobleman's, where I dined. I was quite surprised to see the countenances of the men brighten up the moment the ladies retired, which to me was a great disappointment.

We sat round the table for three hours, drinking port and claret, at least they did; for my part I was very soon obliged to give out, by which I could observe I incurred the general contempt of the company, though they were too polite to express it. The conversation by no means made up for this long confinement; it consisted of remarks on horse-racing, fox-hunting, good eating, good wines, &c. and other subjects,



which, though we Frenchmen like to make jokes upon, we seldom discuss seriously. Toasts applicable to these different subjects were given: I never was so astonished, I may say shocked, yet you know I am not over nice. But I look upon these separate societies of men and women as very hostile to manners. This constitutes a great difference between us and the English; it is both the cause and effect of their want of refinement. If the effect produced by the constant intercourse between the two sexes, in our court, is bad, it is because the women are still worse educated than the men; and because both sexes can only communicate follies to one another. But in our societies, where both are well educated,

it has been productive of the happiest effects; it softens the manners of the men, and strengthens the minds of the women; they become mutually interested in one another's concerns; the men become attached to their families, the women to learning. Those who say that mildness of manners destroys energy, certainly do not understand the meaning of the word.

My ANGELICA was not much better pleased with her evening than I was, and went home before I left the dining-room, so that I did not sit down to the card table, which is here the constant resource, when the dining-room and drawing-room parties are obliged to coalesce for a short time, till they are relieved by supper.

I have this moment received your letter of the 17th: it had been left at my lodgings by mistake, for ten days. I believe you are perfectly right with regard to the state of light information in this country, but I have had no opportunity of judging of that: a fashionable dinner is not very favorable for observations of this sort; but I have been invited to dine to-morrow with some of the members of the opposition, and I shall transmit to you the result of my reflections.

I believe Mr. F-x is at present abroad, but I am to see B—KE and SH——N. You know B—KE is thought to be a man of great genius (though I cannot say his Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, impressed

me with that idea), and SH———N certainly possesses wit and talents.

With what pleasure should I return home on such an occasion as you mention, and which you suppose so near! I believe the absurdity of our government will soon bring it on, too soon I fear. Don't be surprised, I certainly wish for a revolution as much as you can do, but I fear our countrymen are not yet prepared for it. I know that information, enquiry, and science has made more progress in our country than in any in *Europe*. The number of well-educated citizens is greater than any where else; but the populace are certainly as stupid and ignorant as any in *Europe*, if not more so: and this must be the case from the

long and cruel oppression by which they have been crushed.

If then they are made free, before they are taught the use of liberty, they will probably abuse it, or what is more probable still, they will become the tools of some deceivers.

I confess I am a strong partizan of TURGOT'S gradual system of reform. We must put props before we destroy the edifice, or it will crush the people we mean to save, in its fall. Ask CONDORCET if it won't.

Vale ! and me ama,

VILLEFRANCHE.

P. S. I have inoculated both MARIA and CLARA; you will easily believe how anxious ANGELICA is.

From the same to the same.

*Hampstead,*

According to promise, my dear friend, I sit down to give you an account of my political dinner, which has not quite turned my brain.

Man is not supposed to  
of the subject of  
E gave

a French  
stand any thing  
politics. Mr. B—  
up to all the d

*balance of trade, and the balance of interests.*

I listened in silence for some time, astonished, not convinced, by the rapidity of his declamation. At last I ventured to ask him whether he did not think equality of rights was a surer basis for political liberty. "Rights! my dear Sir," said he, "rights! granting that it were possible to make them equal, which I very much doubt, it would not be expedient. Would you have the fair face of society deformed? would you root up ancient institutions? would you abrogate our glorious constitution? would you make vain the struggles of our ancestors, by destroying the privileges of nobility, and the prerogatives

of royalty; which have been cemented by so much precious blood? No, no, Sir: things are vastly well as they are, provided they don't get worse. The corruption of parliament indeed is great, and must be put a stop to by constitutional means: the *angry boy*, as my friend SH——N emphatically calls P——T, must be turned out, and then all will go well. Equality of rights indeed! mere theory!"

To this brilliant harangue I ventured to oppose a few arguments taken from the book of nature instead of Magna Charta. This was to no purpose. SH——N said that the British constitution was an excellent friend, with some few imperfections and failings;



and that it was the duty of an honest man to forgive his friend's faults, and love him with them, when he cannot correct them. Mr. B—KE, too, was so illiberal as to add, that the French, who had never enjoyed the blessings of freedom, were not adequate judges of how liberty was to be obtained, or preserved.

I felt my blood boil, the colour came into my face; but luckily contempt soon came to my assistance, and I coolly answered, that it would perhaps soon be seen, whether we knew how to obtain and enjoy it; that I did not despise the British constitution; that it was wonderful for the time it was made; but that this certainly did not

preclude the possibility of there being a better; that I thought national prejudice puerile and contemptible, and that I abandoned every part of our government, without reserve, to their discretion.

Mr. SH——N applauded me for my liberality of sentiment, and complimented me by giving “the speedy liberty of *France!*” for a toast.

Though I know Machiavelism to be the prevailing doctrine in *England*, I expected that when the doors were shut, we should have had some free conversation. You know the liberty of the table is unreserved in *France*.

Do you think these opinions are really those of the English Opposition, or do they only think it their interest to say so? In either case, I cannot help pitying *Britain*. I believe that, in general, the enlightened men of *France* have got the better of more prejudices than those in *England*. God knows we have no reason to be attached to our constitution, either in church or state: and the English have had so long more freedom than any other nation, that it is not surprising they should still think they possess it; though they are losing part of their liberty every day. But the progress of despotism in *England* may be compared to a river, which is annually making some encroachments on the land almost imperceptibly;

while in our country it has long since overflowed all its banks, and every one feels that the country must be infallibly drowned, if we do not build it out.

I had no very favorable idea of the state of *England* from the officers I met with in *America*; but I thought it unfair to judge of the opinions of a nation, by that of a mercenary army. But I see that in *England* there are more people, whose apparent interest is interwoven with that of government, than in any other country. The commercial spirit is here combined with national prejudice, on the side of government. They have contrived to connect the interest of the merchants and bankers so closely with their schemes of finance,

that they have no present interest to enlighten themselves. Chartered companies alone are sufficient to corrupt the principles of any nation on earth.

Much animadversion is making here on the East India Company; and H——gs's trial engages universal attention. But this letter is already so long, that I shall say no more of this, or reply further to your last till my next. My wife and I embrace you with all our hearts.

VILLEFRANCHE.

P. S. Don't forget us with our friends in *Paris*, who are so good as to think of us.

FROM M. DE VOLENCE TO M. DE  
VILLEFRANCHE.*Paris.*

Never make apologies for your long letters, my dear friend. You know that nothing in the world can give me so much pleasure. I am not surprised to find that you are neither much delighted with the manners nor politics of *England*; I did not expect you would, though I confess the account you give of the state of political opinion here is even worse than I had laid my account to. I show your letters to C——: you know he is completely of your opinion, with regard to what you say of a gradual reform, if it can be obtained, of which however he begins to doubt. I cannot help thinking that

even the expediency of waiting for it may be called in question. Would you advise the French to sit down quietly, and tamely submit to CALONNE'S profligacy, and NECKER'S hypocritical juggling? Shall we say to the people, "bear your taxes for a little longer, allow yourselves to be crushed to death by the nobility; we know you are oppressed, but we will not assist you to get rid of oppression."

Is it not to be feared that if we neglect the present opportunity, the time will become still less favorable for reform? The stupidity of the people and the tyrants may become contagious; the friends of liberty will then lose the power, and may lose the wish of deli-

vering the people from their prejudices: they may content themselves with having got rid of them themselves, and the interested and indolent may make use of the pretext of being afraid of injuring the people, if they publish too much truth, and may thus keep them in eternal ignorance. No, - no, let us strike the iron while it is hot, and free our country while it is in our power. Every hour abuses exist heaps a new crime upon their heads who know how to rectify them.

Do not imagine, however, that I am obstinate in my opinion. I know there is a great deal to be said on both sides, and you shall find me open to conviction.



As to Mr. B—KE, and such as him, their arguments deserve nothing but hatred and contempt: hatred if they do not think what they say, and contempt if they know no better. I am sorry for what you tell me, however; for if this is the opinion of those who are considered friends of liberty in *England*, we shall have no assistance to hope for from *Britain*, should we attempt to recover our liberty; on the contrary, it will be our worst enemy.

Have you had no accounts of EUGENIA? Does your wife's mother never mention her? I begin to be very uneasy about this. I cannot help thinking there is some mystery hanging over her situation. Continue to write to me with

the same detail as usual ; you know that nothing can give greater pleasure to

Your devoted and attached friend,

JOHN LOUIS DE VOLENCE.

P. S. I hope by this time your dear little ones are quite recovered. Address your next to *Scellières*, where I shall remove in a few days.

From M. DE VILLEFRANCHE to  
M. DE VOLENCE.

*Hampstead.*

You have not understood me, my dear friend, in my last letter, or you have wilfully misunderstood me for the sake of an argument, to which I know

you are rather addicted. I never said that we should keep the people in darkness and ignorance; on the contrary, I said that every thing should be done to instruct them as much as possible; and the same truths that do them good will do the government good likewise, provided it allows them to be published. For instance, I think books written in the style of CONDORCET'S Dissertation on the question whether error is useful to the people, of more service than works that directly attack despotism, and put it on its guard against truth; and I cannot help thinking that many of our writers have of late committed the fault of publishing the plan of the campaign to the enemy, as he says.

But I never said that the present opportunity of liberating our country should be neglected; I said, and I still think, that it is very unfortunate that the government has brought on that opportunity so soon, and I cannot help thinking that it is the fault of many of our political writers, that this has happened. Agree with me, my friend, that could government have been prevailed upon to have allowed a good legislation, and a plan of public instruction to be adopted, our country might have been peaceably reformed. But you will say, "they would not do this: was not TURGOT turned out?" This, I grant, is true; I only regret that it is so. Had a certain great personage been tolerably educated, had general truths been only

a little familiar to him, and had he been accustomed to judge for himself, TURGOT might still have been minister. But since this is not the case, why then philosophers must content themselves with directing what they cannot avert. So that, after all, you and I are of the same opinion; and if people of candour would give themselves the trouble to examine subjects to the bottom, they would much oftener agree than they think, or than they appear to do.

The *profligacy* of CALONNE; and the *hypocritical juggling* of NECKER, (as you justly term them) will infallibly produce a revolution: but would it not have been better if the effect had been

produced by the writings of our philosophers upon the good sense of the nation?

I promised to give you some account of H———s's trial. This is one of the subjects where the honest man finds it difficult to decide. By all that I can learn, H———s appears to have been brought to trial by private pique, and will probably be brought off by public profligacy. In the eye of the law he is probably not more guilty than any other Indian governor; but by the eye of justice they are all seen alike. His trial strikes me much in the same view as LALLY's, except that the catastrophe will be different. LALLY was beheaded to conceal the faults of the Company,

and H——NGS will probably be saved for the same reason.

My wife has never heard a word about EUGENIA since we left *France*, and we, like you, are growing very uneasy about her. ANGÉLICA has written to her mother to ask if she can give us any information: but she only received for answer that as she has neither seen nor heard of her lately, she imagines she is doing penance for some misconduct. What a pity her father did not die three years ago!

I am in daily expectation of ANGE-LICA's eldest brother, who has been travelling through *Italy* and *Germany*, and now comes to complete his tour by

remaining some time in *England*. I am glad that I chance to be here, for though I believe him to be a remarkably promising young man, yet at his age the experience of an elder is always useful; and as he has an uncommon regard for his sister, I flatter myself that he will allow me the right of advising him sometimes. As it is three years since his father died, and having been upon his travels all that time, ANGELICA says she is afraid that he has grown very dissipated, and that the style of his letters leads her to suspect that he brings a mistress along with him. If this is the case he certainly shall not reside with us, which he seems to expect from his sister's being free of prejudice, as he says. He seems to have confounded



liberty and licentiousness; and I am afraid it will give me some trouble to make him understand the difference.

What a pity his father, who was so sensible a man himself, should have taken it into his head that it was more for his son HENRY'S advantage to study the world by going to an academy in *Paris*, than to study human nature by staying at home with him.

You will be happy to hear that my little children are both perfectly recovered, and that their mother is quite well.

Farewell. I love you with all my heart:

From M. DE VOLENCE to M. DE  
VILLEFRANCHE.

*Scellières.*

I am glad to find that we are of the same opinion, my dear friend. I suspected there was not much difference; and however fond you may suppose me of argument, I should be sorry to persist in my opinion at the expence of truth.

I am not much better pleased with my retreat than I was last time I tried it. I begin to find complete solitude insupportable. I shall therefore only wait till the twelvemonth is expired when I am to enquire for EUGENIA, and then I intend to travel through the *Pays de Vaud*, and *Switzerland*, till

your return from *England*. I shall endeavour to dissipate my mind by the varied and sublime scenery of the *Alps* and *Mount Jura*. Bodily exercise is sometimes of use to divert the mind. I do not find myself in spirits to write to you to-day. You will say this is wrong; I know it is, and therefore I shall endeavour to amuse myself by putting my thoughts on paper; but it shall not be to you: they are rather melancholy to-day; and I see no reason why I should distress you with them.— I embrace you and your's with all my heart.

VOLENCE.

P. S. I rejoice most sincerely that your children are recovered. Congratulate ANGELICA for me.

From M. DE VILLEFRANCHE to  
M. DE VOLENCE.

*Hampstead.*

I am sorry, my dear friend, to find, by your letter, that the solitude of *Scellières* has produced the same melancholy effect upon you that I regretted so much last year. Believe me, my wife and I feel all the value of your friendship in remaining there till October, for the sake of EUGENIA. I am charmed with the idea of your going to *Switzerland*: as you never travelled there before, the scenery will delight you; and you will besides have an opportunity of observing the difference of manners produced by difference of government.

FERVAC is arrived, and, as I expected, has not come alone. He had the extreme *étourderie* to bring his fair friend with him to our house. I cannot describe to you ANGELICA'S embarrassment upon this occasion. You know her sensibility and affection for her brother; but her sense of rectitude and propriety is as strong. She was afraid lest I should conceive a bad opinion of her brother, or resent his conduct: she therefore called him out of the room about a quarter of an hour after his arrival, and expostulated with him on the extreme impropriety and absurdity of his conduct. I shall endeavour to set down the conversation nearly as ANGELICA repeated it to me, as I think it will amuse you.

“What! my dear little sister, so you are grown a prude upon your marriage! Well! I never should have expected that: but to say the truth, I never thought you would have married such a man as VILLEFRANCHE: he is too serious by half; I am sure he must tire you to death.”

“He is by no means serious,” said ANGELICA, “but he is not mad; he is besides ten years older than you, and has seen more of the world.”

“He has not the air of it, my dear. But as you told me, he was a sensible man, and did not believe all the stories our nurses tell us, I thought he would have no objection to my little JULIA’S

accompanying me. She is a sweet creature, is she not?"

"I really have not had time to judge, nor do I think it probable we shall get much better acquainted."

"And why not, if you please?"

"Do you conceive the folly of bringing your mistress to our house, and in a country too, where such a piece of imprudence may have very serious consequences to my reputation?"

"Pooh! nonsense! So you are grown an English woman!"

"You are grown a fool, I think, my

dear brother. In *Paris*, as in *London*, M. DE VILLEFRANCHE would have been displeased with your conduct; and with reason. If she is a woman of character, why did you not marry her, and if she is not, why did you bring her here?"

"Marry her, indeed! Why I tell you she is married already."

"Worse and worse; you'll really make me angry."

"Come, come, ANGELICA, you are much too young, and too pretty to preach. I think you should be much obliged to me for bringing you such a pleasant companion."



“ Brother, I am serious.”

“ But I am not; so we shall never agree.”

“ Stay a moment, or I shall be obliged to send my husband to lecture you instead of me, and I don't think you will like the exchange. I am not here to censure your conduct in bringing JULIA with you, though I regret it very much, I only want to prove to you that you had no right to bring her here, and that we certainly have to beg she will leave this house immediately. I hope she will oblige me in this, as I should be extremely sorry my brother and husband should have a difference the first day of their meeting.”

“ Well, well! what must be, must be. I did not mean to offend you.”

After this conversation he entered the room with his sister, and disappeared a few minutes after with his fair companion. I was obliged to entertain her all the time of his conference with my wife. She is a pretty little Italian, and seems about seventeen, very thoughtless, and very lively. I have since learned from FERVAE, whom I shall certainly lecture on this subject, when I get better acquainted with him, that she was sold out of a convent at fourteen, to an old avaricious husband, by her mercenary father, and that she had no other alternative than to marry him, or take the veil. Poor thing! it is

difficult to say in which situation she would have been most unhappy. I don't think she will be long happy with FERVAC, though they are at present madly in love; they will soon tire of one another; such attachments never last long.

ANGELICA is much interested in JULIA's fate, and pities her extremely. She would fain make a convert of her: but besides that I do not think this very practicable, I do not wish ANGELICA to appear to encourage her brother's connection with her, by visiting her.

Try to amuse yourself, my dear friend. You know VOLTAIRE says, "life is a child, that must be rocked till it falls asleep."

As the slave trade has often engaged the pens of our best friends in *France*, who have nobly entered the lists against it, I send for your and their perusal a fragment I have picked up here, said to be the production of a Quaker..

## CHAP. V.

## ZIMEO.—A FRAGMENT.

THE affairs of my commerce carried me to *Jamaica*, the heat and moisture of the climate had injured my health, and I retired to a house situated on the ascent of a mountain, towards the centre of the island; the air was cooler, and the soil drier, than in the environs of the town; several streams glided round the mountain, which was clothed with the finest verdure; these streams fell

into the sea, after having watered meadows enamelled with flowers, and immense plains, covered with orange trees, sugar canes, coffee, and innumerable plantations.

The neat house where I staid belonged to my friend PAUL WILMOUTH, of *Philadelphia*; he was born a Quaker, like myself; our manner of thinking was almost the same. His family, composed of a virtuous wife, and three young children, increased my pleasure in living with him.

When I was strong enough to take exercise, I wandered about the country, where I saw as it were a new nature, and beauties unknown in *England*, and

in *Pennsylvania*. I went to visit the plantations: I was charmed with their opulence; their masters received me with politeness; but I remarked something harsh and savage in their countenance and conversation. Their politeness was not kindness: I saw them surrounded with slaves they treated with cruelty. I enquired how the slaves were fed, about the labour that was imposed upon them, &c. and I shuddered at the excesses of cruelty with which men can be inspired by avarice.

I returned to my friend, shocked and distressed; but I soon recovered my spirits in his family: there I saw tranquillity and serenity in the looks of both blacks and whites.

The duty WILMOUTH required from his slaves was moderate: they worked for themselves two days every week; each of them had a piece of ground that he might cultivate as he pleased, and the produce of which he might sell. A slave, who behaved well for ten years, was sure of his liberty. Those freed-men remained attached to my friend; their example gave hopes to the rest, and improved their conduct.

I saw many families of negroes, where the greatest harmony and gaiety prevailed: these families were on good terms with each other; every evening when they returned home, I heard musical instruments, and singing, to which they danced. There was seldom



any diseases amongst them, scarcely any indolence, neither robberies. suicides, nor conspiracies, and none of those crimes which are committed from despair, and which sometimes ruin our colonies.

I had been three months at *Jamaica*, when a negro, from *Benin*, known under the name of JOHN, made the negroes of two rich plantations revolt: they murdered the masters, and retired to the mountain. You know the mountain is in the middle of the island; it is almost inaccessible, and surrounded by fertile vallies, where revolted negroes formerly established themselves: they are called Maroons. It is long since they have given up making war upon

us; but when any slaves desert, they come down to avenge the bad treatment they have received. It was soon known that JOHN had been chosen chief of the Maroons, and that he had left the valley, with a considerable force. The alarm was instantly spread through the colony; troops were sent to the mountain, and soldiers were distributed among the plantations that were defensible.

WILMOUTH came into my room one morning just before sun-rise, "Heaven," said he, "punishes the wicked, and the day is perhaps come when the innocent will be avenged. The Maroons have surprised our posts, they have cut the troops who defended them to pieces,

they are already dispersed in the plain; assistance is expected from the town; the slaves are every where thrown into chains, but I am going to arm mine."

We went to assemble the negroes, and carried them swords and some muskets. "My friends," said WILMOUTH, "here are arms; if I have been a cruel master to you kill me, I have deserved you should; but if I have been a good father to you, come and assist me to defend my wife and children."

The negroes shouted; and pointing to heaven, then putting their hands on the earth, they swore they would all perish in our defence. Some of them

cut themselves with knives, to prove to us how little it cost them to shed their blood for us, whilst others embraced WILMOUTH'S children.

As JOHN was master of the plain, it was impossible to retire into the town; we were reduced to defend ourselves in our plantation; I proposed to the blacks to fortify a magazine not far from the house; this magazine was a strong hold against enemies who had no artillery. The negroes immediately set about the work, and, thanks to their zeal, it was soon finished.

Among WILMOUTH'S slaves there was one named FRANCISCO; I had found him forsaken upon the coast of a

Spanish colony; his leg had been just cut off; a young negress endeavoured to stop the blood, and wept at her fruitless endeavours. She had an infant of some days old. I had the negro carried on board my ship. The negress entreated me not to separate her from him, and to receive her with her child, and I consented.

I was told they belonged to a Spaniard, who had made some proposals that had been rejected to MARION, the young and beautiful negress; and of which FRANCISCO wished to make him ashamed. The Spaniard avenged himself; he asserted that these two slaves were christians, because, according to the custom of the colonies, they were

called by christian names. He had surprised the negro in some religious usages practised at *Benin*; he had him cruelly mutilated, and boasted of having shewn him mercy. I went to this barbarian, and proposed to him to sell me these unfortunate people: at first he made some difficulties; but the sum I offered him soon obtained his consent. I brought them with me to this island, and gave them to WILMOUTH.—MARION has become his wife's friend, and FRANCISCO has deserved WILMOUTH'S confidence, and procured universal esteem by his understanding, his knowledge of agriculture, and his good conduct.

FRANCISCO came to us in the

evening. "The chief of the blacks," said he, "was born at *Benin*; he adores the great *ORISSA*, the lord of light, and the father of men; he must therefore be just and good: he comes to punish the enemies of the children of *ORISSA*. But as for you," said he, looking at *WILMOUTH* and me, "you, who have consoled them in their misfortunes, he will respect you. Send one of the adorers of *ORISSA*, one of our brethren of *Benin*, to this man; *WILMOUTH*, let him go and tell these warriors with what provisions you feed your slaves; let him speak of your friendship for us, our pleasures and our feasts, and you will see them fire their muskets in the ground, and throw their spears at your feet."

We followed FRANCISCO'S advice: a young negro was sent to the chief of the blacks; and during his absence my friend and I enjoyed a sound sleep, while our slaves watched round us. At day-break I was awakened by cries, and a noise of musketry, that came from the plain, and seemed to approach every moment: I opened my window.

I have already said that WILMOUTH'S house was situated upon the ascent of the mountain, and that it overlooked an immense plain, intersected by rivulets, covered with fine country seats, and all the riches that a fertile and well cultivated soil can produce. Most of the houses were on fire; two or three hundred volumes of a dark reddish



flame arose from the plain to the top of the mountain; the flames were stopped at that height by a large black cloud, formed of the sweet vapours of the morning, and the smoke of the burning houses.

When I looked under that cloud, I discovered the sea sparkling with the first rays of the sun: these rays tinged the flowers and the fine verdure of that fertile country, gilt the summits of the mountains, and the tops of the houses that the flames had spared. In some parts of the plains I saw the cattle feeding securely; in other parts men and cattle fled across the country, while furious negroes pursued my unfortunate countrymen, with sabres in their hands:

they murdered them at the foot of the orange, coffee, and cinnamon trees, which were rich in bloom; while round our plantation I heard the brooks murmur, and the birds sing. The noise of the musketry, the cries of the murdered whites, and the blacks eager for slaughter, reached me from the plain: the wealthy and desolated country, the rich appearance of cultivation, and the ravages of vengeance, the tranquil beauties of nature, and the cries of fury and despair, threw me into a train of profound and melancholy reflections. A mixed sentiment of gratitude to the SUPREME BEING, and pity for mankind, made me shed tears.

I left the house with my friend; we

sent the women and old men into the fortified magazine, and went down to a cedar wood, which concealed part of these horrors from our view.

The young negro whom we had sent to the enemy the preceeding evening, returned to us : he was followed by four armed negroes ; his cries and gestures announced from a distance that he brought us good news. “ Master,” said he to WILMOUTH, “ the chief of the blacks is thy friend ; he sends thee his dearest followers : he will soon be here himself.”

We heard that JOHN had murdered the men, women, and children, without mercy, in all the plantations where the

negroes had been ill treated ; that in the others he only freed the slaves, but that he set fire to all the houses the masters of which were absent.

We likewise heard that the governor was preparing to send out more troops, that all the colonists who had had time to make their escape had armed themselves, with some negroes who remained faithful to them ; and that these forces were ready to attack JOHN. We saw the Maroons, loaded with plunder, retreating to the mountain ; they passed very near our house ; about thirty men left the little army, and came up to us, the terrible JOHN was at their head.

JOHN, or rather ZIMEO, (for the Maroons drop the European names that are given to the slaves in the colonies) was a young man of two and twenty: the statues of APOLLO and ANTIQUS have not more regular features, or finer proportions. I was particularly struck with his air of greatness. I never saw a man who appeared to me so much born to command others; he was still animated with the heat of the battle; but when he came up to us his looks expressed kindness and benevolence; his countenance expressed contrary sentiments by turns; he was almost in the same moment sad and gay; furious and tender.

“ I have avenged my race and my-

self," said he; "men of peace, turn not away your hearts from the unfortunate ZIMEO: be not shocked at the blood with which I am covered; it is that of the wicked: it is to terrify the wicked I give no bounds to my vengeance. Let your tigers come from the town; let them come, and they will see those who are like them hanged upon the trees, and surrounded by their murdered wives and children. Men of peace, turn not away your hearts from the unfortunate ZIMEO: the mischief he has done you is just." He then turned to our slaves, and said, "Chuse whether you will follow me to the mountain, or remain with your masters."

At these words our slaves surrounded,

ZIMEO, and spoke to him all at once; they all praised the goodness of WILMOUTH, and spoke of their happiness; they wanted to take ZIMEO to their cottages, to show him how healthy and comfortable they were; they showed him the money they had earned: the free-men boasted of their liberty; they then fell at our feet, and seemed proud to kiss them in presence of ZIMEO.

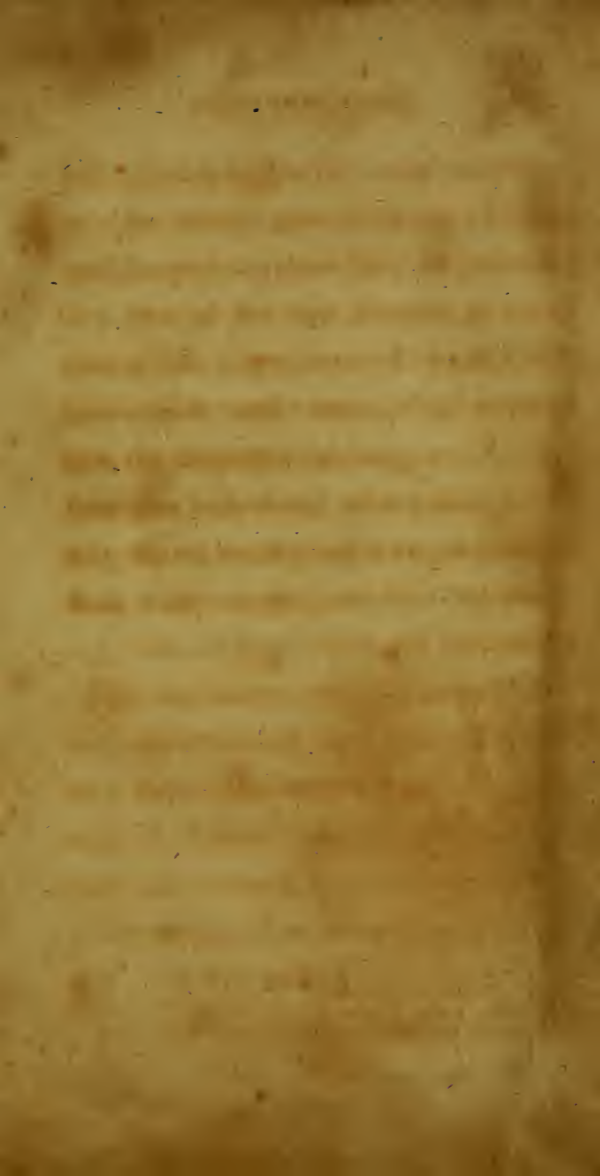
All the slaves swore they would lose their lives rather than separate from us; their eyes were filled with tears, and their voice interrupted by sobs; they all seemed to be afraid of not expressing their sentiments of love and gratitude with sufficient energy.

ZIMEO was affected, agitated, distracted; his eyes were moist, and he breathed with difficulty; he looked by turns at heaven, our slaves, and us.

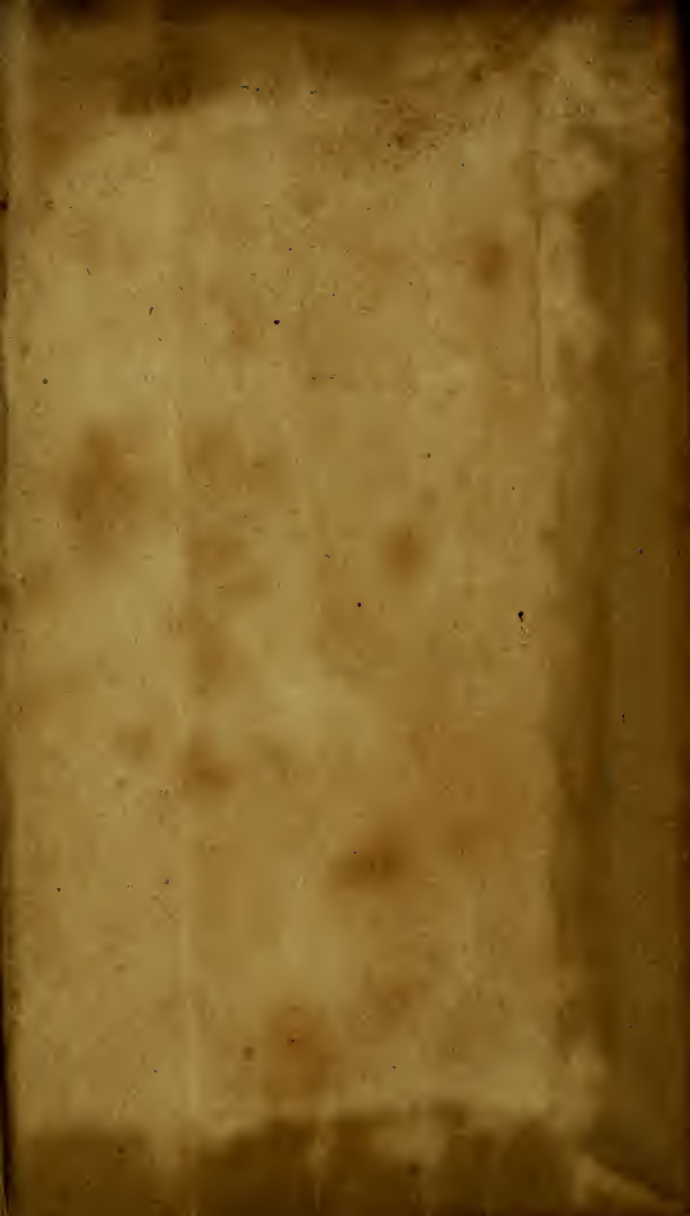
“O GREAT ORISSA! god of the whites and blacks; thou who has made souls, behold the grateful men, these real men; and punish the barbarians who despise us, and treat us as we do not treat the animals, whom thou hast created for the whites and for us.”

END OF VOL. II.





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