

New-England. No longer had I relish for serious lecture and private prayer ; and in a short time neglected public worship.

ABOUT this time the new Theatre was built in Charleston, and opened under West and Bignall. The dramatic mania spread far and wide. I breathed the air of contagion, and found my way to the stage. One essay cured me of my folly, and I renounced at once and forever the sock and buskin.

I REMOVED in July, 1793, to Savannah, in Georgia, where, in February, 1794, I embarked for the West-Indies.—I arrived at St. Martin's, and soon afterward fixed myself in the Virgin Islands.

IN this part of the world I met nothing calculated to renew the pious impressions of my early years ; but much to make me forget them altogether. There was a Methodist Mission in Tortola, but seldom any other public worship. The poor Africans were among the few who appeared to have any sense of Religion.

HITHERTO, although far from living up to the standard of the Gospel, I had never been taught to doubt the truth of Divine Revelation. It was now my misfortune to add infidelity to my other follies, and to have the whole fabric of my religious belief overturned by a single blow. This was achieved by Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. I read this book with undivided attention ; and subscribing to every position, I became a convert to *Deism*. The Religion of Nature, in my estimation, afforded sufficient sanctions for every purpose of moral government ; and I considered all supernatural Revelation superfluous, devised by priestcraft, and addressed to the fears of men.

THE war with France was now raging in all parts of the globe, and every American heart pal-