

rendered furious by their defeat. Instantly would they have put me to death, had I not been the right of *Damel*, as a prisoner of war, and had they not feared a severe chastisement for their zeal. During twenty-four hours, I was covered with chains, exposed to a thousand insults, sinking beneath thirst, hunger, and weariness. Abandoned without succour, and without pity, to inhuman guards, will it be believed, that these frightful ills were the least of my care? My true torment lay deep in my heart. I recollected the laws of war among us. I knew that an eternal slavery awaited the prisoners taken in battle. I saw myself separated from my father, from *Otourou*, and *Amelia*. 'Separated from *Amelia*! Oh, God! and can I support the thought without dying?' Alas! I have too often experienced the possibility of it!

Our enemies now thought only of returning into their country: and I was conducted to the city which *Damel* inhabited, at the distance of fifty leagues. It was situated on that part of the sea coast, where the European vessels, attracted by commerce, frequently anchor. I cannot describe what I suffered during this march. Pardon me, God of the christians! I cursed *Dumont* for having made thee known to me. I regretted our impotent divinities, who would have granted death to my prayers. Thou didst hold my hand. I felt it; but without gratitude. Pardon, my God! the weakness which could not yet support misfortune.

At length we arrived: and they presented me to *Damel*. He was young. During youth, man is more feeling. My height, my air, my figure struck him. 'Who art thou?' said he. 'The son of the general who has vanquished thee,' cried I fiercely. He regarded me with surprise. After a moment's silence he said: 'Fortune treats thee wantonly. Yesterday, my conqueror; to-day my slave! Her injustice is cruel. I will indemnify thee.' 'Thou canst not render me all that I have lost,' answered I. 'I render thee much,' said he: 'I render thee a hope thou couldst no longer possess.' Then addressing himself to his guards: 'release him,' said he, 'from his irons. Yet guard him: attend him with zeal: and be careful that no stranger sees him without my command.'

I was conducted to a country-house belonging to *Damel*, about a quarter of a league from the city. It was built on an eminence, shaded by a forest of citrons and of palms; and commanding a prospect which extended to the sea over rich vallies watered by the river. Enchanting as the sight was, it could not abate the affliction

of my soul. Whatever charms were spread around this abode, to me it was a mere prison, in which I believed myself condemned to groan through the remainder of my life—far from the objects of my tenderest attachments. I turned my eyes, without ceasing, to the side on which I figured my country. From the moment of my captivity a single tear had not fallen upon my cheek. My heart seemed bound as with cords. A dreadful weight seemed to press upon my breast. No words passed my mouth; and my days dragged on in fierce despair.

Save the vigilance with which they guarded me, I had no reason to complain of my slavery. I was even treated with a kind of regard which approached respect. I felt, that I was obliged for this to my father's rank at the court of *Siratic*; and perceived that *Damel*, reduced by his loss to desire peace, hoped to obtain it more easily by his attentions to me. But though I had dived into this policy, still I could not presume, that my liberty would be made by *Damel* the bond of peace. The thing was without example. I too well knew, that the chief riches of our princes consisted in the number of their slaves: and I was far from supposing, that *Damel* would infringe a law so favourable to the avarice of the sovereign. It was, however, on my liberty, that he founded his hopes: and while, unknown to me, every thing was preparing to lead to the instant so dear to my wishes, I did every thing on my part to plunge myself into an eternal slavery.

There exists indeed in the heart of man an inquietude which almost involuntarily makes him act contrary to prudence, and in opposition to his own interests. It appears to him that his future fate depends on himself alone. He makes no account of the aid of his friends, nor the fortuitous concurrence of circumstances, nor the attentive eye of Providence. His mind attaches itself to one object. He pursues it with ardour, he relies on his own powers to attain it, and his precipitation too frequently renders abortive the desires which surrounding circumstances had prepared to crown.

It was this secret inquietude, this desire of anticipating the effects of time, this blindness of making events depend on my own exertions, which hurried me forward. I accumulated on my own head the evils which I wished to shun; and threw myself into the arms of misfortune, to be freed from the torments of a future period, which probably would have conducted me to happiness.

I had been five days in the house of *Damel*: