

scientific acquirements, and especially for his project of a perpetual peace; with which the good Cardinal Fleury was so well pleased, as to write to Fontenelle that it would be happy for mankind if princes would take a dose of the elixir of that excellent project. The Author of the *Studies of Nature* resembles his relation the Abbé in goodness of heart and depth of knowledge, and surpasses him in genius and the powers of elegant composition. At an early age, he entered upon the profession of arms, and travelled in Russia and Poland. Upon his return, he was sent, in the capacity of an engineer, to the Isle of France; which useful colony owes its continued preservation from capture by the English, during the protracted maritime war, in which they have gained nearly all the other French colonies, in great measure, to be sure, to the natural ruggedness of its coast, but in no inconsiderable degree to the excellent fortifications constructed under the direction of St. Pierre.

On his return to France, he renounced his situation in the army as too restrictive of the freedom for study and contemplation he longed to enjoy. Being thus deprived of his pay as an officer; and having generously relinquished what patrimonial estate he had, in favour of a sister, his finances fell to a very low ebb, his prospects were overcast with gloom, and the fate of genius seemed to threaten to be his. But he neither repined, nor abandoned himself to despair. While thus struggling with want and uncertainty, he formed an acquaintance with John James Rousseau, whom he resembled in lofty talents, excessive sensibility, and devotion to retirement: though there was