

ably to face the front, which we presented between the fosse and the wood; without extending beyond, either to the right or left. Soon we saw their fires kindled, and we concluded they would not attack us that day.

Dumont knew, that the negroes rarely engage during the obscurity of the night; yet his prudence did not permit him to rely on customs which might be violated. He visited all the advanced posts, while the army slept in security.

At the break of day we were all in arms; and we perceived by the noise and movements of the enemy, that they prepared to attack us. Dumont ran through the ranks, and besought the troops to act without precipitation. He promised them certain victory, if they executed the orders they had received.

He then took my father, Otourou, and me apart. 'My friends,' said he, 'we are on the point of engaging; we shall conquer, do not fear it. God is ever on the side of justice. Confide in me: be tranquil. This sacrifice of your lives, which you offer to your country, cannot but please him.' We embraced. A few moments we were silent. We wept. Dumont resumed: 'Let us part, each to his duty. Joy!' cried he: 'tears are not due to a day of victory.'

Filial piety had marked my place by the side of my father: Friendship, that of Otourou by my side.

Europeans will not find in the detail of this battle any of that dreadful pomp to which they have been accustomed in such recitals. No horrid machinery which vomits forth thundering death. No murdering globes, which in their swift flight spreads wide carnage and dismay. No resplendent arms to illuminate the air; nor martial music, whose measured sound regulates the soldier's ardour. But the terrifying shock of fierce multitudes, tumult, confusion, cries, courage without order, and dexterity without aim: these are the circumstances of an engagement among negroes. Arrows, wooden sabres, and branches torn from the forest trees, are the weapons which warlike fury places in their hands. Yet here bravery is displayed entire; unmixed with that timid weakness, which secretly rejoices in the distance that the use of fire-arms has placed between the armies of Europe.

The enemy were in motion. At a certain distance they discharged their arrows, and instantly they rushed to the combat with frightful cries. The first assault was terrible. The spot, on which we fought, with my father, was somewhat raised above the rest. The situation gave greater

weight to our exertions, so that during half an hour we gained considerable ground upon our enemies. I began to fear that this would disconcert the men hidden in the fosse, by the circuit they would be obliged to make, to execute the manœuvre with which they were charged. I made the observation to my father. He said: 'I know it, but I have my reasons; press forward.' In a short time I was convinced, that he had foreseen events better than myself. The nephew of Siratik, who was on our right, having retreated, according to his orders, the negroes, opposed to him, pushed the pursuit (as Dumont had foreseen) with shouts of victory, which reached to us. Knowing the cause, they gave us no uneasiness: but they increased the courage of our opponents to temerity. We found ourselves obliged to fall back in our turn; and so lose the ground we had gained. By that, I felt that my father had taken the surest means of maintaining the situation which Dumont had conjured him not to lose.

My father now commanded me to see what passed on the right; not daring himself to leave his troops, whose loss was already considerable, and who betrayed symptoms of flight. I mounted on a little hill which we had in our rear. I saw that the six thousand men had rushed from their retreat upon the pursuers of the nephew of Siratik; and that already the ten thousand approached the rear of those who were engaged with us. I sprang into the air, and cried: 'victory! victory!' Our men heard me. They gave a shout of joy; the ten thousand answered them. Disorder ran through the enemies' troops. Pressed on all sides, they thought of nothing but flight; and the carnage became dreadful.

The ardour of the pursuit had hurried me more than half a league from the place where we fought. I thought myself followed by my friends. At length, covered with blood, and wasted with fatigue, I stood still. I looked around me. I saw neither my father, nor Otourou, nor one of my countrymen. Some bodies of the enemy, whom I had passed in my course, overtook me—still in their flight. My apprehensive eye, my embarrassed air discovered me. They surrounded me; dragged me along with them; and I saw myself in the chains of those whom my nation—whom even my own arms, had conquered.

So rapid was my misfortune, that I had scarcely time to view all the horror of it. I knew not all my danger, till, arrived at the enemy's camp, I found myself the object of indignities, offered by a multitude rendered