

TWO SCENES, BY CHATEAUBRIAND.

"It was frequently our custom to rise in the middle of the night, and seat ourselves on the fore-castle, where we found only an officer, and a few sailors smoking their pipes in silence. The only sound which could be heard was the ploughing of the prow through the waves, while lines of foam, mingled with sparks of fire, flew along the sides of the vessel. God of the christians! it is especially in the abyss of waters, and the immensity of the heavens, that thou hast engraved the traits of thy omnipotence—millions of stars glittering in the azure dome of heaven—the moon in the midst of the firmament—an ocean without bounds—infinity in the heaven and the waves! Never have I felt more overwhelmed by the magnificence than in those nights, when, suspended as it were between the stars and the ocean, I had infinity above my head, and immensity beneath my feet.

"One evening, when it was a profound calm, we were sailing through those lovely seas which bathe the coast of Virginia,—all the sails were furled—I was occupied below, when I heard the bell which called the mariners upon deck to prayers—I hastened to join my orisons to those of the rest of the crew. The officers were on the fore-castle with the passengers; the priest, with his prayer-book in his hand, stood a little in advance; the sailors were scattered here and there on the deck; we were all above, with our faces turned towards the prow of the vessel, which looked to the west.

"The globe of the sun, ready to plunge into the waves, appeared between the ropes of the vessel in the midst of boundless space. You would have imagined, from the balancing of the poop, that the glorious luminary changed at every instant its horizon. A few light clouds were scattered without order in the east, where the moon was slowly ascending; all the rest of the sky was unclouded. Towards the north, forming a glorious triangle with the star of day and that of night, a glittering cloud arose from the sea, resplendent with the colours of the prism, like a crystal pile supporting the vault of heaven.

"He is much to be pitied who could have witnessed this scene, without feeling the beauty of God. Tears involuntarily flowed from my eyes, when my companions, taking off their hats, began to sing, in their hoarse strains, the simple hymn of Our Lady of Succour. How touching was that prayer of men, who on a fragile plank, in the midst of the ocean, contemplated the sun sitting in the midst of the waves! How that simple invocation of the mariners to the mother of woes, went to the heart! The consciousness of our littleness in the sight of Infinity—our chants prolonged afar over the waves—night approaching with its sable wings—a whole crew of a vessel filled with admiration and holy fear—God bending over the abyss, with one hand retaining the sun at the gates of the west, with the other raising the moon in the east, and yet lending an attentive ear to the voice of prayer ascending from a speck in the immensity—all combined to form an assemblage which cannot be described, and of which the human heart could hardly bear the weight.

"The scene at land was not less ravishing. One evening I had lost my way in a forest, at a short distance from the falls of Niaga-