

such as had been described to her, that she might, from place to place, follow her unhappy friend in all his hopes and despair. "It seems, Madame," said Clairon, "that the agitation in which I appear before you, and which each of your remarks increases, makes it my duty to inquire who you are, and of whom you speak; in short, to know what it is you want of me: for my character cannot consent that I should continue any longer to be the dupe or the martyr of whoever you may be. Speak, therefore, or I must leave you."

"I was, Madame," she replied, "the only particular friend of M. de S—, and the sole person by whom he would be seen for the last year of his life. We counted the days and the hours in speaking of you; sometimes painting you in the most angelic form, at others under the most hideous. I continually urged him to forget you, while he protested that he would love you beyond the grave. Your eyes, which I see full of tears, allow me to inquire, why you have rendered him so miserable? and why, with a soul of such sensibility, you have refused him the consolation of speaking to or of seeing you only once more?"

"We cannot command our affections," replied Clairon: "M. de S— had merit and inestimable qualities; but his sombre character, and his despotic temper, made me dread his society, his friendship, and his love. The friendship which he inspired made me attempt to bring him to sentiments more tranquil and more moderate; but I was unable to succeed, and I remained firm in my resolution, persuaded that his folly proceeded less from the excess of his passion, than from the violence of his character. I refused to see him in his last moments,