

who should have possessed so good a heart as yours, would have adverted you of the treachery of his father.— Ah! this is the reproach which I dreaded from you.

It was late, I pressed Ferdinand to take some repose. I could not; and when day came, I had not closed my eyes. The want of sleep, caused by the feelings which our conversation had excited, did me no injury. I found myself even better than I was the preceding evening; and, to please Ferdinand, I consented to go upon deck. At first I could hardly support the brightness of day. The surgeon, who had foreseen it, made me swallow some drops of elixir, which animated my spirits, and my eyes became insensibly accustomed to the light. Urban approached me with joy in his countenance. He complimented his son and the surgeon on the success of their cares; and he offered me congratulations, which too well expressed the sentiment that inspired them.

The hour arrived, in which the negroes were to leave the hold. Ferdinand warned me of it. ‘Courage!’ said he. ‘These are men whom you are to behold. Alas! free or in slavery, weak or powerful, man suffers almost every where the picture of misery.’

They appeared; and soon their usual provisions were distributed to them. They were much wailed. But what was my surprise! I feared to see their tears; to hear their groans; I saw a certain air of serenity which almost approached to joy. My mind revolted at this apparent calm. ‘What!’ said I to myself, ‘have their souls already become familiar to disgrace? Do they no longer feel their fetters? Oh, negroes! if it be thus, you merit your fate! I thought the Europeans the most despicable of men! but you surpass them in baseness. They are unjust; you are contemptible.’

While this reflexion oppressed me, one of those negroes made me a sign, to approach him. Urban, who was near me, probably thinking that a single word from them would advance my cure more than all his cares, pressed me to join the man who called me. I obeyed. ‘Are you there?’ said he to me, in the negro language, and in a low voice. ‘I thought you dead.’ Heaven has willed it otherwise, answered I. ‘So much the better.’ ‘So much the worse!’ I am not as you are; I cannot so speedily reconcile myself to slavery and oppression. ‘Why do you judge thus of us?—I see you content.’ ‘Then are you more reconciled than we to our fate, since it has already made you forget the character of negroes.’ ‘How!’—‘No discussion; we have not time for that. Only answer me. What

think you of the Captain?’ ‘He is a monster!’ ‘And the white people?’—‘Barbarians!’ ‘What are your sentiments for them?’ ‘Hatred!’ ‘Nothing more?’ ‘What more can an unarmed man?’—‘Perhaps—but, does not honour call for more?’ ‘Without doubt, it calls for vengeance.’ ‘And it shall be satisfied; to-morrow, your tyrants shall me no more.’ ‘How!’ ‘To-morrow, I tell you, they expire; and, to crown all, they expire under our hands. Now blame our joy; or rather blush to be a negro, and to have misunderstood the feelings of negroes.’

Pardon me, O, God of the universe! pardon me! Instantly I became criminal. All the passages of my heart flew open to the serpent of vengeance. I forgot thy rights, thy justice. I saw only my own injuries, and the barbarous pleasure of imbruing my hands in the blood of the perfidious authors of them.

‘Proceed;’ said I to the negro. ‘What hour? What signal? What means?’—‘One of us,’ said he, ‘possesses an herb which happily grows in our climates, and which destroys iron. The lightning is not swifter than its effects. To-morrow we divide it among our brethren, and apply it in this very place. These Europeans will not perceive its operation. Our war song shall be the signal. Our fetters fall off. Suddenly we rise. The same fetters shall be our arms. Our tyrants, astonished, will be vanquished as soon as attacked; and shall perish to the last individual of them. The sea shall be their sepulchre, and the theatre of our glory. This is our work,’ continued he. ‘These our chiefs,’ pointing to some of them. ‘And this is my answer,’ said I to him: ‘Vengeance and liberty!’ ‘It is enough,’ replied the negro. ‘Leave me. Suspicion may be awakened.’

I advanced some steps and paused, ‘My joy will betray me,’ said I to myself. ‘Be calm, my mind. Imitate Urban. The traitor devoured me with a tranquil front. Let the barbarian be the victim of the art which he has taught me!’

Ferdinand remarked my agitation, and joined me. ‘Why,’ said he, ‘have you mingled with these negroes? Was not their sight sufficient to awaken your pangs? Why then did you enter into discourse with them? Leave them Ipanoko.’

Detestable passion of revenge! Will it be imagined? I followed Ferdinand without remorse. I had just signed his death warrant: yet the sight of him roused no compassion in me.

I do not excuse myself. I wish only to be entirely as I was. The effect of injustice is to render him barbarous who is the