

said I; 'but there is nothing I will not do to oblige you.' 'Except to beat my negro woman,' answered he. I was silent. I saw him smile and wink at the Spanish captain. 'Is it possible he can have informed him?' said I to myself. 'Then these Europeans have not the same modesty as we. A negro would not speak so willingly of his shame.'

I took the harp. I ran over a prelude; then, sang these couplets.

Melodious lyre, that erst could yield  
Impassion'd sounds, in friendship's  
praise,  
Henceforth be mute; or be my grief  
Henceforth the subject of thy lays.

The generous act, the grateful heart,  
Thy favourite theme no longer be;  
For he, for whom thou'rt wont to swell,  
No longer hears thy harmony.

Neglect and silence be thy doom;  
Nor cheer the night, nor wake the  
morn.

In joyless apathy remain,  
Like me, desponding and forlorn.

Thy dulcet song no more must breathe  
The mingling chords of mirth and  
glee;  
For he, for whom thou'rt wont to swell,  
No longer hears thy harmony.

When I had ceased, they covered me with eulogiums. They praised my voice, the facility of my execution, and the expression of my couplets. 'I have never heard them,' said Urban; 'from whence did you take them?' 'I made them for the occasion,' answered I. 'What! extempore?' cried all the company. 'That is impossible,' added Urban. 'There is no great merit in it,' returned I, 'when I have just bid your son farewell.' Then the applauses were redoubled. Such are in general the Europeans. A spark of talents throws them into enthusiasm.

But at Paris this species of extacy is no more than a mode. These *éphémères*, pretty sometimes, usually insipid, are received with transport; especially by the women. But how! while the singer or reciter of his own verses simply imagines the whole circle have but one ear for him, the mistress of the house trifles with her dog—a young abbé fatrizes the head dress of madam the countess—a petit-maitre contemplates in a glass the brilliant reflexion of his buttons, or turns over the numerous toys of his watch—and a fine-wit incessantly banishes silence, by requiring it from the whole company; while a favourite phy-

sician avails himself of these moments, to write the scandal of the morning on the tablets of a hypochondriac lady. The singer (or reciter) ceases: it is the signal; banished attention flies back, like lightning. It is charming, delicious, divine! The chorus shakes the house almost to the foundation. One of these complaisant ladies, in the course of a day, visited ten houses with one of these amiable stanza manufacturers. Ten times he sung, ten times she entreated a copy of the verses which caused her such raptures. One evening, an abbé looked over her portfolio. 'Ah!' said she, 'there are ten songs of such-a-one! read, read! each is more beautiful than another. Ah! what an inexhaustible genius!' He opened, read. They were ten copies of the same song. How many enormous reputations have no other origin!

My couplets had a merit which I was far from suspecting. They exactly suited the designs of Urban. I ought to have doubted the extraordinary kindness he lavished on me: but I was so occupied with my sorrow, as to pay little attention to what passed around me. He spoke a few words to the captain, who answered only by striking the hand of Urban. Soon after we returned to the port. My first care was to visit Honoria. I found her oppressed with sorrow; and her tears renewed mine. She wished to be informed of every thing that Ferdinand had done or said, till the moment of his departure. She feared, that I should hide even the least gesture from her; and again, again, and again, she made me repeat the same things. I spoke, by chance, of our visit to the Spaniard, and of what had passed in the ship. Honoria heard me with surprise, and was long lost in thought. 'Do you know to what this visit tends?' said she, 'No,' answered I; 'it does not affect me.' 'But I am not so tranquil,' returned Honoria. She said no more on this subject; and soon after dismissed me.

Her observation surprised me. I could not conceive the meaning of it. The caresses of Urban continued. They seemed to increase; and this astonished me more than the language of Honoria. In the mean while, the Spanish captain came to the house. I remarked, that he went away displeas'd; and some epithets, which he bestowed on Urban, led me to suppose, that there was some misunderstanding between them, in their commercial concerns: I was not deceived: but little did I suspect the species of commerce which was the subject of their quarrel. On the third day, scarcely had I arisen, when I was informed that a person asked for me; I de-