THE ROYAL SLAVE

By Aphra Behn

I do not pretend, in giving you the history of this ROYAL SLAVE, to

entertain my Reader with the adventures of a feign'd hero, whose life and

fortunes fancy may manage at the poet's pleasure; nor, in relating the

truth, design to adorn it with any accidents, but such as arrived in

earnest to him: and it shall come simply into the world, recommended by its

own proper merits, and natural intrigues; there being enough of reality to

support it, and to render it diverting, without the addition of invention.

I was myself an eye-witness to a great part of what you will find here set

down; and what I cou'd not be witness of, I receiv'd from the mouth of the

chief actor in this history, the hero himself, who gave us the whole

transactions of his youth: and I shall omit, for brevity's sake, a thousand

little accidents of his life, which, however pleasant to us, where history

was scarce, and adventures very rare, yet might prove tedious and heavy to

my reader, in a world where he finds diversions for every minute, new and

strange. But we who were perfectly charm'd with the character of this great

man, were curious to gather every circumstance of his life.

The scene of the last part of his adventures lies in a colony in America,

called Surinam, in the West Indies.

But before I give you the story of this gallant slave, 'tis fit I tell you

the manner of bringing them to these new colonies; those they make use of

there, not being natives of the place: for those we live with in perfect

amity, without daring to command 'em; but, on the contrary, caress 'em with

all the brotherly and friendly affection in the world; trading with them

for their fish, venison, buffalo's skins, and little rarities; as

marmosets, a sort of monkey, as big as a rat or weasel, but of a marvellous

and delicate shape, having face and hands like a human creature; and

cousheries, a little beast in the form and fashion of a lion, as big as a

kitten, but so exactly made in all parts like that noble beast, that it is

it in miniature: then for little paraketoes, great parrots, muckaws and a

thousand other birds and beasts of wonderful and surprizing forms, shapes,

and colours; for skins of prodigious snakes, of which there are some three-

score yards in length; as is the skin of one that may be seen at his

Majesty's Antiquary's; where are also some rare flies, of amazing forms and

colours, presented to 'em by myself; some as big as my fist, some less; and

all of various excellences, such as art cannot imitate. Then we trade for

feathers, which they order into all shapes, make themselves little short

habits of'em, and glorious wreaths for their heads, necks, arms and legs,

whose tinctures are unconceivable. I had a set of these presented to me,

and I gave 'em to the King's Theatre; it was the dress of the Indian Queen,

infinitely admir'd by persons of quality; and was unimitable. Besides

these, a thousand little knacks, and rarities in nature; and some of art,

as their baskets, weapons, aprons, etc. We dealt with 'em with beads of all

colours, knives, axes, pins, and needles, which they us'd only as tools to

drill holes with in their ears, noses, and lips, where they hang a great

many little things; as long beads, bits of tin, brass or silver beat thin,

and any shining trinket. The beads they weave into aprons about a quarter

of an ell long, and of the same breadth; working them very prettily in

flowers of several colours; which apron they wear just before 'em, as Adam

and Eve did the fig-leaves; the men wearing a long strip of linen, which

they deal with us for. They thread these beads also on long cotton-threads,

and make girdles to tie their aprons to, which come twenty times, or more,

about the waste, and then cross, like a shoulder-belt, both ways, and round

their necks, arms and legs. This adornment, with their long black hair, and

the face painted in little specks or flowers here and there, makes 'em a

wonderful figure to behold. Some of the beauties, which indeed are finely

shap'd, as almost all are, and who have pretty features, are charming and

novel; for they have all that is called beauty, except the colour, which is

a reddish yellow; or after a new oiling, which they often use to

themselves, they are of the colour of a new brick, but smooth, soft and

sleek. They are extreme modest and bashful, very shy, and nice of being

touch'd. And though they are all thus naked, if one lives for ever among

'em, there is not to be seen an undecent action, or glance: and being

continually us'd to see one another so unadorn'd, so like our first parents

before the fall, it seems as if they had no wishes, there being nothing to

heighten curiosity; but all you can see, you see at once, and every moment

see; and where there is no novelty, there can be no curiosity. Not but I

have seen a handsome young Indian, dying for love of a very beautiful young

Indian maid; but all his courtship was, to fold his arms, pursue her with

his eyes, and sighs were all his language: whilst she, as if no such lover

were present, or rather as if she desired none such, carefully guarded her

eyes from beholding him; and never approach'd him, but she look'd down with

all the blushing modesty I have seen in the most severe and cautious of our

world. And these people represented to me an absolute idea of the first

state of innocence, before man knew how to sin: And 'tis most evident and

plain, that simple Nature is the most harmless, inoffensive and vertuous

mistress. 'Tis she alone, if she were permitted, that better instructs the

world, than all the inventions of man: religion wou'd here but destroy that

tranquillity they possess by ignorance; and laws wou'd but teach 'em to

know offences, of which now they have no notion. They once made mourning

and fasting for the death of the English Governor, who had given his hand

to come on such a day to 'em, and neither came nor sent; believing when, a

man's word was past, nothing but death cou'd or shou'd prevent his keeping

it: and when they saw he was not dead, they asked him what name they had

for a man who promis'd a thing he did not do? The Governour told them such

a man was a lyar, which was a word of infamy to a gentleman. Then one of'em

repli'd, "Governour, you are a lyar, and guilty of that infamy." They have

a native justice, which knows no fraud; and they understand no vice, or

cunning, but when they are taught by the white men. They have plurality of

wives; which when they grow old, serve those that succeed 'em, who are

young, but with a servitude easy and respected; and unless they take slaves

in war, they have no other attendants.

Those on that continent where I was, had no King; but the oldest War-

Captain was obey'd with great resignation.

A War-Captain is a man who has led them on to battle with conduct and

success; of whom I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter, and of some

other of their customs and manners, as they fall in my way.

With these people, as I said, we live in perfect tranquillity, and good

understanding, as it behoves us to do; they knowing all the places where to

seek the best food of the country, and the means of getting it; and for

very small and unvaluable trifles, supply us with what 'tis impossible for

us to get: for they do not only in the woods, and over the Sevana's, in

hunting, supply the parts of hounds, by swiftly scouring through those

almost impassable places, and by the mere activity of their feet, run down

the nimblest deer, and other eatable beasts; but in the water, one wou'd

think they were gods of the rivers, or fellow-citizens of the deep; so rare

an art they have in swimming, diving, and almost living in water; by which

they command the less swift inhabitants of the floods. And then for

shooting, what they cannot take, or reach with their hands, they do with

arrows; and have so admirable an aim, that they will split almost a hair,

and at any distance that an arrow can reach: they will shoot down oranges,

and other fruit, and only touch the stalk with the dart s point, that they

may not hurt the fruit. So that they being on all occasions very useful to

us, we and it absolutely necessary to caress 'em as friends, and not to

treat 'em as slaves; nor dare we do other, their numbers so far surpassing

ours in that continent.

Those then whom we make use of to work in our plantations of sugar, are

Negroes, black-slaves altogether, who are transported thither in this

manner.

Those who want slaves, make a bargain with a master, or a captain of a

ship, and contract to pay him so much a-piece, a matter of twenty pound a

head, for as many as he agrees for, and to pay for 'em when they shall be

deliver'd on such a plantation: so that when there arrives a ship laden

with slaves, they who have so contracted, go a-board, and receive their

number by lot; and perhaps in one lot that may be for ten, there may happen

to be three or four men, the rest women and children. Or be there more or

less of either sex, you are obliged to be contented with your lot.

Coramantien, a country of blacks so called, was one of those places in

which they found the most advantageous trading for these slaves, and

thither most of our great traders in that merchandize traffick; for that

nation is very warlike and brave: and having a continual campaign, being

always in hostility with one neighbouring Prince or other, they had the

fortune to take a great many captives: for all they took in battle were

sold as slaves; at least those common men who cou'd not ransom themselves.

Of these slaves so taken, the General only has all the profit; and of these

Generals our captains and masters of ships buy all their freights.

The King of Coramantien was himself a man of an hundred and odd years old,

and had no son, though he had many beautiful black wives: for most

certainly there are beauties that can charm of that colour. In his younger

years he had had many gallant men to his sons, thirteen of whom died in

battle, conquering when they fell; and he had only left him for his

successor, one grand-child, son to one of these dead victors, who, as soon

as he could bear a bow in his hand, and a quiver at his back, was sent into

the field, to be train'd up by one of the oldest Generals to war; where,

from his natural inclination to arms, and the occasions given him, with the

good conduct of the old General, he became, at the age of seventeen, one of

the most expert Captains, and bravest soldiers that ever saw the field of

Mars: so that he was ador'd as the wonder of all that world, and the

darling of the soldiers. Besides, he was adorn'd with a native beauty, so

transcending all those of his gloomy race, that he struck an awe and

reverence, even into those that knew not his quality, as he did into me,

who beheld him with surprize and wonder, when afterwards he arrived in our

world.

He had scarce arrived at his seventeenth year, when, fighting by his side,

the General was kill'd with an arrow in his eye, which the Prince Oroonoko

(for so was this gallant Moor call d) very narrowly avoided; nor had he, if

the General who saw the arrow shot, and perceiving it aimed at the Prince,

had not bow'd his head between, on purpose to receive it in his own body,

rather than it should touch that of the Prince, and so saved him.

'Twas then, afflicted as Oroonoko was, that he was proclaimed General in

the old man's place: and then it was, at the finishing of that war, which

had continued for two years, that the Prince came to Court, where he had

hardly been a month together, from the time of his fifth year to that of

seventeen: and 'twas amazing to imagine where it was he learn'd so much

humanity; or to give his accomplishments a juster name, where 'twas he got

that real greatness of soul, those refined notions of true honour, that

absolute generosity, and that softness that was capable of the highest

passions of love and gallantry, whose objects were almost continually

fighting men, or those mangled or dead, who heard no sounds but those of

war and groans. Some part of it we may attribute to the care of a Frenchman

of wit and learning, who finding it turn to a very good account to be a

sort of royal tutor to this young black, and perceiving him very ready,

apt, and quick of apprehension, took a great pleasure to teach him morals,

language and science; and was for it extremely belov'd and valu'd by him.

Another reason was, he lov'd when he came from war, to see all the English

gentlemen that traded thither; and did not only learn their language, but

that of the Spaniard also, with whom he traded afterwards for slaves.

I have often seen and conversed with this great man, and been a witness to

many of his mighty actions, and do assure my reader, the most illustrious

Courts could not have produced a braver both for greatness of courage and

mind, a judgment more solid, a wit more quick, and a conversation more

sweet and diverting. He knew almost as much as if he had read much: he had

heard of and admired the Romans: he had heard of the late Civil Wars in

England, and the deplorable death of our great Monarch; and wou'd discourse

of it with all the sense and abhorrence of the injustice imaginable. He had

an extreme good and graceful mien, and all the civility of a well-bred

great man. He had nothing of barbarity in his nature, but in all points

address'd himself as if his education had been in some European Court.

This great and just character of Oroonoko gave me an extreme curiosity to

see him, especially when I knew he spoke French and English, and that r

could talk with him But though I had heard so much of him, I was as greatly

surprised when I saw him, as if I had heard nothing of him; so beyond all

report I found him. He came into the room, and addressed himself to me, and

some other women, with the best grace in the world. He was pretty tall, but

of a shape the most exact that can be fancy'd: the most famous statuary

cou'd not form the figure of a man more admirably turn'd from head to foot.

His face was not of that brown rusty black which most of that nation are,

but a perfect ebony, or polished jett. His eyes were the most awful that

cou'd be seen, and very piercing; the white of'em being like snow, as were

his teeth. His nose was rising and Roman, instead of African and flat: his

mouth the finest shaped that could be seen; far from those great turn'd

lips, which are so natural to the rest of the Negroes. The whole proportion

and air of his face was so nobly and exactly form'd, that, bating his

colour, there could be nothing in nature more beautiful, agreeable and

handsome. There was no one grace wanting, that bears the standard of true

beauty. His hair came down to his shoulders, by the aids of art, which was

by pulling it out with a quill, and keeping it comb'd; of which he took

particular care. Nor did the perfections of his mind come short of those of

his person; for his discourse was admirable upon almost any subject: and

whoever had heard him speak, wou'd have been convinced of their errors,

that all fine wit is confined to the white men, especially to those of

Christendom; and wou'd have confess'd that Oroonoko was as capable even of

reigning well, and of governing as wisely, had as great a soul, as politick

maxims, and was as sensible of power, as any Prince civiliz'd in the most

refined schools of humanity and learning, or the most illustrious courts.

This Prince, such as I have describ'd him, whose soul and body were so

admirably adorned, was (while yet he was in the Court of his grandfather,

as I said) as capable of love, as 'twas possible for a brave and gallant

man to be; and in saying that, I have named the highest degree of love: for

sure great souls are most capable of that passion.

I have already said, the old General was kill'd by the shot of an arrow, by

the side of this Prince, in battle; and that Oroonoko was made General.

This old dead hero had one only daughter left of his race, a beauty, that

to describe her truly, one need say only, she was female to the noble male;

the beautiful black Venus to our young Mars; as charming in her person as

he, and of delicate vertues. I have seen a hundred white men sighing after

her, and making a thousand vows at her feet, all in vain and unsuccessful.

And she was indeed too great for any but a prince of her own nation to

adore.

Oroonoko coming from the wars (which were now ended) after he had made his

Court to his grandfather, he thought in honour he ought to make a visit to

Imoinda, the daughter of his foster-father, the dead General; and to make

some excuses to her, because his preservation was the occasion of her

father's death; and to present her with those slaves that had been taken in

this last battle, as the trophies of her father's victories. When he came,

attended by all the young soldiers of any merit, he was infinitely

surpriz'd at the beauty of this fair Queen of Night, whose face and person

were so exceeding all he had ever beheld, that lovely modesty with which

she receiv'd him, that softness in her look and sighs, upon the melancholy

occasion of this honour that was done by so great a man as Oroonoko, and a

Prince of whom she had heard such admirable things; the awfulness wherewith

she receiv'd him, and the sweetness of her words and behaviour while he

stay'd, gain'd a perfect conquest over his fierce heart, and made him feel,

the victor cou'd be subdu'd. So that having made his first compliments, and

presented her an hundred and fifty slaves in fetters, he told her with his

eyes, that he was not insensible of her charms; while Imoinda, who wish'd

for nothing more than so glorious a conquest, was pleas d to believe, she

understood that silent language of newborn love; and, from that moment, put

on all her additions to beauty.

The Prince return'd to Court with quite another humour than before; and

though he did not speak much of the fair Imoinda, he had the pleasure to

hear all his followers speak of nothing but the charms of that maid,

insomuch, that, even in the presence of the old King, they were extolling

her, and heightening, if possible, the beauties they had found in her: so

that nothing else was talk'd of, no other sound was heard in every corner

where there were whisperers, but Imoinda! Imoinda!

'Twill be imagined Oroonoko stay'd not long before he made his second

Visit; nor, considering his quality, not much longer before he told her, he

ador'd her. I have often heard him say, that he admir'd by what strange

inspiration he came to talk things so soft, and so passionate, who never

knew love, nor was us d to the conversation of women; but (to use his own

words) he said, "Most happily, some new, and, till then, unknown power

instructed his heart and tongue in the language of love; and at the same

time, in favour of him, inspir'd Imoinda with a sense of his passion." She

was touch'd with what he said, and return'd it all in such answers as went

to his very heart, with a pleasure unknown before. Nor did he use those

obligations ill, that love had done him, but turn'd all his happy moments

to the best advantage; and as he knew no vice, his flame aim'd at nothing

but honour, if such a distinction may be made in love; and especially in

that country, where men take to themselves as many as they can maintain;

and where the only crime and sin against a woman, is, to turn her off, to

abandon her to want, shame and misery; such ill morals are only practis'd

in Christian countries, where they prefer the bare name of religion; and,

without vertue or morality, think that sufficient. But Oroonoko was none of

these professors; but as he had right notions of honour, so he made her

such propositions as were not only and barely such; but, contrary to the

custom of his country, he made her vows she shou'd be the only woman he

would possess while he liv'd; that no age or wrinkles shou'd encline him to

change: for her soul wou'd be always fine, and always young; and he shou'd

have an eternal idea in his mind of the charms she now bore; and shou'd

look into his heart for that idea, when he cou'd find it no longer in her

face.

After a thousand assurances of his lasting flame, and her eternal empire

over him, she condescended to receive him for her husband; or rather,

receiv'd him, as the greatest honour the gods cou'd do her.

There is a certain ceremony in these cases to be observ'd, which I forgot

to ask how 'twas perform'd; but 'twas concluded on both sides, that in

obedience to him, the grandfather was to be first made acquainted with the

design: for they pay a most absolute resignation to the monarch, especially

when he is a parent also.

On the other side, the old King, who had many wives, and many concubines,

wanted not court-flatterers to insinuate into his heart a thousand tender

thoughts for this young beauty; and who represented her to his fancy, as

the most charming he had ever possessed in all the long race of his

numerous years. At this character, his old heart, like an extinguish'd

brand, most apt to take fire, felt new sparks of love, and began to kindle;

and now grown to his second childhood, long'd with impatience to behold

this gay thing, with whom, alas! he could but innocently play. But how he

should be confirm'd she was this wonder, before he us'd his power to call

her to Court, (where maidens never came, unless for the King's private use)

he was next to consider; and while he was so doing, he had intelligence

brought him, that Imoinda was most certainly mistress to the Prince

Oroonoko. This gave him some chagreen: however, it gave him also an

opportunity, one day, when the Prince was a hunting, to wait on a man of

quality, as his slave and attendant, who should go and make a present to

Imoinda, as from the Prince; he should then, unknown, see this fair maid,

and have an opportunity to hear what message she wou'd return the Prince

for his present, and from thence gather the state of her heart, and degree

of her inclination. This was put in execution, and the old monarch saw, and

burn'd: he found her all he had heard, and would not delay his happiness,

but found he should have some obstacle to overcome her heart; for she

express'd her sense of the present the Prince had sent her, in terms so

sweet, so soft and pretty, with an air of love and joy that cou'd not be

dissembled, insomuch that 'twas past doubt whether she lov'd Oroonoko

entirely. This gave the old King some affliction; but he salv'd it with

this, that the obedience the people pay their King, was not at all

inferiour to what they paid their gods; and what love wou'd not oblige

Imoinda to do, duty wou'd compel her to.

He was therefore no sooner got into his apartment, but he sent the Royal

Veil to Imoinda; that is the ceremony of invitation: he sends the lady he

has a mind to honour with his bed, a veil, with which she is cover'd, and

secur'd for the King's use; and 'tis death to disobey; besides, held a most

impious disobedience.

'Tis not to be imagin'd the surprize and grief that seiz'd the lovely maid

at this news and sight. However, as delays in these cases are dangerous,

and pleading worse than treason; trembling, and almost fainting, she was

oblig'd to suffer herself to be cover'd, and led away.

They brought her thus to Court; and the King, who had caus'd a very rich

bath to be prepar'd, was led into it, where he sat under a canopy, in

state, to receive this long'd-for virgin; whom he having commanded shou'd

be brought to him, they (after disrobing her) led her to the bath, and

making fast the doors, left her to descend. The King, without more

courtship, bad her throw off her mantle, and come to his arms. But Imoinda,

all in tears, threw herself on the marble, on the brink of the bath, and

besought him to hear her. She told him, as she was a maid, how proud of the

divine glory she should have been of having it in her power to oblige her

King: but as by the laws he could not, and from his Royal goodness would

not take from any man his wedded wife; so she believ'd she shou'd be the

occasion of making him commit a great sin, if she did not reveal her state

and condition; and tell him she was another's, and cou'd not be so happy to

be his

The King, enrag'd at this delay, hastily demanded the name of the bold man,

that had married a woman of her degree, without his consent. Imoinda seeing

his eyes fierce, and his hands tremble (whether with age or anger, I know

not, but she fancy'd the last) almost repented she had said so much, for

now she fear'd the storm wou'd fall on the Prince; she therefore said a

thousand things to appease the raging of his flame, and to prepare him to

hear who it was with calmness: but before she spoke, he imagin'd who she

meant, but wou'd not seem to do so, but commanded her to lay aside her

mantle, and suffer herself to receive his caresses, or, by his gods he

swore, that happy man whom she was going to name shou'd die, though it were

even Oroonoko himself "Therefore," said he, "deny this marriage, and swear

thyself a maid." "That," reply'd Imoinda, "by all our powers I do; for I am

not yet known to my husband. " " 'Tis enough," said the King, "'tis enough

both to satisfy my conscience and my heart." And rising from his seat, he

went and led her into the bath; it being in vain for her to resist.

In this time, the Prince, who was return'd from hunting, went to visit his

Imoinda, but found her gone; and not onlyso, but heard she had receiv'd the

Royal Veil. This rais'd him to a storm; and in his madness, they had much

ado to save him from laying violent hands on himself Force first prevail'd,

and then reason: they urg'd all to him, that might oppose his rage; but

nothing weigh'd so greatly with him as the King's old age, uncapable of

injuring him with Imoinda. He wou'd give way to that hope, because it

pleas'd him most, and flatter'd best his heart. Yet this serv'd not

altogether to make him cease his different passions, which sometimes rag'd

within him, and soft'ned into showers. 'Twas not enough to appease him, to

tell him, his grand-father was old, and cou'd not that way injure him,

while he retain'd that awful duty which the young men are us'd there to pay

to their grave relations. He cou'd not be convinc'd he had no cause to sigh

and mourn for the loss of a mistress, he cou'd not with all his strength

and courage retrieve, and he wou'd often cry, "Oh, my friends! were she in

wall'd cities, or confin'd from me in fortifications of the greatest

strength; did inchantments or monsters detain her from me; I wou'd venture

through any hazard to free her: but here, in the arms of a feeble old man,

my youth, my violent love, my trade in arms, and all my vast desire of

glory, avail me nothing. Imoinda is as irrecoverably lost to me, as if she

were snatch'd by the cold arms of death. Oh! she is never to be retriev'd.

If I wou'd wait tedious years; till fate shou'd bow the old King to his

grave, even that wou'd not leave me Imoinda free; but still that custom

that makes it so vile a crime for a son to marry his father's wives or

mistresses, wou'd hinder my happiness; unless I wou'd either ignobly set an

ill precedent to my successors, or abandon my country, and fly with her to

some unknown world who never heard our story."

But it was objected to him, that his case was not the same: for Imoinda

being his lawful wife by solemn contract, 'twas he was the injur'd man, and

might, if he so pleas'd, take Imoinda back, the breach of the law being on

his grandfather's side; and that if he cou'd circumvent him, and redeem her

from the Otan, which is the Palace of the King's Women, a sort of Seraglio,

it was both just and lawful for him so to do.

This reasoning had some force upon him, and he shou'd have been entirely

comforted, but for the thought that she was possess'd by his grandfather.

However, he lov'd so well, that he was resolv'd to believe what most

favour'd his hope, and to endeavour to learn from Imoinda's own mouth, what

only she cou'd satisfy him in, whether she was robb'd of that blessing

which was only due to his faith and love. But as it was very hard to get a

sight of the women (for no men ever enter'd into the Otan, but when the

King went to entertain himself with some one of his wives or mistresses;

and 'twas death, at any other time, for any other to go in) so he knew not

how to contrive to get a sight of her.

While Oroonoko felt all the agonies of love, and suffer'd under a torment

the most painful in the world, the old King was not exempted from his share

of affliction. He was troubled, for having been forc'd, by an irresistible

passion, to rob his son of a treasure, he knew, cou'd not but be extremely

dear to him; since she was the most beautiful that ever had been seen, and

had besides, all the sweetness and innocence of youth and modesty, with a

charm of wit surpassing all. He found, that however she was forc'd to

expose her lovely person to his wither'd arms, she cou'd only sigh and weep

there, and think of Oroonoko; and oftentimes cou'd not forbear speaking of

him, tho her life were, by custom, forfeited by owning her passion. But she

spoke not of a lover only, but of a Prince dear to him to whom she spoke;

and of the praises of a man, who, till now, fill'd the old man's soul with

joy at every recital of his bravery, or even his name. And 'twas this

dotage on our young hero, that gave Imoinda a thousand privileges to speak

of him without offending, and this condescension in the old King, that made

her take the satisfaction of speaking of him so very often.

Besides, he many times inquir'd how the Prince bore himself: and those of

whom he ask'd, being entirely slaves to the merits and vertues of the

Prince, still answer'd what they thought conduc'd best to his service;

which was, to make the old King fancy that the Prince had no more interest

in Imoinda, and had resign'd her willingly to the pleasure of the King;

that he diverted himself with his mathematicians, his fortifications, his

officers, and his hunting.

This pleas'd the old lover, who fail'd not to report these things again to

Imoinda, that she might, by the example of her young lover, withdraw her

heart, and rest better contented in his arms. But, however she was forc'd

to receive this unwelcome news, in all appearance, with unconcern and

content; her heart was bursting within, and she was only happy when she

cou'd get alone, to vent her griefs and moans with sighs and tears.

What reports of the Prince's conduct were made to the King, he thought good

to justify, as far as possibly he cou'd by his actions; and when he

appear'd in the presence of the King, he shew'd a face not at all betraying

his heart: so that in a little time, the old man, being entirely convinc'd

that he was no longer a lover of Imoinda, he carry'd him with him, in his

train, to the Otan, often to banquet with his mistresses, But as soon as he

enter'd, one day, into the apartment of Imoinda, with the King, at the

first glance from her eyes, notwithstanding all his determined resolution,

he was ready to sink in the place where he stood; and had certainly done

so, but for the support of Aboan, a young man who was next to him; which,

with his change of countenance, had betray'd him, had the King chanc'd to

look that way. And, I have observ'd, 'tis a very great error in those who

laugh when one says, "A Negro can change colour": for I have seen 'em as

frequently blush, and look pale, and that as visibly as ever I saw in the

most beautiful white. And 'tis certain, that both these changes were

evident, this day, in both these lovers. And Imoinda, who saw with some joy

the change in the Prince's face, and found it in her own, strove to divert

the King from beholding either, by a forc'd caress, with which she met him;

which was a new wound in the heart of the poor dying Prince. But as soon as

the King was busy'd in looking on some fine thing of Imoinda's making, she

had time to tell the Prince, with her angry, but love-darting eyes, that

she resented his coldness, and bemoan'd her own miserable captivity. Nor

were his eyes silent, but answer'd hers again, as much as eyes cou'd do,

instructed by the most tender and most passionate heart that ever lov'd:

and they spoke so well, and so effectually, as Imoinda no longer doubted

but she was the only delight and darling of that soul she found pleading in

'em its right of love, which none was more willing to resign than she. And

'twas this powerful language alone that in an instant convey'd all the

thoughts of their souls to each other; that they both found there wanted

but opportunity to make them both entirely happy. But when he saw another

door open'd by Onahal (a former old wife of the King's, who now had charge

of Imoinda) and saw the prospect of a bed of state made ready, with sweets

and flowers for the dalliance of the King, who immediately led the

trembling victim from his sight, into that prepar'd repose; what rage! what

wild frenzies seiz'd his heart! which forcing to keep within bounds, and to

suffer without noise, it became the more insupportable, and rent his soul

with ten thousand pains. He was forced to retire to vent his groans, where

he fell down on a carpet, and lay struggling a long time, and only

breathing now and then: "Oh Imoinda!" When Onahal had finished her

necessary affair within, shutting the door, she came forth, to wait till

the King called; and hearing some one sighing in the other room, she past

on, and found the Prince in that deplorable condition, which she thought

needed her aid. She gave him cordials, but all in vain; till finding the

nature of his disease, by his sighs, and naming Imoinda, she told him he

had not so much cause as he imagined to afflict himself: for if he knew the

King so well as she did, he wou'd not lose a moment in jealousy; and that

she was confident that Imoinda bore, at this minute, part in his

affliction. Aboan was of the same opinion, and both together persuaded him

to re-assume his courage; and all sitting down on the carpet, the Prince

said so many obliging things to Onahal, that he half-persuaded her to be of

his party: and she promised him, she would thus far comply with his just

desires, that she would let Imoinda know how faithful he was, what he

suffer'd, and what he said.

This discourse lasted till the King called, which gave Oroonoko a certain

satisfaction; and with the hope Onahal had made him conceive, he assumed a

look as gay as 'twas possible a man in his circumstances could do: and

presently after, he was call'd in with the rest who waited without. The

King commanded musick to be brought, and several of his young wives and

mistresses came all together by his command, to dance before him; where

Imoinda perform'd her part with an air and grace so surpassing all the

rest, as her a beauty was above 'em, and received the present ordained as

prize. The Prince was every moment more charmed with the new beauties and

graces he beheld in this fair-one; and while he gazed, and she danc'd,

Onahal was retired to a window with Aboan.

This Onahal, as I said, was one of the Cast-Mistresses of the old King; and

'twas these (now past their beauty) that were made guardians or

governantees to the new and the young ones, and whose business it was to

teach them all those wanton arts of love, with which they prevail'd and

charmed heretofore in their turn; and who now treated the triumphing happy-

ones with all the severity, as to liberty and freedom, that was possible,

in revenge of the honours they rob them of; envying them those

satisfactions, those gallantries and presents, that were once made to

themselves, while youth and beauty lasted, and which they now saw pass, as

it were regardless by, and paid only to the bloomings. And certainly,

nothing is more afflicting to a decay'd beauty, than to behold in itself

declining charms, that were once ador'd; and to find those caresses paid to

new beauties, to which once she laid claim; to hear them whisper, as she

passes by, that once was a delicate woman. Those abandon'd ladies therefore

endeavour to revenge all the despights and decays of time, on these

flourishing happy-ones. And 'twas this severity that gave Oroonoko a

thousand fears he should never prevail with Onahal to see Imoinda. But, as

I said, she was now retir'd to a window with Aboan.

This young man was not only one of the best quality, but a man extremely

well made, and beautiful; and coming often to attend the King to the Otan,

he had subdu'd the heart of the antiquated Onahal, which had not forgot how

pleasant it was to be in love. And though she had some decays in her face,

she had none in her sense and wit; she was there agreeable still, even to

Aboan's youth: so that he took pleasure in entertaining her with discourses

of love. He knew also, that to make his court to these she-favourites, was

the way to be great; these being the persons that do all affairs and

business at Court. He had also observed that she had given him glances more

tender and inviting than she had done to others of his quality. And now,

when he saw that her favour cou'd so absolutely oblige the Prince, he

failed not to sigh in her ear, and look with eyes all soft upon her, and

gave her hope that she had made some impressions on his heart. He found her

pleas'd at this, and making a thousand advances to him: but the ceremony

ending, and the King departing, broke up the company for that day, and his

conversation.

Aboan fail'd not that night to tell the Prince of his success, and how

advantageous the service of Onahal might be to his amour with Imoinda. The

Prince was overjoy'd with this good news, and besought him, if it were

possible, to caress her so, as to engage her entirely, which he could not

fail to do, if he comply'd with her desires: "For then," said the Prince,

"her life lying at your mercy, she must grant you the request you make in

my behalf." Aboan understood him, and assur'd him he would make love so

effectually, that he would defy the most expert mistress of the art to find

out whether he dissembled it, or had it really. And 'twas with impatience

they waited the next opportunity of going to the Otan.

The wars came on, the time of taking the field approached; and 'twas

impossible for the Prince to delay his going at the head of his Army to

encounter the enemy; so that every day seem'd a tedious year, till he saw

his Imoinda: for he believed he cou'd not live, if he were forc'd away

without being so happy. 'Twas with impatience therefore that he expected

the next visit the King wou'd make; and, according to his wish, it was not

long.

The parley of the eyes of these two lovers had not pass'd so secretly, but

an old jealous lover could spy it; or rather, he wanted not flatterers who

told him they observ'd it: so that the Prince was hasten'd to the camp, and

this was the last visit he found he should make to the Otan; he therefore

urged Aboan to make the best of this last effort, and to explain himself so

to Onahal, that she deferring her enjoyment of her young lover no longer,

might make way for the Prince to speak to Imoinda.

The whole affair being agreed on between the Prince and Aboan, they

attended the King, as the custom was, to the Otan; where, while the whole

company was taken up in beholding the dancing and antick postures the Women-

Royal made to divert the King, Onahal singled out Aboan, whom she found

most pliable to her wish. When she had him where she believ'd she cou'd not

be heard, she sigh'd to him, and softly cry'd, "Ah, Aboan! when will you be

sensible of my passion? I confess it with my mouth, because I would not

give my eyes the lye; and you have but too much already perceived they have

confess'd my flame: nor would I have you believe that because I am the

abandoned mistress of a King, I esteem myself altogether divested of

charms: No, Aboan; I have still a rest of beauty enough engaging, and have

learn'd to please too well, not to be desirable. I can have lovers still,

but will have none but Aboan." "Madam," reply'd the half-feigning youth,

"you have already, by my eyes, found you can still conquer; and I believe

'tis in pity of me you condescend to this kind confession. But, Madam,

words are used to be so small a part of our country-courtship, that 'tis

rare one can get so happy an opportunity as to tell one's heart; and those

few minutes we have, are forced to be snatch'd for more certain proofs of

love than speaking and sighing, and such I languish for."

He spoke this with such a tone, that she hoped it true, and cou'd not

forbear believing it; and being wholly transported with joy for having

subdued the finest of all the King's subjects to her desires, she took from

her ears two large pearls, and commanded him to wear 'em in his. He would

have refused 'em crying, "Madam, these are not the proofs of your love that

I expect; 'tis opportunity, 'tis a lone-hour only that can make me happy."

But forcing the pearls into his hand, she whisper'd softly to him, "Oh! do

not fear a woman's invention, when love sets her a thinking." And pressing

his hand, she cry'd, " This night you shall be happy. Come to the gate of

the orange-grove, behind the Otan, and I will be ready about mid-night to

receive you." It was thus agreed, and she left him that no notice might be

taken of their speaking together.

The ladies were still dancing, and the King, laid on a carpet, with a great

deal of pleasure was beholding them, especially Imoinda, who that day

appear'd more lovely than ever, being enliven'd with the good tidings

Onahal had brought her, of the constant passion the Prince had for her. The

Prince was laid on another carpet at the other end of the room, with his

eyes fixed on the object of his soul; and as she turned or moved, so did

they; and she alone gave his eyes and soul their motions. Nor did Imoinda

employ her eyes to any other use, than in beholding with infinite pleasure

the joy she produced in those of the Prince. But while she was more

regarding him than the steps she took, she chanced to fall, and so near

him, as that leaping with extreme force from the carpet, he caught her in

his arms as she fell; and 'twas visible to the whole presence, the joy

wherewith he received her. He clasped her close to his bosom, and quite

forgot that reverence that was due to the mistress of a King, and that

punishment that is the reward of a boldness of this nature. And had not the

presence of mind of Imoinda (fonder of his safety than her own) befriended

him, in making her spring from his arms, and fall into her dance again, he

had at that instant met his death; for the old King, jealous to the last

degree, rose up in rage, broke all the diversion, and led Imoinda to her

apartment, and sent out word to the Prince, to go immediately to the camp;

and that if he were found another night in Court, he shou'd suffer the

death ordained for disobedience to offenders.

You may imagine how welcome this news was to Oroonoko, whose unseasonable

transport and caress of Imoinda was blamed by all men that loved him: and

now he perceived his fault, yet cry'd, "That for such another moment he

would be content to die."

All the Otan was in disorder about this accident; and Onahal was

particularly concern'd because on the Prince's stay depended her happiness;

for she cou'd no longer expect that of Aboan: so that e'er they departed,

they contrived it so that the Prince and he should both come that night to

the grove of the Otan, which was all of oranges and citrons, and that there

they wou'd wait her orders.

They parted thus with grief enough till night, leaving the King in

possession of the lovely maid. But nothing could appease the jealousy of

the old lover; he wou'd not be imposed on, but would have it that Imoinda

made a false step on purpose to fall into Oroonoko's bosom, and that all

things looked like a design on both sides; and 'twas in vain she protested

her innocence; he was old and obstinate, and left her, more than half

assur'd that his fear was true.

The King going to his apartment, sent to know where the Prince was, and if

he intended to obey his command. The messenger return'd, and told him, he

found the Prince pensive, and altogether unprepar'd for the campaign; that

he lay negligently on the ground, and answer'd very little. This confirmed

the jealousy of the King, and he commanded that they should very narrowly

and privately watch his motions; and that he should not stir from his

apartment, but one spy or other shou'd be employ'd to watch him: so that

the hour approaching, wherein he was to go to the citron-grove; and taking

only Aboan along with him, he leaves his apartment, and was watched to the

very gate of the Otan; where he was seen to enter, and where they left him,

to carry back the tidings to the King.

Oroonoko and Aboan were no sooner enter'd, but Onahal led the Prince to the

apartment of Imoinda; who, not knowing any thing of her happiness, was laid

in bed. But Onahal only left him in her chamber, to make the best of his

opportunity, and took her dear Aboan to her own; where he shew'd the height

of complaisance for his Prince, when, to give him an opportunity, he

suffer'd himself to be caress'd in bed by Onahal.

The Prince softly waken'd Imoinda, who was not a little surpriz'd with joy

to find him there; and yet she trembled with a thousand fears. I believe he

omitted saying nothing to this young maid, that might persuade her to

suffer him to seize his own, and take the rights of love. And I believe she

was not long resisting those arms where she so long'd to be; and having

opportunity, night, and silence, youth, love, and desire, he soon

prevail'd, and ravished in a moment what his old grandfather had been

endeavouring for so many months.

'Tis not to be imagined the satisfaction of these two young lovers; nor the

vows she made him, that she remained a spotless maid till that night, and

that what she did with his grandfather had robb'd him of no part of her

virgin-honour; the gods, in mercy and justice, having reserved that for her

plighted lord, to whom of right it belonged. And 'tis impossible to express

the transports he suffer'd, while he listened to a discourse so charming

from her loved lips; and clasped that body in his arms, for whom he had so

long languished; and nothing now afflicted him, but his sudden departure

from her; for he told her the necessity, and his commands, but should

depart satisfy'd in this, that since the old King had hitherto not been

able to deprive him of those enjoyments which only belonged to him, he

believed for the future he would be less able to injure him; so that,

abating the scandal of the veil, which was no otherwise so, than that she

was wife to another, he believed her safe, even in the arms of the King,

and innocent; yet would he have ventur'd at the conquest of the world, and

have given it all to have had her avoided that honour of receiving the

Royal Veil. 'Twas thus, between a thousand caresses, that both bemoan'd the

hard fate of youth and beauty, so liable to that cruel promotion: 'twas a

glory that could well have been spared here, tho desired and aim'd at by

all the young females of that kingdom.

But while they were thus fondly employ'd, forgetting how time ran on, and

that the dawn must conduct him far away from his only happiness, they heard

a great noise in the Otan, and unusual voices of men; at which the Prince,

starting from the arms of the frighted Imoinda, ran to a little battle-ax

he used to wear by his side; and having not so much leisure as to put on

his habit, he opposed himself against some who where already opening the

door: which they did with so much violence, that Oroonoko was not able to

defend it; but was forced to cry out with a commanding voice, "Whoever ye

are that have the boldness to attempt to approach this apartment thus

rudely; know, that I, the Prince Oroonoko, will revenge it with the certain

death of him that first enters; therefore stand back, and know, this place

is sacred to love and me this night; to-morrow 'tis the King's."

This he spoke with a voice so resolv'd and assur'd, that they soon retired

from the door; but cry'd. " 'Tis by the King's command we are come; and

being satisfy'd by thy voice, O Prince, as much as if we had enter'd, we

can report to the King the truth of all his fears, and leave thee to

provide for thy own safety, as thou art advis'd by thy friends."

At these words they departed, and left the Prince to take a short and sad

leave of his Imoinda; who, trusting in the strength of her charms, believed

she should appease the fury of a jealous King, by saying, she was

surprized, and that it was by force of arms he got into her apartment. All

her concern now was for his life, and therefore she hasten'd him to the

camp, and with much ado prevail'd on him to go. Nor was it she alone that

prevailed; Aboan and Onahal both pleaded, and both assured him of a lye

that should be well enough contrived to secure Imoinda. So that at last,

with a heart sad as death, dying eyes, and sighing soul, Oroonoko departed,

and took his way to the camp.

It was not long after, the King in person came to the Otan; where beholding

Imoinda, with rage in his eyes, he upbraided her wickedness, and perfidy;

and threatning her royal lover, she fell on her face at his feet, bedewing

the floor with her tears, and imploring his pardon for a fault which she

had not with her will committed; as Onahal, who was also prostrate with

her, could testify: that, unknown to her, he had broken into her apartment,

and ravished her. She spoke this much against her conscience; but to save

her own life, 'twas absolutely necessary she should feign this falsity. She

knew it could not injure the Prince, he being fled to an army that would

stand by him, against any injuries that should assault him. However, this

last thought of Imoinda's being ravished, changed the measures of his

revenge; and whereas before he designed to be himself her executioner, he

now resolved she should not die. But as it is the greatest crime in nature

amongst 'em, to touch a woman after having been possess'd by a son, a

father, or a brother, so now he looked on Imoinda as a polluted thing

wholly unfit for his embrace; nor wou'd he resign her to his grandson,

because she had received the Royal Veil: he therefore removes her from the

Otan, with Onahal; whom he put into safe hands, with the order they should

be both sold off as slaves to another country, either Christian or heathen,

'twas no matter where.

This cruel sentence, worse than death, they implor'd might be reversed; but

their prayers were vain, and it was put in execution accordingly, and that

with so much secrecy, that none, either without or within the Otan, knew

anything of their absence, or their destiny.

The old King nevertheless executed this with a great deal of reluctancy;

but he believed he had made a very great conquest over himself, when he had

once resolved, and had perform'd what he resolv'd. He believed now, that

his love had been unjust; and that he cou'd not expect the gods, or Captain

of the Clouds (as they call the unknown power) wou'd suffer a better

consequence from so ill a cause. He now begins to hold Oroonoko excused;

and to say, he had reason for what he did. And now every body cou'd assure

the King how passionately Imoinda was beloved by the Prince; even those

confess'd it now, who said the contrary before his flame was not abated. So

that the King being old, and not able to defend himself in war, and having

no sons of all his race remaining alive, but only this to maintain him on

his throne; and looking on this as a man disobliged, first by the rape of

his mistress, or rather wife, and now by depriving him wholly of her, he

fear'd, might make him desperate, and do some cruel thing, either to

himself or his old grandfather the offender, he began to repent him

extremely of the contempt he had, in his rage, put on Imoinda. Besides, he

consider'd he ought in honour to have killed her for this offence, if it

had been one. He ought to have had so much value and consideration for a

maid of her quality, as to have nobly put her to death, and not to have

sold her like a common slave; the greatest revenge, and the most

disgraceful of any, and to which they a thousand times prefer death, and

implore it; as Imoinda did, but cou'd not obtain that honour. Seeing

therefore it was certain that Oroonoko would highly resent this affront, he

thought good to make some excuse for his rashness to him; and to that end,

he sent a messenger to the camp, with orders to treat with him about the

matter, to gain his pardon, and endeavour to mitigate his grief: but that

by no means he shou'd tell him she was sold, but secretly put to death; for

he knew he should never obtain his pardon for the other.

When the messenger came, he found the Prince upon the point of engaging

with the enemy; but as soon as he heard of the arrival of the messenger, he

commanded him to his tent, where he embraced him, and received him with

joy; which was soon abated by the down-cast looks of the messenger, who was

instantly demanded the cause by Oroonoko; who, impatient of delay, ask'd a

thousand questions in a breath, and all concerning Imoinda. But there

needed little return; for he cou'd almost answer himself of all he

demanded, from his sight and eyes. At last the messenger casting himself at

the Prince's feet, and kissing them with all the submission of a man that

had something to implore which he dreaded to utter, besought him to hear

with calmness what he had to deliver to him, and to call up all his noble

and heroick courage, to encounter with his words, and defend himself

against the ungrateful things he had to relate. Oroonoko reply'd, with a

deep sigh, and a languishing voice, "I am armed against their worst

efforts, for I know they will tell me, Imoinda is no more - And after that,

you may spare the rest." Then, commanding him to rise, he laid himself on a

carpet, under a rich pavilion, and remained a good while silent, and was

hardly heard to sigh . When he was come a little to himself, the messenger

asked him leave to deliver that part of his embassy which the Prince had

not yet divin'd: and the Prince cry'd, "I permit thee." Then he told him

the affliction the old King was in, for the rashness he had committed in

his cruelty to Imoinda; and how he deign'd to ask pardon for his offence,

and to implore the Prince would not suffer that loss to touch his heart too

sensibly, which now all the gods cou'd not restore him, but might

recompense him in glory, which he begged he would pursue; and that death,

that common revenger of all injuries, would soon even the account between

him and a feeble old man.

Oroonoko bad him return his duty to his lord and master; and to assure him,

there was no account of revenge to be adjusted between them: if there were,

'twas he was the aggressor, and that death would be just, and, maugre his

age, would see him righted; and he was contented to leave his share of

glory to youths more fortunate and worthy of that favour from the gods:

that henceforth he would never lift a weapon, or draw a bow, but abandon

the small remains of his life to sighs and tears, and the continual

thoughts of what his lord and grandfather had thought good to send out of

the world, with all that youth, that innocence and beauty.

After having spoken this, whatever his greatest officers and men of the

best rank cou'd do, they could not raise him from the carpet, or persuade

him to action, and resolutions of life; but commanding all to retire, he

shut himself into his pavilion all that day, while the enemy was ready to

engage: and wondring at the delay, the whole body of the chief of the army

then address'd themselves to him, and to whom they had much ado to get

admittance. They fell on their faces at the foot of his carpet, where they

lay, and besought him with earnest prayers and tears to lead them forth to

battle, and not let the enemy take advantages of them; and implored him to

have regard to his glory, and to the world, that depended on his courage

and conduct. But he made no other reply to all their supplications than

this, that he had now no more business for glory; and for the world, it was

a trifle not worth his care: "Go," continued he, sighing, "and divide it

amongst you, and reap with Joy what you so vainly prize, and leave me to my

more welcome destiny."

They then demanded what they should do, and whom he would constitute in his

room, that the confusion of ambitious youth and power might not ruin their

order, and make them a prey to the enemy. He reply'd, he would not give

himself that trouble, but wished 'em to chuse the bravest man amongst 'em,

let his quality or birth be what it wou'd: "For, oh my friends!" (said he)

"it is not titles make men brave or good; or birth that bestows courage and

generosity, or makes the owner happy. Believe this, when you behold

Oroonoko the most wretched, and abandoned by fortune, of all the creation

of the gods." So turning himself about, he wou'd make no more reply to all

they could urge or implore.

The army beholding their officers return unsuccessful, with sad faces and

ominous looks, that presaged no good luck, suffer'd a thousand fears to

take possession of their hearts, and the enemy to come even upon them

before they could provide for their safety by any defence: and though they

were assured by some who had a mind to animate them, that they should be

immediately headed by the Prince: and that in the mean time Aboan had

orders to command as General; yet they were so dismayed for want of that

great example of bravery, that they could make but a very feeble

resistance; and, at last, downright fled before the enemy, who pursued 'em

to the very tents, killing 'em: nor could all Aboan's courage, which that

day gained him immortal glory, shame 'em into a manly defence of

themselves. The guards that were left behind about the Prince's tent,

seeing the soldiers flee before the enemy, and scatter themselves over the

plain, in great disorder, made such out-cries, as rouz'd the Prince from

his amorous slumber, in which he had remained bury'd for two days, without

permitting any sustenance to approach him. But, in spight of all his

resolutions, he had not the constancy of grief to that degree, as to make

him insensible of the danger of his army; and in that instant he leaped

from his couch, and cry'd - "Come, if we must die, let us meet death the

noblest way; and 'twill be more like Oroonoko to encounter him at an army's

head, opposing the torrent of a conquering foe, than lazily on a couch, to

wait his lingering pleasure, and die every moment by a thousand racking

thoughts; or be tamely taken by an enemy, and led a whining, love-sick

slave to adorn the triumphs of Jamoan that young victor, who already is

enter'd beyond the limits I have prescrib'd him."

While he was speaking, he suffer'd his people to dress him for the field;

and sallying out of his pavilion, with more life and vigour in his

countenance than ever he shew'd, he appear'd like some Divine Power

descended to save his country from destruction: and his people had

purposely put him on all things that might make him shine with most

splendor, to strike a reverend awe into the beholders. He flew into the

thickest of those that were pursuing his men; and being animated with

despair, he fought as if he came on purpose to die, and did such good

things as will not be believed that human strength could perform; and such,

as soon inspir'd all the rest with new courage, and new order. And now it

was that they began to fight indeed; and so, as if they would not be

outdone even by their ador'd hero; who turning the tide of the victory,

changing absolutely the fate of the day, gain'd an entire conquest: and

Oroonoko having the good fortune to single out Jamoan, he took him prisoner

with his own hand, having wounded him almost to death.

This Jamoan afterwards became very dear to him, being a man very gallant,

and of excellent graces, and fine parts; so that he never put him amongst

the rank of captives as they used to do, without distinction, for the

common sale, or market, but kept him in his own court, where he retained

nothing of the prisoner but the name, and returned no more into his own

country; so great an affection he took for Oroonoko, and by a thousand

tales and adventures of love and gallantry, flatter'd his disease of

melancholy and languishment; which I have often heard him say had certainly

kill'd him, but for the conversation of this prince and Aboan, and the

French Governour he had from his childhood, of whom I have spoken before,

and who was a man of admirable wit, great ingenuity and learning; all which

he had infused into his young pupil. This Frenchman was banished out of his

own country for some heretical notions he held; and tho he was a man of

very little religion, yet he had admirable morals, and a brave soul.

After the total defeat of Jamoan's army, which all fled, or were left dead

upon the place, they spent some time in the camp; Oroonoko chusing rather

to remain awhile there in his tents, than to enter into a Palace, or live

in a Court where he had so lately suffer'd so great a loss; the officers

therefore, who saw and knew his cause of discontent, invented all sorts of

diversions and sports to entertain their Prince: so that what with those

amusements abroad, and others at home, that is, within their tents, with

the persuasions, arguments, and care of his friends and servants that he

more peculiarly priz'd, he wore off in time a great part of that chagreen,

and torture of despair, which the first efforts of Imoinda's death had

given him; insomuch, as having received a thousand kind embassies from the

King, and invitation to return to Court, he obey'd, tho with no little

reluctancy; and when he did so, there was a visible change in him, and for

a long time he was much more melancholy than before. But time lessens all

extremes, and reduces 'em to mediums, and unconcern; but no motives of

beauties, tho all endeavour'd it, cou'd engage him in any sort of amour,

though he had all the invitations to it, both from his own youth, and other

ambitions and designs.

Oroonoko was no sooner return'd from this last conquest, and receiv'd at

Court with all the joy and magnificence that cou'd be expressed to a young

victor, who was not only returned triumphant, but belov'd like a deity,

than there arriv'd in the port an English ship.

The master of it had often before been in these countries, and was very

well known to Oroonoko, with whom he had traffick'd for slaves, and had

us'd to do the same with his predecessors.

This commander was a man of a finer sort of address and conversation,

better bred, and more engaging, than most of that sort of men are; so that

he seem'd rather never to have been bred out of a Court, than almost all

his life at sea. This captain therefore was always better receiv'd at

Court, than most of the traders to those countries were; and especially by

Oroonoko, who was more civiliz'd, according to the European mode, than any

other had been, and took more delight in the white nations; and, above all,

men of parts and wit. To this captain he sold abundance of his slaves; and

for the favour and esteem he had for him, made him many presents, and

oblig'd him to stay at Court as long as possibly he cou'd. Which the

captain seem'd to take as a very great honour done him, entertaining the

Prince every day with globes and maps, and mathematical discourses and

instruments; eating, drinking, hunting, and living with him with so much

familiarity, that it was not to be doubted but he had gain'd very greatly

upon the heart of this gallant young man. And the captain, in return of all

these mighty favours, besought the Prince to honour his vessel with his

presence some day or other at dinner, before he shou'd set sail; which he

condescended to accept, and appointed his day. The captain, on his part,

fail'd not to have all things in a readiness, in the most magnificent order

he cou'd possibly; and the day being come, the captain, in his boat, richly

adorn'd with carpets and velvet cushions, row'd to the shore to receive the

Prince; with another long-boat, where was plac'd all his musick and

trumpets, with which Oroonoko was extremely delighted; who met him on the

shore, attended by his French Governor, Jamoan, Aboan, and about a hundred

of the noblest of the youths of the Court; and after they had first carry'd

the Prince on board, the boats fetch'd the rest off; where they found a

very splendid treat, with all sorts of fine wines; and were as well

entertain'd, as 'twas possible in such a place to be.

The Prince having drunk hard of punch, and several sorts of wine, as did

all the rest, (for great care was taken they shou'd want nothing of that

part of the entertainment) was very merry, and in great admiration of the

ship, for he had never been in one before; so that he was curious of

beholding every place where he decently might descend. The rest, no less

curious, who were not quite overcome with drinking, rambled at their

pleasure fore and aft, as their fancies guided 'em; so that the captain,

who had well laid his design before, gave the word, and seiz'd on all his

guests; they clapping great irons suddenly on the Prince, when he was

leap'd down into the hold, to view that part of the vessel, and locking him

fast down, secur'd him. The same treachery was used to all the rest; and

all in one instant, in several places of the ship, were lash'd fast in

irons, and betray'd to slavery. That great design over, they set all hands

at work to hoist sail; and with as treacherous as fair a wind they made

from the shore with this innocent and glorious prize, who thought of

nothing less than such an entertainment.

Some have commended this act, as brave in the captain; but I will spare my

sense of it, and leave it to my reader to judge as he pleases. It may be

easily guess'd, in what manner the Prince resented this indignity, who may

be best resembled to a lion taken in a toil; so he rag'd, so he struggled

for liberty, but all in vain; and they had so wisely manag'd his fetters,

that he could not use a hand in his defence, to quit himself of a life that

wou'd by no means endure slavery; nor cou'd he move from the place where he

was ty'd, to any solid part of the ship, against which he might have beat

his head, and have finish'd his disgrace that way. So that being deprived

of all other means, he resolv'd to perish for want of food; and pleas'd at

last with that thought, and toil'd and tir'd by rage and indignation, he

laid himself down, and sullenly resolv'd upon dying, and refused all things

that were brought him.

This did not a little vex the captain, and the more so, because he found

almost all of 'em of the same humour; so that the loss of so many brave

slaves, so tall and goodly to behold, would have been very considerable; he

therefore order'd one to go from him (for he wou'd not be seen himself) to

Oroonoko, and to assure him, he was afflicted for having rashly done so

unhospitable a deed, and which could not be now remedy'd, since they were

far from shore; but since he resented it in so high a nature, he assur'd

him he would revoke his resolution, and set both him and his friends a-

shore on the next land they should touch at; and of this the messenger gave

him his oath, provided he would resolve to live. And Oroonoko, whose honour

was such, as he never had violated a word in his life himself, much less a

solemn asseveration, believ'd in an instant what this man said; but

reply'd, he expected, for a confirmation of this, to have his shameful

fetters dismiss'd. This demand was carried to the captain; who returned him

answer, that the offence had been so great which he had put upon the

Prince, that he durst not trust him with liberty while he remain'd in the

ship, for fear, lest by a valour natural to him, and a revenge that would

animate that valour, he might commit some outrage fatal to himself, and the

King his master, to whom the vessel did belong. To this Oroonoko reply'd,

He would engage his honour to behave himself in all friendly order and

manner, and obey the command of the captain, as he was lord of the King's

vessel, and General of those men under his command.

This was deliver'd to the still doubting captain, who could not resolve to

trust a heathen, he said, upon his parole, a man that had no sense or

notion of the god that he worshipp'd. Oroonoko then reply'd, He was very

sorry to hear that the captain pretended to the knowledge and worship of

any gods, who had taught him no better principles, than not to credit as he

would be credited. But they told him, the difference of their faith

occasion'd that distrust; for the captain had protested to him upon the

word of a Christian, and sworn in the name of a great God: which if he

should violate, he must expect eternal torments in the world to come. "Is

that all the obligations he has to be just to his oath?" reply'd Oroonoko.

"Let him know, I swear by my honour; which to violate, would not only

render me contemptible and despised by all brave and honest men, and so

give myself perpetual pain, but it would be eternally offending and

displeasing to all mankind; harming, betraying, circumventing, and

outraging all men. But punishments hereafter are suffer'd by one's self;

and the world takes no cognizance whether this God has revenged 'em or not,

'tis done so secretly, and deferr'd so long; while the man of no honour

suffers every moment the scorn and contempt of the honester world, and dies

every day ignominiously in his fame, which is more valuable than life. I

speak not this to move belief, but to shew you how you mistake, when you

imagine, that he who will violate his honour, will keep his word with his

gods." So, turning from him with a disdainful smile, he refused to answer

him, when he urged him to know what answer he should carry back to his

captain; so that he departed without saying any more.

The captain pondering and consulting what to do, it was concluded, that

nothing but Oroonoko's liberty would encourage any of the rest to eat,

except the French-man, whom the captain could not pretend to keep prisoner,

but only told him, he was secured, because he might act something in favour

of the Prince; but that he should be freed as soon as they came to land. So

that they concluded it wholly necessary to free the Prince from his irons,

that he might shew himself to the rest; that they might have an eye upon

him, and that they could not fear a single man.

This being resolv'd, to make the obligation the greater, the captain

himself went to Oroonoko; where, after many compliments, and assurances of

what he had already promis'd, he receiving from the Prince his parole, and

his hand, for his good behaviour, dismiss'd his irons, and brought him to

his own cabin; where, after having treated and repos'd him a while, (for he

had neither eat nor slept in four days before) he besought him to visit

those obstinate people in chains, who refus'd all manner of sustenance; and

entreated him to oblige 'em to eat, and assure 'em of their liberty the

first opportunity.

Oroonoko, who was too generous not to give credit to his words, shew'd

himself to his people, who were transported with excess of joy at the sight

of their darling Prince; falling at his feet, and kissing and embracing

'em; believing, as some divine oracle, all he assur'd 'em. But he besought

'em to bear their chains with that bravery that became those whom he had

seen act so nobly in arms; and that they could not give him greater proofs

of their love and friendship, since 'twas all the security the captain (his

friend) could have against the revenge, he said, they might possibly justly

take for the injuries sustain'd by him. And they all, with one accord,

assur'd him, that they cou'd not suffer enough, when it was for his repose

and safety.

After this, they no longer refus'd to eat, but took what was brought 'em,

and were pleas'd with their captivity, since by it they hoped to redeem the

Prince, who, all the rest of the voyage, was treated with all the respect

due to his birth, tho nothing could divert his melancholy; and he wou'd

often sigh for Imoinda, and think this a punishment due to his misfortune,

in having left that noble maid behind him, that fatal night, in the Otan,

when he fled to the camp

Possess'd with a thousand thoughts of past joys with this fair young

person, and a thousand griefs for her eternal loss, he endur'd a tedious

voyage, and at last arriv'd at the mouth of the River of Surinam, a colony

belonging to the King of England, and where they were to deliver some part

of their slaves. There the merchants and gentlemen of the country going on

board, to demand those lots of slaves they had already agreed on; and

amongst those, the overseers of those plantations where I then chanc'd to

be. The captain, who had given the word, order'd his men to bring up those

noble slaves in fetters, whom I have spoken of; and having put 'em, some in

one, and some in other lots, with women and children (which they call

pickaninies) they sold 'em off, as slaves to several merchants and

gentlemen; not putting any two in one lot, because they would separate 'em

far from each other; nor daring to trust 'em together, lest rage and

courage should put em upon contriving some great action, to the ruin of the

colony.

Oroonoko was first seiz'd on, and sold to our overseer, who had the first

lot, with seventeen more of all sorts and sizes, but not one of quality

with him. When he saw this, he found what they meant; for, as I said, he

understood English pretty well; and being wholly unarm'd and defenceless,

so as it was in vain to make any resistance, he only beheld the captain

with a look all fierce and disdainful, upbraiding him with eyes that forc'd

blushes on his guilty cheeks, he only cry'd in passing over the side of the

ship: "Farewell, sir, 'tis worth my sufferings to gain so true a knowledge,

both of you, and of your gods, by whom you swear." And desiring those that

held him to forbear their pains, and telling 'em he would make no

resistance, he cry'd, "Come, my fellow-slaves, let us descend, and see if

we can meet with more honour and honesty in the next world we shall touch

upon." So he nimbly leapt into the boat, and shewing no more concern,

suffer'd himself to be row'd up the river, with his seventeen companions.

The gentleman that bought him was a young Cornish gentleman, whose name was

Trefry; a man of great wit, and fine learning, and was carry'd into those

parts by the Lord --, Governour, to manage all his affairs. He reflecting

on the last words of Oroonoko to the captain, and beholding the richness of

his vest, no sooner came into the boat, but he fix'd his eyes on him; and

finding something so extraordinary in his face, his shape and mien, a

greatness of look, and haughtiness in his air, and finding he spoke

English, had a great mind to be inquiring into his quality and fortune;

which, though Oroonoko endeavour'd to hide, by only confessing he was above

the rank of common slaves, Trefry soon found he was yet something greater

than he confess'd; and from that moment began to conceive so vast an esteem

for him, that he ever after lov'd him as his dearest brother, and showed

him all the civilities due to so great a man.

Trefry was a very good mathematician, and a linguist; could speak French

and Spanish; and in the three days they remain'd in the boat, (for so long

were they going from the ship to the plantation) he entertain'd Oroonoko so

agreeably with his art and discourse, that he was no less pleas'd with

Trefry, than he was with the Prince; and he thought himself, at least,

fortunate in this, that since he was a slave, as long as he would suffer

himself to remain so, he had a man of so excellent wit and parts for a

master. So that before they had finish'd their voyage up the river, he made

no scruple of declaring to Trefry all his fortunes, and most part of what I

have here related, and put himself wholly into the hands of his new friend,

who he found resented all the injuries were done him, and was charm'd with

all the greatnesses of his actions; which were recited with that modesty,

and delicate sense, as wholly vanquished him, and subdu'd him to his

interest. And he promised him, on his word and honour, he wou'd find the

means to re-conduct him to his own country again; assuring him, he had a

perfect abhorrence of so dishonourable an action; and that he would sooner

have dy'd, than have been the author of such a perfidy. He found the Prince

was very much concerned to know what became of his friends, and how they

took their slavery; and Trefry promised to take care about the inquiring

after their condition, and that he should have an account of'em.

Though, as Oroonoko afterwards said, he had little reason to credit the

words of a Backearary; yet he knew not why, but he saw a kind of sincerity,

and awful truth in the face of Trefry; he saw honesty in his eyes, and he

found him wise and witty enough to understand honour: for it was one of his

maxims, A man of wit cou'd not be a knave or villain.

In their passage up the river, they put in at several houses for

refreshment; and ever when they landed, numbers of people would flock to

behold this man: not but their eyes were daily entertain'd with the sight

of slaves; but the fame of Oroonoko was gone before him, and all people

were in admiration of his beauty. Besides, he had a rich habit on, in which

he was taken, so different from the rest, and which the captain cou'd not

strip him of, because he was forc'd to surprize his person in the minute he

sold him. When he found his habit made him liable, as he thought, to be

gazed at the more, he begged Trefry to give him something more befitting a

slave, which he did, and took of his robes: nevertheless, he shone thro

all, and his osenbrigs (a sort of brown Holland suit he had on) cou'd not

conceal the graces of his looks and mien; and he had no less admirers than

when he had his dazling habit on. The Royal Youth appear'd in spight of the

slave, and people cou'd not help treating him after a different manner,

without designing it. As soon as they approached him, they venerated and

esteemed him; his eyes insensibly commanded respect, and his behaviour

insinuated it into every soul. So that there was nothing talked of but this

young and gallant slave, even by those who yet knew not that he was a

prince.

I ought to tell you that the Christians never buy any slaves but they give

'em some name of their own, their native ones being likely very barbarous,

and hard to pronounce; so that Mr. Trefry gave Oroonoko that of Caesar;

which name will live in that country as long as that (scarce more) glorious

one of the great Roman: for 'tis most evident he wanted no part of the

personal courage of that Caesar, and acted things as memorable, had they

been d one in some part of the world replenished with people and

historians, that might have given him his due. But his misfortune was, to

fall in an obscure world, that afforded only a female pen to celebrate his

fame; though I doubt not but it had lived from others' endeavours, if the

Dutch, who immediately after his time took that country, had not killed,

banished and dispersed all those that were capable of giving the world this

great man's life, much better than I have done. And Mr. Trefry, who

designed it, dy'd before he began it, and bemoan'd himself for not having

undertaken it in time.

For the future therefore I must call Oroonoko; since by that name only he

was known in our western world, and by that name he was received on shore

at Parham-House, where he was destin'd a slave. But if the king himself(God

bless him) had come ashore there cou'd not have been greater expectation by

all the whole plantation, and those neighbouring ones, than was on ours at

that time: and he was received more like a governor than a slave:

notwithstanding, as the custom was, they assigned him his portion of land,

his house and his business up in the plantation. But as it was more for

form, than any design to put him to his task, he endured no more of the

slave but the name, and remain'd some days in the house, receiving all

visits that were made him, without stirring towards that part of the

plantation where the negroes were.

At last, he wou'd needs go view his land, his house and the business

assigned him. But he no sooner came to the houses of the slaves, which are

like a little town by itself, the negroes all having left work, but they

all came forth to behold him, and found he was that Prince who had, at

several times, sold most of'em to these parts; and from a veneration they

pay to great men, especially if they know 'em, and from the surprize and

awe they had at the sight of him, they all cast themselves at his feet,

crying out, in their language, "Live, O King! Long live, O King!" and

kissing his feet, paid him even divine homage.

Several English gentlemen were with him, and what Mr. Trefry had told 'em

was here confirm'd; of which he himself before had no other witness than

Caesar himself But he was infinitely glad to find his grandeur confirmed by

the adoration of all the slaves.

Caesar, troubled with their over-joy, and over-ceremony, besought 'em to

rise, and to receive him as their fellow-slave; assuring them he was no

better. At which they set up with one accord a most terrible and hideous

mourning and condoling, which he and the English had much ado to appease:

but at last they prevailed with 'em, and they prepared all their barbarous

musick, and every one killed and dress'd something of his own stock (for

every family has their land apart on which, at their leisure-times, they

breed all eatable things) and clubbing it together, made a most magnificent

supper, inviting their Grandee Captain, their Prince, to honour it with his

presence; which he did, and several English with him, where they all waited

on him, some playing, others dancing before him all the time, according to

the manners of their several nations, and with unweary'd industry

endeavouring to please and delight him.

While they sat at meat, Mr. Trefry told Caesar, that most of these young

slaves were undone in love with a fine she-slave, whom they had had about

six months on their land; the Prince, who never heard the name of love

without a sigh, nor any mention of it without the curiosity of examining

further into that tale, which of all discourses was most agreeable to him,

asked, how they came to be so unhappy as to be all undone for one fair

slave? Trefry, who was naturally amorous, and lov'd to talk of love as well

as anybody, proceeded to tell him, they had the most charming black that

ever was beheld on their plantation, about fifteen or sixteen years old, as

he guess'd; that for his part he had done nothing but sigh for her ever

since she came; and that all the white beauties he had seen, never charm'd

him so absolutely as this fine creature had done; and that no man, of any

nation, ever beheld her, that did not fall in love with her; and that she

had all the slaves perpetually at her feet; and the whole country resounded

with the fame of Clemene, for so (said he) we have christen'd her: but she

denies us all with such a noble disdain, that 'tis a miracle to see, that

she who can give such eternal desires, should herself be all ice and

unconcern. She is adorn'd with the most graceful modesty that ever

beautify'd youth; the softest sigher - that, if she were capable of love,

one would swear she languished for some absent happy man; and so retired,

as if she fear'd a rape even from the God of Day, or that the breezes would

steal kisses from her delicate mouth. Her task of work, some sighing lover

every day makes it his petition to perform for her; which she accepts

blushing, and with reluctancy, for fear he will ask her a look for a

recompence, which he dares not presume to hope: so great an awe she strikes

into the hearts of her admirers. "I do not wonder," reply'd the Prince,

"that Clemene should refuse slaves, being, as you say, so beautiful; but

wonder how she escapes those that can entertain her as you can do; or why,

being your slave, you do not oblige her to yield?" "I confess," said

Trefry, "when I have, against her will, entertained her with love so long,

as to be transported with my passion even above decency, I have been ready

to make use of those advantages of strength and force nature has given me.

But, oh! she disarms me with that modesty and weeping, so tender and so

moving, that I retire, and thank my stars she overcame me." The company

laugh'd at his civility to a slave, and Caesar only applauded the nobleness

of his passion and nature, since that slave might be noble, or, what was

better, have true notions of honour and vertue in her. Thus passed they

this night, after having received from the slaves all imaginable respect

and obedience.

The next day, Trefry ask'd Caesar to walk when the heat was allay'd, and

designedly carry'd him by the cottage of the fair slave; and told him she

whom he spoke of last night lived there retir'd: "But," says he, "I would

not wish you to approach; for I am sure you will be in love as soon as you

behold her." Caesar assured him, he was proof against all the charms of

that sex; and that if he imagined his heart could be so perfidious to love

again after Imoinda, he believed he should tear it from his bosom. They had

no sooner spoken, but a little shock-dog, that Clemene had presented her,

which she took great delight in, ran out; and she, not knowing anybody was

there, ran to get it in again, and bolted out on those who were just

speaking of her: when seeing them, she would have run in again, but Trefry

caught her by the hand, and cry'd, "Clemene, however you fly a lover, you

ought to pay some respect to this stranger," pointing to Caesar. But she,

as if she had resolved never to raise her eyes to the face of a man again,

bent 'em the more to the earth, when he spoke, and gave the Prince the

leisure to look the more at her. There needed no long gazing, or

consideration, to examine who this fair creature was; he soon saw Imoinda

all over her; in a minute he saw her face, her shape, her air, her modesty,

and all that call'd forth his soul with joy at his eyes, and left his body

destitute of almost life: it stood without motion, and for a minute knew

not that it had a being; and, I believe, he had never come to himself, so

oppressed he was with over-joy, if he had not met with this allay, that he

perceived Imoinda fall dead in the hands of Trefry. This awaken'd him, and

he ran to her aid, and caught her in his arms, where by degrees she came to

herself; and 'tis needless to tell with what transports, what exstasies of

joy, they both a while beheld each other, without speaking; then snatched

each other to their arms; then gazed again, as if they still doubted

whether they possess'd the blessing they grasped: but when they recover'd

their speech, it is not to be imagin'd what tender things they express'd to

each other; wondering what strange fate had brought them again together.

They soon inform'd each other of their fortunes, and equally bewail'd their

fate; but at the same time they mutually protested, that even fetters and

slavery were soft and easy, and would be supported with joy and pleasure,

while they cou'd be so happy to possess each other, and to be able to make

good their vows. Caesar swore he disdained the empire of the world, while

he could behold his Imoinda; and she despised grandeur and pomp, those

vanities of her sex, when she could gaze on Oroonoko. He ador'd the very

cottage where she resided, and said, That little inch of the world would

give him more happiness than all the universe cou'd do; and she vow'd it

was a palace, while adorned with the presence of Oroonoko.

Trefry was infinitely pleased with this novel, and found this Clemene was

the fair mistress of whom Caesar had before spoke; and was not a little

satisfy'd, that heaven was so kind to the Prince as to sweeten his

misfortunes by so lucky an accident; and leaving the lovers to themselves,

was impatient to come down to Parham-House (which was on the same

plantation) to give me an account of what had hapned. I was as impatient to

make these lovers a visit, having already made a friendship with Caesar,

and from his own mouth learned what I have related; which was confirmed by

his Frenchman, who was set on shore to seek his fortune, and of whom they

cou'd not make a slave, because a Christian; and he came daily to Parham-

Hill to see and pay his respects to his pupil Prince. So that concerning

and interesting myself in all that related to Caesar, whom I had assured of

liberty as soon as the Governour arrived, I hasted presently to the place

where these lovers were, and was infinitely glad to find this beautiful

young slave (who had already gain'd all our esteems, for her modesty and

extraordinary prettiness) to be the same I had heard Caesar speak so much

of One may imagine then we paid her a treble respect; and tho from her

being carved in fine flowers and birds all over her body, we took her to be

of quality before, yet when we knew Clemene was Imoinda, we could not

enough admire her.

I had forgot to tell you, that those who are nobly born of that country,

are so delicately cut and raised all over the forepart of the trunk of

their bodies, that it looks as if it were japan'd, the works being raised

like high point round the edges of the flowers. Some are only carved with a

little flower, or bird, at the sides of the temples, as was Caesar; and

those who are so carved over the body, resemble our antient Picts that are

figur'd in the chronicles, but these carvings are more delicate.

From that happy day Caesar took Clemene for his wife, to the general joy of

all people; and there was as much magnificence as the country could afford

at the celebration of this wedding: and in a very short time after she

conceived with child, which made Caesar even adore her, knowing he was the

last of his great race. This new accident made him more impatient of

liberty, and he was every day treating with Trefry for his and Clemene's

liberty, and offer'd either gold, or a vast quantity of slaves, which

should be paid before they let him go, provided he could have any security

that he should go when his ransom was paid. They fed him from day to day

with promises, and delayed him till the Lord-Governour should come; so that

he began to suspect them of falshood, and that they would delay him till

the time of his wife's delivery, and make a slave of the child too; for all

the breed is theirs to whom the parents belong. This thought made him very

uneasy, and his sullenness gave them some jealousies of him; so that I was

obliged, by some persons who fear'd a mutiny (which is very fatal sometimes

in those colonies that abound so with slaves, that they exceed the whites

in vast numbers), to discourse with Caesar, and to give him all the

satisfaction I possibly could. They knew he and Clemene were scarce an hour

in a day from my lodgings; that they eat with me, and that I oblig'd them

in all things I was capable. I entertained them with the lives of the

Romans, and great men, which charmed him to my company; and her, with

teaching her all the pretty works that I was mistress of, and telling her

stories of nuns, and endeavouring to bring her to the knowledg of the true

God. But of all discourses, Caesar liked that the worst, and would never be

reconciled to our notions of the trinity, of which he ever made a jest; it

was a riddle he said would turn his brain to conceive, and one cou'd not

make him understand what faith was. However, these conversations fail'd not

altogether so well to divert him, that he liked the company of us women

much above the men, for he could not drink, and he is but an ill companion

in that country that cannot. So that obliging him to love us very well, we

had all the liberty of speech with him, especially myself, whom he call'd

his Great Mistress; and indeed my word would go a great way with him. For

these reasons I had opportunity to take notice of him, that he was not well

pleased of late, as he used to be; was more retired and thoughtful; and

told him, I took it ill he shou'd suspect we wou'd break our words with

him, and not permit both him and Clemene to return to his own kingdom,

which was not so long a way, but when he was once on his voyage he wou'd

quickly arrive there. He made me some answers that shew'd a doubt in him,

which made me ask, what advantage it would be to doubt? It would but give

us a fear of him, and possibly compel us to treat him so as I should be

very loth to behold; that is, it might occasion his confinement. Perhaps

this was not so luckily spoke of me, for I perceived he resent'd that word,

which I strove to soften again in vain: however, he assur'd me, that

whatsoever resolutions he should take, he would act nothing upon the white

people; and as for myself, and those upon that plantation where he was, he

would sooner forfeit his eternal liberty, and life it self, than lift his

hand against his greatest enemy on that place. He besought me to suffer no

fears upon his account, for he could do nothing that honour should not

dictate; but he accus'd himself for having suffer'd slavery so long; yet he

charg'd that weakness on love alone, who was capable of making him neglect

even glory it self; and, for which, now he reproaches himself every moment

of the day. Much more to this effect he spoke, with an air impatient enough

to make me know he would not be long in bondage; and though he suffer'd

only the name of a slave, and had nothing of the toil and labour of one,

yet that was sufficient to render him uneasy; and he had been too long

idle, who us'd to be always in action, and in arms. He had a spirit all

rough and fierce, and that could not be tam'd to lazy rest: and though all

endeavours were us'd to exercise himself in such actions and sports as this

world afforded, as running, wrestling, pitching the bar, hunting and

fishing, chasing and killing tygers of a monstrous size, which this

continent affords in abundance; and wonderful snakes, such as Alexander is

reported to have encounter'd at the river of Amazons, and which Caesar took

great delight to overcome; yet these were not actions great enough for his

large soul, which was still panting after more renown'd actions.

Before I parted that day with him, I got, with much-ado, a promise from him

to rest yet a little longer with patience, and wait the coming of the Lord-

Governour, who was every day expected on our shore. He assur'd me he would,

and this promise he desired me to know was given perfectly in complaisance

to me, in whom he had an intire confidence.

After this, I neither thought it convenient to trust him much out of our

view, nor did the country, who fear'd him; but with one accord it was

advis'd to treat him fairly, and oblige him to remain within such a

compass, and that he should be permitted, as seldom as could be, to go up

to the plantations of the negroes; or, if he did, to be accompany'd by some

that should be rather, in appearance, attendants than spies. This care was

for some time taken, and Caesar look'd upon it as a mark of extraordinary

respect, and was glad his discontent had oblig'd 'em to be more observant

to him; he received new assurance from the overseer, which was confirmed to

him by the opinion of all the gentlemen of the country, who made tneir

court to him. During this time that we had his company more frequently than

hitherto we had had, it may not be unpleasant to relate to you the

diversions we entertain'd him with, or rather he us.

My stay was to be short in that country; because my father dy'd at sea, and

never arriv'd to possess the honour design'd him, (which was Lieutenant-

General of six-and-thirty islands, besides the continent of Surinam) nor

the advantages he hop'd to reap by them: so that, though we were oblig'd to

continue on our voyage, we did not intend to stay upon the place. Though,

in a word, I must say thus much of it; that certainly had his late Majesty,

of sacred memory, but seen and known what a vast and charming world he had

been master of in that continent, he would never have parted so easily with

it to the Dutch. 'Tis a continent, whose vast extent was never yet known,

and may contain more noble earth than all the universe beside; for, they

say, it reaches from east to west one way as far as China, and another to

Peru. It affords all things both for beauty and use; 'tis there eternal

spring, always the very months of April, May, and June; the shades are

perpetual, the trees bearing at once all degrees of leaves, and fruit, from

blooming buds to ripe autumn: groves of oranges, lemons, citrons, figs,

nutmegs, and noble aromaticks, continually bearing their fragrancies: the

trees appearing all like nosegays, adorn'd with flowers of different kinds;

some are all white, some purple, some scarlet, some blue, some yellow;

bearing at the same time ripe fruit, and blooming young, or producing every

day new. The very wood of all these trees has an intrinsick value, above

common timber; for they are, when cut, of different colours, glorious to

behold, and bear a price considerable, to inlay withal. Besides this, they

yield rich balm, and gums; so that we make our candles of such an aromatick

substance, as does not only give a sufficient light, but as they burn, they

cast their perfumes all about. Cedar is the common firing, and all the

houses are built with it. The very meat we eat, when set on the table, if

it be native, I mean of the country, perfumes the whole room; especially a

little beast called an Armadilly, a thing which I can liken to nothing so

well as a rhinoceros; 'tis all in white armour, so jointed, that it moves

as well in it, as if it had nothing on. This beast is about the bigness of

a pig of six weeks old. But it were endless to give an account of all the

divers wonderful and strange things that country affords, and which he took

a great delight to go in search of; tho those adventures are oftentimes

fatal, and at least dangerous. But while we had Caesar in our company on

these designs, we fear'd no harm, nor suffer d any.

As soon as r came into the country, the best house in it was presented me,

call'd St. John's Hill. It stood on a vast rock of white marble, at the

foot of which the river ran a vast depth down, and not to be descended on

that side; the little waves still dashing and washing the foot of this

rock, made the softest murmurs and purlings in the world; and the opposite

bank was adorn'd with such vast quantities of different flowers eternally

blowing, and every day and hour new, fenc'd behind 'em with lofty trees of

a thousand rare forms and colours, that the prospect was the most ravishing

that fancy can create. On the edge of this white rock, towards the river,

was a walk, or grove, of orange and lemon-trees, about half the length of

the Mall here, whose flowery and fruit-bearing branches met at the top, and

hinder'd the sun, whose rays are very fierce there, from entering a beam

into the grove; and the cool air that came from the river made it not only

fit to entertain people in, at all the hottest hours of the day, but

refresh'd the sweet blossoms, and made it always sweet and charming; and

sure, the whole globe of the world cannot shew so delightful a place as

this grove was: not all the gardens of boasted Italy can produce a shade to

out-vie this, which nature has join'd with art to render so exceeding fine;

and 'tis a marvel to see how such vast trees, as big as English oaks, could

take footing on so solid a rock, and in so little earth as cover'd that

rock. But all things by nature there are rare, delightful, and wonderful.

But to our sports.

Sometimes we would go surprizing, and in search of young tygers in their

dens, watching when the old ones went forth to forage for prey: and

oftentimes we have been in great danger, and have fled apace for our lives,

when surprized by the dams. But once, above all other times, we went on

this design, and Caesar was with us; who had no sooner stolen a young tyger

from her nest, but going off, we encounter'd the dam, bearing a buttock of

a cow, which she had torn off with her mighty paw, and going with it

towards her den. We had only four women, Caesar, and an English gentleman,

brother to Harry Martin, the great Oliverian; we found there was no

escaping this enraged and ravenous beast. However, we women fled as fast as

we could from it; but our heels had not saved our lives, if Caesar had not

laid down her cub, when he found the tyger quit her prey to make the more

speed towards him; and taking Mr. Martin's sword, desired him to stand

aside, or follow the ladies. He obey'd him; and Caesar met this monstrous

beast of mighty size, and vast limbs, who came with open jaws upon him;

fixing his awful stern eyes full upon those of the beast, and putting

himself into a very steddy and good aiming posture of defence, ran his

sword quite through her breast, down to her very heart, home to the hilt of

the sword. The dying beast stretch'd forth her paw, and going to grasp his

thigh, surpriz'd with death in that very moment, did him no other harm than

fixing her long nails in his flesh very deep, feebly wounded him, but could

not grasp the flesh to tear off any. When he had done this, he hollow'd to

us to return; which, after some assurance of his victory, we did, and found

him lugging out the sword from the bosom of the tyger, who was laid in her

blood on the ground. He took up the cub, and with an unconcern that had

nothing of the joy or gladness of victory, he came and laid the whelp at my

feet. We all extremely wonder'd at his daring, and at the bigness of the

beast, which was about the height of a heifer, but of mighty great and

strong limbs.

Another time, being in the woods, he killed a tyger, that had long infested

that part, and borne away abundance of sheep and oxen, and other things,

that were for the support of those to whom they belong'd. Abundance of

people assail'd this beast, some affirming they had shot her with several

bullets quite through the body at several times; and some swearing they

shot her through the very heart; and they believ'd she was a devil, rather

than a mortal thing. Caesar had often said, he had a mind to encounter this

monster, and spoke with several gentlemen who had attempted her; one

crying, I shot her with so many poison'd arrows, another with his gun in

this part of her, and another in that; so that he remarking all the places

where she was shot, fancy'd still he should overcome her, by giving her

another sort of a wound than any had yet done; and one day said (at the

table) "What trophies and garlands, ladies, will you make me, if I bring

you home the heart of this ravenous beast that eats up all your lambs and

pigs?" We all promis'd he should be rewarded at our hands. So taking a bow,

which he chose out of a great many, he went up into the wood, with two

gentlemen, where he imagin'd this devourer to be. They had not past very

far into it when they heard her voice, growling and grumbling, as if she

were pleas'd with something she was doing. When they came in view, they

found her muzzling in the belly of a new ravish'd sheep, which she had torn

open; and seeing herself approach'd, she took fast hold of her prey with

her fore paws, and set a very fierce raging look on Caesar, without

offering to approach him, for fear at the same time of losing what she had

in possession. So that Caesar remain'd a good while, only taking aim, and

getting an opportunity to shoot her where he design'd. 'Twas some time

before he could accomplish it; and to wound her, and not kill her, would

but have enrag'd her the more, and endanger'd him. He had a quiver of

arrows at his side, so that if one fail'd, he could be supply'd. At last,

retiring a little, he gave her opportunity to eat, for he found she was

ravenous, and fell to as soon as she saw him retire, being more eager of

her prey, than of doing new mischiefs; when he going softly to one side of

her, and hiding his person behind certain herbage, that grew high and

thick, he took so good aim that, as he intended he shot her just into the

eye, and the arrow was sent with so good a will, and so sure a hand, that

it stuck in her brain, and made her caper, and become mad for a moment or

two; but being seconded by another arrow, she fell dead upon the prey.

Caesar cut her open with a knife, to see where those wounds were that had

been reported to him, and why she did not die of 'em. But I shall now

relate a thing that, possibly, will find no credit among men; because 'tis

a notion commonly receiv'd with us, that nothing can receive a wound in the

heart, and live. But when the heart of this courageous animal was taken

out, there were seven bullets of lead in it, the wound seam'd up with great

scars, and she liv'd with the bullets a great while, for it was long since

they were shot. This heart the conqueror brought up to us, and 'twas a very

great curiosity, which all the country came to see; and which gave Caesar

occasion of many fine discourses of accidents in war, and strange escapes.

At other times he would go a fishing; and discoursing on that diversion, he

found we had in that country a very strange fish, call'd a Numb-Eel, (an

eel of which r have eaten) that while it is alive, it has a quality so

cold, that those who are angling, though with a line of ever so great a

length, with a rod at the end of it, it shall in the same minute the bait

is touch'd by this eel, seize him or her that holds the rod with a

numbness, that shall deprive 'em of sense for a while; and some have fallen

into the water, and others drop'd, as dead, on the banks of the rivers

where they stood, as soon as this fish touches the bait. Caesar us'd to

laugh at this, and believ'd it impossible a man could lose his force at the

touch of a fish; and could not understand that philosophy, that a cold

quality should be of that nature; however, he had a great curiosity to try

whether it would have the same effect on him it had on others, and often

try'd, but in vain. At last, the sought-for fish came to the bait, as he

stood angling on the bank; and instead of throwing away the rod, or giving

it a sudden twitch out of the water, whereby he might have caught both the

eel, and have dismiss'd the rod, before it could have too much power over

him; for experiment-sake, he grasp'd it but the harder, and fainting, fell

into the river; and being still possess'd of the rod, the tide carry'd him,

senseless as he was, a great way, till an Indian boat took him up; and

perceiv'd when they touch'd him, a numbness seize them, and by that knew

the rod was in his hand; which with a paddle, (that is, a short oar) they

struck away, and snatcht it into the boat, eel and all. If Caesar was

almost dead, with the effect of this fish, he was more so with that of the

water where he had remain'd the space of going a league, and they found

they had much ado to bring him back to life; but at last they did, and

brought him home, where he was in a few hours well recover'd and refresh'd,

and not a little asham'd to find he should be overcome by an eel, and that

all the people, who heard his defiance, would laugh at him. But we chear'd

him up; and he being convinc'd, we had the eel at supper, which was a

quarter of an ell about, and most delicate meat; and was of the more value,

since it cost so dear as almost the life of so gallant a man.

About this time we were in many mortal fears, about some disputes the

English had with the Indians; so that we could scarce trust ourselves,

without great numbers, to go to any Indian towns, or place where they

abode, for fear they should fall upon us, as they did immediately after my

coming away; and the place being in the possession of the Dutch, they us'd

them not so civilly as the English; so that they cut in pieces all they

could take, getting into houses, and hanging up the mother, and all her

children about her; and cut a footman I left behind me, all in joints, and

nail'd him to trees.

This feud began while I was there: so that I lost half the satisfaction I

propos'd, in not seeing and visiting the Indian towns. But one day,

bemoaning of our misfortunes on this account Caesar told us, we need not

fear, for if we had a mind to go, he would undertake to be our guard. Some

would, but most would not venture. About eighteen of us resolv'd, and took

barge, and after eight days, arriv'd near an Indian town. But approaching

it, the hearts of some of our company fail'd; and they would not venture on

shore; so we poll'd, who would, and who would not. For my part, I said, if

Caesar would, I would go. He resolv'd; so did my brother, and my woman, a

maid of good courage. Now none of us speaking the language of the people,

and imagining we should have a half diversion in gazing only; and not

knowing what they said, we took a fisherman that liv'd at the mouth of the

river, who had been a long inhabitant there, and oblig'd him to go with us.

But because he was known to the Indians as trading among 'em, and being, by

long living there, become a perfect Indian in colour, we, who had a mind to

surprize 'em, by making them see something they never had seen (that is,

white people), resolv'd only myself, my brother and woman should go. So

Caesar, the fisherman, and the rest, hiding behind some thick reeds and

flowers that grew in the banks, let us pass on towards the town, which was

on the bank of the river all along. A little distant from the houses, or

huts, we saw some dancing, others busy'd in fetching and carrying of water

from the river. They had no sooner spy'd us, but they set up a loud cry,

that frighted us at first; we thought it had been for those that should

kill us, but it seems it was of wonder and amazement. They were all naked;

and we were dress'd, so as is most commode for the hot countries, very

glittering and rich; so that we appear'd extremely fine; my own hair was

cut short, and r had a taffety cap, with black feathers on my head; my

brother was in a stuff-suit, with silver loops and buttons, and abundance

of green ribbon. This was all infinitely surprizing to them: and because we

saw them stand still till we approach'd 'em, we took heart and advanc'd,

came up to 'em, and offer'd 'em our hands; which they took, and look'd on

us round about, calling still for more company; who came swarming out, all

wondering, and crying out Tepeeme; taking their hair up in their hands, and

spreading it wide to those they call'd out to; as if they would say (as

indeed it signify'd) Numberless Wonders, or not to be recounted, no more

than to number the hair of their heads. By degrees they grew more bold, and

from gazing upon us round, they touch'd us, laying their hands upon all the

features of our faces, feeling our breasts and arms, taking up one

petticoat, then wondering to see another; admiring our shoes and stockings,

but more our garters, which we gave 'em, and they ty'd about their legs,

being lac'd with silver lace at the ends; for they much esteem any shining

things. In fine, we suffer'd 'em to survey us as they pleas'd, and we

thought they never would have done admiring us. When Caesar, and the rest,

saw we were receiv'd with such wonder, they came up to us; and finding the

Indian trader whom they knew, (for 'tis by these fishermen, call'd Indian

traders, we hold a commerce with 'em; for they love not to go far from

home, and we never go to them) when they saw him therefore, they set up a

new joy, and cry'd In their language, "Oh, here's our Tiguamy, and we shall

know whether these things can speak." So advancing to him, some of'em gave

him their hands, and cry'd, "Amora Tiguamy"; which is as much as, How do

you do? or, Welcome, friend; and all, with one din, began to gabble to him,

and ask'd, if we had sense and wit? If we could talk of affairs of life and

war, as they could do? If we could hunt, swim, and do a thousand things

they use? He answer'd them, We could. Then they invited us into their

houses, and dress'd venison and buffalo for us; and going out, gather'd a

leaf of a tree, called a Sarumbo leaf, of six yards long, and spread it on

the ground for a table-cloth; and cutting another in pieces instead of

plates, set us on little low Indian stools, which they cut out of one

entire piece of wood, and paint in a sort of Japan-work. They serve every

one their mess on these pieces of leaves; and it was very good, but too

high-season'd with pepper. When we had eat, my brother and I took out our

flutes, and play'd to 'em, which gave 'em new wonder; and I soon perceiv'd,

by an admiration that is natural to these people, and by the extreme

ignorance and simplicity of 'em, it were not difficult to establish any

unknown or extravagant religion among them, and to impose any notions or

fictions upon 'em. For seeing a kinsman of mine set some paper on fire with

a burning-glass, a trick they had never before seen, they were like to have

ador'd him for a god, and begg'd he would give 'em the characters or

figures of his name, that they might oppose it against winds and storms:

which he did, and they held it up in those seasons, and fancied it had a

charm to conquer them, and kept it like a holy relique. They are very

superstitious, and call'd him the great Peeie, that is, Prophet. They

showed us their Indian Peeie, a youth of about sixteen years old, as

handsom as nature could make a man. They consecrate a beautiful youth from

his infancy, and all arts are used to compleat him in the finest manner,

both in beauty and shape. He is bred to all the little arts and cunning

they are capable of; to all the legerdemain tricks and sleight of hand

whereby he imposes on the rabble, and is both a doctor in physick and

divinity: and by these tricks makes the sick believe he sometimes eases

their pains, by drawing from the afflicted part little serpents, or odd

flies, or worms, or any strange thing: and though they have besides

undoubted good remedies for almost all their diseases, they cure the

patient more by fancy than by medicines, and make themselves feared, loved,

and reverenced. This young Peeie had a very young wife, who seeing my

brother kiss her, came running and kiss'd me. After this they kiss'd one

another, and made it a great jest, it being so novel; and new admiration

and laughing went round the multitude, that they never will forget that

ceremony, never before us'd or known. Caesar had a mind to see and talk

with their war-captains, and we were conducted to one of their houses,

where we beheld several of the great captains, who had been at council. But

so frightful a vision it was to see 'em, no fancy can create; no sad dreams

can represent so dreadful a spectacle. For my part, I took 'em for

hobgoblins, or fiends, rather than men. But however their shapes appear'd,

their souls were very humane and noble; but some wanted their noses, some

their lips, some both noses and lips, some their ears, and others cut

through each cheek, with long slashes, through which their teeth appear'd.

They had several other formidable wounds and scars, or rather dismembrings.

They had Comitias, or little aprons, before 'em, and girdles of cotton,

with their knives naked stuck in it; a bow at their back, and a quiver of

arrows on their thighs; and most had feathers on their heads of divers

colours. They cry'd "Amora Tiguamy" to us at our entrance, and were pleas'd

we said as much to them. They seated us, and gave us drink of the best

sort, and wonder'd as much as the others had done before to see us. Caesar

was marvelling as much at their faces, wondring how they should be all so

wounded in war; he was impatient to know how they all came by those

frightful marks of rage or malice, rather than wounds got in noble battel.

They told us by our interpreter, that when any war was waging, two men,

chosen out by some old captain whose fighting was past, and who could only

teach the theory of war, were to stand in competition for the generalship,

or great war-captain; and being brought before the old judges, now past

labour, they are ask'd, what they dare do to shew they are worthy to lead

an army? When he who is first ask'd, making no reply, cuts off his nose,

and throws it contemptibly on the ground; and the other does something to

himself that he thinks surpasses him, and perhaps deprives himself of lips

and an eye. So they slash on till one gives out, and many have dy'd in this

debate. And it's by a passive valour they shew and prove their activity; a

sort of courage too brutal to be applauded by our black hero; nevertheless,

he express'd his esteem of'em.

In this voyage Caesar begat so good an understanding between the Indians

and the English, that there were no more fears or heart-burnings during our

stay, but we had a perfect, open, and free trade with 'em. Many things

remarkable, and worthy reciting, we met with in this short voyage; because

Caesar made it his business to search out and provide for our

entertainment, especially to please his dearly ador'd Imoinda, who was a

sharer in all our adventures; we being resolv'd to make her chains as easy

as we could, and to compliment the Prince in that manner that most oblig'd

him.

As we were coming up again, we met with some Indians of strange aspects;

that is, of a larger size, and other sort of features than those of our

country. Our Indian slaves, that row'd us, ask'd 'em some questions; but

they could not understand us, but shew'd us a long cotton string, with

several knots on it, and told us, they had been coming from the mountains

so many moons as there were knots: they were habited in skins of a strange

beast, and brought along with 'em bags of gold-dust; which, as well as they

could give us to understand, came streaming in little small channels down

the high mountains, when the rains fell; and offer'd to be the convoy to

anybody, or persons, that would go to the mountains. We carry'd these men

up to Parham, where they were kept till the Lord-Governour came. And

because all the country was mad to be going on this golden adventure, the

Governour, by his letters, commanded (for they sent some of the gold to

him) that a guard should be set at the mouth of the river of Amazons (a

river so call'd, almost as broad as the river of Thames) and prohibited all

people from going up that river, it conducting to those mountains of gold.

But we going off for England before the project was further prosecuted, and

the Governour being drown'd in a hurricane, either the design dy'd, or the

Dutch have the advantage of it. And 'tis to be bemoan'd what his Majesty

lost, by losing that part of America.

Though this digression is a little from my story, however, since it

contains some proofs of the curiosity and daring of this great man, I was

content to omit nothing of his character.

It was thus for some time we diverted him; but now Imoinda began to show

she was with child, and did nothing but sigh and weep for the captivity of

her lord, herself, and the infant yet unborn; and believ'd, if it were so

hard to gain the liberty of two, 'twould be more difficult to get that for

three Her griefs were so many darts in the great heart of Caesar; and

taking his opportunity, one Sunday, when all the whites were overtaken in

drink, as there were abundance of several trades, and slaves for four

years, that inhabited among the negro houses; and Sunday being their day of

debauch, (otherwise they were a sort of spies upon Caesar) he went,

pretending out of goodness to 'em, to feast among 'em, and sent all his

musick, and order'd a great treat for the whole gang, about three hundred

negroes, and about a hundred and fifty were able to bear arms, such as they

had, which were sufficient to do execution, with spirits accordingly. For

the English had none but rusty swords, that no strength could draw from a

scabbard; except the people of particular quality, who took care to oil

'em, and keep 'em in good order. The guns also, unless here and there one,

or those newly carry'd from England, would do no good or harm; for 'tis the

nature of that country to rust and eat up iron, or any metals but gold and

silver. And they are very expert at the bow, which the negroes and Indians

are perfect masters of.

Caesar, having singled out these men from the women and children, made a

harangue to 'em of the miseries and ignominies of slavery; counting up all

their toils and sufferings, under such loads, burdens and drudgeries, as

were fitter for beasts than men; senseless brutes, than human souls. He

told 'em, it was not for days, months or years, but for eternity; there was

no end to be of their misfortunes. They suffer'd not like men, who might

find a glory and fortitude in oppression; but like dogs, that lov'd the

whip and bell, and fawn'd the more they were beaten; that they had lost the

divine quality of men, and were become insensible asses, fit only to bear:

nay, worse; an ass, or dog, or horse, having done his duty, could lie down

in retreat, and rise to work again, and while he did his duty, indur'd no

stripes; but men, villanous, senseless men, such as they, toil'd on all the

tedious work till Black Friday; and then, whether they work'd or not,

whether they were faulty or meriting, they, promiscuously, the innocent

with the guilty, suffer'd the infamous whip, the sordid stripes, from their

fellow-slaves, till their blood trickled from all parts of their body;

blood, whose every drop ought to be revenged with a life of some of those

tyrants that impose it. "And why," said he, "my dear friends and fellow-

sufferers, should we be slaves to an unknown people? Have they vanquished

us nobly in fight? Have they won us in honourable battle? And are we by the

chance of war become their slaves? This wou'd not anger a noble heart; this

would not animate a soldier's soul. No, but we are bought and sold like

apes or monkeys, to be the sport of women, fools and cowards; and the

support of rogues and runagades, that have abandoned their own countries

for rapine, murders, theft and villanies. Do you not hear every day how

they upbraid each other with infamy of life, below the wildest savages? And

shall we render obedience to such a degenerate race, who have no one human

vertue left, to distingush them from the vilest creatures? Will you, I say,

suffer the lash from such hands?" They all reply'd with one accord, "No,

no, no; Caesar has spoke like a great captain, like a great king."

After this he would have proceeded, but was interrupted by a tall negro, of

some more quality than the rest, his name was Tuscan; who bowing at the

feet of Caesar, cried, "My lord, we have listen'd with joy and attention to

what you have said; and, were we only men, would follow so great a leader

through the world. But O! consider we are husbands and parents too, and

have things more dear to us than life; our wives and children, unfit for

travel in those unpassable woods, mountains and bogs. We have not only

difficult lands to overcome, but rivers to wade, and mountains to

encounter; ravenous beasts of prey."

To this Caesar reply'd, that honour was the first principle in nature, that

was to be obey'd; but as no man would pretend to that, without all the acts

of vertue, compassion, charity, love, justice and reason, he found it not

inconsistent with that, to take equal care of their wives and children as

they wou'd of themselves; and that he did not design, when he led them to

freedom, and glorious liberty, that they shou'd leave that better part of

themselves to perish by the hand of the tyrant's whip. But if there were a

woman among them so degenerate from love and vertue, to chuse slavery

before the pursuit of her husband, and with the hazard of her life, to

share with him in his fortunes; that such a one ought to be abandoned, and

left as a prey to the common enemy.

To which they all agreed - and bowed. After this, he spoke of the

impassable woods and rivers; and convinced them, the more danger the more

glory. He told them, that he had heard of one Hannibal, a great captain,

had cut his way through mountains of solid rocks; and should a few shrubs

oppose them, which they could fire before 'em? No, 'twas a trifling excuse

to men resolved to die, or overcome. As for bogs, they are with a little

labour filled and harden'd; and the rivers could be no obstacle, since they

swam by nature, at least by custom, from the first hour of their birth.

That when the children were weary, they must carry them by turns, and the

woods and their own industry wou'd afford them food. To this they all

assented with joy.

Tuscan then demanded, what he would do. He said he would travel towards the

sea, plant a new colony, and defend it by their valour; and when they could

find a ship, either driven by stress of weather, or guided by providence

that way, they wou'd seize it, and make it a prize, till it had transported

them to their own countries: at least they should be made free in his

kingdom, and be esteem'd as his fellow-sufferers, and men that had the

courage and the bravery to attempt, at least, for liberty; and if they dy'd

in the attempt, it would be more brave, than to live in perpetual slavery.

They bow'd and kiss'd his feet at this resolution, and with one accord

vow'd to follow him to death; and that night was appointed to begin their

march. They made it known to their wives, and directed them to tie their

hamaca about their shoulders, and under their arms, like a scarf, and to

lead their children that could go, and carry those that could not. The

wives, who pay an entire obedience to their husbands, obey'd, and stay'd

for them where they were appointed. The men stay'd but to furnish

themselves with what defensive arms they could get; and all met at the

rendezvous, where Caesar made a new encouraging speech to 'em and led 'em

out.

But as they cou'd not march far that night, on Monday early, when the

overseers went to call 'em all together, to go to work, they were extremely

surprized, to find not one upon the place, but all fled with what baggage

they had. You may imagine this news was not only suddenly spread all over

the plantation, but soon reached the neighbouring ones; and we had by noon

about six hundred men, they call the Militia of the country, that came to

assist us in the pursuit of the fugitives. But never did one see so comical

an army march forth to war. The men of any fashion would not concern

themselves, tho it were almost the common cause; for such revoltings are

very ill examples, and have very fatal consequences oftentimes, in many

colonies. But they had a respect for Caesar, and all hands were against the

Parhamites (as they called those of Parham-Plantation) because they did not

in the first place love the Lord-Governour; and secondly, they would have

it, that Caesar was ill-used, and baffled with: and 'tis not impossible but

some of the best in the country was of his council in this flight, and

depriving us of all the slaves; so that they of the better sort wou'd not

meddle in the matter. The Deputy-Governour, of whom I have had no great

occasion to speak, and who was the most fawning fair-tongu'd fellow in the

world, and one that pretended the most friendship to Caesar, was now the

only violent man against him; and though he had nothing, and so need fear

nothing, yet talked and looked bigger than any man. He was a fellow, whose

character is not fit to be mentioned with the worst of the slaves. This

fellow would lead his army forth to meet Caesar, or rather to pursue him.

Most of their arms were of those sort of cruel whips they call "Cat with

nine tails"; some had rusty useless guns for show; others old basket-hilts,

whose blades had never seen the light in this age; and others had long

staffs and clubs. Mr. Trefry went along, rather to be a mediator than a

conqueror in such a battle; for he foresaw and knew, if by fighting they

put the negroes into despair, they were a sort of sullen fellows, that

would drown or kill themselves before they would yield; and he advis'd that

fair means was best. But Byam was one that abounded in his own wit, and

would take his own measures.

It was not hard to find these fugitives; for as they fled, they were forced

to fire and cut the woods before 'em; so that night or day they pursu'd 'em

by the light they made, and by the path they had cleared. But as soon as

Caesar found he was pursu'd, he put himself in a posture of defence,

placing all the women and children in the rear; and himself, with Tuscan by

his side, or next to him, all promising to die or conquer. Encouraged thus,

they never stood to parley, but fell on pell-mell upon the English, and

killed some, and wounded a great many; they having recourse to their whips,

as the best of their weapons. And as they observed no order, they perplexed

the enemy so sorely, with lashing 'em in the eyes; and the women and

children seeing their husbands so treated, being of fearful and cowardly

dispositions, and hearing the English cry out, "Yield, and live! Yield, and

be pardoned!" they all ran in amongst their husbands and fathers, and hung

about them, crying out, "Yield! Yield! and leave Caesar to their revenge,"

that by degrees the slaves abandon'd Caesar, and left him only Tuscan and

his heroick Imoinda, who grown as big as she was, did nevertheless press

near her lord, having a bow and a quiver full of poisoned arrows, which she

managed with such dexterity, that she wounded several, and shot the

Governour into the shoulder; of which wound he had liked to have died, but

that an Indian woman, his mistress, sucked the wound, and cleansed it from

the venom. But however, he stir'd not from the place till he had parley'd

with Caesar, who he found was resolved to die fighting, and would not be

taken; no more would Tuscan or Imoinda. But he, more thirsting after

revenge of another sort, than that of depriving him of life, now made use

of all his art of talking and dissembling, and besought Caesar to yield

himself upon terms which he himself should propose, and should be sacredly

assented to, and kept by him. He told him, it was not that he any longer

fear'd him, or could believe the force of two men, and a young heroine,

could overthrow all them, and with all the slaves now on their side also;

but it was the vast esteem he had for his person, the desire he had to

serve so gallant a man, and to hinder himself from the reproach hereafter,

of having been the occasion of the death of a Prince, whose valour and

magnanimity deserved the empire of the world. He protested to him, he

looked upon his action as gallant and brave, however tending to the

prejudice of his lord and master, who would by it have lost so considerable

a number of slaves; that this flight of his shou'd be looked on as a heat

of youth, and a rashness of a too forward courage, and an unconsider'd

impatience of liberty, and no more; and that he labour'd in vain to

accomplish that which they would effectually perform as soon as any ship

arrived that would touch on his coast: "So that if you will be pleased,"

continued he, "to surrender yourself, all imaginable respect shall be paid

you; and yourself, your wife and child, if it be born here, shall depart

free out of our land. "But Caesar would hear of no composition; though Byam

urged, if he pursued and went on in his design, he would inevitably perish,

either by great snakes, wild beasts or hunger; and he ought to have regard

to his wife, whose condition requir'd ease, and not the fatigues of tedious

travel, where she could not be secured from being devoured. But Caesar told

him there was no faith in the white men, or the gods they ador'd; who

instructed them in principles so false, that honest men could not live

amongst them; though no people professed so much, none performed so little:

that he knew what he had to do when he dealt with men of honour; but with

them a man ought to be eternally on his guard, and never to eat and drink

with Christians, without his weapon of defence in his hand; and, for his

own security, never to credit one word they spoke. As for the rashness and

inconsiderateness of his action, he would confess the Governour is in the

right; and that he was ashamed of what he had done, in endeavouring to make

those free, who were by nature slaves, poor wretched rogues, fit to be used

as Christians' tools; dogs, treacherous and cowardly, fit for such masters;

and they wanted only but to be whipped into the knowledg of the Christian

gods, to be the vilest of all creeping things; to learn to worship such

deities as had not power to make them just, brave, or honest. In fine,

after a thousand things of this nature, not fit here to be recited, he told

Byam he had rather die than live upon the same earth with such dogs. But

Trefry and Byam pleaded and protested together so much, that Trefry

believing the Governour to mean what he said, and speaking very cordially

himself, generously put himself into Caesar's hands, and took him aside,

and persuaded him, even with tears, to live, by surrendring himself, and to

name his conditions. Caesar was overcome by his wit and reasons, and in

consideration of Imoinda; and demanding what he desired, and that it should

be ratify'd by their hands in writing, because he had perceived that was

the common way of contract between man and man amongst the whites; all this

was performed, and Tuscan's pardon was put in, and they surrender'd to the

Governour, who walked peaceably down into the plantation with them, after

giving order to bury their dead. Caesar was very much toil'd with the

bustle of the day, for he had fought like a fury; and what mischief was

done, he and Tuscan performed alone; and gave their enemies a fatal proof,

that they durst do anything, and fear'd no mortal force.

But they were no sooner arrived at the place where all the slaves receive

their punishments of whipping, but they laid hands on Caesar and Tuscan,

faint with heat and toil; and surprizing them, bound them to two several

stakes, and whipped them in a most deplorable and inhuman manner rending

the very flesh from their bones, especially Caesar who was not perceived to

make any moan or to alter his face, only to roll his eyes on the faithless

Governour, and those he believed guilty, with fierceness and indignation;

and to compleat his rage, he saw every one of those slaves who but a few

days before ador'd him as something more than mortal, now had a whip to

give him some lashes, while he strove not to break his fetters; though if

he had, it were impossible: but he pronounced a woe and revenge from his

eyes, that darted fire, which was at once both awful and terrible to

behold.

When they thought they were sufficiently revenged on him, they unty'd him,

almost fainting with loss of blood from a thousand wounds all over his

body, from which they had rent his clothes, and led him bleeding and naked

as he was, and loaded him all over with irons; and then rubb'd his wounds,

to compleat their cruelty, with Indian pepper, which had like to have made

him raving mad; and, in this condition made him so fast to the ground, that

he could not stir, if his pains and wounds would have given him leave. They

spared Imoinda, and did not let her see this barbarity committed towards

her lord, but carry'd her down to Parham, and shut her up; which was not in

kindness to her, but for fear she should die with the sight, or miscarry,

and then they should lose a young slave, and perhaps the mother.

You must know, that when the news was brought on Monday morning, that

Caesar had betaken himself to the woods, and carry'd with him all the

negroes, we were possess'd with extreme fear, which no persuasions could

dissipate, that he would secure himself till night, and then would come

down and cut all our throats. This apprehension made all the females of us

fly down the river, to be secured; and while we were away, they acted this

cruelty; for I suppose I had authority and interest enough there, had I

suspected any such thing, to have prevented it: but we had not gone many

leagues, but the news overtook us, that Caesar was taken and whipped like a

common slave. We met on the river with Colonel Martin, a man of great

gallantry, wit, and goodness, and whom I have celebrated in a character of

my new comedy, by his own name, in memory of so brave a man. He was wise

and eloquent, and, from the fineness of his parts, bore a great sway over

the hearts of all the colony. He was a friend to Caesar, and resented this

false dealing with him very much. We carry'd him back to Parham, thinking

to have made an accommodation; when he came, the first news we heard, was,

that the Governour was dead of a wound Imoinda had given him; but it was

not so well. But it seems, he would have the pleasure of beholding the

revenge he took on Caesar; and before the cruel ceremony was finished, he

dropt down; and then they perceived the wound he had on his shoulder was by

a venom'd arrow, which, as I said, his Indian mistress healed, by sucking

the wound.

We were no sooner arrived, but we went up to the plantation to see Caesar;

whom we found in a very miserable and unexpressible condition; and I have a

thousand times admired how he lived in so much tormenting pain. We said all

things to him, that trouble, pity and good-nature could suggest, protesting

our innocency of the fact, and our abhorrence of such cruelties; making a

thousand professions and services to him, and begging as many pardons for

the offenders, till we said so much, that he believed we had no hand in his

ill-treatment; but told us, he could never pardon Byam; as for Trefry, he

confessed he saw his grief and sorrow for his suffering, which he could not

hinder, but was like to have been beaten down by the very slaves, for

speaking in his defence. But for Byam, who was their leader, their head -

and shou'd, by his justice and honour, have been an example to 'em - for

him, he wished to live to take a dire revenge of him; and said, "It had

been well for him, if he had sacrificed me, instead of giving me the

contemptible whip." He refused to talk much; but begging us to give him our

hands, he took them, and protested never to lift up his to do us any harm.

He had a great respect for Colonel Martin, and always took his counsel like

that of a parent; and assured him, he would obey him in anything, but his

revenge on Byam: "Therefore," said he, "for his own safety, let him

speedily dispatch me; for if I could dispatch my self, I would not, till

that justice were done to my injured person, and the contempt of a soldier.

No, I would not kill my self, even after a whipping, but will be content to

live with that infamy, and be pointed at by every grinning slave, till I

have compleated my revenge; and then you shall see, that Oroonoko scorns to

live with the indignity that was put on Caesar. "All we could do, could get

no more words from him; and we took care to have him put immediately into a

healing bath, to rid him of his pepper, and order'd a chirurgeon to anoint

him with healing balm, which he suffer'd, and in some time he began to be

able to walk and eat. We failed not to visit him every day, and to that end

had him brought to an apartment at Parham. The Governour had no sooner

recover'd, and had heard

of the menaces of Caesar, but he called his Council, who (not to disgrace

them, or burlesque the Government there) consisted of such notorious

villains as Newgate never transported; and, possibly, originally were such

who understood neither the laws of God or man, and had no sort of

principles to make them worthy the name of men; but at the very council-

table wou'd contradict and fight with one another, and swear so bloodily,

that 'twas terrible to hear and see 'em. (Some of'em were afterwards

hanged, when the Dutch took possession of the place, others sent off in

chains.) But calling these special rulers of the nation together, and

requiring their counsel in this weighty affair, they all concluded, that

(damn 'em) it might be their own cases; and that Caesar ought to be made an

example to all the negroes, to fright 'em from daring to threaten their

betters, their lords and masters; and at this rate no man was safe from his

own slaves; and concluded, nemine contradicente, that Caesar should be

hanged.

Trefry then thought it time to use his authority, and told Byam, his

command did not extend to his lord's plantation; and that Parham was as

much exempt from the law as White-Hall; and that they ought no more to

touch the servants of the Lord -- (who there represented the King's person)

than they could those about the King himself; and that Parham was a

sanctuary; and tho his lord were absent in person, his power was still in

being there, which he had entrusted with him, as far as the dominions of

his particular plantations reached, and all that belonged to it; the rest

of the country, as Byam was lieutenant to his lord, he might exercise his

tyranny upon. Trefry had others as powerful, or more, that interested

themselves in Caesar's life, and absolutely said, he should be defended. So

turning the Governour, and his wise Council, out of doors, (for they sat at

Parham-House) we set a guard upon our lodging-place, and would admit none

but those we called friends to us and Caesar.

The Governour having remained wounded at Parham, till his recovery was

compleated, Caesar did not know but he was still there, and indeed for the

most part, his time was spent there: for he was one that loved to live at

other peoples expence, and if he were a day absent, he was ten present

there; and us'd to play, and walk, and hunt, and fish with Caesar. So that

Caesar did not at all doubt, if he once recover'd strength, but he should

find an opportunity of being revenged on him; though, after such a revenge,

he could not hope to live: for if he escaped the fury of the English

mobile, who perhaps would have been glad of the occasion to have killed

him, he was resolved not to survive his whipping; yet he had some tender

hours, a repenting softness, which he called his fits of cowardice, wherein

he struggled with love for the victory of his heart, which took part with

his charming Imoinda there; but for the most part, his time was passed in

melancholy thoughts, and black designs. He consider'd, if he should do this

deed, and die either in the attempt, or after it, he left his lovely

Imoinda a prey, or at best a slave to the enraged multitude; his great

heart could not endure that thought: "Perhaps," said he, "she may be first

ravished by every brute; expos'd first to their nasty lusts, and then a

shameful death." No, he could not live a moment under that apprehension,

too insupportable to be borne. These were his thoughts, and his silent

arguments with his heart, as he told us afterwards. So that now resolving

not only to kill Byam, but all those he thought had enraged him; pleasing

his great heart with the fancy'd slaughter he should make over the whole

face of the plantation; he first resolved on a deed (that however horrid it

first appear'd to us all) when we had heard his reasons, we thought it

brave and just. Being able to walk and, as he believed, fit for the

execution of his great design, he begg'd Trefry to trust him into the air,

believing a walk would do him good; which was granted him; and taking

Imoinda with him, as he used to do in his more happy and calmer days, he

led her up into a wood, where (after with a thousand sighs, and long gazing

silently on her face, while tears gush'd, in spite of him, from his eyes)

he told her his design, first of killing her, and then his enemies, and

next himself, and the impossibility of escaping, and therefore he told her

the necessity of dying. He found the heroick wife faster pleading for

death, than he was to propose it, when she found his fix'd resolution; and,

on her knees, besought him not to leave her a prey to his enemies. He

(grieved to death) yet pleased at her noble resolution, took her up, and

embracing of her with all the passion and languishment of a dying lover,

drew his knife to kill this treasure of his soul, this pleasure of his

eyes; while tears trickled down his cheeks, hers were smiling with joy she

should die by so noble a hand, and be sent into her own country (for that's

their notion of the next world) by him she so tenderly loved, and so truly

ador'd in this. For wives have a respect for their husbands equal to what

any other people pay a deity; and when a man finds any occasion to quit his

wife, if he love her, she dies by his hand; if not, he sells her, or

suffers some other to kill her. It being thus, you may believe the deed was

soon resolved on; and 'tis not to be doubted, but the parting, the eternal

leave-taking of two such lovers, so greatly born, so sensible, so

beautiful, so young, and so fond, must be very moving, as the relation of t

was to me afterwards.

All that love could say in such cases, being ended, and all the

intermitting irresolutions being adjusted, the lovely, young and ador'd

victim lays herself down before the sacrificer; while he, with a hand

resolved, and a heart-breaking within, gave the fatal stroke, first cutting

her throat, and then severing her yet smiling face from that delicate body,

pregnant as it was with the fruits of tenderest love. As soon as he had

done, he laid the body decently on leaves and flowers, of which he made a

bed, and concealed it under the same cover-lid of nature; only her face he

left yet bare to look on. But when he found she was dead, and past all

retrieve, never more to bless him with her eyes, and soft language, his

grief swell'd up to rage; he tore, he raved, he roar'd like some monster of

the wood, calling on the lov'd name of Imoinda. A thousand times he turned

the fatal knife that did the deed toward his own heart, with a resolution

to go immediately after her; but dire revenge, which was now a thousand

times more fierce in his soul than before, prevents him; and he would cry

out, "No, since I have sacrific'd Imoinda to my revenge, shall I lose that

glory which I have purchased so dear, as at the price of the fairest,

dearest, softest creature that ever nature made? No, no!" Then at her name

grief would get the ascendant of rage, and he would lie down by her side,

and water her face with showers of tears, which never were wont to fall

from those eyes; and however bent he was on his intended slaughter, he had

not power to stir from the sight of this dear object, now more beloved, and

more ador'd than ever.

He remained in this deplorable condition for two days, and never rose from

the ground where he had made her sad sacrifice; at last rousing from her

side, and accusing himself with living too long, now Imoinda was dead, and

that the deaths of those barbarous enemies were deferred too long, he

resolv'd now to finish the great work: but offering to rise, he found his

strength so decay'd, that he reeled to and fro, like boughs assailed by

contrary winds; so that he was forced to lie down again, and try to summon

all his courage to his aid. He found his brains turned round, and his eyes

were dizzy, and objects appear'd not the same to him they were wont to do;

his breath was short, and all his limbs surpriz'd with a faintness he had

never felt before. He had not eaten in two days, which was one occasion of

his feebleness, but excess of grief was the greatest; yet still he hoped he

shou'd recover vigour to act his design, and lay expecting it yet six days

longer; still mourning over the dead idol of his heart, and striving every

day to rise, but could not.

In all this time you may believe we were in no little affliction for Caesar

and his wife; some were of opinion he was escaped, never to return; others

thought some accident had hapned to him. But however, we fail'd not to send

out a hundred people several ways, to search for him. A party of about

forty went that way he took, among whom was Tuscan, who was perfectly

reconciled to Byam. They had not gone very far into the wood, but they

smelt an unusual smell, as of a dead body; for stinks must be very noisom,

that can be distinguished among such a quantity of natural sweets, as every

inch of that land produces: so that they concluded they should find him

dead, or somebody that was so; they pass'd on towards it, as loathsome as

it was, and made such rusting among the leaves that lie thick on the

ground, by continual falling, that Caesar heard he was approach'd; and

though he had, during the space of these eight days, endeavoured to rise,

but found he wanted strength, yet, looking up, and seeing his pursuers, he

rose, and reel'd to a neighbouring tree, against which he fix'd his back;

and being within a dozen yards of those that advanc'd and saw him, he

call'd out to them, and bid them approach no nearer, if they would be safe.

So that they stood still, and hardly believing their eyes, that would

persuade them that it was Caesar that spoke to 'em, so much he was alter'd;

they ask'd him what he had done with his wife, for they smelt a stink that

almost struck them dead? He, pointing to the dead body, sighing, cry'd,

"Behold her there." They put off the flowers that cover'd her, with their

sticks, and found she was kill'd, and cry'd out, "Oh, monster! thou has

murder'd thy wife." Then asking him, why he did so cruel a deed? He

replied, he had no leisure to answer impertinent questions: "You may go

back," continued he, "and tell the faithless Governour, he may thank

fortune that I am breathing my last; and that my arm is too feeble to obey

my heart, in what it had design'd him." But his tongue faultering, and

trembling, he could scarce end what he was saying. The English taking

advantage by his weakness, cry'd, "Let us take him alive by all means." He

heard 'em; and, as if he had reviv'd from a fainting, or a dream, he cry'd

out, "No, gentlemen, you are deceiv'd; you will find no more Caesars to be

whipt; no more find a faith in me. Feeble as you think me, I have strength

yet left to secure me from a second indignity." They swore all anew; and he

only shook his head, and beheld them with scorn. Then they cry'd out, "Who

will venture on this single man 2 Will no body?" They stood all silent,

while Caesar replied, "Fatal will be the attempt of the first adventurer,

let him assure himself," and, at that word, held up his knife in a menacing

posture. "Look ye, ye faithless crew," said he, "'tis not life I seek, nor

am I afraid of dying," and at that word, cut a piece of flesh from his own

throat, and threw it at 'em, "yet still I would live if I could, till I had

perfected my revenge. But, oh! it cannot be; I feel life gliding from my

eyes and heart; and if I make not haste, I shall fall a victim to the

shameful whip." At that, he rip'd up his own belly, and took his bowels and

pull'd 'em, out, with what strength he could; while some, on their knees

imploring, besought him to hold his hand. But when they saw him tottering,

they cry'd out, "Will none venture on him?" A bold Englishman cry'd, "Yes,

if he were the Devil," (taking courage when he saw him almost dead) and

swearing a horrid oath for his farewel to the world, he rush'd on him.

Caesar with his arm'd hand, met him so fairly, as stuck him to the heart,

and he fell dead at his feet. Tuscan seeing that, cry'd out, "I love thee,

O Caesar! and therefore will not let thee die, if possible"; and running to

him, took him in his arms; but, at the same time, warding a blow that

Caesar made at his bosom, he receiv'd it quite through his arm; and Caesar

having not strength to pluck the knife forth, tho he attempted it, Tuscan

neither pull'd it out himself nor suffer'd it to be pull'd out, but came

down with it sticking in his arm; and the reason he gave for it, was,

because the air should not get into the wound. They put their hands a-

cross, and carry'd Caesar between six of'em, fainting as he was, and they

thought dead, or just dying; and they brought him to Parham, and laid him

on a couch, and had the chirurgeon immediately to him, who dressed his

wounds, and sew'd up his belly, and us'd means to bring him to life, which

they effected. We ran all to see him! and, if before we thought him so

beautiful a sight, he was now so alter'd, that his face was like a death's-

head black'd over, nothing but teeth and eye-holes. For some days we

suffer'd no body to speak to him, but caused cordials to be poured down his

throat; which sustained his life, and in six or seven days he recover'd his

senses. For, you must know, that wounds are almost to a miracle cur'd in

the Indies; unless wounds in the legs, which they rarely ever cure.

When he was well enough to speak, we talk'd to him, and ask'd him some

questions about his wife, and the reasons why he kill'd her; and he then

told us what I have related of that resolution, and of his parting, and he

besought us we would let him die, and was extremely afflicted to think it

was possible he might live. He assur'd us, if we did not despatch him, he

would prove very fatal to a great many. We said all we could to make him

live, and gave him new assurances; but he begg'd we would not think so

poorly of him, or of his love to Imoinda, to imagine we could flatter him

to life again. But the chirurgeon assur'd him he could not live, and

therefore he need not fear. We were all (but Caesar) afflicted at this

news, and the sight was ghastly. His discourse was sad; and the earthy

smell about him so strong, that I was persuaded to leave the place for some

time, (being myself but sickly, and very apt to fall into fits of dangerous

illness upon any extraordinary melancholy). The servants, and Trefry, and

the chirurgeons, promis'd all to take what possible care they could of the

life of Caesar; and I, taking boat, went with other company to Colonel

Martin's, about three days' journey down the river. But I was no sooner

gone, than the Governour taking Trefry, about some pretended earnest

business, a day's journey up the river, having communicated his design to

one Banister, a wild Irishman, one of the Council, a fellow of absolute

barbarity, and fit to execute any villany, but rich; he came up to Parham

and forcibly took Caesar, and had him carried to the same post where he was

whipp'd; and causing him to be ty'd to it, and a great fire made before

him, he told him he should die like a dog, as he was. Caesar replied, This

was the first piece of bravery that ever Banister did, and he never spoke

sense till he pronounc'd that word; and if he would keep it, he would

declare, in the other world, that he was the only man, of all the whites,

that ever he heard speak truth. And turning to the men that had bound him,

he said, "My friends, am I to die, or to be whipt?" And they cry'd, "Whipt!

no, you shall not escape so well." And then he reply'd, smiling, "A

blessing on thee"; and assur'd them they need not tie him, for he would

stand fix'd like a rock, and endure death so as should encourage them to

die: "But if you whip me," said he, "be sure you tie me fast."

He had learn'd to take tobacco; and when he was assur'd he should die, he

desir'd they would give him a pipe in his mouth, ready lighted; which they

did. And the executioner came, and first cut off his members, and threw

them into the fire; after that, with an ill-favour'd knife, they cut off

his ears and his nose, and burn'd them; he still smoked on, as if nothing

had touch'd him; then they hack'd off one of his arms, and still he bore up

and held his pipe; but at the cutting off the other arm, his head sunk, and

his pipe dropt, and he gave up the ghost, without a groan, or a reproach.

My mother and sister were by him all the while, but not suffer'd to save

him; so rude and wild were the rabble, and so inhuman were the justices who

stood by to see the execution, who after paid dear enough for their

insolence. They cut Caesar into quarters, and sent them to several of the

chief plantations: one quarter was sent to Colonel Martin; who refus'd it,

and swore, he had rather see the quarters of Banister, and the Governour

himself, than those of Caesar, on his plantations; and that he could govern

his negroes, without terrifying and grieving them with frightful spectacles

of a mangled king.

Thus died this great man, worthy of a better fate, and a more sublime wit

than mine to write his praise. Yet, I hope, the reputation of my pen is

considerable enough to make his glorious name to survive to all ages, with

that of the brave, the beautiful and the constant Imoinda.