

received any other answer from him than that he feared fire less than sin — resolved to test his courage, and to see whether he would really be stronger than fire. They invite him to enter a bath (this is a kind of oven or hypocaust, in which the whole body is at once bathed in sweat, and in which one would soon be suffocated, were it not often uncovered to allow fresh air to be breathed). The good Christian, who is ignorant of their design, considers this as a favor usual among these peoples when they intend to gratify any one. He enters the bath, but at the very first he feels a heat so excessive [58] that he begs them to allow him to come out. “Comrade,” replies he who had invited him, “I dreamed last night that thou must say three words in honor of my familiar demon, or otherwise some misfortune would happen to me. I beg thee to oblige thy friend, and, if thou wishest to come out, refuse me not those words.” Charles sees very well that they wish to compel him by force to do what gentleness could never obtain from him. “Comrade,” he replies, “the fire of hell is hotter than this. To avoid one I would be very foolish to throw myself into the other. Thou canst make me die here if thou wilt, but thou canst not get a word out of my mouth that will soil my soul. Thou must know that I have no tongue, when a sin has to be committed.” He is urged not to be so strict in a matter which will cost him so little, and so greatly oblige his friend. He is told that the fault cannot be his, and that the compulsion used against him will excuse him before all men. He is promised that it will never be mentioned; and that, if he dread the reproaches of the French, they can never know of it. “Finally, if