

thou fearest," [59] they say to him, "even the shadow of the sin, thy injury will not be beyond remedy, since all sins are forgiven, and we are told that in Heaven there are more sinners than innocents." "My comrades," he says to them, "I fear neither men nor the French, but the eye of God, which penetrates both your consciences and mine, and which would condemn my offense even if the whole earth should praise me for it. It is right to hope that our sins will be forgiven after they are committed, but not in order that we may commit them; unless you wish to excuse folly in a person who, in the hope of curing a mortal wound, plunges a knife into his breast." Meanwhile, the heat becomes more intense; he finds himself in the midst of a heap of stones all heated red-hot, and of coals that flame more and more; and he cannot stir without walking on the embers. "My comrades," he says to them, "my heart fails me, but not my courage. I am stifled here, and cannot breathe; but know that, whatever violence may be done to me, I will never yield to your desires." Thereupon he who had invited him changes [60] his tone, and, assuming an angry one, he utters a thousand blasphemies against God; curses the Faith and the believers; renounces the friendship that had existed between them from their youth; but the more furious he becomes, the more he sees that a truly Christian heart has no fear except of sin. Finally the other Infidels range themselves on the fairer side; they take up the cause of the innocent; they upbraid this insolent man for going to such extremes. He himself is filled with confusion when, on uncovering the hypocaut, he sees the good Christian with-