

“ From that early age she avoided the approach of men, not through any exercise of her reason, but by the instinct of a superior Spirit, which made her speak of being a Nun without knowing what they were except by name. Monsieur her father, seeing that she was of an amiable disposition, took pleasure in opposing her in this inclination,—often telling her that he wished to marry her to a little Gentleman of her own age; and often making her little presents, which he said were sent to her from him. The poor child resisted and grieved so greatly, taking this raillery for earnest, that Madame her mother, perceiving that she was beginning to waste away with melancholy, begged Monsieur her husband to forego this diversion. It happened, one day, that a man of condition, wishing to tease her, kissed her by surprise; she turned around and gave him so smart a blow in the face that he felt it sharply, although it was delivered only by the hand of a child.”

Having noted that Madame her mother gave alms to the poor, and spoke of them with compassion, she would often [133] steal away from her side to carry them her breakfast and her lunch, and even what she could find in the kitchen. Her good mother, upon perceiving this, not only did not disapprove of her conduct, but even kissed and caressed her, and gave her full permission to bestow alms, and to visit the poor whom she fed,—taking the child with her, in order to give her pleasure, when she went to dispense her own charities. *Bona arbor bonos fructus facit*,—“ From a good tree come good fruits.”

“ She had a natural aversion for jewels, gewgaws, and those little insignificant trifles which often constitute the highest pursuits of girls who are fond of