

The union of hearts is not very often broken without violence. He who utters the word "mother" [144] utters the name of one who loves; and he who speaks of a well-born child, speaks of a heart full of love and respect. Our Novice could forsake neither God nor her parents. She would have wished either that her mother might become a Nun with her, or that her parents might convert their house into a Monastery of her Order; for to speak of separation was to speak of death. She would rather have died a thousand times than quit the plow-handle and turn back; and poor nature suffered, in her, strange convulsions and anguish at the thought that she was about to deprive herself, for the rest of her days, of her good mother's delightful conversation.

He who holds all nature suspended in his hand, who knows the number of the stars, who gives force to the winds, and sets bounds to the floods and storms of the sea, cured her of this temptation in a moment. He caused her to see in her sleep a ladder like that of Jacob; with one end it touched the heavens, and with the other it rested on the earth. Many people were climbing this ladder, aided by their good Angels, who gently wiped away the sweat [145] which the toil and exertion called forth from their foreheads and their entire faces. Some of them she saw who fell backward at the first step, or at the first round of the ladder; others tumbled headlong from the middle; and a small number, surmounting the difficulties of a road so straight and so steep, arrived at last at the top, and gained the victory. The effect of this vision made it evident that it was not a simple dream forged in the workshop of her imagination, but a remedy for her ill, applied by the hands of her