

**PAUL AND VIRGINIA;
WITH 125 ILLUSTRATIONS
BY MAURICE LELOIR**

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Paul and Virginia; with 125 illustrations by Maurice Leloir by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre

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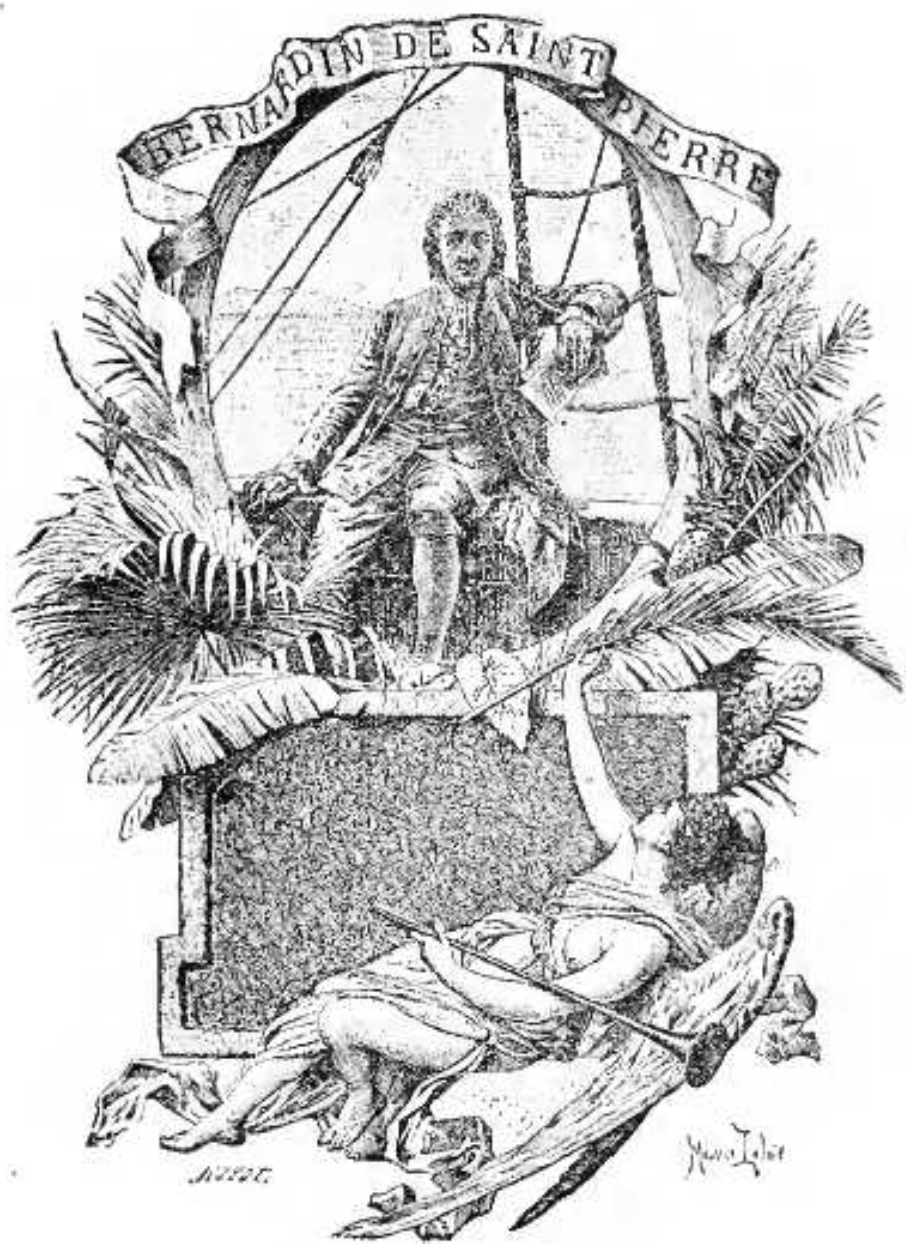
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BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE

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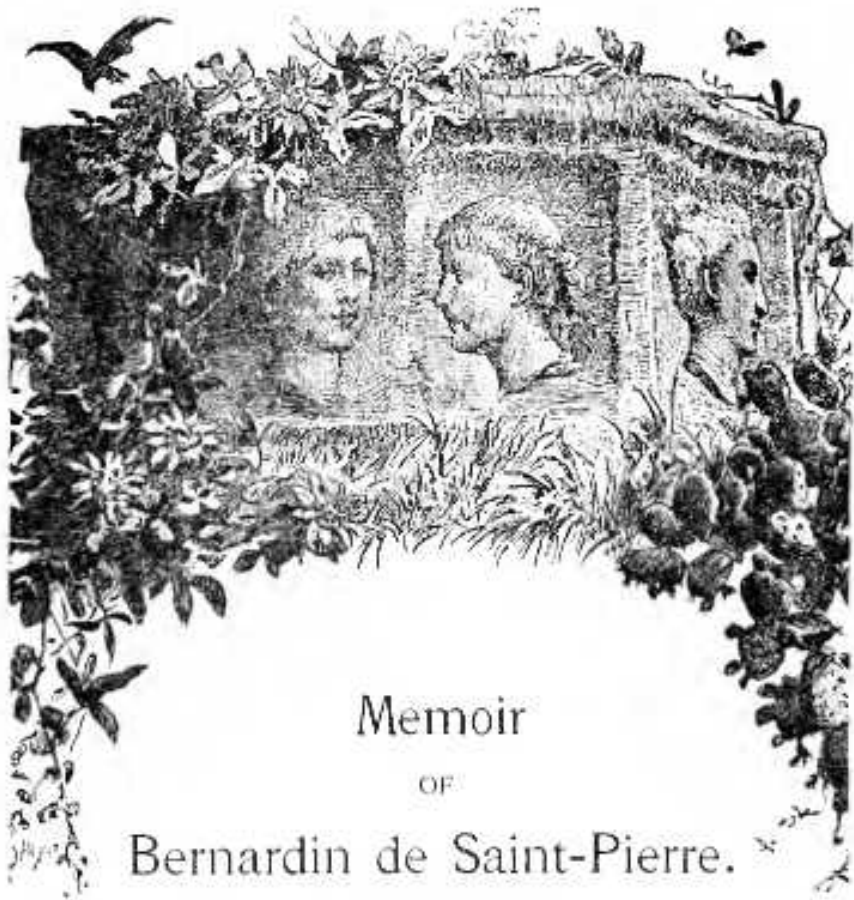
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Memoir
OF
Bernardin de Saint-Pierre.



LOVE OF NATURE, that strong feeling of enthusiasm which leads to a profound admiration of the whole works of creation, belongs, it may be presumed, to a certain peculiarity of organization, and has no doubt existed in different individuals from the beginning of the world. The old poets and philosophers,

romance-writers and troubadours, had all looked upon Nature with observing and admiring eyes. They have most of them given incidentally charming pictures of spring, of the setting sun, of particular spots, and of favorite flowers.

There are few writers of note, of any country or of any age, from whom quotations might not be made in proof of the love with which they regard Nature; and this remark applied as much to religious and philosophic writers as to poets—equally to Plato, St. François de Sales, Bacon, and Fénelon, as to Shakespeare, Racine, Calderon, or Burns; for from no really philosophic or religious doctrine can the love of the works of Nature be excluded.

But before the days of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Buffon, and Bernardin de St. Pierre this love of Nature had not been expressed in all its intensity. Until their day it had not been written on exclusively. The lovers of Nature were not till then, as they may perhaps since be considered, a sect apart. Though perfectly sincere in all the adorations they offered, they were less entirely, and certainly less diligently and constantly, her adorers.

It is the great praise of Bernardin de St. Pierre that, coming immediately after Rousseau and Buffon, and being one of the most proficient writers of the same school, he was in no degree their imitator, but perfectly original and new. He intuitively perceived the immensity of the subject he intended to explore, and has told us that no day

of his life passed without his collecting some valuable materials for his writings. In the divine works of Nature he diligently sought to discover her laws. It was his early intention not to begin to write until he had ceased to observe; but he found observation endless, and that he was "like a child who with a shell digs a hole in the sand to receive the waters of the ocean." He elsewhere humbly says that not only the general history of Nature, but even that of the smallest plant, was far beyond his ability. Before, however, speaking further of him as an author, it will be necessary to recapitulate the chief events of his life.

HENRY-JACQUES BERNARDIN DE ST. PIERRE was born at Havre in 1737. He always considered himself descended from that Eustache de St. Pierre who is said by Froissart (and, I believe, by Froissart only) to have generously offered himself as a victim to appease the wrath of Edward the Third against Calais. He with his companions in virtue, it is also said, was saved by the intercession of Queen Philippa. In one of his smaller works Bernardin asserts this descent, and it was certainly one of which he might be proud. Many anecdotes are related of his childhood indicative of the youthful author—of his strong love of Nature and his humanity to animals.

That "the child is father of the man" has been seldom more strongly illustrated. There is a story of a cat which, when related by him many years afterward to Rousseau, caused that philoso-