

tell him that the Pope wished to speak to him.

The man slowly approached, and when he had come up to the carriage, he fell on his knees and bowed down his head without uttering a word.

The Pope said to him in the kindest tone. My child! you have been following me for a long time. What is your object? Have you any request to make; or do you desire our paternal benediction?

The stranger shook his head in token of dissent,

What is your name?

The unknown moved his lips, but the Pope alone heard what he said.

Do you wish to confess to me?

Yes, Holy Father: my crime is so great that I am persuaded there is but one man on earth who has received from God sufficient power to impose suitable penance on me, and impart me the grace of absolution, and Your Holiness is that person.

My child, replied Pius VII. with much gravity, we must never doubt of Heaven's mercy. Your crime is, perhaps, exceedingly great, but surely God is infinite in goodness.

Oh! after what I have done, said the unknown, whose voice became fainter every moment, after what I have done, it is perhaps an insult to Heaven, to ask its forgiveness.

No, but such a thought as that, is an insult to the divine clemency. As you are still permitted to live, you must see

it is because the Almighty wishes to give you time to repent. I will hear your confession this evening.

Holy Father, you must have great courage. Oh, I hope that we will be quite alone, and that the doors will be well closed.

Pius VII. reflected for a moment, and cast a look at the stranger which pierced his inmost soul. After a moment's silence, he said: "Take this paper, my child. With this pass, signed by my own hand, you will gain admittance to me at any hour."

He took the paper, concealed it in his bosom, bowed down to the earth, and departed.

On the evening of the same day, he had an interview with the Pope which lasted more than two hours. No human being will ever know what took place between them, during this solemn interview. But when it was over, and the Pope had rung his bell, the Cardinal who first entered was so terrified at the paleness of the Holy Father, that he was about to put the stranger under arrest. The Pope made a sign which prevented the Cardinal, and with a gentle wave of the hand, directed the stranger to withdraw.

About two months after this scene, a stranger presented himself before the Mayor of the little town of ———, and declared that he had come to reside there. The conduct of this man soon became the subject of universal curiosity. He took up his quarters at the ex-