

Paul, drawing a long breath, and looking blankly from his comrade to the white coiffe of Soeur Jeanne.

"You may go now," she said; and the two men withdrew, and the Franciscan father came in.

"Where am I?" inquired Paul Ovenbeck, gazing at the strange, cowed face of the friar bending over him.

"You are amongst friends," repeated the father.

"It is cold," said the sick man, shivering, as the wind blew through the slits above his head.

"Yes, it is cold down here, with frost on the ground and the north wind blowing," said the friar; "but in heaven it will be better." "In heaven!" repeated Paul, and he turned to look at Soeur Jeanne, resting his eyes on her with a strange expression. Was it a dream, or had he seen that face before? The blue eyes met his with a soft, wistful glance that seemed familiar to him.

"You do not remember me?" Soeur Jeanne said smiling. "It is a long time since you have seen me, M. Ovenbeck. You have forgotten little Babette and her blind old grandfather?"

"Babette!" repeated Paul Ovenbeck, and instinctively his eye seemed to look for a sign upon her forehead. She pushed aside the white linen band, and showed the mark of a cross underneath it.

"There it is—the mark of the accident that would have been my death if you had not saved me, M. Ovenbeck. I am little Babette that you were so kind to that Christmas day just ten years ago!"

She left him alone with Père Jérôme a while, and then Père Jérôme went to the door of the tent and told her to come back. Two brave soldiers were waiting to know how it fared with their comrade.

"Come in and help him in the last battle, mes amis! it will soon be over, and with a better victory than ever you gained together," said Père Jérôme.

The men came in and knelt down with Soeur Jeanne, while the friar said the Litany for the dying.

Paul Ovenbeck was breathing hard.

The prayers were over.

"Babette . . . little Babette," he murmured faintly.

"Yes, M. Ovenbeck; my good friend, I am here."

"The bells!" whispered the dying man.

"Yes, the Christmas bells that are welcoming you up to heaven," said Babette: "you will pray for little Babette when you get there." "And Nanon. . . . The bells are ringing, Babette."

And then Paul Ovenbeck spoke no more. The bells went on ringing, while Babette and Père Jérôme recited the De Profundis for the soul of the brave soldier.

