

CHAPTER XXXIII

IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY

VERY early upon the following morning, almost before it was light, Alban entered the familiar study at "Five Gables" and read his patron's letter. It had been written the day after he himself returned from Poland, and had long awaited him there in that great lonely house. He opened it as though it had been a message from the dead.

"I am leaving England to-day," the note went, "and may be many months abroad. The unhappy death of Paul Boriskoff in the Schlusselfburg will be already known to you, and will relieve you of any further anxiety upon his daughter's account. I have the assurance of the Minister of St. Petersburg that she will be released immediately, and sent to 'Five Gables,' as I have wished. There I have made that provision for her future which I owe to my own past, and there she will live as your wife until the days of my exile are finished.

"You, Alban Kennedy, must henceforth be the agent of my fortunes. To you, in the name of humanity, I entrust the realization of those dreams which have endeared you to me and made you as my own son. If there be salvation for the outcasts of this city, by such labours as you will now undertake upon their behalf, then let yours be the minis-