

"For of course you will marry, you and she are capitally suited to one another. The mother exists no longer, and M. Straz, if he escaped, which is most likely, will not be able to interfere. Let me recommend you now to get some rest. You will require it. For at twelve you leave Versailles with Mademoiselle de Bayard *en route* for England. Now go! . . ."

LXXIX.

P. C. BREACH and Juliette met upon the morrow, in the same spot near the rose-tree that had borne pink blossoms undismayed through the bitter wintry months.

"You have bestowed upon me no Christmas present, Monsieur," Juliette said to him gravely. "Now I will have you gather one of those roses, and give it to me! . . ."

He strode into the drift, mid-leg deep, and cut a bud that was upon the sheltered side next the wall.

"Be careful of the thorns lest they prick you!" Juliette cried to him. "Do not cut your fingers! Do not get wet!"

"You shall not have this rose," he said, withholding the frozen flower, "until you have given my Christmas gift to me!"

Her blue eyes rose brimming to meet his.

"Ah, what is there I can give you? Tell me, my friend!" she said, softly.

He got out, blushing, and swallowing a lump that rose in his throat:

"We have been through so much . . . we have seen strange and terrible things together! . . . We have shared dangers . . . we have seen a great nation in the death-throes. . . . Nothing could ever make us strangers whatever came to pass. . . . But now we are going back