

was to be dismantled and shut up; once more the deserted place, the preservation of which, the restoring to its right inhabitants, had been the dream and ambition of Urbain de la Marinière's life. For his cousin Hervé he had spent all his energies and a considerable part of his fortune; and to no purpose and worse than none. Even Hervé's love and gratitude failed him now; the knowledge that Hervé could never quite forget or forgive his plotting with Adélaïde and Ratoneau, was the sharpest sting of all; worse even, as his wife felt with a throb of rapturous joy, than the fact that Adélaïde would smile on him no more.

"My poor Urbain!" she murmured.

Her sympathy was tender and real, though she felt that her prayer had been answered, that she and her house had been delivered from the crushing weight of Lancilly, that the great castle on the hill would henceforth be a harmless pile of stones, to be viewed without the old dislike and jealousy. It seemed to her now that she had not known a happy day since the Sainfoys came back, or even for long before, while Urbain's whole soul was wrapped up in preparing for them. Yet she was very sorry for Urbain.

"All for nothing, and worse than nothing," he sighed; and she found no words to comfort him.

The fire crackled and blazed; outside, the wind rolled in great thundering blasts over the country. It roared so loudly in the chimneys that nothing else was to be heard. Urbain went on talking, so