

He embraced the
he covered with
of the marquise ;
und mixed with

He asked only a
y had associations.
ng to set out ; he
mal adieu to the
ay ; driven by the
e-enter the port,
Paternal roof, I
e again ! I am
e soft nest of my
mpanions of my
clasp you in my
ain, well-grown,
' Exalted by
agination fount
and freshness of
en this letter
chevalier had
rs. The lamp of
evening near the
lled his fauteuil,
Madeleine, who

neral, after the
remained here be-
that chance had
work and poverty
seled away Ma-
and time.

work is not ac-
est assist me in
' They threw
ms and remained

ise, 'since you
to me, it is right
of mother.'

ne lived at the
week before his
in the hands of
st testament, by
vice his *metairie*

of eighty to a
This testament

and touching
delicacy of the
in a few charm-

to tranquilize,
respect to her fu-

confided to her
underness of her
pious recogni-

t to her lips and
rn it, she sacred-
bosom,

ave you done ?
ly dismayed, in
that ask this ?

answered Madeleine, smiling. 'I know no-thing of the life of Maurice ; I feel only that this young man must need all his resources, and that it would be a poor recognition of the beneficence of the father to deprive the son of a part of his inheritance. Be assured, my friend, that what I have done is well done. You yourself would not have acted other-wise in my place.'

'But, poor child, you have nothing. I counsel you not to place too much dependence upon the self-denial of Maurice. I gone,—and I have not long to remain on earth, dear child,—what will become of you ?'

'That which happens when one has no-thing but courage and strong will. Am I not, thanks to your lessons, as rich as you your-self were on arriving at Nuremberg ? I hope that He who came to your assistance then will not abandon me now, and I shall make my own nest as you have made yours.'

'Ah ! well, you are a brave girl, as good as beautiful,' added the marquise, taking suddenly between two white and thin hands the head of Madeleine, which she kissed again and again upon the forehead and cheeks.

They waited day by day, Maurice, upon whom the death of his father had fallen like a thunderbolt. Weeks, months flowed by ; Maurice did not come. They learned soon that he had sent his power of attorney, and that his agent was occupied in regulating the affairs that the dead occasion for the living. He had at once written to his cousin a letter without any effusion, although conven-tional, in which he offered her, with neither en-thusiasm nor grace, a large part in the inheri-tance of his father, precisely that *metairie* of Condray which the orphan had generously just renounced—so, indeed, Maurice unwit-tingly happened to offer to Madeleine that which she gave him. The young girl answered simply that, retired with Madame de Fresnes, she absolutely needed nothing. The young man did not insist. What had he done, however, with his good resolutions ? Restrained by respect and remorse, perhaps he dared not yet affront the sight of a tomb which he could, without great rigour, accuse himself of prematurely opening. They ap-plauded him for this reserve ; they did not doubt that he would bring later to Valtra-vers the offering of his expiations.

While at Fresnes they nursed innocently this last hope ; a short distance away mort-gages were falling like hail. A year had hardly passed since the death of the cheva-lier, when the kneus spread in the country that the domain and chateau of Valtravers were to be sold at auction. The marquise and Madeleine flatly refused to believe it,

and protested against the calumny, as they had ever done when the matter in hand was to defend Maurice against the reports of the province. One day, however, as they were walking together in the forest, talking of the cruel and dear absent one—for, while blam-ing, they still could not help loving him—they perceived through the bars of the gate, grouped here and there upon the steps of the perron, a number of the servitors and peasants, who were talking earnestly among themselves, and regard-ing each other with an air of con-stermation. Impelled partly by a pre-sentiment, partly by curiosity, they both ad-vanced towards the manor, to which they were accustomed to make frequent pilgrim-ages.

'Oh ! Madame la Marquise ! Oh ! Ma-demoiselle Madeleine !' cried they all toge-ther as soon as they had approached. 'Oh ! what a great misfortune for us all ! Heaven has fallen upon our heads. This is the ruin of our poor lives.'

'What is it, my children ? what has hap-pened ! what is the matter with you ?' asked Madame de Fresnes.

'See ! see ! Madame la Marquise. What must our good master in heaven, M. le Chevalier, think ?'

With a bewildered air they went up to the door and facade of the chateau, dishonoured by immense placards with the seals of the of-ficers. To doubt was no longer possible ; they were notices of sale.

Madeleine bowed her head, and two tears rolled silently down her cheeks. Till this moment she had not well understood what was called in the vicinity the dissipations and excesses of Maurice. Therefore, in her own conscience, she had ever absolved him. Now, all her noble instincts revolted within her—cried piteously that this young man was lost. The marquise, on her part, felt all the blood of an indignant heart mount to her forehead,—that heart, ever young and burning, which age had not chilled.

'No, my children, no,' she cried resolutely, 'while I live, this domain and chateau shall never become the prey of the black shoal of sharks. I will never permit so great a joy to be given to the fools and rascals. Therefore be tranquil, my friends. You shall remain just as in the past, you in your farms where you were born, you in this house where you have grown up. Nothing will be changed in your existence ; take my word for it, and go immediately to console your wives and chil-dren.'

She, therefore, instantly sent for her no-tary, and put into his hands the certificates of her stocks that represented the greater part