

choking from his throat. "What is it that you want to say—Mother Blondin?"

Her fingers twined over his, and clung tighter and tighter.

"That man, father—he—he must not hang. I—I cannot go to God with that on my soul. I lied at the trial—I lied. I hated God then. I wanted only revenge because my son was dead. I said I recognised him again, but—but that is not true, for the light was low, and—and I do not see well—but—but that—that does not matter, father—it is not that—for it must have been that man. But it was not that man who—who tried to rob me—it—it was my own son. That man is innocent—innocent—I tell you—I——" She raised herself wildly up in bed. "Why do you look at me like that, Father Aubert—with that white face—is it too late—too late—and—and—will God not forgive?"

"It is not too late. Go on, Mother Blondin"—it was his lips that formed the words; it was not his voice, it could not be—that quiet voice speaking so softly.

Her face grew calmer. The fear was gone.

"It is not too late—it is not too late—and—and God will forgive," she whispered. "Listen then, father—listen, and pray for me. I—I was sure Théophile had been robbing me. I watched behind the door that night. I saw him go to take the money. And—and then that man came in, and Théophile rushed at him with a stick of wood. The man had—had done nothing. It was in self-defence he fought. And then I—I helped Théophile. It was Théophile who took the revolver to kill him, and—and—it went off in Théophile's hand, and——" she sighed heavily, and sank back on the pillow.

The room seemed to sway before Raymond—and