

from her alive. With one word spoken in her holy fortitude and strong courage, she changed my whole purpose: 'Pierre,' said she, 'you must go—it is my wish.' I knelt before her, and I said, 'I will go, mother.' 'Pierre,' she added, 'thou hast been a good son, and I thank God for it; but the duties of a son are not the only ones a man has to fulfil. Every citizen owes himself to his country; it calls thee—obey! Thou art going to be a soldier; from this moment thy life is no longer thine own, it is thy country's. If it's interests demand it, lay it down cheerfully. If it be the will of God that thou shouldst die before me, I should weep for thee my heart's tears, but I would say—"He gave, and He has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!" Go now, and if thou love thy mother, do thy duty.' Oh, how precious those holy words! I have never forgotten them. 'Do thy duty,' she said; now the duty of a soldier was always and in all things to obey; and in all things, and always, I obeyed. It was to go straight forward, to face danger without hesitation, without a second thought; and I went straight forward, faced danger without hesitation, without a second thought. Those who saw me thus, as it were, seek to meet the bullets, said, 'There is a brave fellow!' They might have better said, 'There is a man who loves his mother!'

"One day a letter brought the tidings that she was ill—my own poor mother; I longed to go to her. I asked for leave of absence; it was not granted. I remembered her last words—'If thou love thy mother, do thy duty.' I submitted. A little after I heard that she was dead. Oh! then my senses forsook me: at any risk I determined to return to the country. Whence proceeded so ardent, so impetuous a desire to see once more the place where my mother had just died? I will tell you; and as you have a mother, as she loves you, and as you love her, you will understand me....."

"We peasants of Morvan are a simple and confiding race; we have not received the instruction, nor attained the knowledge, that they have in the cities; but we have our beliefs, which the towns-folk call our superstitions. What matters the name? Be they superstitions or beliefs, we have them, and clever would be the man that could uproot them. Now one of these beliefs to

which we cling the most is, that which attributes to the first flower that blows in the grave-mould such a virtue, that he who gathers it is certain of never forgetting the dead, and of never being forgotten by them. Belief, how dear! how sweet! With it death has no terrors: for death, without forgetting or being forgotten, is but a sweet sleep, but calm repose after long toil. That flower—I panted to see it bud; I panted to gather it; I abandoned my post and went on my way. After ten days of a long and weary march, I reached my mother's grave. The earth seemed yet fresh; no flower had appeared: I waited. Six weeks elapsed; and then one lovely morning I saw a little blue flower—'Forget-me-not.' As I plucked it, I shed glad tears; for methought that little flower was my mother's soul; that she had felt that I was near, and under the form of that flower had given herself to my heart once more.

"There was nothing now to detain me in the country, for my father had soon followed my mother to the grave, and I plucked my precious flower; what more did I want? I remembered my mother's charge—'do thy duty!' I sought out the *gens d'armes*, and I said, 'I am a deserter—arrest me.'..... And now I am to die, and if, as you have assured me, I have in you a friend, I die without regret, for you will do me the only service I require. The flower which at the risk of my life I plucked from the grave is here, in a little case next to my heart.—Promise me that you will see that they do not take it from me. It is the link which unites me to my mother, and if I thought it would be broken—Oh! I should not have the courage.....Say, do you promise to do what I ask of you?"

"I promise," said the officer.

"Your hand, that I may press it to my heart; you are very kind to me; and if the Almighty God were in his omnipotence to give me my life a second time, I would devote it to you." The friends parted.

The next day dawned. They had arrived at the place of execution; and already had the fatal sentence been read over, when the low murmurs which ran through the ranks, suddenly changed into almost deafening shouts, "The Emperor! The Emperor! Long live the Emperor!"

He appeared, dismounted from his horse;