

but without a change wrought in all your spirit, alas ! my son ! you cannot hope to see the kingdom of heaven."

"Who dares to condemn the deed? He deserved death—and whence was doom to come but from me the Avenger? I took his life—but once I saved it. I bore him from the battlements of a fort stormed in vain—after we had all been blown up by the springing of a mine; and from bayonets that had drunk my blood as well as his—and his widowed mother blessed me as the saviour of her son. I told my wife to receive him as a brother—and for my sake to feel towards him a sister's love. Who shall speak of temptation—or frailty—or infatuation to me? Let the fools hold their peace. His wounds became dearer to her abandoned heart than mine had ever been, yet had her cheek lain many a night on the scars that seamed this breast—for I was not backward in battle, and our place was in the van. I was no coward, that she who loved heroism in him should have dishonoured her husband. True, he was younger by some years than me—and God had given him pernicious beauty—and she was young—too—oh ! the brightest of all mortal creatures the day she became my bride—nor less bright with that baby at her bosom—a matron in girlhood's resplendant spring! Is youth a plea for wickedness? And was I old? I, who in spite of all I have suffered, feel the vital blood yet boiling as to a furnace—but cut off for ever by her crime from fame and glory—and from a soldier in his proud career covered with honour in the eyes of all my countrymen, changed in an hour into an outlawed and nameless slave! My name has been borne by a race of heroes—the blood in my veins has flowed down a long line of illustrious our ancestors—and here am I now—a hidden disguised hypocrite—dwelling among peasants—and afraid—aye, afraid, because ashamed, to lift my eyes freely from the ground even among the solitudes of the mountains, lest some wandering stranger should recognise