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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DAWN.

ANNE was but one of some thousands of women who passed through the trial of that night; who heard the vague sounds of disquiet that roused them at midnight grow to sharp alarms, and these again—to the dull, pulsing music of the tocsin—swell to the uproar of a deadly conflict waged by desperate men in narrow streets. She was but one of thousands who that night heard fate knocking at their hearts; who praying, sick with fear, for the return of their men, showed white faces at barred windows, and by every tossing light that passed along the lane viewed long years of loneliness or widowhood.

But Anne had this burden also; that she had of herself sent her man into danger; her man, who, but for her pleading, but for her bidding, might not have gone. And that thought, though she had done her duty, laid a cold grip upon her heart. Her work it was if he lay at this moment stark in some dark alley, the first victim of the assault; or, sorely wounded, cried for water; or waited in pain where none but the stricken heard him. The thought bowed her to the ground, sent her to her prayers, took from her alike all memory of the danger that had menaced her this morning, and all consciousness of that which now threatened her, a helpless woman, if the town were taken.

The house, having its back on the Rue de la Cité, at