

for me that he should die, for if he lived I could not live without him. Father, do I sin?"

"No, my child," and the prelate closed his eyes.

"I have been so lonely," she said, "so alone. I craved the love of the young. He was so different from any man I had met before. His bright, handsome face seemed constantly with me."

At this moment Maurice's breast rose and fell in a long sigh. Presently the lids of his eyes rolled upward. Consciousness had returned. His wandering gaze first encountered the sad, austere visage of the prelate.

"Monseigneur?" he said, faintly.

"Do you wish absolution, my son?"

"I am dying. . . . ?"

"Yes."

"I am dying. . . . God has my account and he will judge it. I am not a Catholic, Monseigneur." He turned his head. "Your Highness?" He roved about the room with his eyes and discerned the feminine touch in all the appointments. "Where am I?"

"You are in my room, Monsieur," she said. Her voice broke, but she met his eyes with a brave smile. "Is there anything we can do for you?"

"Nothing. I am alone. To die. . . . Well, one time or another. And yet, it is a beautiful world, when we but learn it, full of color and life and love. I am young; I do not wish to die. And now . . . even in the midst . . . to go . . . where? Monseigneur, I am dying; to me princes and kings signify nothing. That is not to say that they ever did. In the presence of death