

stands duly remitted, in consequence of the remission of the sentence against Sister Mellicent. You are likewise free to return to Tadmor, at your own will and pleasure. But—attend to what is coming, friend Amelius!—the Council holds to its resolution that your choice between us and the world shall be absolutely unbiassed. In the fear of exercising even an indirect influence, we have purposely abstained from corresponding with you. With the same motive we now say that if you do return to us, it must be with no interference on our part. We inform you of an event that has happened in your absence—and we do no more.'

He paused, and looked again at his watch. Time proverbially works wonders. Time closed his lips.

Amelius replied with a heavy heart. The message from the Council had recalled him from the remembrance of Mellicent to the sense of his own position. 'My experience of the world has been a very hard one,' he said. 'I would gladly go back to Tadmor this very day, but for one consideration—' He hesitated; the image of Sally was before him. The tears rose in his eyes; he said no more.

Brother Bawkwell, driven hard by time, got on his legs, and handed to Amelius the second of the two papers which he had taken out of his pocket-book.

'Here is a purely informal document,' he said; 'being a few lines from Sister Mellicent, which I was charged to deliver to you. Be pleased to read it as quickly as you can, and tell me if there is any reply.'

There was not much to read:—'The good people here, Amelius, have forgiven me and let me return to them. I am living happily now, dear, in my remembrances of you. I take the walks that we once took together—and sometimes I get out in the boat on the lake, and think of the time when I told you my sad story. Your poor little pet creatures are under my care; the dog and the fawn, and the birds—all well, and waiting for you, with me. My belief that you will come back to me remains the same unshaken belief that it has been from the first. Once more I say it—you will find me the first to welcome you, when your spirits are sinking under the burden of life, and your heart turns again to the friends of your