

better ; you shall tell me that you are sorry for what you have said, and the pain you have given me. Come, take my hand, and ask my pardon.

JACOBUS, (*crustily*).—Not before you shall have explained to me wherein my crime or error lies.

MME. D'ERMEL, (*rising*). Ah ! this ugly pride of yours just recalls to me in time that a woman's indulgence is never repaid by anything else but ingratitude. Now, sir, I give you my word that you shall never, while I live, cross the threshold of this house, if before leaving, you do not ask my pardon, and on your knees.

JACOBUS.—That is, indeed, pushing me out by the shoulders. (*He takes his hat and cane. Mme. d'Ermel pulls the bell—Victoire enters.*)

MME. D'ERMEL.—Has the doctor's servant come for him ?

VICTOIRE.—No, Madam.

MME. D'ERMEL.—Well, then, tell John to light his lantern and take Monsieur home.

VICTOIRE.—Oh ! gracious, Madam.

MME. D'ERMEL.—Why, what is the matter with you ?

VICTOIRE.—But, Madam, don't you hear how it storms ?

MME. D'ERMEL.—And what do you suppose umbrellas were made for ?

VICTOIRE.—Oh, it is not an umbrella Monsieur will want, Madam, but a boat. You do not know what ravages this tempest is making. The mill-stream has overflowed, and carries everything with it. John, who just comes from it, saw the miller's dog floating down in his kennel, with a pile of logs behind, all travelling to the sea, no doubt. There never was such weather !

JACOBUS.—No matter, no matter ; I shall get across some how or other.

MME. D'ERMEL.—You are crazy. There is no use drowning yourself, especially in your present frame of mind. (*To Victoire.*) You may go. (*To Jacobus.*) When the rain stops, you have but to ring for Victoire,

and John will go with you. I leave you now. I am tired, and am going to bed. (*She passes through the little door that leads into her chamber. Her bed-chamber, small, neat and fresh. A night-lamp sheds a quiet light around. The foot of the bed is close to the door. Mme. d'Ermel, leaning her head against one of the little posts of the bed.*) How wicked men are ! how very wicked ! May be I have asked too much of him ? but it is not only my pardon I wished him to ask ! If he had offended me alone, I should not have cared ! (*She walks about in her room.*) Dear me ; how ill I feel ! Such emotions at my age ! The fact is, that as long as the heart beats, it can suffer, and how easily it can be made to suffer ! When I was young, I used to think that the time of life when all passions are dead must be a happy one, and longed for it, fancying the heart would then be at rest. How little we know ourselves ! Human nature is surely less earthly than we think ! Souls must have, like flowers, their different and sympathetic sexes—their own inclinations and attractions. Now, am I really in love with this old physician ? I am sure I don't know—it seems so ridiculous ! (*She wipes her eyes.*) And yet I was right—he hurt my feelings—I owed this sacrifice to my piety ! . . . Well, it will probably be the last I shall have to make in this life ! (*She kneels down and remains a moment engaged in prayer—Rising*) : He must be gone—I hear no one in the room. Well, so be it. (*She begins to undress, and stops.*) Really, I can't—I shall just throw myself on my bed. (*She lies down.*) How glad I shall be when morning comes ; night but adds to one's grief—makes darkness darker. (*The door of the room opens gently.*)

JACOBUS, *outside*.—I am going, Madam.

MME. D'ERMEL, *to herself*. He is still here ! (*Aloud.*) What did you say ?

JACOBUS.—I won't come in, Madam. You are in bed, I suppose.

MME. D'ERMEL.—Almost ; don't come