

A PAGAN OF THE SOUTH

not, the hurt to Clare would remain the same. With an angry bitterness in his voice that he did not try to hide, he said: "There is nothing more to be done now, Gabrielle, that I can see. But it is a crime—it is a pity!"

"A pity that he did not tell the truth on the gravestone—that he did not follow his star to the last, monsieur? How droll! And you should see how green the grass was on my grave! Yes, it is a pity."

But Shorland, heavy at heart, looked at her and said nothing more. He wondered why it was that he did not loathe her. Somehow, even in her shame, she compelled a kind of admiration and awe. She was the wreck of splendid possibilities. A poisonous vitality possessed her, but through it glowed a daring and a candor that belonged to her before she became wicked, and that now half redeemed her in the eyes of this man, who knew the worst of her. Even in her sin she was loyal to the scoundrel for whom she had sacrificed two lives, her own and another's. Her brow might flush with shame of the mad deed that turned her life awry, and of the degradation of her present surroundings; but her eyes looked straight into those of Shorland without wavering, with the pride of strength if not of goodness.

"Yes, there is one thing more," she said. "Give me that portrait to keep—until the twenty-fifth. Then you may take it—from the woman in the Morgue."