

"I care nothing for Paris or its sinful life; your mother has told me of it. I love my home—every stone in this old castle is dear to me, and my heart will always be here."

"Ah," said the Count, "I understand you. Your husband must be content to live here and never go to Paris."

"If he loves me as I shall love him, he will be content to stay here with me."

Count Napier Mont d'Oro felt sure that his mother intended to cut off his allowance when he became the husband of Vivienne; in fact, she might do so even if that event did not take place. Thrown upon his own resources, he knew his only means of existence would be the gambling-table. He was wild, ungovernable, criminal in many ways, but he did not look forward with unmixed pleasure to a sinful life. He was honest with himself in that he knew he thought more of the rich Batistelli estates than of the fair young girl who bore the name. He thoroughly believed in *laissez-faire*. His philosophy was very much like that of Clarine; take a step that does not exactly please you and trust that fate will so order your future that you will not be obliged to take another like it.

Apparently dropping conversation on the subject uppermost in their minds, he said: "I am going back to Paris, but for a little while only. I have some business matters there to attend to—I mean to close up. Then I am coming back to Corsica to settle down. After all, I think you are right; Parisian life is like fireworks—there is a snap and a go and a very pretty sight for a few minutes, and then it is all over. But the life of a country gentleman is solid and substantial. What more can a man want in this world than a faithful and trusting wife and beautiful and loving children? As these pictures pass before my eyes, I know which one is the best and which is better for me, but before I go I