

THE MUSIC

When he looked again at the woman, her eyes were open, and there glowed in them still the feeble fire of a great love. Her lips, too, pleaded with him in their old, sweet way, which always meant that he was to kiss them, and stroke her hair, and tell her again that she was the most beautiful thing in the whole world.

"My Mélisse!"

He crushed his face to her, his sobbing breath smothering itself in the soft masses of her hair, while her arms rose weakly and fell around his neck. He heard the quick, gasping struggle for breath within her bosom, and, faintly again, the words:

"It—is—the—music—of—my—people!"

"It is the music of the angels in the skies, my sweet Mélisse! It is *our* music. I will open the door."

The arms had slipped from his shoulders. Gently he ran his rough fingers through the loose glory of the woman's hair, and stroked her face as softly as he might have caressed the cheek of a sleeping child.