

infinite tenderness and pity. Laying her hand gently on his head, she stooped and kissed him once upon the brow. The whole manner of the action was so austere, so full of the sadness and remoteness of one whom a vast, impassable gulf separates for ever from all human and familiar intercourse, that it told Charles more plainly than any words could have done, the hopelessness of his love. He bowed his head in silence a moment, then pressing his lips passionately to her hand, he rose and left her.

She never saw him again. When she realised that he was indeed gone, that the last link which bound her to her past was broken, she began to feel bitterly the utter loneliness of her lot. Alone in the world, without kith or kin; alone, without the possibility of ever unburdening her heart to any human being, the old madness which had stared her in the face on the Isle of Demons seemed about to return.

But she was to have a noble salvation. Her uncle's estates were now hers. The wars had left them poor, untilled, in a wretched condition. The peasants were starving, the ramparts of the castle were tumbling down, and robber bands were plundering what remained to her. A life of action was what she needed: her resolve was soon taken, and in less than a month she was on her way northward, taking with her a companion of her own rank who had consented to share her solitude.

The journey was a weary one. Repeatedly she