

hunger nor sorrow, fear nor hope. He ate and drank mechanically and slept at intervals like a drugged man. Just as he had brought nothing into the world so now he seemed to be waiting to pass out of life stripped bare of all he had ever possessed and treasured. The need to live had withdrawn to some deep recess of being.

It is a desperate situation when the heart of a brave man fails him. That Pierre had held out even so long without reaching this climax spoke volumes for his capacity for endurance. Undoubtedly his love for Veronica had been the chief saving factor so far, combined with the secret vital belief that some unexpected volte-face of fortune might yet enable him to carry on and complete the errand for which he had been dispatched from France.

But now if he gave a thought to his mission at all it was only to tell himself with shuddering humiliation that success from the first had been hopeless. From the outset doomed to failure he had risked his life and his love to no purpose but to rot to his death in a filthy tomb, forgotten of God and his own kind. That he did not attempt to take his own life was due simply to the inertia which now bound his whole being.

Yet at rare intervals a glimmering ray would suddenly pierce the blackness of his mood.

"My Veronica!" he would murmur, and be at once conscious of a slight uplift of the deathly gloom. It was almost as if for a fleeting second an invisible bridge had swung in midair across the gulf which separated the lovers. And who shall deny that the prayers and yearning heart of the distant girl had created the tremulous light-ray which had shot through space and touched into momentary life the tortured soul of the man she loved.