

"Madame de Lastie, your mother is dying!" exclaimed the person who had roused the household, when the door was opened. "Oh, Madamed'Harville, hasten, hasten to her, if you want to see her again; and, Mademoiselle, run for the priest: lose no time; have pity on her soul."

Ernestine, in the distress this announcement caused her, and in terror lest her grandmother should die before the priest arrived, forgot her promise to Gustave, and, in a few minutes, accompanied by her maid, was on her way to the Seminary. The short streets, calm and quiet in the bright moonlight, were quickly traversed, and they soon reached the Place d'Armes. When half-way across it, the Seminary clock struck twelve; as it ceased, a strain of beautiful music from Handel's finest compositions rose in the air, sung by excellent and well-trained manly voices. For a moment Ernestine was beguiled from her sorrow, and she felt pleased that the good fathers should be the objects of such pious reverence. As she approached the gate of the Seminary, opposite which the serenaders were, she distinguished that the words adapted to the sacred music were the grossest parodies on all that she, or any who are called christian, hold most sacred, and that they were pronounced with studied distinctness and emphasis. Horror-struck, she would have retraced her steps, but that love for her grandmother urged her forward; and on reaching the gate, while the servant rang the bell, she turned to look at the actors in this dreadful scene, and, as she looked, she felt that happiness and joy in this world had gone from her forever; death would have been preferred to the agony that wrung her soul, and set her brain on fire. Thirteen noble-looking men formed a living *tableau* of the Redeemer and the twelve apostles, taken from one of the greatest masters. Twelve of them formed a semicircle round one who represented the Saviour, and that one was Gustave de Montbel, the president of this iniquitous club. The powder which was worn in those days had been taken out of his hair; the queue, unbound, fell in dark

brown curls around his shoulders; a slight tint of rouge colored his cheeks; and a large white cloth robed his entire figure. His head was a little bent, and one hand was held out as if teaching. At him she wildly gazed; her countenance became pale and rigid; and, with clasped hands, she stood looking, hoping that what she saw was but the phantasm of her fevered brain: but no, the awful words of the song were rising clear and distinct in the silence of the midnight hour; and, as it proceeded, high above their voices rose her distracted cry, "Gustave, Gustave!"

Her lover rushed towards her, his countenance distorted with fury and despair; and, seizing her hand, he said angrily: "Ernestine, did you not promise that you would not leave your house to-night?"

"Oh!" she moaned, "my punishment has quickly followed my sin. Oh, pardon, Father! I have sinned;" and for a moment a feeling of faintness overpowered her.

Gustave, alarmed, said more gently: "Ernestine, why did you come out to-night?"

"Gustave," she cried, rousing herself and withdrawing her hand from his grasp, "a merciful Providence has led me here to-night, to show me the gulf of misery I was falling into, and to take the idol from my heart, that He alone may be all in all to me."

Gustave sneered slightly. "I do not understand you," he remarked.

"Mademoiselle's grandmother is dying, and we have come for the priest," said the servant, pulling violently at the bell, "and that devil's song of yours, Monsieur Gustave, has scared them. They won't answer the bell, and Madame may die, and her soul be lost, if she dies without the precious offices of the church."

"If she has nothing better than that to depend on, she will not miss them, I can tell you, Mademoiselle Elise," said Gustave, with a sneer. Though he knew it not, his words were true, inasmuch as the scripture saith that, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven;"