

‘It is now three in the morning, and I must finish my letter. I have wept so much that I can hardly see. Oh! André, André, is it possible to be young and loving and yet be driven to die? Something clutches my throat, is strangling me. I had every right to live and be happy. A dream of life and light still hovers before me. But to-morrow, to-day’s sun even, is to fling me into the embracing arms of the master who is forced upon me, and where—where are the arms I could have loved?’

Here there was a break indicating an interval of time. The last hesitation, no doubt, and then the doing of the irrevocable. For a few more lines the letter was in the old tranquil strain; but it was a tranquillity that made him shudder.

‘It is done; it only needed a little courage; the phial of forgetting is empty. I am already a thing of the past. In an instant I had stepped out of life; I have only a bitter taste of flowers left on my lips. The world seems far away; everything is confused and vanishing—everything except the friend whom I loved, whom I am calling, who must stay with me till the end.’

And now the writing sloped across like that of a child; then, at the bottom of the next page, the lines crossed in every direction. The poor little hand was no longer firm and steady; the letters were too tiny or suddenly much too large, frightfully large. This was the last sheet, which had