

come in. Her aunt supported her head upon her shoulder, while Heloise knelt at her knee and fanned her with sisterly tenderness, whispering words of sisterly sympathy in her ear.

Pierre flew to the Convent at the hour appointed. He was at once admitted, with a caution from Mère Esther to be calm and not agitate the dying girl. The moment he entered the great parlor, Amélie sprang from her seat with a sudden cry of recognition, extending her poor thin hands through the bars towards him. Pierre seized them, kissing them passionately, but broke down utterly at the sight of her wasted face and the seal of death set thereon.

"Amélie, my darling Amélie!" exclaimed he; "I have prayed so long to see you, and they would not let me in."

"It was partly my fault, Pierre," said she fondly. "I feared to let you see me. I feared to learn that you hate, as you have cause to do, the whole house of Repentigny! And yet you do not curse me, dear Pierre?"

"My poor angel, you break my heart! I curse the house of Repentigny? I hate you? Amélie, you know me better."

"But your good father, the noble and just Bourgeois! Oh, Pierre, what have we not done to you and yours!"

She fell back upon her pillow, covering her eyes with her semi-transparent hands, bursting, as she did so, into a flood of passionate tears and passing into a dead faint.

Pierre was wild with anguish. He pressed against the bars. "For God's sake, let me in!" exclaimed he; "she is dying!"

The two quiet nuns who were in attendance shook their heads at Pierre's appeal to open the door. They were too well disciplined in the iron rule of the house to open it without an express order from the Lady Superior, or from Mère Esther. Their bosoms, abounding in spiritual warmth, responded coldly to the contagion of mere human passion. Their ears, unused to the voice of man's love, tingled at the words of Pierre. Fortunately, Mère Esther, ever on the watch, came into the parlor, and, seeing at a glance the need of the hour, opened the iron door and bade Pierre come in. He rushed forward and threw himself at the feet of Amélie, calling her by the most tender appellatives, and seeking to recall her to a consciousness of his presence.

That loved, familiar voice overtook her spirit, already