

"I hope you are not going to work late," she said.

"Only to write a letter, dear child," he answered.

"I understand," said Sulpice, "you are going to wait for Xavier."

"Yes, he must hear my decision to-night."

"Remember your promise."

"Have no fear, Sulpice. Rest in peace my good son!"

The young priest went up to the top floor, where his room was situated.

Sabine went to her little apartment, just between her father's and Xavier's.

The young girl, who had begged her father to retire early, seated herself at a table, and began to write with the rapidity of inspiration and of joy.

Meanwhile M. Pomereul rang for Baptiste.

"Let me know when M. Xavier comes in," he said briefly.

"M. Xavier has been in more than an hour," said the man.

"Then ask him to come to my study."

A moment more, and Xavier was face to face with his father.

His countenance bore traces of late hours and of premature excess; his eyes were dim, his lips colorless, his usually careful dress was disordered, his hands trembling with nervous excitement.

"Why did you not appear at dinner?" said his father.

The young man hung his head, but said nothing.

"Where were you?"

"At the club."

"So you preferred the society of your friends to ours?"

"I have not dined," said Xavier, in a low voice.

"What were you doing then?"

"I was playing."

"You were playing, and you lost, I suppose?"