

who would be sure to provide handsomely for their dear friends, the aristocrats. I had heard my master speak of joining the emigration, and said to myself, that there would be no hardship in his being carried there by force where he had wished himself to go. Still I could not resolve to betray him, but *drank again and again*, and talked boastfully of knowledge I could but would not give. They beset me sorely, and began to threaten also. They displayed the proclamation, and described all I should gain by giving information to the committee. They called me a cowardly slave, a miserable hireling, who dared not stand up for the people or denounce its enemies; and when on the one hand I saw imprisonment, and death perhaps, staring me in the face, and on the other riches and grandeur offering themselves to my grasp, the evil spirit got possession of me, and in an ill-fated hour I spoke the words that sealed the doom of my master and of his family. I cannot dwell on the subsequent details; I cannot speak of the agonies I endured. I saw them hurried into the town. I saw their pale faces; my master's gray head bowed in anguish on his breast. I saw her, that gentle saint, whom from my earliest childhood I had revered, hooted at and jeered by the mob, and her young daughters weeping by her side. The little boy too, rougher arms than mine were carrying him now, and when he saw me standing amidst the crowd (for a strange fascination made me follow them on their way to the prison), he called to Jacques to come and take him. 'Tis strange that a man lives through such a moment. I need not tell you the rest. They murdered them all—all but the boy. Him they kept in prison a long while, and then sent him away, I know not where, for I left my native place soon after my old master's execution, and became a wanderer on the face of the earth, a very Cain, with the stamp of reprobation on my brow.

"As might have been expected, I never reaped any worldly advantage from my crime. The man who had lured me to it got possession of the count's estates. I know not in whose hands they have remained. Now can you wonder that I have never ventured since to put my foot into a church; that I have lived an excommunicated outcast; and that I die as I have lived?"

A fearful groan burst from the breast of the unhappy man, and turning his face away from the priest he remained silent.

"The cross?" said the Abbe.

"The cross!" Jacques exclaimed. "She sent me this cross. She never knew that I had betrayed them. She was grateful to me for having favored their escape. O, my God, it has often seemed like an instrument of torture, this cross, which she begged the jailer's wife to give me, and with it her dying thanks and her blessing.—Look, look!" he cried, as he convulsively grasped the little enameled cross, "there are her initials, E. M.; and *there*," he continued with a still more despairing accent, and lifting up at the same time the curtain from the wall near his bedside,—"*there is her picture*. I knew where it was hanging in the summer-house of the chateau, and one night I stole it and carried it away with me. But I cannot bear to look at it, nor to part with it, and so I hung that curtain before it. Are you going away, Monsieur l'Abbe?"

The priest had gazed a moment at the cross and then at the picture. He had retired to the opposite side of the room, and knelt down in silence. There he remained for a few minutes with his face buried in his hands, while Jacques watched him with a secret uneasiness. At last he rose from his knees; his face was as pale as death, but perfectly calm. Returning to the bedside of his penitent, he spoke to him with great mildness, but at the same time with an irresistible energy of voice and manner.

"Jacques," he said, "there is *no sin* which the Precious Blood cannot wash away. It is never too late to repent; and if you repent, as I know you do, I can absolve you from this and all your other sins. I charge you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ your God and mine, instantly to make your confession, and to seek that pardon which I am authorized to bring you."

There was something in the priest's manner which awed and subdued the hitherto intractable sinner. He meekly complied with the injunction, and, in a voice broken by sobs, he made a general confession: and when he had accused himself of having, Judas-like, betrayed his master, for the first time his tears flowed freely. The Abbe—addressed to him a few touching words of exhortation, moved him to a yet deeper and more tender contrition; and then, as he saw there was no time to lose, he gave him absolution. The blessed words were pronounced; the dying man forgiven; and in that narrow chamber angels rejoiced, for a sinner had repented. Peace stole over the face so lately hardened by despair.

"And now," said the Abbe—"now