

without answering. Then with a steady look she calmly said:

"I can think of but one contingency which might shake my resolution to leave her yours without the least interruption from me. If *he*—Antoinette, if he were left alone and childless, I might see my duty differently from now. You must be prepared for that."

"Ermentrude, when you send me this little shoe—See, I will leave one on and give you the other, I shall know that you are coming, or that you want the child. My life is yours as I once promised, and do you think I would hold back the child?"

And again their hands met as once before, in that strong clasp, which means:

"Trust me to the death and beyond it."

With Antoinette it was to the death, as we have seen. Warned by Ermentrude of the appalling results of their plan to bring father and child together, and entreated to fly lest her story should imperil the secret upon the preservation of which his very life now hung, she answered to the call as she had promised, and thus acquitted her debt though she failed to save him.

Of her previous act in disfiguring his photograph in her temporary lodging-place, we shall never know the full story. The picture had been hers for years,