

When the people gathered again in the little church upon the hill, Valmond and his great adventure had become almost a legend, so soon are men and events lost in the distance of death and ruin.

The Curé preached, as he had always done, with a simple, practical solicitude ; but towards the end of his brief sermon he paused, and, with a grave tenderness of voice, said :

“ My children, vanity is the bane of mankind ; it destroys as many souls as self-sacrifice saves ! It is the constant temptation of the human heart. I have ever warned you against it, as I myself have prayed to be kept from its devices—alas ! at times, how futilely ! Vanity leads to imposture, and imposture to the wronging of others. But if a man repent, and yield all he has, to pay the high price of his bitter mistake, he may thereby redeem himself even in this world. If he give his life, repenting, and if the giving stays the evil he might have wrought, shall we be less merciful than God ?

“ My children ” (he did not mention Valmond’s name), “ his last act was manly ; his death was beautiful ; his sin was forgiven. Those rifle bullets that brought him down, let out all the evil in his blood.

“ We have, my people, been delivered from a grave error. Forgetting—save for our souls’ welfare—the misery of this vanity which led us astray, let us remember with gladness all of him that was commendable in our eyes : his kindness, eloquence, generous heart, courage, and love of Mother-