

said to me. And the priest has taught her all she knows, how to sew and embroider, and cook and read, though he never lets her read anything but works on religion. Religion, always religion! He has brought her up like a nun, crushed the life out of her. Until I found her out, found my jewel out. It is Tennyson who says that. But his "Maud" was freer to woo than Hortense, freer to love and kiss and hold—my God! that night while I watched them studying and bending over those cursed works on the Martyrs and the Saints and the Mission houses—I saw him—him—that old priest—take her in his arms and caress her, drink her breath, feast on her eyes, her hair, her delicate skin, and I burst in like a young madman and told Father Conture what I thought. Oh! I was mad! I should have won her first. I should have worked quietly, cautiously, waiting, waiting, biding my time. But I could never bide my time. And now she hates me, Hortense hates me, though she so nearly learned to love me. There where we used to listen to the magical river songs, we nearly loved, did we not Hortense? But she was a *St. Hilaire*, and I—I was nobody, and I had insulted *le bon Pere*. Yet if I can go back to her rich, prosperous, independent—What if that happen? But I begin to fancy it will never happen. My resolutions, where are they, what comes of them? Nothing. I have tried everything except the opera. Everything else has been rejected. For a week I have not gone to bed at all. I wait and see those ghastly gray fingers smoothing my pillow. I am not wanted. I am crowded out. My hands tremble and I cannot write. My eyes fail and I cannot see. To the window! * *

* * The lights of Oxford St. once more; the glare and the rattle without, the fever and the ruin, the nerves and the heart within. Poor nerves, poor heart; it is food you want and wine and rest, and I cannot give them to you. * * *

Sing, Hortense, will you? sit by my side, by our dear river St. Maurice, the clear, the sparkling. See how the floating cribs sail by, each with its gleaming lights! It is like Venice I suppose. Shall we see Venice ever, Hortense, you and I? Sing now for me,

Descendez à l'ombre,
Ma Jolie blonde.

Only you are *petite brune*, there is nothing *blonde* about you, *mignonne*, my dear mademoiselle, I should say if I were with you of course as I used to do. But surely I *am* with you and those lights are the floating cribs I see, and your voice it is that sings,