

up; and then with a mighty crashing of timbers and shifting of pebbles, and a din as of the world's end, began to run the other way. Anne's face turned a shade paler; so appalling was the noise, she would fain have stopped her ears. But her mother sat up.

"What is it?" she asked eagerly. "What is it?"

"Dear mother, do not fret! It must be——"

"Go and see, child! Go to the window in the passage, and see!" Madame Royaume persisted.

Anne had no wish to go, no wish to see. She pictured her lover in the *milieu* whence rose those appalling cries; and gladly would she have hidden her head in the bed-clothes and poured out her heart in prayer for him. But Madame persisted, and she yielded, went into the passage and opened the small window. With the cold air entered a fresh volume of sound. On the walls and timbered gables opposite her—and so near that she could well-nigh touch them with her extended arm—strange lights played luridly; and here and there, at dormers on a level with her, pale faces showed and vanished by turns.

She looked down. For a moment, in the confusion, in the medley of moving forms, she could discern little or nothing. Then, as her eyes became more accustomed to the sight, she made out that the tide of conflict was running inward into the town, a sign that the invaders were gaining the mastery.

"Well?" Madame Royaume asked, her eyes eager.

Anne strove to say something that would soothe her mother. But a sob choked her, and when she regained her speech she felt herself impelled, she knew not why, to tell the truth. "I fear our people are falling back," she murmured, trembling so violently that she could barely stand.

"How far? Where are they, child?" Her mother's voice was eager. "Where are they?"