

ing you she is praying God to preserve you to her, and to restore peace in the land. Alas ! one would think that God had abandoned us, and let men do just as they liked. What time we live in !”

But Paul, impatient, thought he heard his name called in a faint voice, and he moved on tiptoe toward his mother's bed. He had not been deceived — the sick woman's eyes were opened wide.

“ Paul ! my boy ! ” she cried, in her thin, weak voice. Without a word he lay down beside her, and her arms closed around him hungrily.

And now the boy who had faced death so impassively could do nothing but sob. In his mother's arms, he became a child once more, timid, despairing.

The sick woman, who seemed to gain strength from his presence, sought in vain to console him.

“ Why do you distress yourself so, my child, my best beloved ? ” she asked. “ You shall never leave me again. We will throw that hateful uniform away ; I never want to see it again, I will make haste to get well ; I feel so much stronger since you came. Soon you will go to work again, and we shall be happy together. The past will only look like a bad dream then, and we will forget it completely ; completely, my boy. ”

Poor soul, how could she know that her pictures for a bright future only deepened her boy's anguish ? She was silent, telling herself that the best way to dry tears is to let them flow freely. She kissed him and let his weary head fall back on the pillow, and then she gave herself up to dreams of happier days in store for both of them.

The boy's sobs grew less frequent and less violent, and soon nothing could be heard in the little room but the regular breathing of the mother and her son. Ashamed of his weakness, Paul forced himself into self-control ; and when he raised his head from the pillow once more, believing himself stronger than love of life ; his mother, yielding