

"Why do you go? Where are you going?"

"I have been here too long. I am what they call a villain and a plunderer. I am going to—*mon Dieu*, I do not know!" He shrugged his shoulders, and smiled with a sort of helpless disdain.

She leaned her hands on the table before her. Her voice was still that low, clear murmur.

"What people say doesn't matter." She staked her all upon her words. She must speak them, though she might hate herself afterwards. "Are you going—alone?"

"Where I may have to go I must travel alone."

He could not meet her eyes now; he turned his head away. He almost hoped she would not understand.

"Sit down," he added; "I want to tell you of my life."

He believed that telling it as he should, she would be horror-stricken, and that the deep flame would die out of her eyes. Neither he nor she knew how long they sat there, he telling with grim precision of the life he had led. Her hands were clasped before her, and she shuddered once or twice, so that he paused; but she asked him firmly to go on.

When all was told he stood up. He could not see her face, but he heard her say:

"You have forgotten many things that were not bad. Let me say them." She named things that would have done honour to a better man. He was standing in the moonlight that came through the window. She stepped forward, her hands quivering out to him. "Oh, Pierre," she said, "I know why you tell me this: but it makes no difference—none! I will go with you wherever you go."

He caught her hands in his. She was stronger than he was now. Her eyes mastered him. A low cry broke

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