

window, with his back to her, a stalwart figure in no-wise answering to the boyish proportions of her brother Paul.

The creaking of the door, as she closed it behind her, caused him to turn suddenly. The face that had been clouded and anxious swiftly brightened as he saw her standing there, chilled with the cold, weary, and pale, but nevertheless looking much more like living than he had dared to hope for.

"Thank God you are still alive!" he said, with an embrace that brought the blood coursing to heart and face. "You are to come home with me, — here is your mother's written order."

He gave her the letter, which she held unopened in her hand.

"I have thought it all out the last few months," she replied. "I can fulfil the troth I plighted to God in my childhood in other ways than by utter self-sacrifice." Her voice faltered, while her eyes drooped before the eager, searching gaze bent upon her; but there was a resolute look on her face, as if she was determined at any cost to make her confession, no matter how it might be received.