

"My brother first," said Xavier gravely, "then a young girl."

"A young girl?"

"Yes; I did not tell you all. I am going to be married."

"To an heiress?"

"No, to a poor orphan. I have nothing, yet she is satisfied."

"What is her name?"

"A very obscure one—Louise Dubois. You do not know her. Her father, an honest and honorable man, was our cashier for forty years."

Benedict wrung his friend's hand.

The others, seeing that the breakfast was going to end in a serious conversation, took their leave, and Benedict, with beating heart, found himself alone with Xavier. The young men had not seen each other for two years. Benedict had fought all during the war. When peace was concluded, and Jean Machû's confession had exonerated Xavier, Sabine besought him not to go near Benedict. His name always woke new sorrow in her breast. She knew that he had forgotten her, or was trying to forget; that the talent she was once so proud of had been applied to lower uses. Through the paper she learned of Benedict's new success, and henceforth a gulf opened between them. Loving him too much not to suffer, and too courageous not to struggle against her sorrow, she strove to conceal it from every one. But Xavier was not deceived by his sister's apparent serenity, and in spite of her request and his promise resolved to find out for himself if Benedict did not share in her regret. He knew it was so at the first word Benedict spoke, and at the first glance he gave him. The very way in which he took his hands, the voice in which he uttered his name, sufficed to show that Sabine's men-