

only bring my poor Pierre back again."

"There, I knew it was Pierre you were thinking of; but do you think he will ever come back, Mamma? Think how long it is since he went away."

"Yes, it is a long time; but then it seems like a day to me; and sometimes I think he must come back."

"I wonder what he would be like if he did come home. He was always wild, that Pierre."

"Yes, but not bad-hearted; there was nothing bad-hearted about Pierre."

"Mamma, Mamma, I have heard you tell the truth about him when you have been angry with his goings-on."

Madame Desrocher looked up incredulously from her knitting and shook her head. Therese commenced her singing again; she did not notice when her mother rose and went up-stairs, and she sang on, thinking of Pierre, how rough he used to be, and how he would never stay at home, but loved to wander about and sleep out in the fields, like an animal. By-and-byes she took her dishes and went out into the kitchen. The storm was rising, and every now and then an eddy of wind around the house corner would shriek and whistle off into the silence. From the street came the sound of sleigh bells and the shouts of the drivers. There was the soft, long sound of the fire in the room.

Suddenly the street door opened and a man entered. He wore an old blue toque without a tassel, a rough overcoat bulging about him and drawn together by a leather strap, and light trousers torn about the ankles. His feet were covered—but not protected—by a pair of broken boots. Over his shoulder he carried a bundle wrapped in a piece of jute. He had not endeavored to announce his arrival, and when he found the room empty he went over to the fire with the instinct to warm himself, for he was cold, bitterly cold. He threw his pack on a wooden settle near the stove, and put one of his feet on the fire-pan. His face, which was covered with an unkempt beard, was rather attractive, but he had a look of deep cunning in his eyes, and the marks of fatigue and dissipation were deeply trenched upon his cheek. He stood there warming himself

and glancing rapidly about the room, with an eye that lost no detail of the arrangement.

He found it little changed, but it awoke only a feeling of bitterness for the comfort of it, when he was so cold. He had not returned with any love for his old home, but had drifted there as a ship might put out of the storm into the haven where she was built, without purpose, except for safety and temporary shelter. He was evidently careless whether he was discovered or not, but as the moments passed the desire to see what he could find became too strong to be resisted, and he moved over to a large dresser which occupied one corner of the room. Above it hung several colored pictures of saints; there was St. Christopher with his great staff, and St. John Baptist; there was the divine Christ Himself with His heart upon His breast. On the shelf of the dresser were some trinkets, amongst them a little shrine in brass of the good Ste. Anne, and a leaden image of St. Anthony of Padua. It had belonged to him. How well he remembered it, and the day he bought it at St. Anne de Beauprè. It had not changed in an atom. There he stood, the good saint, his mild face beaming on the child which rested upon the open book in his hand.

He had just opened one of the drawers, and his roving eye had caught sight of some notes and silver in one corner, when he saw a small photograph which he had not before observed. As he picked it up he recognized the face of his old sweetheart; he muttered her name. With this portrait in his hand he remembered some things he had forgotten so long ago that the memory of them surprised him. He forgot that he was cold and hungry, that he had a moment before made up his mind to rob, that he might be discovered.

Suddenly he heard a voice singing in another room. He stopped to listen, and lost his chance to take the money and escape. He had barely time to put down the picture and return to the stove when Therese entered. She half screamed when she saw this burly figure, standing with impudent assurance, in the middle of the room,