

Poor Gilberte was blushing crimson. She shifted her weight from one foot to another.

"Oh, my lord!" she whispered.

"Aha!" cried Du Beaulieu. "You are witness to it, Henri. She denies not a jot of it. By the rood, she cannot! It is true — all true!"

Then addressing Gilberte again, —

"My girl, you are convicted," he said. "My lady will pronounce your sentence. Make it something lasting, wife. Some punishment that shall cling to her for ever."

Gilberte joined her hands and gazed in alarm at her mistress's face. The sweet radiance of loving kindness there reassured her, but she was puzzled beyond expression.

"Fear not, my lord!" said Yvonne, in a voice soft with tears restrained, tender with overflowing affection. "The punishment which I shall ask you to inflict will cling irrevocably to her and her descendants for ever. Gilberte, the words you used can only be atoned for on your knees. Kneel then before your lord and mine. No — closer — so!"

She ceased, and, with heaving bosom, held out the sword and scabbard.

The count drew the sword, and fixed his eyes on the down-turned face of his servant.

"You have given me the lie. You have called