

under the pall, and he was about to leap over the rails of the chancel, when the strong arm of one of the priests withheld him ; and, recalled by this repulse to the full extent of his misery, he lost all strength, and fell back senseless. In the silence that for a moment ensued, Madame d'Harville's sobs were distinctly heard, as were the plaintive words she uttered :

"Oh, my children ! my children ! am I to lose you both ?"

There in her coffin, did the world Ernestine thought she had died to, inwardly as well as outwardly, flow back into the inmost recesses of her heart, with all the loving instincts man has been blessed with, to make him happy here, and increase his happiness hereafter. And there, as she lay bound irrevocably in a remorseless isolation, did that voice within, whose suggestions she had resisted as so many temptations to draw her from the stern life of penance she believed herself called to, make itself heard. "Were not these dear ones given to you to cherish," it said clearly and distinctly. Scarce could she refrain from lifting the pall, but she dared not do even that ; and the tramp of the men's feet who carried Gustave out, in the stillness that otherwise prevailed, struck like thunder on her ears. Go where we will, to the uttermost ends of the earth, or down into its very depths, we cannot flee from the world ; for it is within us, in the heart, with all its loves, its hopes, its aspirations, its sorrows and its joys, its good and its evil. Buried in her cloister, this world within ceased not its exactions from Ernestine, and the doubt that arose in her soul, just as her final vows had been made, would not yield with all her efforts to efface it ; and the constant repetition of rosaries and litanies became mechanical, notwithstanding her struggles to confine her thoughts upon this occupation of her life, so different from that praying without ceasing which, in the midst of the heaviest occupation, keeps an enlightened Christian in constant communion with his Maker. But, to this sweet spirit in prison, Christ had not yet been

preached in all the fullness of his love and power to save, and it wearied itself in unceasing efforts to propitiate Him who is the "propitiation for our sins" "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," and as Isaiah further says : "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Precious truth, that brought no comfort to Ernestine ! Thus, far from the light of the natural day, and further still from the light of that "Sun of righteousness" which has arisen with healing on his wings, she faded as a tender plant lacking light and moisture. Often would she awake out of the little sleep she allowed herself, fancying she beheld her mother sick, dying, and neglected ; and often would she hear Gustave's loud cry of "Ernestine, Ernestine, don't leave me," and would answer ere quite aroused, "Here, here I am, Gustave, beloved," and, counting this unconscious act a great crime, would renew her penances with increased severities ; and thus she lingered on a few years, and one morning was found dead upon the steps of the little altar in her cloister.

A severe fit of illness followed the painful scene in the chapel, and it was long doubtful if Gustave would ever rise from this bed of suffering ; and when he did, his beautiful hair had become white as the driven snow. Long as Ernestine lived he attended the chapel, still cherishing the delusion that he could distinguish her voice. This was all the honor he ever paid the communion to which he belonged, taking no heed to the fables taught in it. He no longer denied the existence of God. Acknowledging Him in His works, he formed this creed for himself,—that the Creator of so much beauty and so much good must also be just and merciful.

I have often pondered over the state of mind of those whose intelligence refuses to yield obedience to the dogmas of this church ; and been astonished at the repugnance generally manifested to search the