

views of the superiority of the English *morale* to the French, which had been so ably impressed upon him during his visit to Manchester.

For after a very short stay at Brussels the nephew had boldly and suddenly pushed over to England, and had spent a fortnight in Barbier's lodgings reconnoitering his uncle. As to the uncle, Xavier had struck him, on closer inspection, as one of the most dissolute young reprobates he had ever beheld. He had preached to him like a father, holding up to him the image of his own absent favourite, David Grieve, as a brilliant illustration of what could be achieved even in this wicked world by morals and capacity. And in the intervals he had supplied the creature with money and amused himself with his *gaminerie* from morning till night. On their parting the uncle had with great frankness confessed to the nephew the general opinion he had formed of his character; all the same they were now embarked on a tolerably frequent correspondence; and Dubois' ultimate chance of obtaining his uncle's savings, on the *chasse* of which he had come to England, would have seemed to the cool observer by no means small.

'But now, look here,' said Barbier, taking off his spectacles to wipe away the 'merry tear' which dimmed them, after the recapitulation of Xavier's last letter, 'no more nonsense! I come and have it out with that young man. I sent him to Paris, and I'll know what he did there. *He's* not made of burnt sugar. Of course he's broken his heart—we all do. Serve him right.'

'It's easy to laugh,' said Ancrum dryly, 'only these young fellows have sometimes an uncomfortable way of vindicating their dignity by shooting themselves.'

Barbier started and looked interrogative.

'Now suppose you listen to me,' said the minister.

And the two men resumed their patrol of Albert Square while Ancrum described his rescue of David. The story was simply told but impressive. Barbier whistled, stared, and surrendered. Nay, he went to the other extreme. He loved the absurd, but he loved the romantic more. An hour before, David's adventures had been to him a subject of comic opera. As Ancrum talked, they took on 'the grand style,' and at the end he could no more have taken liberties with his old pupil than with the hero of the *Nuit de Mai*. He became excited, sympathetic, declamatory, tore open old sores, and Mr. Ancrum had great difficulty in getting rid of him.

So now the minister was sitting at home meditating. Through the atmosphere of mockery with which Dubois had invested the story he saw the outlines of it with some clearness.

CHAPTER XIII

In the midst of his meditations, however, the minister did not forget to send John out for David's supper, and when David

appeared, white, haggard, and exhausted, it was to find himself thought for with a care like a woman's. The lad, being sick and irritable, showed more resentment than gratitude; pushed away his food, looking sombrely the while at the dry bread and tea which formed the minister's invariable evening meal as though to ask when he was to be allowed his rational freedom again to eat or fast as he pleased. He scarcely answered Ancrum's remarks about the war, and finally he got up heavily, saying he was going out.

'You ought to be in your bed,' said Ancrum, protesting almost for the first time, 'and it's there you will be—tied by the leg—if you don't take a decent care of yourself.'

David took no notice and went. He dragged himself to the German Athenæum, of which he had become a member in the first flush of his inheritance. There were the telegrams from Paris, and an eager crowd reading and discussing them. As he pushed his way in at last and read, the whole scene rose before him as though he were there—the summer boulevards with their trees and kiosks, the moving crowds, the shouts, the 'Marseillaise'—the blind infectious madness of it all. And one short fortnight ago, what man in Europe could have guessed that such a day was already on the knees of the gods?

Afterwards, on the way to the Parlour, he talked to Elise about it,—placing her on the boulevards with the rest, and himself beside her to guard her from the throng. Hour by hour, this morbid gift of his, though it tortured him, provided an outlet for passion, saved him from numbness and despair.

When he got to Dora's sitting-room he found Daddy sitting there, smoking sombrely over the empty grate. He had expected a flood of questions, and had steeled himself to meet them. Nothing of the sort. The old man took very little notice of him and his travels. Considering the petulant advice with which Daddy had sent him off, David was astonished and, in the end, piqued. He recovered the tongue which he had lost for Ancrum, and was presently discussing the war like anybody else. Reminiscences of the talk amid which he had lived during those Paris weeks came back to them; and he repeated some of them which bore on the present action of Napoleon III. and his ministry, with a touch of returning fluency. He was, in fact, playing for Daddy's attention.

Daddy watched him silently with a wild and furtive eye. At last, looking round to see whether Dora was there, and finding that she had gone out, he laid a lean long hand on David's knee.

'That'll do, Davy. Davy, why were you all that time away?'

The young man drew himself up suddenly, brought back to realities from this first brief moment of something like forgetfulness. He tried for his common excuse of illness; but it stuck in his throat.

'I can't tell you, Daddy,' he said at last, slowly. 'I might tell you lies, but I won't. It concerns myself alone.'

Daddy still bent forward, his peaked wizard's face peering at his companion.

'You've been in trouble, Davy?'

'Yes, Daddy. But if you ask me questions I shall go.'

He spoke with a sudden fierce resolution.

Daddy paid no attention. He threw himself back in his chair with a long breath.

'Bedad, and I knew it, Davy! But sorrow a bit o' pity will you get out o' me, my boy—sorrow a bit!'

He lay staring at his companion with a glittering hostile look.

'By the powers!' he said presently, 'to be a gossoon of twenty again and troubled about a woman!'

David sprang up.

'Well, Daddy, I'll bid you good night! I wanted to hear something about your own affairs, which don't seem to be flourishing. But I'll wait till Miss Dora's at home.'

'Sit down, sit down again!' cried Lomax angrily, catching him by the arm. 'I'll not meddle with you. Yes, we're in a bad way, a deuced bad way, if you listen to Dora. If it weren't for her I'd have walked myself off long ago and let the devil take the creditors.'

David sat down and tried to get at the truth. But Daddy turned restive, and now invited the traveller's talk he had before repelled. He fell into his own recollections of the Paris streets in '48, and his vanity enjoyed showing this slip of a fellow that old Lomax was well acquainted with France and French politics before he was born.

Presently Dora came in, saw that her father had been beguiled into foregoing his usual nocturnal amusements, and looked soft gratitude at David. But as for him, he had never realised so vividly the queer aloofness and slipperiness of Daddy's nature, nor the miserable insecurity of Dora's life. Such men were not meant to have women depending on them.

He went downstairs pondering what could be done for the old vagabond. Drink had indeed made ravages since he had seen him last. For Dora's sake the young man recalled with eagerness some statements and suggestions in a French treatise on 'L'Alcoolisme' he chanced to have been turning over among his foreign scientific stock. Dora, no doubt, had invoked the parson; he would endeavour to bring in the doctor. And there was a young one, a frequenter of the stall in Birmingham Street, not as yet overburdened with practice, who occurred to him as clever and likely to help.

Nor did he forget his purpose. The very next morning he got hold of the young man in question. Out came the French book, which contained the record of a famous Frenchman's experiments, and the two hung over it together in David's little back room,

till the doctor's views of booksellers and their probable minds were somewhat enlarged, and David felt something of the old intellectual glow which these scientific problems of mind and matter had awakened in him during the winter. Then he walked his physician off to Daddy during the dinner hour and boldly introduced him as a friend. The young doctor, having been forewarned, treated the situation admirably, took up a jaunty and jesting tone, and, finally, putting morals entirely aside, invited Daddy to consider himself as a scientific case, and deal with himself as such for the benefit of knowledge.

Daddy was feeling ill and depressed; David struck him as an 'impudent varmint,' and the doctor as little better; but the lad's solicitude nevertheless flattered the old featherbrain, and in the end he fell into a burst of grandiloquent and self-excusing confidence. The doctor played him; prescribed; and when he and David left together it really seemed as though the old man from sheer curiosity about and interest in his own symptoms would probably make an attempt to follow the advice given him.

Dora came in while the three were still joking and discussing. Her face clouded as she listened, and when David and the doctor left she gave them a cool and shrinking good-bye which puzzled David.

Daddy, however, after a little while, mended considerably, developed an enthusiasm for his self-appointed doctor, and, what was still better, a strong excitement about his own affairs. When it came to the stage of a loan for the meeting of the more pressing liabilities, of fresh and ingenious efforts to attract customers, and of a certain gleam of returning prosperity, David's concern for his old friend very much dropped again. His former vivid interest in the human scene and the actors in it, as such, was not yet recovered; in these weeks weariness and lassitude overtook each reviving impulse and faculty in turn.

He was becoming more and more absorbed, too, by the news from France. Its first effect upon him was one of irritable repulsion. Barbier and Hugo had taught him to loathe the Empire; and had not he and she read *Les Châtiments* together, and mocked the Emperor's carriage as it passed them in the streets? The French telegrams in the English papers, with their accounts of the vapouring populace, the wild rhetoric in the Chamber, and the general outburst of *fanfaronnade*, seemed to make the French nation one with the Empire in its worst aspects, and, as we can all remember, set English teeth on edge. David devoured the papers day by day, and his antagonism grew, partly because, in spite of that strong gravitation of his mind towards things expansive, emotional, and rhetorical, the essential paste of him was not French but English—but mostly because of other and stronger reasons of which he was hardly conscious. During that fortnight of his agony in Paris all that sympathetic bond between the great city and himself which had been the source of so much pleasure and excitement to him during his early days with Elise

had broken down. The glamour of happiness torn away, he had seen, beneath the Paris of his dream, a greedy brutal Paris from which his sick senses shrank in fear and loathing. The grace, the spell, was gone—he was alone and miserable!—and amid the gaiety, the materialism, the selfish vice of the place he had moved for days, an alien and an enemy, the love within him turning to hate.

So now his mortal pain revenged itself. They would be beaten—this depraved and enervated people!—and his feverish heart rejoiced. But Elise? His lips quivered. What did the war matter to her except so far as its inconveniences were concerned? What had *la patrie* any more than *l'amour* to do with art? He put the question to her in his wild evening walks. It angered him that as the weeks swept on, and the great thunderbolts began to fall—Wissembourg, Forbach, Wörth—his imagination would sometimes show her to him agitated and in tears. No pity for him! why this sorrow for France? Absurd! let her go paint while the world loved and fought. In '48, while monarchy and republic were wrestling it out in the streets of Paris, was not the landscape painter Chintreuil quietly sketching all the time just outside one of the gates of the city? There was the artist for you.

Meanwhile the growing excitement of the war, heightened and poisoned by this reaction of his personality, combined with his painful efforts to recover his business to make him for a time more pale and gaunt than ever. Ancrum remonstrated in vain. He would go his way.

One evening—it was the day after Wörth—he was striding blindly up the Oxford Road when he ran against a man at the corner of a side street. It was Barbier, coming out for the last news.

Barbier started, swore, caught him by the arm, then fell back in amazement.

'*C'est toi? bon Dieu!*'

David, who had hitherto avoided his old companion with the utmost ingenuity, began hurriedly to inquire whether he was going to look at the evening's telegram.

'Yes—no—what matter? You can tell me. David, my lad, Ancrum told me you had been ill, but—'

The old man slipped his arm through that of the youth and looked at him fixedly. His own face was all furrowed and drawn, the eyes red.

'*Oui; tu es changé,*' he said at last with a sudden quivering breath, almost a sob, 'like everything,—like the world!'

And hanging down his head he drew the lad on, down the little street, towards his lodging.

'Come in! I'll ask no questions. Oh, come in! I have the French papers; for three hours I have been reading them alone. Come in or I shall go mad!'

And they discussed the war, the political prospect, and Bar-

bier's French letters till nearly midnight. All the exile's nationality had revived, and so lost was he in weeping over France he had scarcely breath left wherewith to curse the Empire. In the presence of a grief so true, so poignant, wherein all the man's little tricks and absurdities had for the moment melted out of sight, David's own seared and bitter feeling could find no voice. He said not a word that could jar on his old friend. And Barbier, like a child, took his sympathy for granted and abused the 'heartless hypocritical' English press to him with a will.

The days rushed on. David read the English papers in town, then walked up late to Barbier's lodgings to read a French batch and talk. Gravelotte was over, the siege was approaching. In that strange inner life of his, David with Elise beside him looked on at the crashing trees in the Bois de Boulogne, at the long lines of carts laden with household stuff and fugitives from the *zone militaire* flocking into Paris, at the soldiers and horses camping in the Tuileries Gardens, at the distant smoke-clouds amid the woods of Issy and Meudon, as village after village flamed to ruins.

One night—it was a day or two after Sedan—in a corner of the *Constitutionnel*, he found a little paragraph:—

'M. Henri Regnault and M. Clairin, leaving their studio at Tangiers to the care of the French Consul, have returned to Paris to offer themselves for military service, from which, as holder of the *prix de Rome*, M. Regnault is legally exempt. To praise such an act would be to insult its authors. France—our bleeding France!—does but take stern note that her sons are faithful.'

David threw the paper down, made an excuse to Barbier, and went out. He could not talk to Barbier, to whom everything must be explained from the beginning, and his heart was full. He wandered out towards Fallowfield under a moon which gave beauty and magic even to these low, begrimed streets, these jarring, incongruous buildings, thinking of Regnault and that unforgotten night beside the Seine. The young artist's passage through the Louvre, the towering of his great head above the crowd in the 'Trois Rats,' and that outburst under the moonlight—everything, every tone, every detail, returned upon him.

'*The great France—the undying France—*'

And now for France—ah!—David divined the eagerness, the passion, with which it had been done. He was nearer to the artist than he had been two months before—nearer to all great and tragic things. His recognition of the fact had in it the start of a strange joy.

So moved was he, and in such complex ways, that as he thought of Regnault with that realising imagination which was his gift, the whole set of his feeling towards France and the war wavered and changed. The animosity, the drop of personal gall in his heart, disappeared, conjured by Regnault's look, by Regnault's act. The one heroic figure he had seen in France began

now to stand to him for the nation. He walked home doing penance in his heart, passionately renewing the old love, the old homage, in this awful presence of a stricken people at bay.

And Elise came to him, in the moonlight, leaning upon him, with soft, approving eyes—

Ah! where was she—where—in this whirlwind of the national fate? where was her frail life hidden? was she still in this Paris, so soon to be 'begirt with armies'?

Four days later Barbier sent a note to Ancrum: 'Come and see me this afternoon at six o'clock. Say nothing to Grieve.'

A couple of hours afterwards Ancrum came slowly home to Birmingham Street, where he was still lodging. David had just put up the shop-shutters, John had departed, and his employer was about to retire to supper and his books in the back kitchen.

Ancrum went in and stood with his back to the fire which John had just made for the kettle and the minister's tea, when David came in with an armful of books and shut the door behind him. Ancrum let him put down his cargo, and then walked up to him.

'David,' he said, laying his hand with a timid gesture on the other's shoulder, 'Barbier has had some letters from Paris to-day—the last he will get probably—and among them a letter from his nephew.'

David started, turned sharp round, shaking off the hand.

'It contains some news which Barbier thinks you ought to know. Mademoiselle Elise Delaunay has married suddenly—married her cousin, Mr. Pimodan, a young doctor.'

The shock blanched every atom of colour from David's face. He tried wildly to control himself, to brave it out with a desperate 'Why not?' But speech failed him. He walked over to the mantelpiece and leant against it. The room swam with him, and the only impression of which for a moment or two he was conscious was that of the cheerful singing of the kettle.

'She would not leave Paris,' said Ancrum in a low voice, standing beside him. 'People tried to persuade her—nothing would induce her. Then this young man, who is said to have been in love with her for years, urged her to marry him—to accept his protection really, in view of all that might come. Dubois thinks she refused several times, but anyway two days ago they were married, civilly, with only the legal witnesses.'

David moved about the various things on the mantelpiece with restless fingers. Then he straightened himself.

'Is that all?' he asked, looking at the minister.

'All,' said Ancrum, who had, of course, no intention of repeating any of Dubois' playful embroideries on the facts. 'You will be glad, won't you, that she should have some one to protect her in such a strait?'—he added, after a minute's pause, his eyes on the fire.

'Yes,' said the other after a moment. 'Thank you. Won't you have your tea?'

Mr. Ancrum swallowed his emotion, and they sat down to table in silence. David played with some food, took one thing up after another, laid it down, and at last sprang up and seized his hat.

'Going out again?' asked the minister, trembling, he knew not why.

The lad muttered something. Instinctively the little lame fellow, who was closest to the door, rushed to it and threw himself against it.

'David, don't—don't go out alone—let me go with you!'

'I want to go out alone,' said David, his lips shaking. 'Why do you interfere with me?'

'Because—' and the short figure drew itself up, the minister's voice took a stern deep note, 'because when a man has once contemplated the sin of self-murder, those about him have no right to behave as though he were still like other innocent and happy people!'

David stood silent a moment, every limb trembling. Then his mouth set, and he made a step forward, one arm raised.

'Oh, yes!' cried Ancrum, 'you may fling me out of the way. My weakness and deformity are no match for you. Do, if you have the heart! Do you think I don't know that I rescued you from despair—that I drew you out of the very jaws of death? Do you think I don't guess that the news I have just given you withers the heart in your breast? You imagine, I suppose, that because I am deformed and a Sunday-school teacher, because I think something of religion, and can't read your French books, I cannot enter into what a *man* is and feels. Try me! When you were a little boy in my class, *my* life was already crushed in me—my tragedy was over. I have come close to passion and to sin; I'm not afraid of yours! You are alive here to-night, David Grieve, because I went to look for you on the mountains—lost sheep that you were—and found you, by God's mercy. You never thanked me—I knew you couldn't. Instead of your thanks I demand your confidence, here—now. Break down this silence between us. Tell me what you have done to bring your life to this pass. You have no father—I speak in his place, and I *deserve* that you should trust and listen to me!'

David looked at him with amazement—at the worn misshapen head thrown haughtily back—at the arms folded across the chest. Then his pride gave way, and that intolerable smart within could no longer hide itself. His soul melted within him; tears began to rain over his cheeks. He tottered to the fire and sat down, instinctively spreading his hands to the blaze, that word 'father' echoing in his ears; and by midnight Mr. Ancrum knew all the story, or as much of it as man could tell to man.

From this night of confession and of storm there emerged at least one result—the beginnings of a true and profitable bond

between David and Ancrum. Hitherto there had been expenditure of interest and affection on the minister's side, and a certain responsiveness and friendly susceptibility on David's; but no true understanding and contact, mind with mind. But in these agitated hours of such talk as belongs only to the rare crises of life, not only did Ancrum gain an insight into David's inmost nature, with all its rich, unripe store of feelings and powers, deeper than any he had possessed before, but David, breaking through the crusts of association, getting beyond and beneath the Sunday-school teacher and minister, came for the first time upon the real man in his friend, apart from trappings—cast off the old sense of pupilage, and found a brother instead of a monitor.

There came a moment when Ancrum, laying his hand on David's knee, told his own story in a few bare sentences, each of them, as it were, lightning on a dark background, revealing some few things with a ghastly plainness, only to let silence and mystery close again upon the whole. And there came another moment when the little minister, carried out of himself, fell into incoherent sentences, full of obscurity, yet often full of beauty, in which for the first time David came near to the living voice of religion speaking in its purest, intensest note. Christ was the burden of it all; the religion of pain, sacrifice, immortality; the religion of chastity and self-repression.

'Life goes from test to test, David; it's like any other business—the more you know the more's put on you. And this test of the man with the woman—there's no other cuts so deep. Aye, it parts the sheep from the goats. A man's failed in it—lost his footing—rolled into hell, before he knows where he is. "On this stone if a man fall"—I often put those words to it—there's all meanings in Scripture. Yes, you've stumbled, David—stumbled badly, but not more. There's mercy in it! You must rise again—you can. Accept yourself; accept the sin even; bear with yourself and go forward. That's what the Church says. Nothing can be undone, but break your pride, do penance, and all can be forgiven.

'But you don't admit the sin? A man has a right to the satisfaction of his own instincts. You asked a free consent and got it. What is law but a convention for miserable people who don't know how to love? Who was injured?

'David, that's the question of a fool. Were you and she the first man and woman in the world that ever loved? That's always the way; each man imagines the matter is still for his deciding, and he can no more decide it than he can tamper with the fact that fire burns or water drowns. All these centuries the human animal has fought with the human soul. And step by step the soul has registered her victories. She has won them only by feeling for the law and finding it—uncovering, bringing into light, the firm rocks beneath her feet. And on these rocks she rears her landmarks—marriage, the family, the State, the Church. Neglect them, and you sink into the quagmire from

which the soul of the race has been for generations struggling to save you. Dispute them! overthrow them—yes, if you can! You have about as much chance with them as you have with the other facts and laws amid which you live—physical or chemical or biological.

'I speak after the manner of men. If I were to speak after the manner of a Christian, I should say other things. I should ask how a man *dare* pluck from the Lord's hand, for his own wild and reckless use, a soul and body for which He died; how he, the Lord's bondsman, *dare* steal his joy, carrying it off by himself into the wilderness, like an animal his prey, instead of asking it at the hands, and under the blessing, of his Master; how he *dare*—a man under orders, and member of the Lord's body—forget the whole in his greed for the one—eternity in his thirst for the present!

'But no matter. Christ is nothing to you, nor Scripture, nor the Church—'

The minister broke off abruptly, his lined face working with emotion and prayer. David said nothing. In this stage of the conversation—the stage, as it were, of judgment and estimate—he could take no part. The time for it with him had not yet come. He had exhausted all his force in the attempt to explain himself—an attempt which began in fragmentary question and answer, and ended on his part in the rush of a confidence, an 'Apologia,' representing, in truth, that first reflex action of the mind upon experience, whence healing and spiritual growth were ultimately to issue. But for the moment he could carry the process no farther. He sat crouched over the flickering fire, saying nothing, letting Ancrum soliloquise as he pleased. His mind surged to and fro, indeed, as Ancrum talked between the poles of repulsion and response. His nature was not as Ancrum's, and every now and then the quick critical intellect flashed through his misery, detecting an assumption, probing an hypothesis. But in general his *feeling* gave way more and more. That moral sensitiveness in him which in its special nature was a special inheritance, the outcome of a long individualist development under the conditions of English Protestantism, made him from the first the natural prey of Ancrum's spiritual passion. As soon as a true contact between them was set up, David began to feel the religious temper and life in Ancrum draw him like a magnet. Not the forms of the thing, but the thing itself. In it, or something like it, as he listened, his heart suspected, for the first time, the only possible refuge from the agony of passion, the only possible escape from this fever of desire, jealousy, and love, in which he was consumed.

At the end he let Ancrum lead him up to bed and give him the bromide the Paris doctor had prescribed. When Ancrum softly put his head in, half an hour later, he was heavily asleep. Ancrum's face gleamed; he stole into the room carrying a rug and a pillow; and when David woke in the morning it was

to see the twisted form of the little minister stretched still and soldierlike beside him on the floor.

CHAPTER XIV

FROM that waking David rose and went about his work another man. As he moved about in the shop or in the streets, he was conscious of a gulf between his present self and his self of yesterday, which he could hardly explain. Simply the whole atmosphere and temperature of the soul was other, was different. He could have almost supposed that some process had gone on within him during the unconsciousness of sleep, of which he was now feeling the results; which had carried him on, without his knowing it, to a point in the highroad of life, far removed from that point where he had stood when his talk with Ancrum began. That world of enervating illusion, that 'kind of ghastly dreaminess,' as John Sterling called it, in which since his return he had lived with Elise, was gone, he knew not how—swept away like a cloud from the brain, a mist from the eyes. The sense of catastrophe, of things irrevocable and irreparable, the premature ageing of the whole man, remained—only the fever and the restlessness were past. Memory, indeed, was not affected. In some sort the scenes of his French experience would be throughout his life a permanent element in consciousness; but the persons concerned in them were dead—creatures of the past. He himself had been painfully re-born, and Pimodan's wife had no present personal existence for him. He turned himself deliberately to his old life, and took up the interests of it again one by one, but, as he soon discovered, with an insight, a power, a comprehension which had never yet been his. A moral and spiritual life destined to a rich development practically began for him with this winter—this awful winter of the agony of France.

His thoughts were often occupied now with Louie, but in a saner way. He could no longer, without morbidness, take on himself the whole responsibility of her miserable marriage. Human beings after all are what they make themselves. But the sense of his own share in it, and the perception of what her future life was likely to be, made him steadily accept beforehand the claims upon him which she was sure to press.

He had written to her early in September, when the siege was imminent, offering her money to bring her to England, and the protection of his roof during the rest of the war. And by a still later post than that which brought the news of Elise's marriage arrived a scrawl from Louie, written from a country town near Toulouse, whither she and Montjoie had retreated—apparently the sculptor's native place.

The letter was full of complaints—complaints of the war, which was being mismanaged by a set of rogues and fools who deserved stringing to the nearest tree; complaints of her husband,

who was a good-for-nothing brute; and complaints of her own health. She was expecting her confinement in the spring; if she got through it—which was not likely, considering the way in which she was treated—she should please herself about staying with such a man. *He* should not keep her for a day if she wanted to go. Meanwhile David might send her any money he could spare. There was not much of the six hundred left—that she could tell him; and she could not even screw enough for baby-clothes out of her husband. Very likely there would not be enough to pay for a nurse when her time came. Well, then she would be out of it—and a good job too.

She wished to be remembered to Dora; and Dora was especially to be told again that she needn't suppose St. Damian's was a patch on the real Catholic churches, because it wasn't. She—Louie—had been at the Midnight Mass in Toulouse Cathedral on Christmas Eve. That was something like. And down in the crypt they had a 'Bethlehem'—the sweetest thing you ever saw. There were the shepherds, and the wise men, and the angels—dolls, of course, but their dresses were splendid, and the little Jesus was dressed in white satin, embroidered with gold—old embroidery, tell Dora.

To this David had replied at once, sending money he could ill spare, and telling her to keep him informed of her whereabouts.

But the months passed on, and no more news arrived. He wrote again *via* Bordeaux, but with no result, and could only wait patiently till that eagle's grip, in which all French life was stifled, should be loosened.

Meanwhile his relation to another human being, whose life had been affected by the French episode, passed into a fresh phase. Two days after the news of Elise's marriage had reached him, he and John had just shut up the shop, and the young master was hanging over the counter under the gas, heavily conning a not very satisfactory business account.

John came in, took his hat and stick from a corner, and threw David a gruff 'good night.'

Something in the tone struck David's sore nerves like a blow. He turned abruptly—

'Look here, John! I can't stand this kind of thing much longer. Hadn't we better part? You've learnt a lot here, and I'll see you get a good place. You—you rub it in too long!'

John stood still, his big rough hands beginning to shake, his pink cheeks turning a painful crimson.

'You—you never said a word to me!' he flung out at last, incoherently, resentfully.

'Said a word to you? What do you mean? I told you the truth, and I would have told you more, if you hadn't turned against me as though I had been the devil himself. Do you suppose you are the only person who came to grief because of that French time? *Good God!*'

The last words came out with a low exasperation. The young