

FADETTE

BY

GEORGE SAND

TRANSLATED

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NEW YORK: 46 East 14th Street
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY
BOSTON: 100 Purchase Street

moulin digital editions



2017

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PREFACE

AFTER the terrible days of June, 1848, were at an end, I withdrew from the world—agitated to the very depths of my soul by the scenes of violence through which we had passed, and hoping to regain in solitude, at least my faith, if not my peace of mind.

If I claimed to be a philosopher, I might believe or pretend to believe, that faith in ideas enables the mind to maintain its serenity in the midst of the deplorable events of contemporaneous history.

But I make no such pretensions. I humbly acknowledge that the conviction that Providence has a future in store for us, would have no power to sustain the soul of an artist through the trials of a present fraught with gloom and convulsed by civil war. Men who enter the fray—who take an active part in politics—must, whatever may be the circumstances, be a prey to alternate hope and despair, rage and exultation—the elation of triumph or the exasperation of defeat.

But for the poor poet as for the woman who sits, an idle spectator of events—having no direct or personal part in them—there is—whatever may be the outcome of the struggle—a profound abhorrence of bloodshed on either side, grief and despair at beholding the hatred, the insults, the threats, the calumnies which ascend to heaven, like a foul holocaust, in the train of social upheavals.

At such moments as these, a genius like Dante's, impetuous and indomitable, writes with his tears, his nerves at their utmost tension, dipping his pen in gall—a terrible poem, a drama filled with groans and torture. One's soul must, like his, have been tempered by fire and sword, before one's imagination could conceive the horrors of a symbolic Inferno, when the wretched Purgatory of actual earthly desolation is staring him in the face.

The artist of our less virile and more sensitive age—who is the reflection and echo of his generation—cannot resist the impulse to avert his gaze and distract his imagination by turning toward an ideal state of peace and calm contemplation. He need not blush for the weakness to which he yields, for it is also his duty. At a time when such evils arise from men's hatred of each other and lack of mutual understanding, the artist's mission is to extol moderation, mutual confidence, and friendship, and thereby to remind poor, callous, or disheartened humanity, that purity of morals, tender sentiments, and primitive justice still exist or can exist in this world.

Direct allusions to present ills, appeals to excited passions—these do not lead to salvation; a sweet song, an air on the rustic pipe, a tale with which to lull the little ones to sleep—secure and free from pain—is worth far more than the portrayal of real evils, whose colors are deepened and intensified by the power of fiction.

To preach peace and harmony to men engaged in cutting each other's throats, is like a voice crying in the wilderness. There are times when men's souls are so disturbed that they are deaf to any direct appeal. Since those June days, of which present events are the inevitable consequence, the author of the tale which you are about to read has assumed the task of being amiable, even if he should die of chagrin. He has allowed them to ridicule his pastoral sketches, just as they have ridiculed everything else, but has not troubled himself as to the decisions of dogmatic criticism. He knows that he has given pleasure to those who love that strain, and that to give pleasure to such as suffer from the same malady as himself—a horror of hatred and the vengeance which follows in its footsteps—is to do them all the good which they are capable of accepting. A brief enjoyment, it is true—a fleeting consolation—but more genuine than the tirades of passion and more impressive than a classic presentation of logical facts.

GEORGE SAND.

NOHANT, December 21, 1851.

FADETTE

CHAPTER I

FATHER BARBEAU was a member of the municipal council of his commune, so you may take it for granted that he was a man in pretty comfortable circumstances. He had two fields which furnished a support for his family, and gave him a profit besides. His meadows yielded an abundant crop of hay, and, with the exception of that growing along the brook—which was of rather poorer quality on account of the rushes—it was considered the best forage in the neighborhood. Father Barbeau's house was well built, roofed with tiles, and pleasantly situated on a hillside, with a productive garden and a vineyard of about five acres. Then he had a fine orchard behind his barn—what is called an *ouche* in our part of the country, which bore plenty of fruit—plums, cherries, pears, and sorb apples; and there were no walnut trees, within a couple of leagues, so large and old as those which bordered his land. Father Barbeau was a good, cheerful, simple-hearted man, very devoted to his family, without neglecting the interests of his neighbors and fellow-parishioners.

He was already the father of three children, when Mother Barbeau—being no doubt of the opinion that they were able to support five, and that she had better hurry up as she was getting on in years—saw fit to present him with two fine boys at once. As they were so much alike that it was difficult to tell them apart, it was at once evident that they were bessons, that is to say, twins who bear a remarkable resemblance to each other. Mother Sagette, who received them in her apron as soon as they came into the world, did not forget to make a little cross with her needle on the arm of the first-born, because, said she, “there might be some mistake about a bit of ribbon or a necklace, and so the child might forfeit his birthright.”

“When the child is better able to bear it,” said she, “we must make a mark which will last” and this was accordingly done. The elder was named Sylvain, which was soon changed to Sylvinet, to distinguish him from his elder brother, who was his godfather; the younger was called Landry, and kept the name as he had received it at baptism, his uncle, who was his sponsor, being still known as Landriche—the name he had borne as a child.

When Father Barbeau returned from market, he was rather surprised to see two little heads in the cradle.

“Oh, ho!” said he, “that cradle is too small—I must make it larger to-morrow.” He was something of a carpenter, though he had never learned the trade, and had made half his furniture himself. He had nothing further to say on the subject, but set about caring for his wife, who drank a large glass of warm wine, and was all the better for

never told of it.”

“It makes no difference whether I am a little more or a little less ugly—you cannot say, Landry, that I am a pretty girl. Come, don’t try to comfort me; for I don’t care anything about it.”

“Pshaw! Who knows how you would look if you were dressed like the other girls, and had on a pretty cap! One thing everybody acknowledges; that is, that if your nose were not so short, your mouth so big, and your skin so dark, you wouldn’t be at all bad-looking. They say too, that there is not another such a pair of eyes in all the country round, and if they had not such a bold, defiant expression, anybody would be glad to get a kind glance from them.”

Landry said this without much reflection. He found himself recalling all Fadette’s good and bad points, and, for the first time, he felt an interest in the subject which he would not have believed possible a short time before. She noticed it, but said nothing about it, being too clever to take it seriously.

“My eyes look kindly on everything good,” said she, “and with pity on what is not good. Then I don’t mind displeasing people who don’t please me, and I cannot see how all those pretty girls whom I see admired, can flirt with everybody, as if they liked one person as well as another. As for me—if I were pretty—I should not want any one to think me so, or find me attractive but the one person of whom I was fond.”

Landry could not help thinking of Madelon, but little Fadette did not allow him to dwell on that subject. She continued:

“So then, Landry, the only wrong I have done other people, is that I have never sought their pity or indulgence for my ugliness. I have showed it to them without any disguise or embellishment, and that offends them, and makes them forget that though I have often done them a favor, I have never done them any harm. On the other hand, even if I should take an interest in my appearance, where should I manage to buy finery? Have I ever begged, even though I haven’t a cent to bless myself with? What does my grandmother give me beside board and lodging? And if I don’t know how to make use of the poor rags my mother left me, is it my fault, since nobody ever took the trouble to teach me, and I have been left to myself since I was ten years old, with nobody to look after me? I know what people say about me, though you are too kind to speak of it. They say that I am sixteen years old, and that I could hire myself out, and then I should earn wages enough to support myself. They say that I only stay with my grandmother because I am too lazy and too self-willed to work out, though she does not like me at all, and is well able to keep a servant.”

“Well, Fadette, isn’t it true?” said Landry. “They say that you are not fond of work, and your grandmother herself says that she would be much better off if she had a servant in your place.”

“My grandmother says that because she loves to scold and com-

plain. And yet, whenever I speak of going away, she refuses to let me go, because she knows that I am more useful to her than she will admit. Her eyes and her limbs are not so young as they once were, and she is no longer able to gather the herbs which she uses for her potions and powders: and some of them grow very far off and are difficult to get at. Besides that, as I told you, I know more about some kinds of herbs than she does herself, and she is surprised at the good effects of the medicines I make. As for our animals, they are so fine that everybody is astonished to see such a handsome flock belonging to people who have no pasture of their own. My grandmother knows well enough whom she ought to thank for her good yield of wool, and her rich goat's milk. No, indeed, she doesn't want me to go away, and I am worth a great deal more than I cost her. I am fond of my grandmother, even if she does scold me and give me hardly anything to eat. But I have another reason for staying with her, and I'll tell you, Landry, what it is, if you care to hear."

"Well, go on and tell it," answered Landry, who was greatly interested.

"When I was ten years old my mother left in my care a poor, ugly child—as ugly as I am, and still more unfortunate; for he was born a cripple, is sickly, puny, misshapen, and always peevish and ill-tempered because he is always in pain, poor boy! Everybody abuses him, hustles him about, and calls him names, my poor Grasshopper! My grandmother scolds him severely and would beat him too hard, if I did not protect him from her by making believe to whip him myself. But I always take care not to hurt him at all, and he knows it well enough. So when he has done anything naughty, he runs and hides himself under my petticoats, and says:

"Beat me before grandmother gets me!" And I pretend to beat, and the little rascal makes believe to cry. And then I take care of him. I can't always help his being in rags, poor little fellow; but whenever I can manage to get an old garment of any kind, I make it over for him, and I cure him when he is sick, whereas my grandmother would be the death of him, for she doesn't know anything about the care of children. So I look after the poor, sickly little thing, who would suffer if it were not for me, and would soon be in the grave beside my poor father, who died in spite of all my care. Perhaps I am not doing him a kindness by keeping life in him, misshapen as he is, and so ill-tempered; but I cannot help myself. And when I think of going out to service, Landry, so that I may have some money of my own, and escape from my present wretched condition, my heart aches for him, and I reproach myself, as if I were my Grasshopper's mother, and he was about to die through my neglect. So now you know all my faults and shortcomings, Landry. May the dear Lord be my judge! I forgive those who do not understand me."

CHAPTER XX

LITTLE Fadette's account of herself affected Landry very much, and he could not help acknowledging to himself that her reasoning was unanswerable. At last he was quite overcome by the way she spoke of her little brother, the Grasshopper, and was seized with a sudden liking for her, which made him feel as if he would be willing to take her part against the whole world.

"Any one who could blame you, Fadette, is more deserving of blame than you are. You express yourself very well, and nobody would give you credit for having so much good sense and such a kind heart. Why don't you let people see your true self? Then nobody would speak ill of you any more, and there would certainly be some who would do you justice."

"But I told you, Landry," answered she, "that I do not care to please anybody whom I do not like."

"And as you have told me, it must be because—" Then Landry stopped, taken by surprise by what he found himself about to say; he continued:

"Then you must think more of me than you do of anybody else? I always thought you hated me, for I have never been good to you."

"Perhaps I did hate you a little bit," answered little Fadette; "but if I did, I shall never hate you again after to-day, and I'll tell you why, Landry. I thought you were proud, and so you are; but you'll do your duty in spite of your pride, and you deserve all the more credit. I thought you ungrateful, and though you have been taught to be so proud that it makes you a little ungrateful, you are so true to your word that you keep it whatever it may cost you. And then, I thought you were a coward, and that made me despise you; but I find that you are only superstitious, and that you are not wanting in courage when you have real danger to face. You danced with me, though it was a great mortification to you. You even came into church to look for me after Vespers, just as I had forgiven you in my heart after saying my prayers, and had made up my mind not to torment you any more. You protected me from those naughty children, and you defied the big boys who would have ill-treated me if it had not been for you. And then this evening when you heard me crying, you came at once to help and comfort me. Don't imagine, Landry, that I can ever forget such things as that. I will find some means of proving to you, all your life long, that I have not forgotten what you have done for me, and I will always do anything I can for you and at any time. Now, to begin with. I know that I gave you a great deal of trouble to-day. Yes, Landry, I am sure of it, and I am enough of a witch to have guessed something about you which I did not suspect this morning. Now do believe that I am more mischievous than malicious, and that if I had known that you were in love

with Madelon, I would not have made trouble between you and her as I did, by making you dance with me. I acknowledge, I thought it was great fun to make you leave a pretty girl to dance with a fright like me; but I supposed that it was only a wound to your vanity. When I came to understand that you were really hurt—that, in spite of yourself, you could not help looking over at Madelon, and that you were almost ready to cry when you saw how angry she was—I cried myself! Yes, I cried when you wanted to fight her admirers, and you thought they were tears of repentance. That is the reason I was still crying so bitterly when you happened to come upon me here, and I shall never stop crying over it till I have atoned for the trouble I have brought upon such a good boy as I now know you to be.”

“Well, and suppose, my poor Fanchon,” said Landry, much moved by the tears which she was beginning to shed afresh, “suppose that you did cause a falling out between me and the girl with whom you think I am in love, what could you do to reconcile us?”

“Leave that to me, Landry,” answered little Fadette. “I know enough to explain things satisfactorily. Madelon shall know that it was all my fault. I will tell her everything and will clear you entirely. If she does not make up with you to-morrow, it will be because she has never loved you, and—”

“And then I ought not to feel badly about it, Fanchon. And as she really never has loved me, you would have all your trouble for nothing. So don’t do it, and don’t worry yourself about the trifling annoyance you have caused me. I have gotten over it already.”

“Such troubles as that are not so easily healed,” answered little Fadette. Then recollecting herself, she went on:

“At least, so they say. You are angry now, Landry. To-morrow, when you have slept over it, you will feel very unhappy till you have made your peace with pretty Madelon.”

“Perhaps I may,” said Landry. “But just now, I pledge you my word that I don’t understand what you mean, and am not bothering myself about it at all. It seems to me that you are trying to make me believe that I am in love with her, and I really think that if I ever did care for her, it was so little that I can hardly remember it.”

“That’s strange!” said little Fadette, sighing. “Is that the way you boys love?”

“Pshaw! You girls don’t love any better! Just see how little it takes to offend you, and how soon you take up with any new person who happens to come along. But perhaps we are talking about things which we don’t understand; at least I don’t believe that you know what you are talking about, Fadette; you, who are always making fun of lovers. I’ve no doubt you think it would be great fun to try and patch up my quarrel with Madelon. Don’t do it, I tell you; for she might think that I had asked you to do it, and she would be very much mistaken. Then she might be angry if she thought that I was

representing myself as her accepted lover; for, to tell the truth, I've never made love to her at all, and even if I did like her society, and was fond of dancing with her, she never encouraged me to say anything to her on the subject. So we had better let the matter drop. She may get over it by herself if she chooses, and if she doesn't, I don't think it will be the death of me."

"I know what you think about that, better than you do yourself, Landry," said little Fadette. "I believe you when you say that you have never told your love to Madelon in so many words, but she must be very stupid if she has not read it in your eyes, especially to-day. Since I was the cause of your quarrel, I must try and bring you together again, and it would be a good opportunity to let Madelon know that you love her. I will undertake to tell her, and I will do it so delicately and with so much tact, that she can never accuse you of putting it into my head. Just trust your little Fadette, Landry—the poor ugly Cricket whose heart is not so ugly as her face—and forgive my having tormented you; for it will all turn out right. You will find out that if it is pleasant to have a pretty girl in love with you, it is also very convenient to have an ugly girl as a friend; for ugly girls are disinterested and are not so touchy, and don't bear malice for every fancied slight."

"It doesn't make any difference whether you are pretty or ugly, Fanchon," said Landry, taking her hand. "I can see already that your friendship is a very good thing to have—so good, that perhaps it is more to be desired than love. I know now that you must have a good disposition, for I was very rude to you to-day, and you did not resent it, and though you say that I have treated you well, I know better—I have acted very meanly indeed."

"What do you mean, Landry? I don't know what—"

"Why, I didn't kiss you once in the dance, though it is the custom, and I ought to have done it. I treated you as if you were a little girl of ten, whom no one would take the trouble to kiss, and yet you are almost as old as I am; there isn't more than a year between us. So I really insulted you, and if you were not such a good-hearted girl, you would have noticed it."

"I never once thought of it," said little Fadette; and she got up, for she felt that she was not telling the truth, and she did not want him to find it out. "Come," said she, trying to speak cheerfully, "just hear the crickets chirping in the stubble fields! They are calling me by name, and that owl over there is telling me the hour by the star clock in the sky."

"I hear it too, and I must go back to La Priche; but before I say good-bye, Fadette, won't you tell me that you forgive me?"

"But I am not angry with you, Landry, and I have nothing to forgive."

"Yes, you have," said Landry, who felt curiously perturbed since she had been talking to him about love and friendship in so soft a

voice that the drowsy chirping of the bulfinches in the thicket seemed harsh in comparison. "Yes, you have something to forgive—and you must let me kiss you now, to make up for not doing it to-day."

Little Fadette trembled, then recovering her self-possession, she said:

"So you want me to let you do penance for your shortcomings. Well, I will acquit you, my boy. It is enough to have danced with the ugly girl, it would be too much to expect you to kiss her, too."

"Ah, don't say that," exclaimed Landry, catching hold of her hand and arm at the same time; "I don't think it would be a penance to kiss you—at least if it didn't offend and annoy you, coming from me—"

And as he said this, he was seized with such a strong desire to kiss little Fadette that he trembled for fear she would not consent.

"Listen, Landry," said she to him in her soft, caressing voice; "if I were a pretty girl, I should tell you that this is neither the place nor the time for kissing, as if we were doing it on the sly. If I were a flirt, I should think, on the contrary, that the time and place were just suitable; for you can't see how ugly I am in the dark, and as there is nobody here, you need not be ashamed of this notion which you have taken into your head. But as I am neither pretty nor a coquette, I must tell you this: just shake hands with me to show that we are friends, and that will be quite enough for me; for I have never had a friend before, and never expect to have another."

"Yes," said Landry, "I'll shake hands with you gladly; but listen, Fadette, the most honest friendship—and that is what I feel for you—need not prevent your allowing me to kiss you. If you will not give me that token of good-will, I shall think you have something against me."

Then he tried to snatch a kiss, but she resisted, and when he persevered, she began to cry and said, "Let me go, Landry—you hurt my feelings!"

Landry stopped in surprise, and was so annoyed to see that she was crying that he was almost angry with her.

"Now I see that you were not telling me the truth when you said that you did not care if nobody else liked you but me. You like somebody better than you do me, and that is the reason you will not kiss me."

"No, Landry," answered she, sobbing; "but I am afraid that if you kiss me at night when you can't see me, you will hate me when you see me again by daylight."

"Haven't I seen you before?" said Landry, provoked. "Don't I see you this very minute? Just come a little this way, here in the moonlight—I can see you as well as can be, and, pretty or ugly, I like your face, for I like you. That's all I have to say about it."

And then he kissed her—at first quite timidly, and then so in-

creased in his ardor that she grew frightened, and pushed him away, saying:

“That will do, Landry. That will do. Any one would think that you were kissing me because you were angry with me, or that you were thinking of Madelon. Don’t worry yourself! I will speak to her to-morrow, and you will enjoy kissing her a great deal more than you enjoy kissing me.”

So she sprang hastily up the bank which led to the road, and ran off with her usual light step.

Landry was quite infatuated, and he had a great mind to run after her. He started three times to follow her, before he came to the conclusion to go down the river bank. At last, feeling as if the devil was at his heels, he began to run too, and never stopped till he got to La Priche.

The next morning early, as he was feeding his cattle and petting them, he kept thinking of the conversation he had had with little Fadette in the Chaumois road, and which had lasted a full hour, though it seemed to him like a moment. His head was heavy with sleep and the excitement of a day which had turned out contrary to his expectations. He was alarmed and puzzled as he recalled the feeling which had taken possession of him with regard to this girl, whom he now saw in his mind’s eye, ugly and ill-dressed as he had always known her. Between whiles, it seemed to him that he must have dreamed of wanting to kiss her, and of pressing her to his heart as if he loved her dearly, and as if she had all of a sudden become the prettiest and dearest girl in the world to him.

“She must be a witch as they say she is, deny it as she may,” thought he; “for she certainly bewitched me last night, and never in all my life did I feel such intense love for father, mother, sister, or brother—certainly not for pretty Madelon, and not even for my twin brother Sylvinet—as I felt for that devil of a girl those two or three minutes. If poor Sylvinet could have seen my heart, he would have died of jealousy. My fancy for Madelon did not interfere with my love for my brother; but if I should pass a single day of such excitement and infatuation as I felt those few moments when I was with Fadette, I should lose my senses and think there was nobody else in the world.”

And Landry felt half dead with shame, fatigue, and vexation. He seated himself on the ox manger, and trembled for fear that the witch had deprived him of his courage, his reason, and his health.

But when it was broad daylight, and the farm laborers of La Priche were all up, they began to tease him about dancing with the ugly Cricket, and they made her out so ugly, so ill-bred, so shabby, that he did not know where to hide his face, he was so ashamed, not only of what they had seen, but of what he took good care not to tell them.

But he did not get angry, for the La Priche people were all

friendly to him and meant no harm by teasing him. He was even brave enough to tell them that little Fadette was not what they believed her to be—that she was as good as anybody else, and that she was a girl who was capable of doing many a good turn. Then they laughed at him more than ever.

“I won’t say anything about her mother,” said they, “but as for her—she is a child who doesn’t know anything at all, and I advise you not to try any of her remedies on a sick beast; for she is a little chatterbox and she doesn’t know anything about curing by magic. But she seems to know how to bewitch boys; for you never left her side all St. Andoche’s Day, and you’d better look out, Landry, my boy, or they’ll soon call you the Cricket’s mate, and the will-o’-the-wisp’s double. The devil will get after you. Old Nick himself will come and pull the sheets off our beds and tangle our horses’ manes. We shall have to send for the priest to take off the spell she has put upon you.”

“I believe,” said little Solange, “that he must have put on one of his stockings wrong side out yesterday morning. That attracts witches, and little Fadette must have noticed it.”

CHAPTER XXI

During the day, Landry, who was busy sowing, saw little Fadette pass. She was walking fast, and went off in the direction of a coppice where Madelon was cutting leaves for her sheep. It was time to unyoke the oxen, for they had finished their half-day’s work, and as Landry was leading them to pasture he watched little Fadette running along with a step so light that the grass hardly bent beneath her tread. He was anxious to know what she was going to tell Madelon, and instead of hurrying off to his dinner, which was waiting for him in the furrow, still warm from the ploughshare he walked on tiptoe along the edge of the wood, to try and hear what the two girls were talking about. He could not see them, and as Madelon muttered her answers, he could not hear what she said; but little Fadette’s voice, though soft, was none the less clear, and he did not lose a word, though she spoke in her usual tone. She was talking to Madelon about him, and told her, as she had promised Landry, how, ten months before, she had made him pledge her his word to hold himself at her disposal, whenever she should demand anything of him. And she explained this humbly and so prettily that it was a pleasure to listen to her, and then, without mentioning the will-o’-the-wisp, or how it had frightened Landry, she told about his being almost drowned on the Eve of St. Andoche, by attempting to cross the ford in the wrong place. In short, she represented everything in its best light, and made it evident that all the trouble came from a whim of her own, as she wanted to dance with a big boy, instead of the little

urchins who had always been her partners.

At this point, Madelon, who was quite out of patience, raised her voice, and said:

“What is all that to me? You may dance all your life long with the twins of the Twinnery, for all I care. You won’t hurt my feelings, I can tell you, and I certainly shall not envy you.”

And Fadette answered:

“Don’t speak so unkindly of poor Landry; for his heart is set on you, and if you don’t accept it, you will grieve him more than I can tell you.”

She expressed herself so prettily and in so caressing a tone of voice, and lavished such praise on Landry, that he would gladly have borrowed her powers of speech for use on future occasions, and blushed with pleasure to hear himself so eulogized. Madelon was also amazed at little Fadette’s pretty manner of speaking, but she despised her too much to let her see how greatly she was impressed.

“You have a nimble tongue, and are as bold as brass,” said she; “and it looks as if your grandmother had given you lessons in witchcraft; but I don’t like to talk to witches. It’s bad luck, and so you will please let me alone, you silly Cricket. You’ve caught a beau;—keep him, my pretty dear, for he is the first and last who will ever take a fancy to your ugly mug. You needn’t think I’d take your leavings;—no, not if he were a prince. Your Landry is nothing but a fool, and he must be utterly good for nothing, if you, believing that you had taken him away from me, have already come to ask me to take him back. A fine beau for me!—A fellow that even little Fadette won’t have!”

“If that is what is wounding your pride,” answered little Fadette, in a tone of voice which went straight to the bottom of Landry’s heart, “and if you are so haughty that you will not do him justice till you have first humiliated me, then rest content, Madelon, and trample under foot the self-respect and spirit of the poor little field Cricket. You say that I must despise Landry or I wouldn’t beg you to forgive him. Well, let me tell you, if you care to hear it, that I have been in love with him a long time—that he is the only boy I ever cared for, and that I shall perhaps never care for anybody else as long as I live. But I have too much sense, and am also too proud, to fancy that I can ever win his love. He is handsome, rich, and highly esteemed; I am ugly, poor, and despised. I know well enough that he is too good for me, and you must have seen how he scorned me at the festival. So, I say, don’t worry; for the man to whom little Fadette would not dare to lift her eyes, loves you dearly. Punish little Fadette by ridiculing her, and by taking possession of him to whom she would not venture to lay claim. If you won’t do it out of love for him, you may, at least, do it to punish my insolence—promise me, when he comes to make his peace with you, to treat him kindly, and give him a little encouragement.”

Instead of being touched by such humility and self-devotion, Madelon was very scornful indeed, and dismissed little Fadette, saying that she might keep Landry—he would just suit her—but as for herself, he was too childish and too big a fool. But little Fadette’s act of self-sacrifice bore fruit in spite of Madelon’s disdain. Such is the perversity of women’s hearts, that a boy seems to them a man as soon as he is liked and petted by other women. Madelon, who had never given Landry a serious thought, now began to think about him a great deal as soon as Fadette had gone away. She remembered everything the clever little talker had said to her about Landry’s love, and she rejoiced in being able to avenge herself on Fadette, now that she, poor girl, had gone so far as to acknowledge that she was in love with him herself.

That evening she went to La Priche—which was only two or three gun-shots away from her own home—and pretending to be in search of one of her own cattle, which had strayed into the same field with her uncle’s, she took care that Landry should see her, and encouraged him, with a glance, to come and speak to her.

Landry understood very well, for since he had seen so much of little Fadette his wits had sharpened wonderfully.

“Fadette is a witch,” thought he; “she has reestablished me in Madelon’s good graces, and she has accomplished more for me in a half-hour’s chat than I could have done for myself in a year. She is wonderfully clever, and God doesn’t often make so good a heart as hers.”

And as this thought passed through his mind, he looked at Madelon, but so coldly that she went away before he could make up his mind to go and speak to her. He was not abashed in her presence—strange to say, his shyness had all disappeared, but with it had vanished the pleasure he had once taken in her society, and his desire to win her love.

He had hardly eaten supper when he pretended to be going to bed. He soon got out on the side next the wall, crept softly out, and started off for the Roulettes ford. This evening, too, the will-o’-the-wisp was flitting about. As soon as he caught sight of it, Landry thought:

“So much the better; there is the will-o’-the-wisp. Fadette can’t be far off.” So he crossed the ford, quite fearlessly, made no misstep, and went up to Mother Fadet’s house, keeping a sharp lookout. He waited a little while, but saw no light and heard no noise. Everybody was in bed. He was in hopes that the Cricket, who often prowled about at night after her grandmother and the Grasshopper were asleep, might be wandering somewhere in the neighborhood. So he set off to try and find her. He crossed the field; he went as far as the Chaumoï road, whistling and singing at the top of his voice to attract attention; but he saw nothing but a badger stealing through the stubble, and a screech-owl hooting on a tree-top. He had to go

home without finding an opportunity to thank the girl who had done him such good service.

CHAPTER XXII

A WHOLE week passed and Landry did not meet Fadette, which surprised and worried him very much.

“She must still think me ungrateful,” said he; “and yet if I haven’t succeeded in seeing her, it is not for want of waiting and looking for her. I must have hurt her feelings by kissing her without her consent, yet I meant no harm, and never thought of offending her.” And he gave more time to thought this week than he had ever given before in all his life.

His mind was disturbed, he was pensive and agitated, and he could not work without an effort; for neither the big oxen, nor the shining plough, nor the rich red soil, moist with the fine rain of autumn, could fill his thoughts now.

Thursday evening he went to see his twin, and found him as anxious as himself. Sylvinet’s disposition was unlike his, but they were often in sympathy with each other. He seemed to have divined that something had disturbed his brother’s tranquillity, and yet he was far from suspecting what it was. He asked whether he had made up with Madelon, and for the first time in his life Landry lied to him and said yes. The fact is that Landry had not spoken a word to Madelon, and thought there was plenty of time for that—there was no hurry.

At last Sunday came, and Landry went to early Mass. He went in before the bell had rung, knowing that little Fadette was in the habit of coming at that time, because her prayers were always so long that everybody ridiculed her. He saw a little figure kneeling in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin—the back turned, and the face hidden in the hands so that there might be nothing to distract the mind. It was little Fadette’s posture, but it was not her cap nor dress, and Landry went out again to see if he could not find her on the porch, which we call by a word which signifies the place of rags and tatters, because there are so many ragged beggars there during service. Fadette’s rags were the only ones which he did not see. He heard Mass without seeing her, and it was only at the *Sursum Corda* that, looking once more toward that girl who was praying so fervently in the chapel, he saw her raise her head, and recognized his Cricket, though her whole appearance was totally unfamiliar to him. She still wore the same shabby dress, the coarse woollen petticoat, the red apron, and the linen cap, without the usual lace trimmings; but she had bleached, cut over, and mended everything during the week. She had let down her dress so that it fell over her stockings, at a more suitable length. Her stockings were very white, and so was her cap, which had been altered over into the new shape, and sat prettily

on her neatly braided black hair. She wore a new neckkerchief of a pretty, soft yellow, which suited her dark complexion. She had also lengthened her bodice, and instead of looking like a dressed-up piece of wood, she had a slender, graceful waist like a beautiful honey-bee. Moreover, by washing her face and hands with some unknown tincture of flowers and herbs, her pale face and her dainty little hands looked as fresh and soft as the white blossoms of the spring hawthorn.

Landry, seeing her so changed, let his prayer-book drop, and at the noise it made, little Fadette turned quite around and looked at him, and their eyes met. She blushed a little—a pale pink, like the wild hedge rose—but it made her look almost beautiful, especially as her black eyes, which were undeniably lovely, were so brilliant, that she seemed completely transfigured. Landry thought again, “She must be a witch. She has willed to change herself from an ugly girl into a pretty one—and, lo and behold!—some miracle has made her beautiful!”

He was really quite awestruck, but that did not prevent his having such a desire to approach and speak to her, that his heart beat with impatience for Mass to be over.

But she did not look at him again, and, instead of scampering about and frolicking with the children after her prayers, she slipped out so quietly that she hardly gave people time to notice the change and improvement in her. Landry did not dare follow her, particularly as Sylvinet never took his eyes off of him; but, about an hour afterward, he succeeded in getting off, and this time, following the guidance of his heart, he found little Fadette, who was tending her cattle in the little hollow roadway called the Gendarme’s Path, because one of the king’s gendarmes had been killed there by the people of La Cosse in olden times, as he was trying to compel the poor people to pay the tax and do extra duty, contrary to the requirements of the law, already severe enough.

CHAPTER XXIII

As it was Sunday, Fadette was neither sewing nor spinning as she watched her flocks. She was engaged in a simple amusement which our peasant children sometimes take very seriously. She was looking for four-leaved clover, which is seldom seen, and which brings good luck to those who chance to find it.

“Have you found one, Fanchon,” said Landry to her, as soon as he reached her side.

“I have often found them,” answered she; “but they don’t bring good luck, and I am none the better off for having three sprigs in my book.”

Landry sat down beside her as if to have a long talk. But, lo and

improve, and, who can tell—many an ugly girl turns out to be pretty by the time she is seventeen or eighteen years old.”

“And then they come to have some sense,” said Father Naubin, “and a girl learns to make herself attractive and agreeable. It is high time for the Cricket to realize that she is not a boy. Good heavens! We all thought she’d turn out a perfect disgrace to the place. But she’ll settle down and come out all right like the others. She will feel that she must behave herself so that people will forget that she had such a good-for-nothing mother, and you’ll see, she won’t get herself talked about.”

“God grant that she may,” said Mother Courtillet; “for it is a pity to see a girl look like a runaway horse. But I have some hopes of Fadette; for I met her yesterday, and instead of hobbling along behind me as usual, imitating my limp, she said good-morning and asked after my health as nicely as anybody.”

“That little girl you are all talking about is more wild than bad,” said Father Henri; “she has a good heart, I can tell you, for she has often taken my grandchildren out to the fields with her, just to relieve my daughter, when she was ill; and she took such good care of them that they wanted to stay with her.”

“They tell me,” said Father Couturier, “that one of Father Barbeau’s twins fell in love with her on St. Andoche’s Day. Is it true?”

“Nonsense!” answered Father Naubin. “You mustn’t place any faith in that story. It was only a childish fancy, and the Barbeaus are no fools—children or parents—let me tell you.”

And so they talked about little Fadette, but nobody thought of her very often; for they hardly ever saw her.

CHAPTER XXV

BUT there was one person who saw her very often, and was greatly interested in her, and that was Landry Barbeau. He was beside himself when he could not manage to get a few words with her, but as soon as he was in her presence a moment, he was soothed and contented; for she talked sensibly to him, and sympathized with his feelings. Perhaps her treatment of him was not altogether free from coquetry—at least, so it seemed to him; but as her motive was honorable, and she would not allow him to make love to her, till she had duly considered the matter, he had no right to complain. She could not suspect him of trying to deceive her as to the ardor of his affection for her; for it was such love as is not often found among country people, who are less impulsive and passionate than the dwellers in cities. Indeed Landry was by nature rather more than usually phlegmatic, and nobody could have foreseen that he would singe his wings so severely. His secret was carefully hidden, and it would have been a great surprise to any one who had discovered it.

But Fadette, seeing that he had given his heart to her so suddenly and unreservedly, was afraid that it might be only a flash in the pan, or that her own feelings might become more interested than was seemly for two children, not yet of marriageable age, at least according to the judgment of their parents and the dictates of prudence; for love is impatient of delay, and when it is once kindled in the hearts of two youngsters, it is a miracle, indeed, if it waits for the approval of others.

But little Fadette, who had always seemed younger than she really was, had plenty of sense, and a power of will far in advance of her age. She must have had extraordinary strength of mind to produce this result; for hers was a passionate nature—more so, indeed, than Landry's. She was desperately in love with him, and yet she behaved with remarkable discretion; for though she thought of him constantly, day and night, and longed to see him and caress him, she controlled herself as soon as she saw him, talked calmly and sensibly to him, even pretending that she did not know what it was to love passionately, and allowing him simply to shake hands with her.

And Landry, who was so greatly infatuated with her that, when he was alone with her in secluded places or under cover of the darkness, he might so far have forgotten himself as to refuse to obey her, was nevertheless so afraid of her displeasure, and so uncertain that she really loved him, that he was on as innocent terms with her as if she had been his sister, and he Jeanet, the little Grasshopper.

Fadette, to turn his attention from ideas which she did not wish to encourage, tried to teach him all the things she knew, and her intelligence and natural ability had carried her far beyond her grandmother's instructions. She did not try to keep up any appearance of mystery with Landry, and as he had always had a fear of witchcraft, she tried her best to make him understand that the devil had nothing to do with the secrets of her science.

"Pshaw, Landry," she said to him one day, "there is no such thing as the intervention of the evil spirit. There is only one spirit, and that is a good one; for it is the spirit of God. Lucifer is an invention of the Curé's, and the Old Nick is an old wife's tale. When I was a little thing, I believed in all those stories and stood in great awe of my grandmother's evil spells, but she laughed me out of it; for, to tell the truth, those who doubt everything are the ones who try to impose on others, and nobody has less faith in the devil than the witches themselves, though they are always invoking him on all occasions. They know well enough that they have never seen him or received the slightest aid from him. Those who are so silly as to believe in him and try to call him up, have never succeeded in getting him to appear. For instance, there was the miller of Passe-aux-chiens, who, as my grandmother told me, used to go to a place where four roads meet, carrying a big cudgel, and there he would summon the devil, intending to give him a sound thrashing. And

they heard him shouting in the night, 'Are you coming, you devil? Are you coming, mad dog? Are you coming, Old Nick?' But no Old Nick ever made his appearance. So the miller was quite eaten up with vanity, for he thought the devil was afraid of him."

"But, my little Fanchon," said Landry, "it isn't exactly Christian not to believe in the devil."

"I can't argue about it," said she; "but if he does exist, I am quite sure that he has no power to come on earth and do us any harm or steal away our souls from God. He could never have the insolence to do that, and since the earth is the Lord's, He alone can govern the men and things which dwell on it."

So Landry laid aside his foolish fears, and could not help wondering to see little Fadette so good a Christian in all her ways of thinking, and in her prayers. Indeed her piety took a more attractive form than that of other people. She loved God with all the fervor of her nature; for her keen intelligence and her tender heart were apparent in everything she did. When she spoke to Landry of this love, he was amazed to discover that he had been taught to repeat certain prayers and practise certain observances without the remotest idea of their meaning, and that though he had always treated sacred things with reverence from a sense of duty, his heart had never glowed with love for his Creator as little Fadette's did.

CHAPTER XXVI

IN his walks and talks with her, he became acquainted with the properties of herbs, and with all sorts of recipes for curing man and beast. He soon tried the effect of one of the latter on one of Father Caillaud's cows, which had eaten too much green food, and was swollen up with the colic. As the veterinary had given her up, saying that she could not live an hour, Landry gave her a potion which little Fadette had taught him to prepare. He told nobody what he had done, and the next morning when the workmen—very sorry for the loss of so fine a cow—came to bury her, they found her standing up, beginning to sniff at her food; her eyes were bright and the swelling had almost entirely disappeared. Another time, a colt was bitten by a viper, and Landry, still following the directions of little Fadette, cured it in short order. Finally, he had an opportunity of trying the antidote for hydrophobia on one of the La Priche dogs, who got well before he had bitten anybody. As Landry did his best to hide his intimacy with little Fadette, he did not boast of his skill, and the cure of his cattle was attributed to the care which he took of them. But Father Caillaud, who had a good knowledge of veterinary practice, like all good farmers, was surprised, and said:

"Father Barbeau has no special talent for cattle-raising, and hasn't even very good luck at it; for he lost several fine cattle last

year, and that, not for the first time. But Landry has the knack of it, and that is something one is born with. You have it or you don't have it; and even if one should go and study in the schools as the veterinary surgeons do, it is no use unless it is born in you. Now, I tell you, Landry is clever, and so he finds out what remedies to use. It is a great gift which nature has bestowed on him, and it will be worth more than capital to him in the management of a farm."

Father Caillaud's opinion was not that of a credulous or ignorant man, only he was mistaken when he took it for granted that Landry's skill was a gift of nature. Landry had no gift, save carefulness and intelligence in the use of the prescriptions which had been taught him. Still there is such a thing as a natural gift, for little Fadette had it; and with the few simple lessons which she had received from her grandmother, she recognized the salutary properties which God has bestowed on certain plants, which are to be employed in special ways, and showed as much readiness as if she had discovered them herself. She told the truth when she declared that she never resorted to witchcraft; but she was very observing, and made experiments, drew inferences, noticed, and made comparisons, and nobody can deny that this is a natural gift. Father Caillaud went still further—he was of the opinion that there are some herdsmen and laborers who are more or less lucky than others, and that the very presence of such people in the stable, benefits or injures the animals. However, as there is always a little truth in the greatest delusions, it must be acknowledged that good care, cleanliness, and conscientious labor will succeed, where negligence or stupidity will cause disaster.

Landry's tastes had always run in that direction. His love for Fadette was increased by the gratitude which he felt for the information which she had given him, and the respect which her talents and cleverness inspired. He was thankful enough to her now for frowning down his love-making in their walks and talks; and he saw, too, that she had her lover's interests and improvement more at heart than the pleasure she might have experienced if she had allowed him to court and flatter her as he had at first wished to do. Landry was soon so much in love that he was no longer ashamed to have it known that he had given his heart to a girl who had the reputation of being ugly, ill-tempered, and badly brought up. If he still observed any precautions, it was on account of his twin brother, whose jealous disposition was well known to him, and who had been obliged to make a great effort to resign himself to Landry's fancy for Madelon—a very mild and tame affair in comparison with what he now felt for Fanchon Fadet.

But if Landry was too eager in his love to think of prudence, little Fadette, on the other hand, had a natural fondness for mystery. Besides that, she did not want to expose him to being teased about her. Little Fadette, in short, loved him too well to wish to make trouble between him and his family, and enjoined upon him such

secrecy that it was almost a year before anybody suspected that there was anything between them. Landry had cured Sylvinet of prying into his affairs, and that part of the country, which is sparsely inhabited and thickly wooded, affords many facilities for lovers to meet in secret. Sylvinet, seeing that Landry no longer gave a thought to Madelon, though he had brought himself to regard sharing his brother's affection with her as a necessary evil, made more endurable by Landry's bashfulness and the girl's prudence, was rejoiced to find that Landry was in no hurry to withdraw his affection from his brother, to bestow it on a woman, and, being no longer jealous, he left him more free to do what he liked and go where he pleased on fête days and holy days. Landry found plenty of pretexts for coming and going, especially on Sunday evenings, when he left the Twinery early, and did not go home to La Priche till almost midnight. He had no difficulty in getting in; for he had persuaded them to let him have a little bed in the Capharnion.¹ You will perhaps take me up on this word, for the schoolmaster objects to it and insists on calling it Capharnium; but however much he may know about the word, he knows nothing about the thing, for I had to explain to him that it was that part of a barn, near the stables, where they keep the yokes, chains, horseshoes, and all sorts of utensils used for the farm animals, and for the cultivation of the land. So Landry could go home at any hour he pleased without waking anybody, and he always had all day Sunday to himself and till Monday morning, because Father Caillaud and his eldest son, who were both very steady men and never frequented wine shops or drank to excess on holidays, were in the habit of assuming all the care and management of the farm on such occasions, in order, said they, that all the young people of the establishment, who worked harder than they did during the week, might be free to frolic and amuse themselves, as our good Lord intended them to do.

And in the winter time, when the nights are so cold that love-making would have been very uncomfortable in the open air, Landry and little Fadette found a safe shelter in the Jacot Tower, an old deserted dovecote, which the pigeons had abandoned years ago, but which was still sound and weather-tight. It was attached to Father Caillaud's farm, and he used it even still for storing his surplus crops. As Landry kept the key and the dovecote stood on the border of the La Priche property, not far from the Roulettes ford, and in the middle of a walled field of luzerne grass, it would have puzzled the devil himself to discover the rendezvous of this pair of young lovers. When the weather was mild, they wandered about the groves of young trees, fit for cutting, which are numerous in this part of the country. They form admirable hiding-places for thieves and lovers, and as we have no thieves among us, only the lovers avail themselves of their shelter, and find themselves undisturbed and free from annoyance.

CHAPTER XXVII

BUT as secrecy cannot be maintained forever, it happened that, as Sylvinet was passing along by the cemetery wall, one fine Sunday, he heard the voice of his twin, a few steps away from him. Landry's tones were low, but Sylvinet was so well acquainted with his voice that he could have guessed what he was talking about, even if he had not heard a single word.

"Why won't you come and dance?" said he to a person whom Sylvinet could not see. "It is so long since you have been seen to stay after Mass, that nobody will think anything of it if I dance with you, as I am supposed to be only slightly acquainted with you. They will not think that I do it for love of you, but for politeness' sake, and because I want to see whether you have forgotten how to dance."

"No, Landry, no," answered a voice which Sylvinet did not recognize, because it was so long since he had heard it, little Fadette having kept herself so aloof from everybody, and particularly from him.

"No," said she, "it is better that I should not attract attention, and if you danced with me once, you would want to do it every Sunday, and that would be more than enough to make people talk about us. Believe what I have always told you, Landry—the day when our love is discovered, our troubles will begin. Let me go, and after you have spent a part of the day with your family and your twin brother, you may come and meet me at the place which we agreed upon."

"But it is so melancholy never to dance," said Landry; "you used to be so fond of dancing, darling, and you danced so well! How delighted I should be to take you by the hand, and whirl you about in my arms, and to see you dance with nobody but me—you who are so graceful and light-footed!"

"That is just what I must not do," answered she. "But I see that you are longing to dance, my dear Landry, and there is no reason why you should give it up. Go and dance a little! I shall be glad to know that you are enjoying yourself, and I shall wait for you as patiently as possible."

"Oh, you have too much patience!" said Landry, in a voice which was indicative of a very slender supply of that virtue; "but I would rather have my legs cut off than dance with girls I do not like, and whom I wouldn't kiss for a hundred francs."

"Well, if I should dance," answered little Fadette, "I could not help dancing with other young men beside you, and I should have to let them kiss me too."

"Go home then, go home, as quick as you can!" said Landry; "I don't want anybody to kiss you." Sylvinet heard nothing further ex-

cept the sound of retreating footsteps, and he slipped quickly into the cemetery and let his brother pass; for he did not want to be caught eavesdropping by him.

This discovery was like a stab in the heart to Sylvinet. He did not try to find out what girl it was with whom Landry was so desperately in love. It was enough for him to know that there was a person for whose sake Landry was willing to give him up, to whom he devoted all his thought, so that he no longer told his twin brother everything which concerned him.

“He must have lost confidence in me,” thought he, “and this girl of whom he is so fond must put it into his head to fear and dislike me. I am not surprised now, that he is always so bored at home, and so restless when I go out to walk with him. I gave it up, thinking that he would rather be alone, but now I shall be very careful not to annoy him. I shall not say anything to him, for he would be angry with me for finding out what he did not want me to know. I shall be the only sufferer and he will be glad to get rid of me.”

Sylvinet kept his resolution, and even went farther than necessary; for not only did he give up all attempt to keep his brother with him, but, in order to leave him free to do just as he chose, he was always the first to leave the house, and went wandering about the orchard, never going out into the field, saying to himself:

“If I should happen to meet Landry, he might think that I was watching him, and would let me know that he thought me a nuisance.”

And so it came to pass that, by degrees, his old trouble, which had been almost cured, took such firm and obstinate hold on him, that it soon betrayed itself in his face. His mother reproved him gently, but, as he was ashamed to own that he was as childish at eighteen as he had been three years earlier, he would not confess what was troubling him.

This saved him from an illness; for our good Lord never deserts those who try to help themselves, and he who has the courage to keep his troubles to himself is more able to bear them than he who utters a complaint. The poor twin began to look pale and sad all the time; he had an occasional attack of fever, and as he was not done growing he continued to be quite slender and delicate. He could not work very steadily, but that was not his fault; for he knew that work was good for him. It was bad enough to worry his father by his melancholy—he did not want to irritate and wrong him by his listlessness. So he went to work, and worked all the harder because he was out of patience with himself. So he often exceeded his strength, and was so tired the next day that he could not do anything.

“He will never make a stout worker,” said Father Barbeau, “but he does the best he can, and does not spare himself even when he might do so. That is the reason why I do not want to hire him out; for between his dread of a scolding, and the small amount of

strength which God has given him, he would be sure to kill himself, and I should reproach myself for it the rest of my life.”

Mother Barbeau took the same view of the matter which he did, and tried her best to cheer up Sylvinet. She consulted several doctors in regard to his health, and some of them told her to take great care of him and let him drink nothing but milk, because he was delicate, while others said to keep him at work and give him good wine, because, being delicate, he needed strengthening. Mother Barbeau did not know which to believe, which is always the case when one has too many advisers.

As she could not come to a decision, she fortunately did nothing, and Sylvinet kept on in the way which the good Lord had laid out for him, without meeting anything to turn him either to the right or to the left, and he bore his little cross and did not break down utterly under his trial, up to the time when Landry's love-affair was made public, and Sylvinet's distress was increased by the sight of his brother's suffering.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MADÉLON was the first to discover the secret, and she made a bad use of her knowledge, which she had happened upon quite by accident. She had long ago consoled herself for Landry's desertion, and as she had not wasted much time loving him, it did not take her long to forget him. However, she still bore him a little grudge, which only needed an opportunity to show itself—so true it is that a woman's pique outlives her liking.

This is the way the thing came about. Pretty Madelon, who was celebrated for her discretion and high and mighty airs with boys, was at heart a genuine coquette, and not half so faithful and sincere in her attachments as the poor Cricket, of whom everybody spoke and prophesied ill. Madelon had already had two admirers, not counting Landry, and now had her eye on a third—her cousin, the youngest son of Father Caillaud de La Priche. She had taken so great a fancy to him that she consented to accompany him to the dovecote which Landry and little Fadette had used as a trysting-place for their innocent love-making. She did not know of any other place where she could have a private interview with her new sweetheart, and feared an outbreak from the last man she had encouraged, for she was aware that he was watching her.

Young Caillaud had made a great search for the key of the dovecote, but without success, as it was still in Landry's pocket; he had not dared ask anybody for it, because he had no good reasons to give in explanation. Nobody but Landry cared anything about the whereabouts of the key, and so young Caillaud, taking it for granted that it must be lost, or that his father had it on his bunch, deter-

mined to break in the door. But the day this happened, Landry and Fadette were already there, and the two pairs of lovers felt so silly, when they found themselves face to face, that they were all equally anxious to keep the secret. But Madelon was so angry and jealous when she saw that Landry—who was now one of the best-looking and most promising young fellows in the neighborhood—had remained faithful to little Fadette ever since St. Andoche's Day, that she resolved to have her revenge. She said nothing about it to young Caillaud, who was an honest man and would not have given her any assistance, but she took into her confidence one or two young girls of her acquaintance, who were also rather miffed because Landry never asked them to dance any more, and they kept such close watch on little Fadette that it was not long before they found out all about her intimacy with Landry.

After seeing them together two or three times, they noised it abroad throughout the neighborhood, telling everybody who would listen to them—and Heaven knows there are always plenty of tongues to spread scandal, and ears to hearken to it—that Landry was on very familiar terms with little Fadette.

Then all the girls took it up; for when a good-looking youngster with property devotes himself to a young woman, the others regard it as an insult to their charms, and they will miss no opportunity of saying something disagreeable about her. We may add, too, that when women undertake to spread a piece of gossip, it flies like wild-fire.

So, two weeks after the adventure in Jacot's Tower, everybody, little and big, old and young, knew that Landry the twin was in love with Fanchon the Cricket. There was no mention made of the tower, however, or of Madelon, who took good care to keep in the background, and even pretended to be surprised at a piece of news which she herself had been the first to set in circulation.

The rumor reached the ears of Mother Barbeau, who was much distressed, and hesitated to speak to her husband on the subject. But Father Barbeau heard it from somebody else, and Sylvinet, who had carefully kept his brother's secret, was worried to find out that everybody knew it.

So one evening when Landry was about to leave the Twinnery rather early, as he was in the habit of doing, his father said to him, in the presence of his mother, his elder sister, and his twin brother:

“Don't be in such a hurry to leave us, Landry—I have something to say to you; I'll wait till your godfather comes, for I want to ask you for an explanation before all those members of the family who are interested in your welfare.” When the godfather, who was Uncle Landriche, had arrived, Father Barbeau began:

“What I am about to say will be rather mortifying to you, Landry; indeed I am myself both sorry and ashamed to be forced to question you before the whole family. But I am in hopes that this

mortification will do you good, and cure you of a fancy which might injure you very much. It seems that you have made an acquaintance dating back to last St. Andoche's Day—nearly a year ago. I was told of it at the time, for it was most extraordinary that you should dance all day with the ugliest, dirtiest, and most disreputable girl in all our part of the country. I thought best to take no notice of it, thinking that you had merely done it by way of amusement; I did not approve of such behavior, for if it is wrong to associate with bad people, you should never do anything to increase their degradation, and expose them to the contempt of everybody. I neglected saying anything to you about it, thinking, when I saw how low-spirited you looked the next day, that you were sorry for what you had done, and would not be likely to do it again. But now, this last week, I hear quite a different story, and although the report comes from reliable people, I shall not believe it unless you acknowledge its truth. If I have wronged you by my suspicions, you must attribute it to my interest in you, and to the fact that I consider it my duty to keep an eye on you. If the story be false, I shall be glad to take your word for it, and it will be a relief to know that you have been slandered."

"Father," said Landry, "will you be good enough to tell me of what you accuse me? I will answer you truthfully and with all due respect."

"I think I have already told you enough to make you understand, Landry, that you are accused of improper relations with the granddaughter of Mother Fadet, who is bad enough, not to speak of the unfortunate girl's own mother, who ran away from her husband, her children, and her native place, to be a camp-follower. They say that you wander about everywhere with little Fadette, which makes me fear that she has inveigled you into some disreputable love-affair, which you may regret all your life long. Now, do you understand?"

"I understand perfectly, my dear father," answered Landry; "but allow me to ask you one question before I answer you. Is it on account of her family or only on her own account, that you regard Fanchon Fadet as an undesirable acquaintance for me to have?"

"For both reasons, of course," answered Father Barbeau, with rather more severity than he had shown at the beginning of the conversation; for he had expected to find Landry very humble and penitent, whereas he was perfectly calm and prepared for anything. "In the first place," said he, "she comes of very disreputable stock, and no decent, respectable family like mine would be willing to connect itself with the Fadets. In the next place, nobody has any confidence in little Fadette herself, or any respect for her. We have seen her grow up and we know all about her. They tell me—and indeed I have noticed it myself two or three times—that for the past year she has behaved herself better; that she has stopped running around with the little boys, and is no longer impudent to everybody she meets. You see that I want to be perfectly just, but that does not pre-

vent my seeing that a child who has had such a bringing up can never make a decent woman, and knowing her grandmother as I do, I have every reason to believe that the whole affair is a put-up job to entrap you into making promises which will place you in a very mortifying and embarrassing position. People even go so far as to say that the girl is in a delicate situation. I am not willing to believe this on mere hearsay, but if it should turn out to be true, you would surely be suspected and it might result in a scandal and a lawsuit.”

Landry, who from the first word had made up his mind to be on his guard and keep his temper, now lost all patience. He turned as red as fire, and said, rising from his seat:

“Father, the people who told you that, lied like dogs. It is such an outrageous insult to Fanchon Fadet, that if I had them here, I should have made them take back their words, or fight it out with me. Tell them that they are cowards and heathen—just let them say to my face what they have been mean enough to insinuate to you behind my back, and we’ll see how it will turn out.”

“Don’t fly into such a rage, Landry,” said Sylvinet, in the greatest distress. “Father does not mean to accuse you of ruining the girl; but he is afraid that she may have been imprudent with others, and now wants to make it appear, by hanging around you all the time, that she has some claim on you.”

CHAPTER XXIX

His twin brother’s voice had a soothing effect on Landry, but he could not allow his words to pass without a reply.

“Brother,” said he, “you don’t know anything at all about it. You have always been prejudiced against little Fadette, and you don’t know her at all. I care very little for what they say against me, but I will not allow them to talk against her, and I want my father and mother to know that there isn’t another girl in the world so modest, so sensible, so good, and so unselfish as she is. If she is so unfortunate as to have disreputable relatives, she deserves all the more credit for being what she is; and I would never have believed it possible that Christian people could blame her for her unfortunate birth.”

“You seem to think that I am to blame, Landry,” said Father Barbeau, rising too, to show that he did not wish any more words on the subject. “It is very plain to be seen that you are more interested in this Fadette than I could have wished. Since you are neither sorry nor ashamed of what you have done, we will say no more about it. I shall think over what I had better do, to save you from the consequences of a piece of youthful folly. And now you had better return to your employer.”

“You must not go off like that,” said Sylvinet, detaining his brother, who was about to leave. “Father, Landry is so sorry for hav-

ing offended you that he cannot say anything. Forgive him and kiss him, or he will cry all night long, and your displeasure will be a greater punishment than he deserves.”

Sylvinet was crying, Mother Barbeau was crying, too, and so were the elder sister and Uncle Landriche. Nobody’s eyes were dry but Father Barbeau’s and Landry’s; but their hearts were full, and they kissed each other as the rest of the family begged them to do. The father did not exact any promise from his son, knowing that such promises are very uncertain in an affair of this kind, and not wishing to run any risk of being disobeyed; but he gave Landry to understand that the matter did not drop there, and that he should take it up again.

Landry went away, indignant and distressed. Sylvinet would have been glad to follow him, but he did not dare do so; for he took it for granted that his brother would go straight to little Fadette to tell her of his troubles, and he went to bed so downhearted that he did nothing but sigh all night and dream that some dreadful misfortune had overtaken the family.

Landry went to little Fadette’s and knocked at the door. Mother Fadet had grown so deaf that nothing could waken her, after she had once fallen asleep, and ever since Landry had found out that his secret was discovered, he could not get a chance to talk to Fanchon, excepting at night, in the room where the old woman and little Jeanet were sleeping. Even then he ran a great risk; for the old witch could not bear him, and would have greeted him with more cuffs than pretty speeches. Landry told all his troubles to little Fadette, and found her perfectly resigned and fearless. At first she tried to persuade him that it would be better for him to think no more about her. But when she saw that he grew more and more indignant and distressed, she urged him to submit, telling him that everything would turn out all right.

“Listen, Landry,” said she; “I have always foreseen what has just happened, and I have often wondered what we should do in such a case as the present. Your father is right and I do not blame him at all; for it is his affection for you which makes him dread to see you fall in love with a girl like me. I forgive him for his pride and for being rather unjust to me; for we can’t deny that I was as wild as a hawk when I was little, and you yourself gave me a good talking to the day you fell in love with me. Even if I have cured myself of some of my faults the past year, there has not been time enough to inspire your father with confidence in me, as he told you to-day. We must wait awhile longer, and by degrees the prejudice against me will die out, and the wicked lies they are telling will be forgotten. Your father and mother will see that I am a decent girl, and that I am not trying to corrupt you or get money out of you. They will do justice to the sincerity of my affection for you, and we shall be able to see and talk to each other, and nobody will object. But meanwhile we must obey

your father, who will forbid your visiting me, I am sure.”

“I shall never have the courage to give up seeing you,” said Landry; “I would rather go and throw myself into the river.”

“Then I must have it for you,” said Fadette; “I will go away, I will leave this part of the country for a little while. There is a good place in the city which has been waiting for me for the last two months. My grandmother is getting so old and so deaf that she has almost given up making and selling her medicines, and cannot hold consultations any more. She has a relative—a very good woman—who has offered to come and live with her, and who will take good care of her and my little Grasshopper—”

Little Fadette’s voice broke down a moment at the thought of leaving this child, whom, next to Landry, she loved better than anything in the world; but she mustered up courage to go on:

“He is strong enough now to get along without me. He is going to make his first communion, and he will take so much interest in going to catechism with the other children, that he will forget to grieve about my going away. You must have noticed how sensible he is getting to be, and that the other boys do not tease him as much as they used to do. Now, Landry, you must see that there is no other way. People must have time to forget me a little, for just now there is a good deal of ill feeling against me in the neighborhood. When I come back again after being away a year or two, and bring good references and an unblemished reputation, which I can gain elsewhere more easily than I could here, they will stop tormenting us, and we shall be better friends than ever.”

Landry would not listen to this plan; he was quite overcome with grief, and went back to La Priche in a state of mind which would have moved the hardest heart to pity.

Two days afterward, as he was taking the tub to the vintage, young Caillaud said to him:

“I see you are angry with me, Landry, and it is some time since you have spoken to me. You probably think that I spread abroad the report of your love-affair with little Fadette, and I am sorry that you could think me capable of such a piece of meanness. As true as there is a God in heaven, I have never breathed a single word on the subject, and I am really troubled that you should have had so much to worry you; for I always thought a good deal of you, and I never bothered little Fadette. I’ll even say that I respect the girl for what happened at the dovecote; for she might have gossiped if she had chosen, and yet she has held her tongue, so that nobody knows anything about it. She might have made use of what she knew, if only to revenge herself on Madelon; for she must know well enough who has started all these stories. But she hasn’t done it; and I see, Landry, that it isn’t safe to judge people by appearances or reputation. Fadette, who had the name of being a bad girl, has turned out to be very kind-hearted. Madelon, who was considered good, has acted

very deceitfully, not only toward Fadette and you, but toward me, too; for she has given me good reason to doubt her fidelity to me."

Landry took young Caillaud's explanation in good part, and the latter did his best to comfort him in his trouble.

"You have been very badly treated, my poor Landry," said he, in conclusion; "but little Fadette's good behavior ought to be a great source of consolation to you. It is good of her to go away, so as to put an end to the trouble in your family, and I have just told her so, as I said good-bye to her when she went by."

"What are you talking about, Caillaud?" exclaimed Landry. "Is she going away? Has she gone?"

"Didn't you know it?" said Caillaud. "I supposed that you had settled it between you, and that you did not accompany her for fear of making people talk. But she's going away, that you may depend on. She passed right by our house, not more than a quarter of an hour ago, and she had her little bundle under her arm. She was going to Château Meillant, and she cannot be farther off by this time than Vielle Ville or Ormont Hill."

Landry left his goad resting against the straw pad of his oxen—started off and never stopped till he caught up with little Fadette, in the sandy road which leads down from the Ormont vineyard to Frenelaine.

Then, exhausted by grief and the haste with which he had come, he fell down across the pathway, unable to speak a word, but making signs to her that she must walk over his prostrate body if she wished to get rid of him. When he had somewhat recovered, Fadette said to him:

"I wanted to save you this grief, Landry, and now you are doing all you can to unnerve me. Be a man, and do not break down my spirit! I have more need of courage than you imagine, and when I think of little Jeanet looking for me and crying after me at this very moment, my strength fails me so that I am ready to dash my head against these stones. Ah, I beg of you, Landry, help me, instead of trying to make me forget my duty; for if I don't go away to-day, I shall never go, and we shall be ruined."

"Fanchon, Fanchon! you have no such great need of courage!" answered Landry, "you are only grieving after a child who will soon forget you, as children do. You never give a thought to my despair; you don't know what love is; you have no love for me, and you will soon forget me, so perhaps you will never come back again."

"Yes, I shall come back, Landry—I take God to witness that I shall come back in a year, or at most two years, and I shall be so far from forgetting you, that I shall never have another friend or lover but you."

"It may be true that you will never have another friend, for you will never find one who will yield to you as I have done; but I don't know about another lover; who can be sure of that?"

"I can answer for it."

"You don't know anything about it yourself, Fadette; you have never loved, and when you do find out what love is, you will think no more of your poor Landry. Ah, if you had only loved me as I love you, you would never leave me like this!"

"Do you think so, Landry?" said little Fadette, looking at him sadly and thoughtfully. "Perhaps you don't know what you are saying. I believe that I should do far more for love than I should for friendship."

"Ah, well, if you were really actuated by love, I should not feel so distressed. Ah, yes! Fanchon, if I thought you were going away for love's sake, I believe that I should be almost happy, in the midst of all my grief. I should have faith in your promises, and hope for the future. I should be as brave as you are—I should indeed. But it is not love—you have told me so many a time, and your calm behavior toward me has proved the truth of what you say."

"So you think it is not love?" said little Fadette, "you are quite sure of that?"

And as she looked at him, her eyes filled with tears which rolled down her cheeks, and her lips wore a strange smile.

"Ah, good Lord!" cried Landry, clasping her in his arms, "if I have made a mistake!"

"You have indeed made a mistake," answered little Fadette, between smiles and tears. "I know that ever since she was thirteen years old, poor Cricket has set her heart on Landry and on no one else. I know that when she followed him about the fields and roads, talking nonsense to him, and teasing him to make him take some notice of her, she did not know what she was doing or what it was that drew her to him. I know that when she set out one day to look for Sylvinet—knowing that Landry was in trouble—and found him sitting beside the river, lost in thought, with a little lamb on his lap, she tried a little witchcraft on Landry, so that he might be forced to owe her a debt of gratitude. I know, too, that when she abused him at the Roulettes ford, it was because she was angry and hurt that he had never spoken to her since that day. I know that when she was crying in the Chaumois road, it was because she was sorry for having offended him. I know that when she asked him to dance with her, it was because she was wild about him, and was in hopes of pleasing him by her pretty dancing. I know, too, that when he wanted to kiss her, and she refused, when he made love to her, and she answered him by talking of friendship, it was because she feared to forfeit his love if she yielded too quickly. In short, I know that if she is breaking her heart by going away, it is in the hope that she may return worthy of him in the opinion of everybody, and fit to be his wife, without bringing distress and mortification on his family."

When Landry heard this, he thought he should lose his wits altogether. He laughed, he cried, he shouted. He kissed Fanchon's

hands, he kissed her dress, he would have kissed her feet, had she allowed him to do so; but she raised him up and gave him a true love kiss which was almost the death of him, for it was the first he had ever received from her or any one else. He fell, half fainting, by the roadside; she picked up her bundle, blushing and agitated as she was, and ran off, forbidding him to follow her, and vowing that she would come back again.

CHAPTER XXX

LANDRY submitted, and returned to the vintage, much surprised to find that he was not so unhappy as he had expected to be, for it is very comforting to know that one's love is returned; and when one's affection is great, one's faith is equally so. He was so surprised and so delighted that he could not help telling young Caillaud, who was also surprised, and admired little Fadette for the prudence she had shown in behaving herself with such strength of mind and dignity, during all the time that Landry and she had been in love with each other.

"I am glad to see," said he, "that this girl has so much character, for I have never had a bad opinion of her; and I must acknowledge that if she had ever taken any notice of me, I should have fancied her. She has such fine eyes that I have always thought her more pretty than ugly, and for some time past anybody could see plainly enough that she was getting more attractive every day, if she had cared to make herself agreeable. But she cared for nobody but you, Landry, and was satisfied as long as others did not dislike her. She never sought any admiration but yours; and I tell you that is the kind of woman that suits me. I have known her from a child, and have always thought her good-hearted; and, if everybody who knows her should give you his honest opinion, you would find the verdict in her favor. But that's the way of the world! —just let two or three people set after anybody, and all the rest join in the chase—throw stones, and try their best to ruin the person's reputation, and for no reason whatever, unless it may be for the pleasure they take in crushing one who is defenceless."

Landry took great comfort in listening to young Caillaud's moralizing, and from that time on they became warm friends, and it was quite a consolation to be able to talk to him about his woes. So one day Landry said to him, "Don't waste another thought on Madelon, my dear Caillaud. You are no older than I am, and you have plenty of time to think about getting married. Now, I have a little sister Nanette, who is as pretty as a picture, well brought up, sweet-tempered—a real little darling—and she will soon be sixteen. Come and see us a little oftener! My father thinks a good deal of you, and when you get acquainted with Nanette, you will see that you couldn't

do better than to become my brother-in-law.”

“Upon my word, I agree with you!” answered Caillaud; “and if the girl is not already engaged, I will call at your house every Sunday evening.”

The evening that Fanchon Fadet left, Landry made up his mind to go and tell his father how well the girl had behaved whom he had so misjudged; and, at the same time, to offer him his submission for the present, though he would not commit himself for the future. His heart beat fast as he passed Mother Fadet’s house; but he summoned all his courage, thinking to himself that if Fadette had not gone away, it might have been a long time before he could have discovered that he was so fortunate as to have won her heart. And he saw Mother Fanchette, who was Fanchon’s relative and godmother, and who had come to take her place in caring for the old woman and the child. She was sitting in the doorway, with the Grasshopper on her lap. Poor Jeanet was crying and did not want to go to bed, because his dear Fanchon had not yet come in, said he, and he wanted her to hear him say his prayers and tuck him in. Mother Fanchette did her best to comfort him, and Landry was glad to hear her speak so kindly and gently to him. But as soon as the Grasshopper caught sight of Landry, he slipped away from Mother Fanchette, at the risk of leaving one of his claws behind, and ran and threw his arms around Landry’s legs, hugging him and asking him all sorts of questions, and begging him to bring back his dear Fanchon. Landry took him in his arms, and did his best to soothe him, though he could not help shedding tears himself. He tried to make him take a bunch of fine grapes which he was carrying to Mother Barbeau from Mother Caillaud, but Jeanet, who was generally greedy enough, would not accept anything, nor obey Mother Fanchette, till Landry promised him, with a sigh, to go and look for his Fanchon.

Father Barbeau was not prepared for this step on the part of Fadette. He was pleased, but could not help regretting the course she had taken; for he was a just and kind-hearted man.

“I am sorry, Landry, that you had not the strength of will to give up going to see her. If you had done your duty, she would not have been obliged to leave home. God grant that the poor child may do well in her new position, and that her grandmother and her little brother may not suffer by her absence; for though there are a good many who speak ill of her, there are some who take her part, and say that she was very kind to her family, and did a great deal for them. We shall soon see whether the ugly stories they tell about her are true or not, and we’ll stand up for her as we ought. If, unfortunately, they should turn out to be true, and you, Landry, are the guilty party, we will come to her assistance, and not allow her to suffer. All I ask of you, Landry, is that you will never marry her.”

“Father,” said Landry, “you and I do not take the same view of the matter. If I were guilty of the offence to which you allude, I

should, on the contrary, ask your permission to marry her. But as little Fadette is as innocent as my sister Nanette, I only ask you to forgive me now for giving you so much trouble. We will talk about her later on, as you promised me."

Father Barbeau was obliged to yield to these conditions, and let the subject drop for the present. He was too prudent to attempt to hurry up matters, and so was forced to rest content with the progress he had made.

From that time on, nothing was said about Fadette at the Twinery; for Landry turned red and then pale when anybody happened to mention her name in his presence, and it was easy enough to see that he was as fond of her as ever.

CHAPTER XXXI

AT first Sylvinet was selfish enough to feel glad that Fadette had gone away, and flattered himself that now Landry would care for nobody but him, and that nobody would ever again take his place. But this did not turn out to be the case. Landry certainly loved Sylvinet better than anybody in the world after Fanchon, but he could not long be happy in his society; for Sylvinet would not make an effort to overcome his dislike to Fanchon. As soon as Landry began to talk to him about her, and tried to win him over to her side, Sylvinet became very much agitated, and reproached him because he persisted in worrying his father and mother and distressing him. So Landry said no more to him about it, but as he felt as if he must talk to some one, he divided his time between young Caillaud and little Jeanet. He took the child out walking with him, and heard his catechism, and taught him and comforted him as well as he could.

When people met him with the child, they would have ridiculed him had they dared. But in addition to the fact that Landry never allowed anybody to ridicule him on any subject, he was more proud than ashamed of his championship of Fanchon Fadet's brother, and this was his way of answering those who insisted that Father Barbeau had been clever enough to put an end to his love-affair in short order. Sylvinet found that his brother was still somewhat alienated from him, and was jealous of both young Caillaud and little Jeanet. He saw also that his sister Nanette, who had all along comforted and cheered him with her tender caresses and loving ways, was beginning to take pleasure in the society of young Caillaud, whose attention met with the approval of both families. Poor Sylvinet, who wished to reign supreme in the affections of those whom he loved, became strangely languid and melancholy, and so gloomy and low-spirited that nothing could rouse him. He no longer laughed, he took no interest in anything; he had grown so weak and feeble that he was hardly able to work. At last they began to be alarmed about him, for

his fever was almost incessant; and when it was a little higher than usual, he was flighty in his talk and wounded his parents' feelings. He insisted that nobody loved him, though he had been more spoiled and petted than any member of the family. He wished that he could die, and said that he was of no use to anybody; that his friends treated him kindly, because they pitied him, but that he was a burden to his parents, and it would be a great mercy to them if God would take him away.

Sometimes Father Barbeau reproved the boy severely when he heard him talk in such an unchristian way, but it did no good. Then Father Barbeau would entreat him, with tears, to believe that he loved him. This was worse still. Sylvinet cried—repented, and asked forgiveness of his father, his mother, his twin brother, and the whole family; but the fever always came back with renewed force, from having given way to his morbid feelings.

They consulted the doctors again. They had not much advice to give, but seemed to think that all the trouble arose from the fact that he was a twin, and that one or the other of them—probably the weaker one—would certainly die. So they consulted the bath woman at Clavières, who was the best nurse in the district, now that Mother Sagette was dead and Mother Fadet was getting childish. This clever woman told Mother Barbeau:

“The only thing which can save your child, is falling in love with some girl.”

“And he can't bear girls,” said Mother Barbeau; “I have never seen a boy so shy and retiring, and from the time that his twin brother took it into his head to fall in love, Sylvinet hasn't had a good word for any girl of our acquaintance. He abuses them all, because one of them—and, unfortunately, not one of the best—stole his brother's heart away from him.”

“Well,” said the nurse, who was very skilful in diseases of both mind and body, “when your son Sylvinet does fall in love with a woman, he will love her much more warmly than he does his brother. Mark my words. His heart is too full of love, and as he has always bestowed it all on his brother, he has almost forgotten his sex, and has thus sinned against the law of God, which ordains that a man should cherish his wife more than father or mother, sister or brother. But cheer up! He must soon listen to the voice of nature, however backward he may be. Don't refuse to let him marry the woman whom he may fancy, no matter how poor and ugly and disagreeable she may be; for, as far as I can judge, he will love but once. His heart is too faithful ever to change, and if it requires a great miracle of nature to wean him from his twin, it must be a still greater one to make him forget the woman whom he may come to love even more than he does his brother.”

Father Barbeau was much impressed by the opinion of the nurse, and he tried to get Sylvinet to visit at those houses where

there were good and pretty girls of marriageable age. But, though Sylvinet was a handsome young fellow, and had pleasant manners, he looked so sad and so indifferent that the girls did not fancy him. They would not make any advances to him, and he was so shy that he imagined that he hated them, when, in fact, he was only afraid of them.

Father Caillaud, who was the most intimate friend and adviser of the family, then had another piece of advice to offer.

“I have always told you,” said he, “that absence is the best cure. Just look at Landry! He was distracted about little Fadette, and now that she has gone away, he is none the worse in mind or body; he doesn’t even seem as sad as he used to be, for we noticed how he looked, and wondered what could be the matter. Now he seems quite sensible and resigned. It would be the same with Sylvinet, if he did not see his brother for five or six months. I’ll tell you how you can separate them without making any trouble. My La Priche farm is doing well, but the property which I own over toward Arton is in very poor condition; for my tenant has been ill for about a year and doesn’t get any better. I don’t want to turn him out, for he is an honest man; but if I could send him a good assistant he would soon improve, for there is nothing the matter with him but hard work and anxiety. If you are agreed, I will send Landry over to spend the rest of the season on my property. We needn’t let Sylvinet know how long he will be gone. On the contrary, we will tell him that Landry will be gone a week. Then after a week has passed, we’ll say that he will be gone another week—and so on, till he gets accustomed to being separated from him. Now just follow my advice, instead of humoring the whims of a spoiled child who has got the upper hand of you.”

Father Barbeau was disposed to follow this advice, but Mother Barbeau was afraid. It seemed to her that it would be a death-blow to Sylvinet. So they agreed to make a compromise; she begged that Landry might first be kept at home for a fortnight, to see if his brother would not get well by having him with him all the time. But if Sylvinet got worse, she would consent to take the advice of Father Caillaud.

And so Landry came to stay the allotted time at the Twinnery—greatly to his satisfaction—and they made an excuse that his father needed him to help finish threshing the wheat, as Sylvinet was no longer able to help him work. Landry was as kind as possible to his brother, and did his best to please him. He stayed with him continually; he slept in the same bed; he took care of him as if he had been a little child. The first day Sylvinet was in very good spirits, but the second he took it into his head that Landry was tired of him, and Landry could not make him believe otherwise. The third day Sylvinet got angry because the Grasshopper came to see Landry, and Landry had not the heart to send him away. Finally, at the end of

the week, they had to give it up; for Sylvinet became more and more unreasonable and exacting, and was jealous of his own shadow. Then they determined to try Father Caillaud's plan, and though Landry, who was so fond of his native place, his work, his family, and that of his employer, did not at all fancy going to Arton among strangers, he was perfectly willing, to do what they proposed with the hope of benefiting his brother.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE first day Sylvinet nearly died, but the second he was calmer, and the third the fever had left him. First, he became resigned, then he mustered up a little spirit, and by the time the first week had passed, it was plain to be seen that his brother's absence had done him good. A secret feeling of jealousy suggested a reason for being almost glad that Landry had gone away. "At any rate," thought he, "he doesn't know anybody over there, and he can't make new friends at once. He will be a little homesick, and he'll think of me, and wish he could see me. When he comes back, he'll love me better than ever."

Landry had been gone about three months, and little Fadette almost a year, when she unexpectedly returned, because her grandmother had had a stroke of paralysis. She nursed her carefully and tenderly, but age is an incurable disease, and in about a fortnight Mother Fadet suddenly died. Three days afterward, little Fadette, having buried the poor old woman, put the house in order, undressed her little brother and put him to bed, and kissed her godmother, who had retired to rest in another room, sat sadly enough beside her little fire, which threw out but little light, and listened to the cricket on the hearth, which seemed to say to her:

"Fay, fay, my little fay,
Take thy torch and haste away;
Here's my cap and here's my cloak,
And here's a mate for fairy folk."

The rain pattered against the window-pane, freezing as it fell, and Fanchon was thinking of her lover, when there came a knock at the door and a voice said:

"Fanchon Fadet, are you there, and do you recognize me?"

It did not take her long to open the door, and great was her delight to find herself in Landry's arms. He had heard of her grandmother's illness and her own return. He could not resist the temptation to come and see her, and he came at night, intending to go away at daybreak. So they spent the night talking at the fireside, but very soberly and seriously; for little Fadette reminded Landry that the

bed on which her grandmother had died was scarcely cold yet, and it was neither the time nor the place to give themselves up to their own delight at seeing each other once more. But still, in spite of their good resolutions, they could not help feeling very happy to be together again, and to assure themselves that they loved each other more than ever. As the day began to dawn, however, Landry's courage failed him, and he begged Fanchon to hide him in her garret so that he might see her again the next night. But, as usual, she brought him to his senses. She told him that they would not be separated much longer, for she had made up her mind to remain at home.

"I have my reasons for that, which I will tell you later," said she, "and which shall not stand in the way of our marrying some day. Go and finish the work which your master has given you to do; for, from what my godmother tells me, it is necessary for your brother's recovery that he should not see you for some time to come."

"That is the only reason which could induce me to leave you," answered Landry; "for my poor twin has caused me a good deal of anxiety, and I am afraid that I shall still suffer on his account. You are so clever, Fanchonette, you ought to be able to think of some way of curing him."

"I don't know any other way than to reason with him," answered she; "for it is his mind which is injuring his body, and whoever could cure one, would cure the other. But he has such a dislike to me that I shall never have an opportunity to talk to him, and try to comfort him."

"But you are so clever, Fadette—you talk so well, and you have such a talent for persuading anybody to think just what you please, when you choose to take the trouble, that if you could only talk to him one hour, it would have an effect on him. Try it, I beg of you!—Don't mind his pride and ill humor! Make him listen to you. Make this effort for my sake, my dear Fanchon, and for the sake of our love also; for my brother's opposition is not the least of our troubles."

So Fanchon gave him her promise, and they parted, after mutual assurances of love and fidelity.

CHAPTER XXXIII

NOBODY in the neighborhood knew that Landry had been home. If Sylvinet had happened to hear of it, he would have fallen ill again, and would never have forgiven Landry for coming to see Fadette and not himself.

Two days afterward, little Fadette dressed herself very neatly; for she was no longer penniless, and her mourning gown was of fine serge. She walked through La Cosse, and as she had grown a great deal, those who saw her pass did not at first recognize her. She had

grown to be much better looking while she had been away in the city. Good food and lodging had improved her complexion, and she was as plump as a girl of her age ought to be, and there was no longer any danger of her being mistaken for a boy in disguise; for she had a very pretty, graceful figure. Love had given her whole person that indescribable charm which nobody can fail to remark. In short, if she were not the prettiest girl in the world, as Landry imagined her to be, she was the most winning and the freshest girl in the neighborhood, and had the most attractive face and figure.

She had a basket on her arm, and she stopped at the Twinnery, where she asked to see Father Barbeau. Sylvinet was the first to see her, and he was so annoyed at meeting her that he turned his back. But she asked him so politely where his father was, that he was obliged to answer her, and take her to the barn, where Father Barbeau was busy at some carpentering work. Fadette having asked to see him alone, so that she might have a private conversation with him, he shut the barn door, and told her that he was ready to hear what she had to say to him.

Little Fadette did not allow herself to be discouraged by Father Barbeau's coldness. She seated herself on a bundle of straw, he sat down on another, and she began:

"Father Barbeau, though my grandmother, who is dead and gone, had a great dislike to you, and you have a grudge against me, it is nevertheless true that I have always known that you are the most honorable and upright man in this part of the country. There are no two opinions on that subject, and my grandmother herself, while she accused you of being proud, did you that justice. Besides that, your son Landry and I have been friends a long time, as you know. He has often talked to me about you, and I know from him, even better than from others, what a good man you are. That is the reason I have come to ask a favor of you, and to take you into my confidence."

"Go on, Fadette," said Father Barbeau; "I have never yet refused to help anybody, and if it is anything which my conscience does not forbid, you may rely upon my doing what I can for you."

"It is this," said Fadette, lifting her basket, and setting it down at Father Barbeau's feet. "My grandmother, when she was alive, earned more money than you would suppose possible by giving advice and by the sale of her remedies, and, as she hardly spent anything, and never made any investments, of course nobody suspected what she had in an old hole in her cellar, which she often pointed out to me, and said:

"After I am gone, you will find in there all that I have to leave you. It belongs to you and your brother, and if you are a little pinched now, you will be all the richer some day or other. But don't let the lawyers get hold of it, for they'd eat it all up in costs. Keep it when you get it—hide it away as long as you live, so that you may not

come to want in your old age.

“After my poor grandmother was buried, I did as she had told me. I took the key of the cellar and pried out the bricks of the wall, just where she had showed me. There I found what I have brought you in this basket, Father Barbeau, and I beg of you to invest it as you see fit, after doing whatever the law may demand, and avoiding the heavy expenses of which I am afraid.”

“I am much obliged to you for the confidence you have expressed in me, Fadette,” said Father Barbeau, without looking into the basket, though he felt considerable curiosity as to its contents; “but I have no right to take charge of your money, or to manage your affairs. I am not your guardian. Your grandmother must have left a will.”

“She did not leave a will, but my mother is my legal guardian. Now, you know it is a long time since I have heard anything about her, and I don’t know whether she is dead or alive, poor thing. My nearest relative after her, is my godmother Fanchette, who is a good, honest woman, but quite incapable of managing my property, or even indeed of keeping it safely locked up. She would be sure to talk about it and show it to everybody, and I should be afraid that she would make poor investments, or that by allowing so many inquisitive people to handle it, a good deal of it might be taken without her knowledge. My poor, dear godmother doesn’t even know how to count it.”

“So it is a considerable sum?” asked Father Barbeau, his eyes fastened, in spite of himself, on the cover of the basket. He lifted it by the handle to ascertain its weight. He was amazed to find it so heavy, and said, “If it is in small coin, a load for a horse wouldn’t amount to much.”

Little Fadette, who had a keen sense of humor, was much amused at his evident curiosity about the contents of the basket. She made a motion as if to open it, but Father Barbeau considered it beneath his dignity to allow her to do so.

“It is none of my business,” said he, “and as I can’t take charge of your money, I have no right to know anything about your affairs.”

“But, Father Barbeau, you will, at least, do me this one little service! I can’t count above a hundred much better than my godmother. Besides, I don’t know the value of all the coins, old and new, and you are the only one I can trust to tell me whether I am rich or poor, and to give me the exact amount of my property.”

“Well, let’s see, then,” said Father Barbeau, who could hold out no longer. “That’s no great favor to ask, and I ought not to refuse you.”

Then Fadette quickly raised the two lids of the basket, and took out two big bags, each of which contained two thousand francs in crown pieces.

“Well, that’s very nice,” said Father Barbeau; “there is a little

dowry, which will bring you a suitor or two.”

“That isn’t all,” said Fadette; “there is some more at the bottom of the basket, though I don’t know how much it is.”

And she drew out an eel-skin purse, which she emptied into Father Barbeau’s hat. There were a hundred gold louis—evidently old coins—which made the honest man open his eyes. When he had counted them, and put them back in the eel skin, she took out another just like it, and then a third, and a fourth, and finally, in gold, silver, and small coin, there was not much less than forty thousand francs in the basket.

That was about one-third more than the value of all Father Barbeau’s buildings, and, as country people never have much ready money, he had never seen so large a sum in his life.

However honest and disinterested a peasant may be, nobody can say of him that he hates the sight of money, and so Father Barbeau felt the drops of perspiration start out on his forehead, for a moment. When he had done counting, he said:

“You lack only twenty-two crowns of having forty thousand francs, and your share of the property is about two thousand pistoles in ready money. That makes you the greatest heiress in these parts, Fadette, and your brother, the Grasshopper, may stay lame and sickly all his life; he can take a carriage to look after his property. You may consider yourself fortunate; for you need only let it be known that you are rich if you want to get a good husband.”

“I am in no hurry,” said Fadette, “and I must beg you, on the contrary, not to let anybody know how rich I am, Father Barbeau. Ugly as I am, I don’t want to be married for my money, but for my good heart and my fair name. And as I have had a bad reputation in this part of the country, I mean to stay here some time, to prove that I don’t deserve it.”

“As for your ugliness, Fadette,” said Father Barbeau, raising his eyes, which had been fastened on the basket, “I can tell you, in sober earnest, that you have got bravely over it, and have improved so much since you went to the city that you will pass for a very nice-looking girl nowadays. And as for your bad name, if, as I hope is the case, you do not deserve it, I approve of your idea of waiting awhile before you let it be known that you are rich; for there are plenty of men who would want to marry you for your money, without feeling for you the regard which a woman should demand from her husband.

“Now as for the money which you wish to deposit with me, it would be contrary to law for me to take it, and might expose me, later on, to false suspicions and accusations; for there are plenty of scandalmongers about. Besides, supposing you had a right to dispose of what belongs to you, you have no authority over the property of your brother, who is a minor. All that I can do will be to ask advice for you, without mentioning your name. Then I will let you

know how to invest your legacy and your brother's, so that it will be safe, without letting it fall into the hands of pettifoggers, who are not all to be trusted. Take it all away, then, and hide it again till I can give you an answer. I place myself at your disposal if you need me, to testify before the attorneys of your co-heir, as to the amount of the sum which we have just been counting, and which I am going to write down in the corner of my barn, so that I shall not forget it."

All that Fadette wanted was that Father Barbeau should know just how matters stood. If she was rather glad to let him know that she was rich, it was only because now he could no longer accuse her of setting her cap for Landry.

CHAPTER XXXIV

FATHER BARBEAU, seeing how prudent and clever she was, was not in such haste to deposit and invest her money, as he was to make inquiries as to the reputation she had borne at Château Meillant, where she had spent the year of her absence. Though her large dowry was very tempting, and made him feel inclined to overlook her unfortunate connections, it was quite a different matter when the honor of the girl he hoped to call his daughter-in-law was in question. So he went in person to Château Meillant, and instituted the strictest inquiries. He learned not only that it was false that Fadette had gone there to give birth to a child, but also that she had conducted herself so well that there was absolutely nothing to be said to her disadvantage. She had been in the service of a nun of noble family, who had taken pleasure in making a companion of her, instead of a servant, having found her so well-behaved, so sensible, and so well-mannered. She regretted losing her, and said that she was a lovely Christian character, frank, neat, careful, and so amiable in disposition that she never expected to find another like her.

As this old lady was quite wealthy, she was interested in many charities, and Fadette had been of great service to her in caring for the sick and in compounding medicines, and her mistress had taught her how to prepare several valuable secret remedies, which she herself had learned in her convent before the Revolution.

Father Barbeau was much pleased, and he came back to La Cosse determined to sift the matter to the bottom. He called his family together and charged his older children, his brothers, and all his relatives, to inquire closely into Fadette's mode of life since she had arrived at years of discretion, so that, if all the gossip about her had arisen merely from some childish piece of folly, they might set it at naught; but if, on the contrary, anybody could claim to have seen her commit an actual misdemeanor or knew her to be guilty of any act of impropriety, he should enforce his order that Landry should have nothing further to do with her. The investigation was con-

ducted with great prudence, as he had desired, and there was no mention made of the dowry; for he had not even told his wife about that.

All this time, Fadette was living a very retired life in her little house, which remained unchanged, excepting that it was kept so clean that you could have seen your face in the simple furniture.

She dressed her little Grasshopper neatly, and made by degrees so great a change for the better in their food, that the effect was soon apparent on the child: his health improved greatly, and he soon became as healthy as one could wish. His disposition altered under the influence of happiness, and now that his grandmother was no longer there to threaten him, and nag at him, and as he met with nothing but caresses, kind words, and good treatment, he grew to be a nice little boy, full of quaint and pretty fancies, so that nobody could think of disliking him, in spite of his limp and his little snub nose.

In addition to that, there was so marked a change in the person and habits of Fanchon Fadet, that all the ugly stories about her were forgotten, and more than one young fellow, as he saw her pass by with her light step and graceful carriage, wished that her mourning were at an end, so that he might pay court to her, and invite her to dance.

Sylvinet Barbeau was the only one who still adhered to his former opinion of her. He saw plainly enough that there was something brewing in his family with regard to her, for his father could not resist speaking of her now and then, and whenever some old lie about her was proved to be false, he congratulated himself on Landry's account, saying that he could not bear to have his son accused of ruining an innocent young girl.

Landry's approaching return began also to be talked about, and Father Barbeau seemed to be anxious that Father Caillaud should agree to it. At last Sylvinet saw that all opposition to Landry's love-affair was about to be withdrawn, and he became as wretched as ever. Public opinion, which varies with the wind, had for some time past been in favor of Fadette; nobody knew that she was rich, but she made friends, and for that very reason Sylvinet disliked her all the more, for she seemed to him to be a rival in Landry's affections.

Once in a while Father Barbeau let slip in his presence a word about marriage, saying that the twins would soon be old enough to be thinking of settling themselves. Sylvinet had never been able to think of Landry's getting married without the greatest distress, and it seemed to him as if it would be a death-blow to their affection and companionship. His fever returned, and his mother sent for the doctors once more.

One day she met Mother Fanchette, who, hearing how anxious she was, asked her why she sent so far for advice and spent so much money, when she had at her very door a more skilful doctress than any in the country—one who did not wish to practise for money as

FADETTE

her grandmother had done, but only for the love of God and of her neighbor. Then she mentioned little Fadette.

Mother Barbeau spoke of it to her husband, who made no objection. He told her that Fadette had a great reputation in Château Meillant for her skill in healing, and that people came from far and near to consult her and her mistress.

So Mother Barbeau begged Fadette to come and see Sylvinet, who was now ill in bed, and requested her to do what she could for him.

Fanchon had more than once tried to find an opportunity of speaking to him, in accordance with her promise to Landry, but he had always avoided her.

So she did not wait to be urged, but went at once to see the poor twin. She found him in a feverish sleep, and asked to be left alone with him. As it is customary for doctresses to work their cures in secret, there was no objection made, and nobody remained in the room.

The first thing Fadette did was to lay her hand on his, which rested on the edge of the bed. She did it so gently, however, that he was not aware of it, though his sleep was so light that he woke if a fly buzzed in the room. Sylvinet's hand was hot as fire, and it became hotter still as little Fadette continued to hold it in hers. He seemed agitated, but did not try to withdraw his hand. Then Fadette placed her other hand on his forehead, as gently as before, and he became still more restless. But, little by little, he calmed down, and she could feel her patient's head and hand grow cooler from minute to minute; he was soon sleeping as quietly as a little child. She remained beside him till she saw that he was about to wake, and then she slipped behind his curtain, and left the room and the house, saying to Mother Barbeau, as she passed:

"Go and see your son, and give him something to eat, for his fever is gone; and above everything, don't talk to him about me, if you want me to cure him. I will come back this evening, at the hour when you say his disease is at its height, and I will try to break this raging fever again."

CHAPTER XXXV

MOTHER BARBEAU was much astonished to see Sylvinet free from fever, and she hastened to give him something to eat, which he took with some appetite. As his fever had lasted six days without a break, and he had not been able to take anything, the family were enthusiastic over Fadette's skill; for, without waking him up or giving him anything to drink, she had already benefited him so much, solely by the aid of her spells, or so it seemed to them.

Toward evening, the fever returned, and his temperature was

very high. Sylvinet was dozing and his mind was wandering, and when he woke, he was afraid of those who stood around his bed.

Fadette came again, and, as in the morning, remained alone with him for nearly an hour, and the only magic she used was to hold his hands and head in a soft clasp, and to breathe on his hot cheeks with her cool, fresh breath.

His fever and delirium vanished as in the morning, and when she left, still requesting that he should not be told that she had been there, they found him sleeping quietly—his face no longer flushed—and apparently completely restored to health. I do not know where Fadette had picked up this idea. She had found out, partly by chance and partly by experience, that when her little brother Jeanet was at the point of death she had been able to relieve him a dozen times or more, by simply cooling him with her hands and breath, and warming him in the same way, when the burning fever was preceded by chills. She believed that the affection and good-will of a person in sound health, and the laying on of a hand, full of vitality and free from any taint of sin, has power to banish disease, provided that the said person is endowed with a certain temperament, and has a firm faith in God's goodness. She engaged in silent prayer while her hands rested on the patient. This treatment—which she was now trying on Sylvinet, and which was the same she had given her little brother—she would not have been willing to administer to any one in whom she was not greatly interested; for she believed that its chief efficacy lay in the love in her heart, which she offered as a sacrifice to the Lord, and without which He would not have granted her power to relieve the patient.

And so, while Fadette was charming away Sylvinet's fever, she repeated the same prayer which she had made beside her sick brother. "O God, let my health pass out of my body into this suffering body, and as our dear Saviour offered up His life to redeem the souls of all mankind, if it be Thy will to take away my life and bestow it upon this sick person, I give it into Thy hands. I gladly yield it in exchange for the recovery of him for whom I am praying."

Little Fadette had thought of making this prayer at her grandmother's deathbed, but she did not venture; for it seemed to her that the old woman's life was dying out in body and soul, as the result of old age, and in accordance with that natural law which God Himself has established. So Fadette, who, as you see, trusted more to piety than to witchcraft in working her charms, feared to displease Him, by asking for anything which He grants to other Christians only as a special miracle. Whether the remedy had any special virtue of its own or not, one thing is certain, in three days Sylvinet had recovered from his fever, and would never have known how his cure was brought about, if, on her last visit, he had not happened to wake a little sooner than usual, and caught sight of her bending over him, and softly withdrawing her hands. At first he thought that it was a

vision, and closed his eyes to avoid the sight of her. But afterwards when he asked his mother whether Fadette had not held his hand and felt his pulse, Mother Barbeau, to whom her husband had at last given a hint of his plans, and who was anxious that Sylvinet should overcome his dislike to Fanchon, answered that she had been there every morning and evening for the last three days, and, by some secret process, had broken his fever in the most miraculous way.

Sylvinet did not seem to believe what she said. He said that the fever had left him of its own accord, and that Fadette's spells and incantations were all silly nonsense. He improved so much in the course of the next few days that Father Barbeau thought best to speak to him as to the possibility of his brother's marriage, but without mentioning the name of the wife he had in view for him.

"You need not hide the name of the bride you intend to give him," answered Sylvinet. "I know well enough that it is Fadette, who has cast a spell over you all."

In fact, Father Barbeau's private inquiries into Fadette's character had resulted so much to her advantage, that he no longer hesitated, and was quite eager to send for Landry to come home. The only fear he now had was the jealousy of his twin brother, and he tried to cure him of this weakness by telling him that his brother would never be happy without Fadette. But Sylvinet answered, "Do just as you think best; my brother must be happy, whatever happens!"

But they did not dare take any steps in the matter as yet; for Sylvinet's fever returned as soon as he seemed to have given up his opposition.

CHAPTER XXXVI

FATHER BARBEAU, however, was afraid that Fadette might cherish some resentment against him for his past injustice, and that having become accustomed to Landry's absence, she might have taken up with some other admirer. When she came to the Twinnery to look after Sylvinet, he had tried to speak to her about Landry, but she pretended not to understand him, and he was quite puzzled as to what course to take.

At last, one morning, he made up his mind to go and see Fadette.

"Fanchon Fadet," said he, "I have come to ask you a question, and I beg you to answer me honestly and truly. Had you any idea before your grandmother's death that she would leave you so much property?"

"Yes, Father Barbeau," answered Fadette, "I had some idea of it; for I had often seen her counting gold and silver, and I never saw

her spend anything but copper, and also because she often said to me when the other girls made fun of my rags, 'Don't you worry about that, little one—you will have more money than any of them some day, and you can dress yourself in silk from head to foot if you choose to do so.'"

"As far as I am concerned, Father Barbeau," said Fadette, "as I always wanted to be loved for the sake of my fine eyes, which is the only beauty I am supposed to possess, I was not so silly as to tell Landry that all my charms were tied up in eel-skin bags, and yet I might have ventured to let him know; for Landry's love is so true and so devoted that it would have made no difference to him whether I was rich or poor."

"And since your grandmother's death, dear Fanchon," continued Father Barbeau, "can you give me your word of honor that Landry has not heard of the state of the case, from you or any one else?"

"I can," said Fadette. "I swear to you by my love for my Maker, that you are the only person in the world beside myself who knows anything about it."

"And do you think that Landry is still in love with you, Fanchon? Have you received any token of his fidelity to you since your grandmother's death?"¹¹

"I have received the best of assurances," answered she; "for I must tell you that he came to see me three days after my grandmother died, and that he swore he would die of grief if I did not become his wife."

"And what answer did you give him, Fadette?"

"I am not called upon to answer that question, Father Barbeau, but I will do so, if you wish it. I told him that there was time enough for us to think of getting married, and that I did not like to receive attention from a man whose parents did not approve of me."

Fadette said this with an air of so much pride and indifference that Father Barbeau was quite disturbed.

"I have no right to question you, Fanchon Fadet," said he; "and I don't know whether you mean to make my son happy or unhappy for life, but I do know that he is over head and ears in love with you, and if I were in your place, and wanted to be loved for myself alone, I should think, 'Here's Landry Barbeau, who loved me when I was in rags, when everybody despised me, and when his own relations treated him as if he had committed a sin in caring for me. He thought me beautiful when everybody else thought me hopelessly ugly; he loved me in spite of all the troubles which that love brought upon him. He loved me as well when I was away, as when we were together; in fact, he loves me so dearly that I cannot help trusting him, and I will never marry any one else.'"

"I've thought all that long ago, Father Barbeau," answered Fadette, "but I must tell you once more that I have the greatest objec-

tion to coming into a family which would be ashamed of me, and which only give their consent out of pity.”

“If that’s all that stands in the way, you may set your mind at rest, Fanchon,” said Father Barbeau; “for Landry’s family has a great regard for you, and will be glad to welcome you. Don’t fancy that we have changed our opinion because you are now rich. It was not your poverty which made us object, but the ugly stories which people told about you. If they had turned out to be well founded, I should never have consented to call you my daughter-in-law, even if it had cost Landry his life. But I determined to find out the truth about these reports, so I went to Château Meillant for that very reason. I made very strict inquiries over there and in our own neighborhood, and I am now convinced that they lied to me, and that you are a good, honest girl, as Landry always persisted in declaring you to be. So now, Fanchon Fadet, I have come to ask you to marry my son, and if you say yes, he shall be here before the week is out.”

This overture, which did not surprise her in the least, made Fadette feel very happy; but she took care not to let him see how delighted she was, for she wished that her future husband’s family should continue to respect her. So she hesitated a moment. Then Father Barbeau said to her:

“I see, my girl, that you still have a grudge against me and my family. Don’t expect too many apologies from a man of my age. Just rely on my word when I tell you that we will all treat you with respect and affection. Father Barbeau has never yet deceived anybody, and you may believe what he tells you. Come now, will you give the kiss of peace to the guardian whom you chose for yourself, or the father who wishes to adopt you?”

Fadette could hold out no longer. She threw her arms around Father Barbeau’s neck, and his old heart was rejoiced.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE arrangements were soon made. The marriage was to take place as soon as the period of Fadette’s mourning was over. There was nothing left to do but to send for Landry; but when Mother Barbeau came to see Fanchon that evening, to give her a kiss and a blessing, she told her how Sylvinet had been taken ill again as soon as he heard about his brother’s approaching marriage, and she asked for a few days’ delay, so that he might have time to recover his health and spirits.

“You made a mistake, Mother Barbeau,” said Fadette, “in not allowing Sylvinet to believe that it was a dream, when he saw me at his bedside, at the time when his fever left him. Now he will oppose his will to mine, and I shall no longer have power to relieve him in his sleep as I have done. I shall lose my influence over him, and my

presence may even make him worse."

"I don't think so," answered Mother Barbeau; "for just as soon as he was taken ill, a little while ago, he went to bed and said, 'Where is Fadette? I believe she helped me the last time. Won't she come back again?' And I told him that I would go for you, and he seemed pleased and even eager to have you come."

"I'll go," said Fadette, "but this time I shall try a different treatment; for, as I told you, the course I adopted when he was not aware of my presence will be useless now."

"And won't you take any medicines with you?" asked Mother Barbeau.

"No," said Fadette; "there is not much the matter with his body. I must try and work on his mind. I am going to make an attempt to exert a moral influence over him, but I do not promise you that I shall be successful. One thing, however, I can promise you, and that is, to wait patiently till Landry comes back, and not to ask you to send for him till we have done all in our power to restore his brother to health. Landry has so often begged me to try and help Sylvinet that I know he will approve, even though his return is postponed and his happiness delayed."

When Sylvinet saw Fadette standing beside his bed, he seemed annoyed, and did not answer when she asked him how he felt. She tried to feel his pulse, but he drew away his hand and turned his face to the wall. Then Fadette made signs that she wanted to be left alone with him, and after everybody had gone out she extinguished the lamp, and let no other light enter the room except the rays of the moon, which was at its full. Then she came back to the bedside, and said to Sylvinet, in a tone of authority which he obeyed like a child:

"Sylvinet, put both your hands in mine, and tell me the truth; for I did not come here for the sake of money, neither did I take the trouble to come here to treat you, to have you behave so rudely and ungratefully to me. So now listen to what I ask you, and take care how you answer me; for you cannot possibly deceive me."

"Ask me whatever you please, Fadette," answered the twin, quite taken aback at hearing little Fadette, who had always been such a madcap, speak to him so severely.

"Sylvain Barbeau," said she, "I believe you want to die."

Sylvain hesitated a moment before answering, and as Fadette kept a firm hold on his hand and made him feel the power of her will, he said rather shyly:

"Wouldn't it be the best thing that could happen to me if I should die, when I can't help seeing that I am nothing but a care and trouble to my family, on account of my bad health, and my—"

"Go on, Sylvain, don't keep anything back!"

"And my unhappy disposition, which I can't change," answered the twin, quite overcome.

"You had better say your bad heart," said Fadette, so sternly that

he felt almost as much indignation as fear.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

“WHY do you accuse me of having a bad heart?” said he. “You insult me because you see that I have not the strength to defend myself.”

“I told you the truth about yourself, and I am going to tell you still more. I shall not take any pity on you because you are ill; for I know enough to see that it is not very serious, and if you are in any danger, it is of losing your mind, for you are doing your very best to make yourself crazy. You don’t seem to have any idea what serious consequences your ill-temper and folly may produce.”

“Say what you please about my folly,” said Sylvinet; “but I do not deserve to be accused of ill-temper.”

“Don’t try to defend yourself,” answered Fadette; “I know you better than you know yourself, Sylvain, and I tell you that weakness leads to deceit, and that has made you selfish and ungrateful.”

“If you have such a poor opinion of me, Fanchon Fadet, it must be because my brother Landry has been talking ill of me, and you have found out how little he cares for me; for your only acquaintance with me must be through him.”

“That’s just what I expected you to say, Sylvain. I know that you could not talk long without complaining of your twin brother, and finding fault with him; for the love you bear him is so foolish and immoderate that it easily degenerates into spitefulness and revenge. That shows me that you are not in your right mind, and that you are not good. Well, I can tell you that Landry loves you ten times as much as you love him; for he never finds fault with you, no matter how you worry him, while you are forever reproaching him if he doesn’t do just what you want him to do. How do you suppose that I can help seeing the difference between you and him? So the more Landry praised you, the worse opinion I had of you; for it seemed to me that you must have a very bad disposition to misunderstand so good a brother.”

“And so you hate me, Fadette, don’t you? I was sure I was not mistaken, and I knew you talked against me to my brother, till he ceased to love me.”

“That’s just like you again, Master Sylvain, and I am glad that you lay the blame on me at last. Well, I must tell you that you are ill-natured and malicious, since you wilfully misunderstand and insult a girl who has always tried to be good to you, and has taken your part, though nobody knew better than she did that you did everything in your power to injure her. A girl who has many a time given up the only pleasure she had in the world—the pleasure of seeing Landry and of being with him—so that she might let Landry go to you, and

give you the happiness which she denied herself. And yet I was under no obligation to you. You have always been an enemy of mine, and as far back as I can remember I never saw a child so cruel and unfeeling to anybody as you have always been to me. I might have wished to take my revenge, and there were plenty of opportunities. If I have not availed myself of them, and if, without your knowledge, I have returned good for evil, it is because I believe it to be my duty to forgive my neighbor if I wish to please God. But you probably do not understand me when I speak to you of God, for you are an enemy to Him and your own salvation."

"I have allowed you to say a good many things to me, Fadette, but you are going too far when you accuse me of being a heathen."

"Didn't you tell me that you wanted to die? Do you call that the desire of a Christian?"

"I didn't say that, Fadette—I said—" and Sylvinet stopped, startled at the recollection of his own words, which, now that Fadette had drawn his attention to them, really seemed impious.

But she would not let him alone, and kept on remonstrating with him.

"It may be," said she, "that you did not mean all you said; for I am sure that you are not so anxious to die as you wish your family to suppose, so that they may all do just as you wish them to do, and that you may torment your mother, who is distressed to death, and your twin brother, who is innocent enough to believe that you would really like to put an end to yourself. But you can't deceive me, Sylvain. I believe that you are as much afraid to die as the rest of us, and even more so, and that you enjoy playing upon the fears of those who love you. You like to see them yield to you even against their better judgment, when you threaten to give up the ghost, and it must be very convenient and agreeable to have everybody give in to you at a word. That is the way you manage to rule your whole family. But as you use means of which God disapproves, and which are contrary to the natural order of things, He punishes you by making you even more wretched than you would be if you obeyed instead of commanding. And so you are weary of a life which has been made only too easy for you. Now let me tell you, Sylvain, what would have made a good, sensible boy of you. You should have had very severe parents, poverty, and scanty food, and plenty of whippings. If you had been brought up in the same school as myself and my brother Jeanet, you would be thankful for anything, instead of being as ungrateful as you are. Now, Sylvain, do not lay it all to your being a twin! I know that they have talked a great deal too much before you about that affection existing between twins, which is a law of nature, and which might perhaps cause your death if it were set at naught, and you thought that you were only carrying out your destiny when you bore this love to excess. But God is not so unjust as to single us out before our birth for an unhappy fate. He is not so cruel as to

implant in us impulses which we cannot overcome, and you do Him wrong—superstitious creature that you are—by believing that the blood in your body has an irresistible power for evil, which your moral sense is incapable of combating. You can never make me believe that you could not have conquered your jealous disposition if you tried to do so, unless, indeed, your mind is unsettled. You do not make an effort to overcome it, because they pet you for this moral failing, and you are more guided by your whims than you are by your sense of duty.”

Sylvinet did not reply, and allowed Fadette to continue to reprove him unsparingly. He knew well enough that she was right in the main, and that in one respect only was she too severe. She professed to think that he had never made any effort to resist this evil propensity of his, and that his selfishness was premeditated, whereas he had acted selfishly without knowing or intending it. This mortified and distressed him very much, and he would gladly have exonerated himself. She was quite aware that she had been exaggerating, and she had done it purposely, so that he might be brought to a properly chastened frame of mind, before she should proceed to comfort him and heal his wound. So she forced herself to speak sternly to him, and to appear indignant, while her heart was so full of pity and tenderness that she was disgusted with the part she was playing, and was more exhausted than he was.

CHAPTER XXXIX

To tell the truth, Sylvinet was not half so ill as he seemed or as he wished them to believe, and chose to consider himself. When Fadette felt his pulse, she saw at once that he had but little fever, and that, though he might be rather flighty, it was because his mind was not so strong as his body. So she thought that the best way of managing him was to make him afraid of her, and early the next morning she came to see him again. He had slept but little, but he was quiet and appeared to be exhausted. As soon as he saw her, he held out his hand, instead of snatching it away as he had done the night before.

“Why do you offer me your hand, Sylvain?” inquired she. “Do you want me to see whether you have any fever? I see by your face that it is all gone.”

Sylvinet, ashamed at being obliged to draw back the hand which she did not seem inclined to take, said:

“I want to shake hands with you, Fadette, and to thank you for all the trouble you have taken on my account.”

“If that’s the case, I will shake hands with you,” said she, taking his hand and holding it in hers; “for I never refuse an act of courtesy, and I don’t believe you are so deceitful as to pretend to be

friendly to me if you did not feel so.”

Although, this time, Sylvinet was wide awake, he was very glad indeed to allow his hand to rest in Fadette’s, and he said to her very gently:

“And yet you treated me very badly yesterday evening, Fanchon, and I don’t see how it is that I am not angry with you. Indeed I feel much obliged to you for coming to see me after all the trouble I have given you.”

Fadette sat down beside his bed, and talked to him, but in a very different strain from her reproof of the night before. She was so kind, so gentle, and so affectionate, that Sylvinet was greatly relieved, and his pleasure was all the greater because he had believed that she was very angry with him. He wept freely, confessed his faults, and even begged her pardon and asked for her friendship with such a good grace that it was plain to be seen that his heart was better than his head. She let him unbosom himself, still scolding him a little, now and then, and when she tried to take away her hand, he held it fast, because it seemed to him that this hand had power to cure him of both mental and bodily ailments. When she saw that he was in the right mood, she said:

“Now I am going, Sylvain, and you must get up; for your fever is gone, and you mustn’t lie here, letting your mother wait on you, and waste her time sitting by your bedside. You must eat what your mother is preparing for you under my directions. It is meat, and I know that you say you have a horror of it, and that you insist on eating nothing but vegetable messes, but, no matter—you must force yourself to eat it, and even if you do not like it you must not let her suspect it. Your mother will be gratified to see you eating substantial food, and your dislike will decrease each time you make an effort to overcome it, and finally it will altogether disappear. You’ll see if I am not telling you the truth. So now, good-bye, and don’t let them come after me so early again; for I know you will not be ill any more unless you choose to be.”

“You will come again this evening, won’t you?” asked Sylvinet.

“I don’t practise medicine for pay, Sylvain, and I have something better to do than to take care of you when you are not ill.”

“You are right, Fadette, but you think that I only want to see you out of selfishness. It isn’t that at all. I take great comfort in talking to you.”

“Very well, you are not helpless, and you know where I live. You know that I am going to be your sister by marriage, as I am already in affection, so there will be no harm in your coming to see me.”

“I shall come, since you are willing that I should do so,” said Sylvinet.

“So now, *au revoir*, Fadette. I am going to get up, though I have a bad headache from lying awake all night and grieving.”

“I will try to cure your headache,” said she; “but take care that it is the last, and remember, I order you to sleep soundly to-night.”

She laid her hand on his forehead, and in about five minutes his head no longer ached, and he felt relieved and comfortable.

“I see that I did wrong not to allow you to help me, Fadette,” said he; “for you are a great doctress, and you can charm away sickness. All the others have done me harm by their drugs, and you have cured me just by laying your hands on me. I believe if I could have you always near me, I should not be ill again, and would never be so foolish and wicked as I have been. But tell me! You are not angry with me any more, are you? Will you rely on the promise I made you to do just as you tell me?”

“I shall rely on it, and if you don’t change your mind, I shall be as fond of you as if you were my twin brother.”

“If you really meant what you say, Fanchon, you would treat me like a brother; for twins do not speak to each other so formally.”

“Well then, Sylvain, get up, eat your breakfast, talk, sleep, take a walk,” said she, rising. “Those are my orders for to-day. To-morrow you may go to work.”

“And I shall go to see you.”

“Very well,” said she, and she left the room, giving him a look of pardon and affection, which at once inspired him with a desire to leave his bed of suffering and self-indulgence.

CHAPTER XL

MOTHER BARBEAU could not get over her amazement at the skill which Fadette had shown, and that evening she said to her husband:

“Here is Sylvinet, feeling better than he has felt for the last six months. He has eaten everything I have given him to-day without any of his usual grimaces over it, and, what is still more remarkable, he speaks of Fadette as if she were the good Lord Himself. He can’t say enough in her praise, and he is longing for his brother’s return and marriage. It seems like an absolute miracle, and I don’t know whether I am asleep or awake.”

“Miracle or no miracle,” said Father Barbeau, “the girl is very clever, and I think any family which gets her is lucky.”

Three days afterward, Sylvinet started off for Arton to bring his brother home. He had begged his father and Fadette to allow him, as a great favor, to be the first to tell Landry of his good fortune.

“All my happiness comes at once,” said Landry, almost ready to die of joy, in Sylvinet’s arms; “for you have come to bring me home, and seem as delighted as I am myself.”

They came back together, and did not linger on the way, as you may well imagine, and there never was a happier set of people than

the family at the Twinnery, when they sat down to supper, with Fadette and Jeanet in their midst. Everything went on smoothly for the next six months. Little Nanette became engaged to young Caillaud, who was Landry's best friend, outside his own family. It was decided that the two weddings should take place on the same day and at the same hour. Sylvinet had grown so fond of Fadette that he did nothing without consulting her, and she had as much influence over him as if she were really his sister. He was in excellent health, and there was no longer any talk of jealousy. If he still occasionally looked sad, and was too much inclined to indulge in reverie, Fadette reproved him, and he at once began to smile and talk.

The two marriages took place on the same day and at the same Mass, and as both families were well-to-do, the wedding feast was so bountiful that Father Caillaud, who was always as sober and dignified as possible, made believe to be a little drunk the third day. There was nothing to dampen the enjoyment of Landry and the whole family, and, indeed, one might say, the whole neighborhood, for the Barbeaus and Caillauds were rich, and Fadette had as much as both families together; so they extended their hospitality to everybody and gave away a good deal in charity. Fanchon was so kind-hearted that she wanted to return good for evil toward all those who had misjudged her. Indeed, later on, when Landry had bought a fine farm, which he and his wife managed admirably, she built a comfortable house on their own land, where all the poor children of the district came for four hours every week day, and she and her brother Jeanet took the trouble to teach them, to give them religious instruction, and even to relieve the necessities of those among them who were in want.

She remembered that she had herself been an unfortunate, neglected child, and her own beautiful boys and girls were early taught to be kind and sympathetic toward those who had nobody to pet them and care for them.

But what was Sylvinet doing while all these rejoicings were going on in his family? Something had happened which nobody could understand and which puzzled Father Barbeau very much. About a month after the weddings of his brother and sister, when his father urged him to look around for a wife, he answered that he did not want to marry, but that he had an idea in his head which he wanted to carry out—this was to go and enlist for a soldier. As there are more girls than boys in the families of our country people, and all the hands are needed for the cultivation of the land, it is very seldom that a man volunteers. So this determination of Sylvinet's caused a good deal of surprise, and he assigned no reason for it, except that he had a fancy for a military life, which nobody had ever suspected. He turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of his father and mother, his sisters and brothers, not even excepting Landry, and they were obliged to appeal to Fanchon, who had better judg-

ment than any member of the family, and whose advice was valuable. She and Sylvinet had a conversation of more than two hours, and when they parted, it was noticed that he and his sister-in-law had both been shedding tears; but they seemed so calm and determined that there was no more objections raised when Sylvinet said that his mind was made up, and Fanchon added that she approved his resolution, and thought it would turn out to be the best thing for him in the end. As it seemed probable that she knew more about the matter than she chose to tell, no one ventured to offer any opposition, and even Mother Barbeau gave in, though she shed a good many tears over it. Landry was in despair, but his wife said:

“It is God’s will and our duty to let Sylvain go. Believe me, I know what I am talking about, and ask no more questions.”

Landry accompanied his brother as far as he could on his journey. He had insisted on carrying Sylvain’s bundle on his shoulder, and when he handed it to him, it seemed as if he were tearing the heart out of his body. He went home to his dear wife, who nursed him tenderly; for he was really ill with grief for a whole month.

Sylvain did not fall ill, but pursued his way to the frontier; for it was in the times of the great and glorious wars of Napoleon. Though he had never had the least liking for the army, he kept his inclinations under such control that he soon gained the reputation of being a good soldier, brave in action, like a man who attaches no value to his life, and yet as amenable to discipline as a child, and living with all the austerity and rigorous simplicity of the ancients. As he had a very fair education, he soon won his promotion, and after ten years of gallant service and many hardships, he got to be a captain, and was also decorated with the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

“Oh, if he would only come home after all these years,” said Mother Barbeau to her husband, the evening of the day on which they had received a delightful letter from him, filled with kind messages for everybody—for Landry, for Fanchon, and indeed for the whole family, old and young. “Here he is, almost a general, and it is time he had a rest.”

“He has rank enough without exaggerating it,” said Father Barbeau, “and it is a great honor for a peasant’s family.”

“Fadette predicted it,” said Mother Barbeau—“yes, indeed, she told us long ago how it would turn out.”

“All the same,” said the father, “I shall never understand how it was that his tastes turned so suddenly in that direction, and how his disposition changed so completely—he who was so quiet and so fond of his ease.”

“Old man, our daughter-in-law knows a good deal more about that than she will tell, but it is not easy to deceive so fond a mother as I am, and I think I know as much about it as our Fadette.”

“I think that it is about time you told me.”

“Well,” said Mother Barbeau, “our Fanchon is too powerful an

enchantress, and she exerted more influence over Sylvinet than she intended. When she saw how the charm was working, she would gladly have dispelled it, or done something to diminish its force, but she could not, and our Sylvinet, seeing that he was becoming too fond of his brother's wife, went away from a sense of honor, in which he was sustained and encouraged by Fanchon."

"If that is the case," said Father Barbeau, scratching his ear, "I fear that he will never marry; for the nurse of Clavières said long ago that his infatuation for his brother would cease should he ever fall in love, but that his heart was too tender and passionate ever to love more than once."

¹ Capharnion. This word with its correct spelling, Capharnaum, is much used in France. Capharnaum or Capernaum was a large commercial town in Judea, hence its vulgar meaning, a place where many things are stored. Littré, *Dict. de la langue française*.