

man and wife? And did she not owe every thing to her uncle? And was it not the duty of a girl to obey her guardian? Would not all the world be against her if she refused this man? Her mind was tormented by a thousand doubts, when her uncle said another word to her, just as they were entering the village:

"You will try and think better of it, will

you not, my dear?" She was silent. "Come, Marie, you can say that you will try. Will you not try?"

"Yes, uncle, I will try."

Michel Voss went home in a good humor, for he felt that he had triumphed; and poor Marie returned broken-hearted, for she was aware that she had half yielded. She knew that her uncle was triumphant.

#### CHAPTER V.

WHEN Edmond Greisse was back at Granpere he well remembered his message, but he had some doubt as to the expediency of delivering it. He had to reflect, in the first place, whether he was quite sure that matters were arranged between Marie and Adrian Urmand. The story had been told to him as being certainly true by Peter, the waiter. And he had discussed the matter with other young men, his associates in the place, among all of whom it was believed that Urmand was certainly about to carry away the young woman with whom they were all more or less in love. But when, on his return to Granpere, he had asked a few more questions, and had found that even Peter was now in doubt on a point as to which he had before been so sure, he began to think that there would be some difficulty in giving his message. He was not without some little fear of Marie, and hesitated to tell her that he had spread the report about her marriage. So he contented himself with simply announcing to her that George Voss intended to visit his old home.

"Does my uncle know?" Marie asked.

"No; you are to tell him," said Greisse.

"I am to tell him! Why should I tell him? You can tell him."

"But George said that I was to let you know, and that you would tell your uncle." This was quite unintelligible to Marie; but it was clear to her that she could make no such announcement after the conversation which she had had with her uncle. It was quite out of the question that she should be the first to announce George's return, when she had been twice warned on that Sunday afternoon not to think of him. "You had

better let my uncle know yourself," she said, as she walked away. But young Greisse, knowing that he was already in trouble, and feeling that he might very probably make it worse, held his peace. When, therefore, one morning George Voss showed himself at the door of the inn, neither his father nor Madame Voss expected him.

But his father was kind to him, and his step-mother hovered round him with demonstrations of love and gratitude, as though much were due to him for coming back at all. "But you expected me?" said George.

"No indeed," said his father. "We did not expect you now any more than on any other day since you left us."

"I sent word by Edmond Greisse," said George. Edmond was interrogated, and declared that he had forgotten to give the message. George was too clever to pursue the matter any further, and when he first met Marie Bromar there was not a word said between them beyond what might have been said between any young persons so related after an absence of twelve months. George Voss was very careful to make no demonstration of affection for a girl who had forgotten him, and who was now, as he believed, betrothed to another man; and Marie was determined that certainly no sign of the old love should first be shown by her. He had come back, perhaps just in time. He had returned just at the moment in which something must be decided. She had felt how much there was in the little word which she had spoken to her uncle. When a girl says that she will try to reconcile herself to a man's overtures, she has almost yielded. The word had escaped her without any such

meaning on her part—had been spoken because she had feared to continue to contradict her uncle in the full completeness of a positive refusal. She had regretted it as soon as it had been spoken, but she could not recall it. She had seen in her uncle's eye, and had heard in the tone of his voice, for how much that word had been taken; but it had gone forth from her mouth, and she could not now rob it of its meaning. Adrian Urmand was to be back at Granpere in a few days—in ten days Michel Voss had said; and there were those ten days for her in which to resolve what she would do. Now, as though sent from heaven, George had returned in this very interval of time. Might it not be that he would help her out of her difficulty? If he would only tell her to remain single for his sake, she would certainly turn her back upon her Swiss lover, let her uncle say what he might. She would make no engagement with George unless with her uncle's sanction; but a word, a look of love, would fortify her against that other marriage.

George, she thought, had come back a man more to be worshipped than ever, as far as appearance went. What woman could doubt for a moment between two such men? Adrian Urmand was no doubt a pretty man, with black hair, of which he was very careful, with white hands, with bright, small, dark eyes which were very close together, with a thin, regular nose, a small mouth, and a black mustache which he was always pointing with his fingers. It was impossible to deny that he was good-looking after a fashion; but Marie despised him in her heart. She was almost bigger than he was, certainly stronger, and had no aptitude for the city niceness and *point-devise* fastidiousness of such a lover. George Voss had come back, not taller than when he had left them, but broader in the shoulders, and more of a man. And then he had in his eye, and in his beaked nose, and his large mouth, and well-developed chin, that look of command which was the peculiar character of his father's face, and which women, who judge of men by their feelings rather than their thoughts, always love to see. Marie, if she would consent to marry Adrian Urmand, might probably have her own way in the house in every thing;

whereas it was certain enough that George Voss, wherever he might be, would desire to have his way. But yet there needed not a moment, in Marie's estimation, to choose between the two. George Voss was a real man; whereas Adrian Urmand, tried by such a comparison, was, in her estimation, simply a rich trader in want of a wife.

In a day or two the fatted calf was killed, and all went happily between George and his father. They walked together up into the mountains, and looked after the wood-cutting, and discussed the prospects of the inn at Colmar. Michel was disposed to think that George had better remain at Colmar, and accept Madame Faragon's offer. "If you think that the house is worth any thing, I will give you a few thousand francs to set it in order; and then you had better agree to allow her so much a year for her life." He probably felt himself to be nearly as young a man as his son; and then remember, too, that he had other sons coming up who would be able to carry on the house at Granpere when he should be past his work. Michel was a loving, generous-hearted man, and all feeling of anger with his son was over before they had been together two days. "You can't do better, George," he said. "You need not always stay away from us for twelve months; and I might take a turn over the mountain, and get a lesson as to how you do things at Colmar. If ten thousand francs will help you, you shall have them. Will that make things go straight with you?" George Voss thought the sum named would make things go very straight; but, as the reader knows, he had another matter near to his heart. He thanked his father; but not in the joyous, thoroughly contented tone that Michel had expected. "Is there any thing wrong about it?" Michel said, in that sharp tone which he used when something had suddenly displeased him.

"There is nothing wrong, nothing wrong at all," said George, slowly. "The money is much more than I could have expected. Indeed, I did not expect any."

"What is it, then?"

"I was thinking of something else. Tell me, father, is it true that Marie is going to be married to Adrian Urmand?"

"What makes you ask?"

"I heard a report of it," said George. "Is it true?"

The father reflected a moment what answer he should give. It did not seem to him that George spoke of such a marriage as though the rumor of it had made him unhappy. The question had been asked almost with indifference. And then the young man's manner to Marie and Marie's manner to him during the last two days had made him certain that he had been right in supposing that they had both forgotten the little tenderness of a year ago. And Michel had thoroughly made up his mind that it would be well that Marie should marry Adrian. He believed that he had already vanquished Marie's scruples. She had promised "to try to think better of it" before George's return; and therefore was he not justified in regarding the matter as almost settled? "I think that they will be married," said he to his son.

"Then there is something in it?"

"Oh yes; there is a great deal in it. Urmand is very eager for it, and has asked me and her aunt, and we have consented."

"But has he asked her?"

"Yes; he has done that too," said Michel.

"And what answer did he get?"

"Well, I don't know that it would be fair to tell that. Marie is not a girl likely to jump into a man's arms at the first word. But I think there is no doubt that they will be betrothed before Sunday week. He is to be here again on Wednesday."

"She likes him, then?"

"Oh yes; of course she likes him." Michel Voss had not intended to say a word that was false. He was anxious to do the best in his power for both his son and his niece. He thoroughly understood that it was his duty as a father and a guardian to start them well in the world, to do all that he could for their prosperity, to feed their wants with his money, as a pelican feeds her young with blood from her bosom. Had he known the hearts of each of them, could he have understood Marie's constancy, or the obstinate silent strength of his son's disposition, he would have let Adrian Urmand, with his business and his house at Basle, have sought a wife in any other quarter when he listed, and would have joined together the

hands of these two whom he loved, with a paternal blessing. But he did not understand. He thought that he saw every thing when he saw nothing; and now he was deceiving his son; for it was untrue that Marie had any such "liking" for Adrian Urmand as that of which George had spoken.

"It is as good as settled, then?" said George, not showing by any tone of his voice the anxiety with which the question was asked.

"I think it is as good as settled," Michel answered. Before they got back to the inn George had thanked his father for his liberal offer, had declared that he would accede to Madame Faragon's proposition, and had made his father understand that he must return to Colmar on the next Monday—two days before that on which Urmand was expected at Granpere.

The Monday came, and hitherto there had been no word of explanation between George and Marie. Every one in the house knew that he was about to return to Colmar, and every one in the house knew that he had been entirely reconciled to his father. Madame Voss had asked some question about him and Marie, and had been assured by her husband that there was nothing in that suspicion. "I told you from the beginning," said he, "that there was nothing of that sort. I only wish that George would think of marrying some one, now that he is to have a large house of his own over his head."

George had determined a dozen times that he would, and a dozen times that he would not, speak to Marie about her coming marriage, changing his mind as often as it was formed. Of what use was it to speak to her? he would say to himself. Then again he would resolve that he would scorch her false heart by one withering word before he went. Chance at last arranged it for him. Before he started he found himself alone with her for a moment, and it was almost impossible that he should not say something. Then he did speak. "They tell me you are going to be married, Marie. I hope you will be happy and prosperous."

"Who tells you so?"

"It is true, at any rate, I suppose?"

"Not that I know of. If my uncle and



"THEN HE PUT HIS ARM ROUND HER AND KISSED HER."

anunt choose to dispose of me, I can not help it."

"It is well for girls to be disposed of sometimes. It saves them a world of trouble."

"I don't know what you mean by that, George—whether it is intended to be ill-natured."

"No indeed. Why should I be ill-natured to you? I heartily wish you to be well and happy. I dare say M. Urmand will make you a good husband. Good-by, Marie. I shall be off in a few minutes. Will you not say farewell to me?"

"Farewell, George."

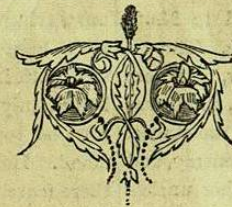
"We used to be friends, Marie."

"Yes; we used to be friends."

"And I have never forgotten the old days. I will not promise to come to your marriage, because it would not make either of us happy, but I shall wish you well. God bless you, Marie!" Then he put his arm round her and kissed her, as he might have done to a sister—as it was natural that he should do to Marie Bromar, regarding her as a cous-

in. She did not speak a word more, and then he was gone!

She had been quite unable to tell him the truth. The manner in which he had first addressed her made it impossible for her to tell him that she was not engaged to marry Adrian Urmand, that she was determined if possible to avoid the marriage, and that she had no love for Adrian Urmand. Had she done so, she would in so doing have asked him to come back to her. That she should do this was impossible. And yet as he left her some suspicion of the truth, some half-formed idea of the real state of the man's mind in reference to her, flashed across her own. She seemed to feel that she was specially unfortunate, but she felt at the same time that there was no means within her reach of setting things right. And she was as convinced as ever she had been that her uncle would never give his consent to a marriage between her and George Voss. As for George himself, he left her with an assured conviction that she was the promised bride of Adrian Urmand.





## CHAPTER VI.



THE world seemed very hard to Marie Bromar when she was left alone. Though there were many who loved her, of whose real affection she had no doubt, there was no one to whom she could go for assistance. Her uncle in this matter was her enemy, and her aunt was completely under her uncle's guidance. Madame Voss spoke to her often in these days of the coming of Adrian Urmand, but the manner of her speaking was such that no comfort could be taken from it. Madame Voss would risk an opinion as to the room which the young man ought to occupy, and the manner in which he should be fed and entertained. For it was thoroughly understood that he was coming on this occasion as a lover, and not as a trader, and that she was coming as the guest of Michel Voss, and not as a customer to the inn. "I suppose he can take his supper like the other people," Marie said to her aunt. And again, when the question of wine was mooted, she

was almost saucy. "If he's thirsty," she said, "what did for him last week will do for him next week; and if he's not thirsty, he had better leave it alone." But girls are always allowed to be saucy about their lovers, and Madame Voss did not count this for much.

Marie was always thinking of those last words which had been spoken between her and George, and of the kiss that he had given her. "We used to be friends," he had said, and then he had declared that he had never forgotten old days. Marie was quick, intelligent, and ready to perceive at half a glance—to understand at half a word—as is the way with clever women. A thrill had gone through her as she heard the tone of the young man's voice, and she had half told herself all the truth. He had not quite ceased to think of her. Then he went, without saying the other one word that would have been needful, without even looking the truth into her face. He had gone, and had plainly given her to understand that he acceded to this marriage with Adrian Urmand. How was she to read it all? Was there more than one way in which a wounded woman, so sore at heart, could read it? He had told her that though he loved her still, it did not suit him to trouble himself with her as a wife; and that he would throw upon her head the guilt of having been false to their old vows. Though she loved him better than all the world, she despised him for his thoughtful treachery. In her eyes it was treachery. He must have known the truth. What right had he to suppose that she would be false to him—he, who had never known her to lie to him? And was it not his business, as a man, to speak some word, to ask some question, by which, if he doubted, the truth might be made

known to him? She, a woman, could ask no question. She could speak no word. She could not renew her assurances to him till he should have asked her to renew them. He was either false, or a traitor, or a coward. She was very angry with him—so angry that she was almost driven by her anger to throw herself into Adrian's arms. She was the more angry because she was full sure that he had not forgotten his old love—that his heart was not altogether changed. Had it appeared to her that the sweet words of former days had vanished from his memory, though they had clung to hers—that he had, in truth, learned to look upon his Granpere experiences as the simple doings of his boyhood—her pride would have been hurt, but she would have been angry with herself rather than with him. But it had not been so. The respectful silence of his sojourn in the house had told her that it was not so. The tremor in his voice, as he reminded her that they once had been friends, had plainly told her that it was not so. He had acknowledged that they had been betrothed, and that the plight between them was still strong; but, wishing to be quit of it, he had thrown the burden of breaking it upon her.

She was very wretched, but she did not go about the house with downcast eyes or humble looks, or sit idle in a corner with her hands before her. She was quick and eager in the performance of her work, speaking sharply to those who came in contact with her. Peter Veque, her chief minister, had but a poor time of it in these days; and she spoke an angry word or two to Edmond Greisse. She had, in truth, spoken no words to Edmond Greisse that were not angry since that ill-starred communication of which he had only given her the half. To her aunt she was brusque and almost ill-mannered.

"What is the matter with you, Marie?" Madame Voss said to her one morning, when she had been snubbed rather rudely by her niece. Marie in answer shook her head and shrugged her shoulders. "If you can not put on a better look before M. Urmand comes, I think he will hardly hold to his bargain," said Madame Voss, who was angry.

"Who wants him to hold to his bargain?"

said Marie, sharply. Then, feeling ill inclined to discuss the matter with her aunt, she left the room. Madame Voss, who had been assured by her husband that Marie had no real objection to Adrian Urmand, did not understand it all.

"I am sure Marie is unhappy," she said to her husband when he came in at noon that day.

"Yes," said he. "It seems strange, but it is so, I fancy, with the best of our young women. Her feeling of modesty—of bashfulness, if you will—is outraged by being told that she is to admit this man as her lover. She won't make the worse wife on that account when he gets her home." Madame Voss was not quite sure that her husband was right. She had not before observed young women to be made savage in their daily work by the outrage to their modesty of an acknowledged lover. But, as usual, she submitted to her husband. Had she not done so, there would have come that glance from the corner of his eye, and that curl in his lip, and that gentle breath from his nostril which had become to her the expression of imperious marital authority. Nothing could be kinder, more truly affectionate, than was the heart of her husband toward her niece. Therefore Madame Voss yielded, and comforted herself by an assurance that, as the best was being done for Marie, she need not subject herself to her husband's displeasure by contradiction or interference.

Michel Voss himself said little or nothing to his niece at this time. She had yielded to him, making him a promise that she would endeavor to accede to his wishes, and he felt that he was bound in honor not to trouble her further, unless she should show herself to be disobedient when the moment of trial came. He was not himself at ease, he was not comfortable at heart, because he knew that Marie was avoiding him. Though she would still stand behind his chair at supper—when for a moment she would be still—she did not put her hands upon his head, nor did she speak to him more than the nature of her service required. Twice he tried to induce her to sit with them at table, as though to show that her position was altered now that she was about to become a bride;

but he was altogether powerless to effect any such change as this. No words that could have been spoken would have induced Marie to seat herself at the table, so well did she understand all that such a change in her habits would have seemed to imply. There was now hardly one person in the supper-room of the hotel who did not instinctively understand the reason which made Michel Voss anxious that his niece should sit down, and that other reason which made her sternly refuse to comply with his request. So day followed day, and there was but little said between the uncle and the niece, though heretofore—up to a time still within a fortnight of the present day—the whole business of the house had been managed by little whispered conferences between them. "I think we'll do so and so, uncle;" or, "Just you manage it yourself, Marie." Such and such like words had passed every morning and evening, with an understanding between them full and complete. Now each was afraid of the other, and every thing was astray.

But Marie was still gentle with the children; when she could be with them for half an hour, she would sit with them on her lap, or clustering round, kissing them and saying soft words to them—even softer in her affection than had been her wont. They understood as well as every body else that something was wrong; that there was to be some change as to Marie which perhaps would not be a change for the better; that there was cause for melancholy, for close kissing as though such kissing were in preparation for parting, and for soft strokings with their little hands as though Marie were to be pitied for that which was about to come upon her. "Isn't somebody coming to take you away?" little Michel asked her, when they were quite alone. Marie had not known how to answer him. She had therefore embraced him closely, and a tear fell upon his face. "Ah," he said, "I know somebody is coming to take you away. Will not papa help you?" She had not spoken; but for the moment she had taken courage, and had resolved that she would help herself.

At length the day was there on which Adrian Urmand was to come. It was his

purpose to travel by Mulhouse and Remiremont, and Michel Voss drove over to the latter town to fetch him. It was felt by every one—it could not be but felt—that there was something special in his coming. His arrival now was not like the arrival of any one else. Marie, with all her resolution that it should be like usual arrivals at the inn, could not avoid the making of some difference herself. A better supper was prepared than usual; and at the last moment she herself assisted in preparing it. The young men clustered round the door of the hotel earlier than usual to welcome the newcomer. M. le Curé was there with a clean white collar, and with his best hat. Madame Voss had changed her gown, and appeared in her own little room before her husband returned almost in her Sunday apparel. She had said a doubtful word to Marie, suggesting a clean ribbon or an altered frill. Marie had replied only by a look. She would not have changed a pin for Urmand's coming had all Granpere come round her to tell her that it was needful. If the man wanted more to eat than was customary, let him have it. It was not for her to measure her uncle's hospitality. But her ribbons and her pins were her own.

The carriage was driving up to the door, and Michel with his young friend descended among the circle of expectant admirers. Urmand was rich, always well dressed, and now he was to be successful in love. He had about him a look as of a successful, prosperous lover, as he jumped out of the little carriage with his portmanteau in his hand, and his great-coat with its silk linings open at the breast. There was a consciousness in him and in every one there that he had not come now to buy linen. He made his way into the little room where Madame Voss was standing up waiting for him, and was taken by the hand by her. Michel Voss soon followed them. "And where is Marie?" Michel asked. An answer came from some one that Marie was up stairs. Supper would soon be ready, and Marie was busy. Then Michel sent up an order by Peter that Marie should come down. But Marie did not come down. "She had gone to her own room," Peter said. Then there came a frown on Michel's brow. Marie had promised to try,

and this was not trying. He said no more till they went up to supper. There was Marie standing as usual at the soup tureen. Urmand walked up to her, and they touched

each other's hand; but Marie said never a word. The frown on Michel's brow was very black, but Marie went on dispensing her soup.

## CHAPTER VII.

ADRIAN URMAND, in spite of his white hands and his well-combed locks and the silk lining to his coat, had so much of the spirit of a man that he was minded to hold his head well up before the girl whom he wished to make his wife. Michel, during that drive from Remiremont, had told him that he might probably prevail. Michel had said a thousand things in favor of his niece, and not a word to her prejudice; but he had so spoken, or had endeavored so to speak, as to make Urmand understand that Marie could only be won with difficulty, and that she was perhaps unaccountably averse to the idea of matrimony. "She is like a young filly, you know, that starts and plunges when she is touched," he had said. "You think there is nobody else?" Urmand had asked. Then Michel Voss had answered with confidence, "I am sure there is nobody else." Urmand had listened and said very little; but when at supper he saw that the uncle was ruffled in his temper, and sat silent with a black brow, that Madame Voss was troubled in spirit, and that Marie dispensed her soup without vouchsafing a look to any one, he felt that it behooved him to do his best, and he did it. He talked freely to Madame Voss, telling her the news from Basle: how at length he thought the French trade was reviving, and how all the Swiss authorities were still opposed to the German occupation of Alsace, and how flax was likely to be dearer than ever he had seen it, and how the traveling English were fewer this year than usual, to the great detriment of the innkeepers. Every now and then he would say a word to Marie herself as she passed near him, speaking in a cheery tone, and striving his best to dispel a black silence which on the present occasion would have been specially lugubrious. Upon the whole, he did his work well, and Michel Voss was aware of it; but Marie Bromar enter-

tained no gentle thought respecting him. He was not wanted there, and he ought not to have come. She had given him an answer, and he ought to have taken it. Nothing, she declared to herself, was meaner than a man who would go to a girl's parents or guardians for support when the girl herself had told him that she wished to have nothing to do with him. Marie had promised that she would try, but every feeling of her heart was against the struggle.

After supper Michel with his young friend sat some time at the table, for the innkeeper had brought forth a bottle of his best Burgundy in honor of the occasion. When they had eaten their fruit, Madame Voss left the room, and Michel and Adrian were soon alone together. "Say nothing to her till to-morrow," said Michel, in a low voice.

"I will not," said Adrian. "I do not wonder that she should be put out of face if she knows why I have come."

"Of course she knows. Give her to-night and to-morrow, and we will see how it is to be."

At this time Marie was up stairs with the children, resolute that nothing should induce her to go down till she should be sure that their visitor had gone to his chamber. There were many things about the house which it was her custom to see in their place before she went to her rest, and nobody should say that she neglected her work because of this dressed-up doll; but she would wait till she was sure of him—till she was sure of her uncle also. In her present frame of mind she could not have spoken to the doll with ordinary courtesy. What she feared was that her uncle should seek her up stairs.

But Michel had some idea that her part in the play was not an easy one, and was minded to spare her for that night. But she had promised to try, and she must be reminded of her promise. Hitherto she certainly had

not tried. Hitherto she had been ill-tempered, petulant, and almost rude. He would not see her himself this evening, but he would send a message to her by his wife. "Tell her from me that I shall expect to see smiles on her face to-morrow," said Michel Voss. And as he spoke there certainly were no smiles on his own.

"I suppose she is flurried," said Madame Voss.

"Ah, flurried! That may do for to-night. I have been very good to her. Had she been my own, I could not have been kinder. I have loved her just as if she were my own. Of course I look now for the obedience of a child."

"She does not mean to be undutiful, Michel."

"I do not know about meaning. I like reality, and I will have it, too. I consulted herself, and was more forbearing than most fathers would be. I talked to her about it, and she promised me that she would do her best to entertain the man. Now she receives him and me with an old frock and a sulky face. Who pays for her clothes? She has every thing she wants, just as a daughter, and she would not take the trouble to change her dress to grace my friend—as you did, as any daughter would! I am angry with her."

"Do not be angry with her. I think I can understand why she did not put on another frock."

"So can I understand. I can understand well enough. I am not a fool. What is it she wants, I wonder? What is it she expects? Does she think some count from Paris is to come and fetch her?"

"Nay, Michel, I think she expects nothing of that sort."

"Then let her behave like any other young woman, and do as she is bid. He is not old or ugly, or a sot or a gambler. Upon my word and honor, I can't conceive what it is that she wants. I can't indeed." It was perhaps the fault of Michel Voss that he could not understand that a young woman should live in the same house with him and have a want which he did not conceive. Poor Marie! All that she wanted now, at this moment, was to be let alone!

Madame Voss, in obedience to her husband's commands, went up to Marie, and

found her sitting in the children's room, leaning with her head on her hand and her elbow on the table, while the children were asleep around her. She was waiting till the house should be quiet, so that she could go down and complete her work. "Oh, is it you, Aunt Josey?" she said. "I am waiting till uncle and M. Urmand are gone, that I may go down and put away the wine and the fruit."

"Never mind that to-night, Marie."

"Oh yes, I will go down presently. I should not be happy if the things were not put straight. Every thing is about the house every where. We need not, I suppose, become like pigs because M. Urmand has come from Basle."

"No; we need not be like pigs," said Madame Voss. "Come into my room a moment, Marie. I want to speak to you. Your uncle won't be up yet." Then she led the way, and Marie followed her. "Your uncle is becoming angry, Marie, because—"

"Because why? Have I done any thing to make him angry?"

"Why are you so cross to this young man?"

"I am not cross, Aunt Josey. I went on just the same as I always do. If Uncle Michel wants any thing else, that is his fault—not mine."

"Of course you know what he wants, and I must say that you ought to obey him. You gave him a sort of a promise, and now he thinks that you are breaking it."

"I gave him no promise," said Marie, stoutly.

"He says that you told him that you would, at any rate, be civil to M. Urmand."

"And I have been civil," said Marie.

"You did not speak to him."

"I never do speak to any body," said Marie. "I have got something to think of instead of talking to the people. How would the things go if I took to talking to the people, and left every thing to that little goose, Peter? Uncle Michel is unreasonable—and unkind."

"He means to do the best by you in his power. He wants to treat you just as though you were his daughter."

"Then let him leave me alone. I don't want any thing to be done. If I were his

daughter he would not grudge me permission to stop at home in his house. I don't want any thing else. I have never complained."

"But, my dear, it is time that you should be settled in the world."

"I am settled. I don't want any other settlement—if they will only let me alone."

"Marie," said Madame Voss, after a short pause, "I sometimes think that you still have got George Voss in your head."

"Is it that, Aunt Josey, that makes my uncle go on like this?" asked Marie.

"You do not answer me, child."

"I do not know what answer you want. When George was here I hardly spoke to him. If Uncle Michel is afraid of me, I will give him my solemn promise never to marry any one without his permission."

"George Voss will never come back for you," said Madame Voss.

"He will come when I ask him," said Marie, flashing round upon her aunt with all the fire of her bright eyes. "Does any one say that I have done any thing to bring him to me? If so, it is false, whoever says it. I have done nothing. He has gone away, and let him stay. I shall not send for him. Uncle Michel need not be afraid of me because of George."

By this time Marie was speaking almost in a fury of passion, and her aunt was almost subdued by her. "Nobody is afraid of you, Marie," she said.

"Nobody need be. If they will let me alone, I will do no harm to any one."

"But, Marie, you would wish to be married some day."

"Why should I wish to be married? If I liked him I would take him; but I don't. Oh, Aunt Josey, I thought you would be my friend!"

"I can not be your friend, Marie, if you oppose your uncle. He has done every thing for you, and he must know best what is good for you. There can be no reason against M. Urmand, and if you persist in being so unruly, he will only think that it is because you want George to come back for you."

"I care nothing for George," said Marie,

as she left the room; "nothing at all—nothing."

About half an hour afterward, listening at her own door, she heard the sound of her uncle's feet as he went to his room, and knew that the house was quiet. Then she crept forth, and went about her business. Nobody should say that she neglected any thing because of this unhappiness. She brushed the crumbs from the long table, and smoothed the cloth for the next morning's breakfast; she put away bottles and dishes, and she locked up cupboards, and saw that the windows and the doors were fastened. Then she went down to her books in the little office below stairs. In the performance of her daily duty there were entries to be made and figures to be adjusted, which would have been done in the course of the evening had it not been that she had been driven up stairs by fear of her lover and her uncle. But by the time that she took herself up to bed nothing had been omitted. And after the book was closed she sat there, trying to resolve what she would do. Nothing had, perhaps, given her so sharp a pang as her aunt's assurance that George Voss would not come back to her, as her aunt's suspicion that she was looking for his return. It was not that she had been deserted, but that others should be able to taunt her with her desolation. She had never whispered the name of George to any one since he had left Granpere, and she thought that she might have been spared this indignity. "If he fancies I want to interfere with him," she said to herself, thinking of her uncle, and of her uncle's plans in reference to his son, "he will find that he is mistaken." Then it occurred to her that she would be driven to accept Adrian Urmand to prove that she was heart-whole in regard to George Voss.

She sat there, thinking of it, till the night was half spent, and when she crept up cold to bed she had almost made up her mind that it would be best for her to do as her uncle wished. As for loving the man, that was out of the question. But then would it not be better to do without love altogether?