

by setting him down as a hero of romance. We had scarcely advanced two leagues further ere we knew that he was in the army, that his family dwelt in the Chateau de Beaupréau on the banks of the Drome; the old gentleman in his avenue one of the richest landholders in Burgundy, at whose house, he had just spent six weeks with the Countess of T * * *, and her daughter Augusta, that he had been betrothed to the latter from her infancy, because their estates lay contiguous; that he was going to make preparations for their marriage, which was to take place a fortnight after, at the Chateau of the Countess; and lastly, that he was going to resign his Commission, in order to live six months in the year, in the quiet of philosophy, upon his own estate, and six months as a courtier at Paris. Education and good manners prevented him from being tiresome, yet he was naturally talkative, and the buoyancy of his spirits made him eager to communicate to others the feelings of happiness by which he was then excited. He seemed anxious to be on good terms with every one in the diligence. In short, his good nature was such, and even his flightiness in such good taste, that I at last became interested in him, although I am much better disposed to weep with those that weep, than to laugh with those who are joyful.

On a sudden our vehicle was stopped; our progress was impeded by a crowd of men, women, and children, all mingling their cries with notes of a dozen fiddles, the pressing invitations of two merry-andrews, and the energetic remonstrances of four gendarmes. We were in the midst of a fair.

“What saints day can this be?” said our fellow-passenger, Madame Pinguet, taking an almanack from her reticule; “ah! it is the 21st., St. Ursula’s day”

“Ursula!” repeated M. Maurice looking at the woman with an air of surprise.

“Yes,” replied the latter giving him the almanack, “look! the 21st., that is to-day St. Ursula’s day.”

M. Maurice instinctively took the almanac, and pronounced—