

than here and there a huge mound—the venerable monument of departed ages—or a solitary tree of stunted growth, shattered by the blast, and pining alone in the gay desert. The prospect was bounded by a range of tall bluffs, which overlooked the prairie, covered at some points with groves of timber, and at others exhibiting their naked sides, or high, bold peaks, to the eye of the beholder. Herds of deer might be seen here at sunrise, slily retiring to their coverts, after rioting away the night on the rich pasturage. Here the lowing kine lived, if not in clover, at least in something equally nutritious; and here might be seen immense droves of French ponies roaming untamed, the common stock of the village, ready to be reduced to servitude by any lady or gentleman who chose to take the trouble.

This little colony was composed partly of emigrants from France, and partly of natives—not Indians, but *bona fide* French, born in America, but preserving their language, their manners, and their agility in dancing, although several generations had passed away since their first settlement. Here they lived perfectly happy; and well they might; for they enjoyed, to the full extent, those three blessings on which the declaration of independence has laid so much stress—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

If this village had no other recommendation, it is endeared to my recollection as the birth-place and residence of Monsieur Baptiste Menou, who was one of its principal inhabitants when I first visited it. He was a bachelor of forty, a tall, lank, hard-featured personage, as straight as a ramrod, and almost as thin, with stiff black hair, sunken cheeks, a complexion a tinge darker than the aborigines. His person was remarkably erect, his countenance grave, his gait deliberate; and when to all this is added an enormous pair of sable whiskers, it will be admitted that Monsieur Baptiste was no insignificant person. He had many estimable qualities of mind and body, which endeared him to his friends, whose respect was increased by the fact of his having been a soldier and a traveller.

Across the street, immediately opposite to Mons. Baptiste, lived Mademoiselle Jeanette Duval, a lady who resembled him in some respects, but in many others, was his very antipode. Like him, she was cheerful, and happy, and single; but, unlike him, she was brisk, and fat, and plump. Monsieur was the very pink of gravity; Mademoiselle was blessed with a goodly portion thereof—but hers was specific gravity. Her hair was dark, but her heart was light; and her eyes, though black, were as brilliant a pair of orbs as ever beamed upon the dreary solitude of a bachelor's heart. Jeanette's heels were as light as her heart, and her tongue as active as her heels; so that, notwithstanding her rotundity, she was as brisk a Frenchwoman as ever frisked through the mazes of a cotillion. To sum up her

perfections, her complexion was of a darker olive than the genial sun of France confers on her brunettes; and her skin was as smooth and shining as polished mahogany. Her whole household consisted of herself and a female negro servant. A spacious garden, which surrounded her house, a pony, and a herd of cattle, constituted in addition to her personal charms, all the wealth of this amiable spinster. But with these she was rich, as they supplied her table, without adding much to her cares.

Baptiste and Jeanette were the best of neighbours. He always rose at the dawn, and after lighting his pipe, sallied forth into the open air, where Jeanette usually made her appearance at the same time; for there was an emulation, of long standing, between them, which should be the earliest riser.

"Bon jour! Mam'selle Jeanette," was his daily salutation.

"Ah! bon jour! bon jour! Monsieur Menou," was her daily reply.

Then, as he gradually approximated the little paling which surrounded her door, he hoped Mam'selle was well this morning, and she reiterated the kind inquiry, but with increased emphasis. Then Monsieur inquired after Mam'selle's pony, and Mam'selle's cow, and her garden, and every thing appertaining to her, real, personal, and mixed; and she displayed a corresponding interest in all the concerns of her kind neighbour. These discussions were mutually beneficial. If Mam'selle's cattle ailed, or if her pony was guilty of any impropriety, who so able to advise her as Mons. Baptiste?—and if his plants drooped or his poultry died, who so skilful in such matters, as Mam'selle Jeanette? Sometimes Baptiste forgot his pipe, in the superior interest of the *tête-à-tête*, and must needs step in to light it at Jeanette's fire, which caused the gossips of the village to say that he purposely let his pipe go out, in order that he might himself go in. But he denied this: and indeed, before offering to enter the dwelling of Mam'selle on such occasions, he usually solicited permission to light his pipe at Jeanette's sparkling eyes—a compliment at which, although it had been repeated some scores of times, Mam'selle never failed to laugh and curtesy, with great good humour and good breeding.

It cannot be supposed that a bachelor of so much discernment could long remain insensible to the galaxy of charms which centred in the person of Mam'selle Jeanette; and, accordingly, it was currently reported that a courtship of some ten years' standing had been silyly conducted on his part, and as cunningly eluded on hers. It was not averred that Baptiste had actually gone the fearful length of offering his hand, or that Jeanette had been so imprudent as to discourage, far less reject, a lover of such respectable pretensions. But there was thought to exist a strong hankering on the part of the gentleman, which the lady managed so skilfully as to keep his