

meditation. Madame often looked upon her fondly, sighing to think how short a time her blithe presence would brighten the dark ancestral halls, and lend its fresh youth to cheer the stately old chateau. She looked forward sadly to a time when visitors would be shown the last portrait in the picture-gallery, and told that it represented the daughter of the house, who had married and gone over the sea to an ocean-bound island; and she could fancy how the stranger, gazing upon it, would envy the home to which so gracious a presence would be added, and try to imagine the high-born damsel a youthful bride, rejoicing her husband's heart in a Northern home, far from the sunny Loire.

The wedding-day came at last—a day in the late autumn, when the earth was arrayed in its fairest robes to celebrate its espousals with death. There was a more touching loveliness in the landscape than the full glory of the midsummer. The village bells rang out in joy; the children strewed their garlands, woven of the dying year's half-faded flowers, under the feet of the bridegroom and the bride. Never had the Douglas halls witnessed a more joyous festivity. The chapel doors were thrown wide, incense