

she told her in a voice that broke now and then, how Pierre had risked his own life to save that of M. le Baron.

Babette's heart sang. Her Pierre would be sure to do brave deeds.

Madame would not hear of Babette's returning till she had rested, and had taken a meal with Suzanne, so the rays of the sun were level as *le Petit Soleil* took her way home. She was happier than she had been since Pierre went. Her noble Pierre! Their son should be a hero also: he should be just like his father, and then *la belle France* would have two sons of whom she could be proud.

Babette went on, absorbed in her happy day-dream, till she was abruptly stopped by a cry of "Halt!"

Five or six uhlans faced her.

"There are French troops hidden near this wood, *ma chère*, and you must tell me where they are," said the officer in command.

Babette lifted truthful eyes to his face as she answered:

"Monsieur, I did not know French troops were near, and I do not know where they are."

There was a smothered exclamation of impatience from one of the men.

"You know that punishment will be meted out to you if it is discovered that you have lied to us? You swear that you have told us the truth?"

"I swear it, Monsieur, by all I hold most sacred."

"Where are you going?"

"To the village yonder."

"Where have you come from?"

"From the château."

"Your name?"

"Babette Massier, Monsieur."

"You may pass on."

With a muttered curse at what he considered his superior's soft-heartedness, one of the troopers struck his spur into Babette's cloak and rent it as she brushed by his horse.

That night, the rattle of musketry, not a mile off, was heard for a few minutes and then all was still.

The next day red war stepped over their threshold, for a detachment of the enemy entered the village.

The officer in command ordered the villagers to be assembled on the green in front of the church, and there addressed them.

In guttural French he told them that the previous evening, five of his men and a sergeant had been betrayed into an ambush by one of the villagers and that he had come to make the village answer for the deed.

"Seize that man," he ordered, indicating the curé.

Two soldiers roughly collared the old man, and, placing him back to a wall, stood on guard.