

ing, their eyes protected from the glaring whiteness of the snow by great smoked goggles. They look funny, certainly, but even cows are too sensible to object to a ridiculous appearance if it adds to their health and comfort!

GOSSIPS

"Jeanne! Jeanne!"
"Yes, mother, I'm here—out in the orchard."

"Come here, then, quick. I want you and Marie to go on an errand for me."

"I'm coming."

The next moment the stout oak door of the farmhouse was flung wide open, and little Jeanne entered with a flood of sunshine from the bright summer day without.

Madam Pontin was standing by the table, deftly arranging some eggs in a large wicker basket.

"Now listen carefully to me Jeanne," she said. "I want these two baskets taken to M. Verdette, at the White House. See, one basket contains twenty-four of my new-laid eggs and some young salads on the top, and the other a pair of chickens and some butter. Now Monsieur wants them for 12 o'clock breakfast, as he has company to-day, and so you must not get there one moment later than 11. Do you understand? I should lose all his custom if I were to fail him to-day."

"What is the time now?" asked Jeanne.

"It has just struck 10. You see, I am sending you in plenty of time, as I don't want you to be late. Now you take the chickens, as they are the heavier, and Marie—where is Marie?"

"I am here, mamma."

"Marie shall take the eggs. Now, be careful, children, and deliver the baskets in good time, and you shall have a sou each to spend next market-day."

Then Madame Pontin gave each little face a hearty kiss, and watched the children start off down the long, dusty, white road on their errand.

"No gossiping, now, at the cross-roads!" she called out after them, as they came to the corner. "Just go straight on without stopping."



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