

John's Decision (126-130)

An important event was to take place at Longueval on the tenth of August, John's return. Everybody had been waiting for him with impatience: Mr. and Mrs. Scott (the former had returned from America a few days ago), their two children, and especially Bettina. Richard, Suzie, and Bettina had just sat down in the park, when Bettina addressed her sister: "Do you remember your promise? You promised to let me speak frankly to John to-day, if I were sure of my love. Well, I am sure of it." Richard replied: "We are both ready to grant you this permission." At the same time John, who had just reached his house, was saying to himself that he would not see Bettina any more. He would leave for Paris that very evening and have himself sent to another regiment. He had only to write to Mrs. Scott and say good-bye to the curé. The letter to Mrs. Scott was soon written and sent.

John's Confession (131-135)

Passing the curé's house that day, John had stopped only a few minutes. He told the curé that he would come back presently to talk to him about something important. When John returned, the priest asked him what it was about and was surprised to learn that John was leaving for Paris in a few hours. In order not to pain the poor old man, John told him that he was going away just for a short time. "But I have only a short time to live," said the abbé. "Wait at least until I leave. For some time you have been looking sad and unhappy. Tell me what is happening." "I didn't intend to tell you anything," replied John, "but I should be wrong in hiding it any longer—I am in love with Bettina and I must not see her again." After a few minutes' silence the priest replied: "I have noticed that she, too, is interested in you."