

VII

ANATOLE had been despatched to ask the Mayor and the Curé to come as quickly as they could to talk matters over, and the Doctor had thrown himself on the mattress in the sacristy whilst waiting for them. His head was weary and he felt as though he could neither think nor act. What was he to do?

The afternoon sun shone in through the little window, and the glare on the white wall made him close his tired eyes for a moment.

"*Have—you—already—been—in—Germany?*" He started violently as he heard the voice, and opened his eyes.

The room was quite dark, but for the little oil-lamp on the table, and on the bench sat the Mayor and the Curé talking in a low voice.

"I did not hear you come," said the Doctor, springing to his feet.

"We did not want to wake you," said the Curé, "you looked so tired. You have slept like a child for a good half-hour, but I am afraid you were awakened by a nightmare."

"You have a long night's walk before you, and you were well in need of the little sleep