

Hilaire had attained the perfection of blooming womanhood.

All this time, what had become of *la petite Madelaine*? What does become of little girls just half-way through their teens, when associated, under similar circumstances, with young ladies who are women grown? Why, they are to be patient listeners to the lover's perfections when he is out of the way, and more patient companions (because perfectly unnoticed at such times) of the lovers' romantic walks; shivering associates (at discreet distance) of their tender communings on mossy banks, under willow and acacia, by pond-sides and brook-sides—by daylight, and twilight, and moonlight—at all seasons, and in all temperatures—so that by the time the pastoral concludes with matrimony, it may be accounted an especial mercy if the "mutual friend" is not crippled with the rheumatism for life, or brought into the first stage of a galloping consumption. No such fatal results were, however, in reserve for the termination of *la petite Madelaine's* official duties; and those, while in requisition, were

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The families of St. Hilaire and Du Résnél were, as has been mentioned, distantly related, and the ties of kindred were strengthened by similarity of faith, both professing that of the Reformed Church, and living on that account very much within their own circle, though on terms of perfect good-will with the surrounding Catholic neighbourhood. Mlle. de St. Hilaire might naturally have been expected to select among the elder of her cousins her companion and intimate, their ages nearly assimilating with her own; but, too cold-hearted and proud to brook companionship on equal terms, and to seek for sympathy, too proud to sacrifice any caprice, or make any exertion for the too selfish and indolent to patronise la petite Madelaine, she found it most convenient to insure willing though not servile compliance with even the unreasonable fancies of all who were kind to her, and whose gentle spirit and sweet temper insured willing though not servile compliance with even the unreasonable fancies of all who were kind to her, and whose quickness of intellect and excellent capacity more than fitted her for whose quickness of intellect and excellent capacity more than fitted her for companionship with Adrienne, though the latter was six years her senior. Besides all, there was the pleasure of patronage—hot the least influential motive to a proud and mean spirit, or to the heart of a beauty well-nigh satiated, if that were possible, by the contemplation of her own perfections. When la petite Madelaine was ten years old, and la belle Adrienne sixteen, it therefore happened that the former was much oftener to be found at Chateau St. Hilaire than at le Manoir du Résnél; for whenever the parental efforts of Monsieur and Madame de St. Hilaire failed (and they failed too often) to divert the ennui of their spoiled darling, the latter was wont to exclaim, in satisfy the caprices of their spoiled darling, the latter was wont to exclaim, in the pettish tone of peevish impatience, "Faites donc venir la petite Madelaine!" and the innocent charmer was as eagerly sought out and welcomed by the harassed parents as ever David was sought for by the servants of Saul, to lay with the sweet breathings of his harp the evil spirit that possessed their unhappy master. Something similar was the influence of la petite Madelaine's nature over that of her beautiful cousin. No wonder that her presence could scarcely be dispensed with at Chateau St. Hilaire. Had her own home been more a home of love, not all the blandishments of the kindest friends, not all the luxuries of a wealthy establishment, would ever have reconciled her to be so much separated from her nearest connections. But, alas! except when her services were required (and no sparing and light tasks were her assigned ones), she was but too welcome to bestow her companionship on others; and except Roland, and le petit frère, who was there to miss la petite Madelaine? And Roland was mostly her escort to St. Hilaire; and on fine evenings, when le petit frère had escaped from his tutor and his sister, Jeannette was easily persuaded to take him as far as the old mill, half-way between the chateau, to meet her on her way home. Those were pleasant meetings. Madelaine loved often, in after-life, to talk of them with that dear brother, always her faithful friend. So time went on—Time, the traveller whose pace is so variously designated by various humours, is always the restless, the unpausing—till Mademoiselle de St. Hilaire had attained the perfection of blooming womanhood—the glowing love-