

lucky girl to get such a handsome husband, and to be in no danger of future pains or aches.

Belline was not at all the *habitant's* ideal of beauty; should you ask any one of those worthies to define his favorite type of female loveliness he will invariably reply: "Big, fat, white creature, with bleedin' cheek, de long black curl like de saussice, and de eyes like de black glass!"

Poor little Belline had none of these attractions; she was very small, with a pale delicate little face, and a pair of big soft brown eyes, that did not look in the least like black glass; but she was too happy to mind that. "*So long as Rémi is satisfied,*" she would say with a big sigh of content; for she loved Rémi with all the intensity of a young heart's first awakening.

Once an English artist who was taking sketches about the village, saw Rémi coming out of Belline's house, and asked a village girl who that fine fellow was; she told him, adding "Oh, monsieur! dat's shame for sure,—nice fat boy like dat, gone to marry little affaire full of bone." The artist laughed and little Belline, sitting at her window, laughed too quite cheerfully for *Rémi was satisfied*, and besides it was well known that Fédéra Boullé had a great penchant for "Le beau Rémi" and consequently no very deep affection for Belline, his fiancée.

On this day little Belline was very busy, it was Saturday, the day of ménage or house-cleaning, and she had so many preparations of her own to make that she hardly knew where to begin now. All morning she had been making carpet out of the long strips of rag she had sewed together and rolled into balls in the previous winter; the morning had passed pleasantly for she had three of her friends to help her, and they chatted away merrily, as they sat on the floor around the big frame with an old salt-bag cut open and stretched on it as ground-work of the rag-carpet, for a model of thrift is the French-Canadian house-wife. How the hooks flew! those queer hooks made out of old useless forks, with the prongs broken off, the end filed smooth and bent into the form of a hook, of which the workers make use by holding a strip of rag under the canvas and then drawing it through it in loops till the whole strip is drawn up, when the rough ends are cut off,—(and even the ends are saved till enough of such scraps are gathered to stuff a matras). Very warm carpets they

make, and often very pretty ones; and little Belline was excelling herself with this one,—*so that Rémi would be satisfied.*

When dinner was over she put away the remainder of the pea-soup and fat fresh pork, which is the invariable fare of the well-to-do *hab.* Many of them only taste meat on Christmas Eve: their equivalent for our saying: "As rich as a Jew," being, "He eats meat three times a day!" The every day menu of the poorer people consists of bran bread, almost black, and a dish of sour milk with maple sugar grated into it. The bran bread is made of bran baked with water and salt. A loaf of this, with the dish of sour milk is placed in the middle of the table, and the members of the family soak their slice of bread in it, *sans cérémonie.* But on Easter none are so poor as to do without their fat fresh pork and black mollasses. Belline's father was a "*Gros habitant*" (well to-do farmer), and had pork every day; and she did not look at it with the admiration of the less fortunate as she put it away. Then she took her broom of cedar-branches and swept away till the whole house was full of the scent of the Canadian woods in summer.

"How quiet it is," thought little Belline, pausing a moment to look up into the empty blue sky through the diamond-pane window of the parlor-bedroom, the only room on the first floor besides the kitchen, which is the general living-room when the big stove is moved in the Autumn from the summer cooking-shed behind the *habitant's* house. Busy little Belline did not pause for long however; for was she not tidying the parlor bed-room? the pride of every French-Canadian village girl's heart: the old customs, traditions, and superstitions of the Brétons will never die out while the *habitant* exists. There is never much difference between the parlor bed-room of one house and that of another. You will always find the same great lumbering high bed, with its goffered cotton valance, its snow-white curtains, and the blue and white catelognes used instead of blankets. The osier-bottomed rocking-chairs, with their vermilion frame-work; the gilt-framed, rainbow-hued chromos of Christ and the Virgin, with with the omnipresent statue of *La bonue St. Anne*; the little red-stained table—and then, of each young rustic's sentimental veneration, the great "*Coffre Bleu*"!

Ah, that big indigo coffer! what tales it would tell could it speak. Within it