

"*Oui, mon maître,*" said the dull Hyacinthe.

"Thy great hands shall shape and smooth the wood, *nigaud*, and I will render it beautiful," said Pierre, puffing out his chest.

"Yes, master," answered Hyacinthe humbly, "and when is it to be ready for Madame?"

"Madame will want it perhaps next week, for that is Christmas. It is to be finished and ready on the holy festival, great sluggard. Hearest thou?" and he cuffed Hyacinthe's ears again furiously.

Hyacinthe knew that the making of the cabinet would fall to him, as most of the other work did. When Pierre L'Oreillard was gone he touched the strange sweet wood and at last laid his cheek against it, while the fragrance caught his breath. "How it is beautiful!" said Hyacinthe, and for a moment his eyes glowed, and he was happy. Then the light passed, and with bent head he shuffled back to his bench through a foam of white shavings curling almost to his knees.

"Madame will want the cabinet for Christmas," repeated Hyacinthe to him-

