



"Slow worm!" cried Pierre, and he cuffed Hyacinthe as he passed in. Hyacinthe rubbed his head and said nothing. He was used to blows. He wondered why his master was in the workshop at that time of day instead of drinking brandy at the Cinq Chateaux.

Pierre L'Oreillard had a small heavy bundle under his arm, wrapped in sack-
ing, and then in burlap, and then in fine soft cloths. He laid it on a pile of shavings, and unfolded it carefully; and a dim sweetness filled the dark shed and hung heavily in the thin winter sunbeams.

"It is a piece of wood," said Hyacinthe in slow surprise. He knew that such wood had never been seen in Terminaison.

Pierre L'Oreillard rubbed the wood respectfully with his knobby fingers.

"It is sandalwood," he explained to Hyacinthe, pride of knowledge making him quite amiable, "a most precious wood that grows in warm countries, thou great goblin. Smell it, idiot. It is sweeter than cedar. It is to make a cabinet for the old Madame at the big house."