

paved courtyard opening on the highroad. The main part of the building projected, and on each side extended low wings. The squares between the wings and the main house, Dame Lucille, the wife of the Aubergiste, had fairly covered with boxes of sweet-smelling, bright-tinted flowers; mignonette, geraniums, phlox and fuschias grew side by side in hardy profusion; and to the rough stones and mullioned windows of the left wing clung the tough tendrils of the northern grape, whilst, over the right wing, trailed ivy and scarlet runners. Then behind, were the straggling orchard and the long sweep of green fields.

“One bright day, bright that is for the late November, I, a child of six years, tripped up the narrow path leading from the river to the Auberge. I had gathered the last flaming poppies, and golden goats-beard, and tender marguerites, and woven a glowing wreath for mamma. Springing over Lucille’s flower boxes, already stripped of their splendor, I stopped a moment, peeping round the sharp angle for some one to surprise. I noticed that old Francis Bourgoigne sat on the long stone bench that ran across the court under the eaves; that Baptiste and Cèleste leant against the door-posts, neither looking at the other. Presently, Cèleste’s shrill accents rang out—‘A great gust blows handfuls of green leaves from the old chestnut; it is a bad sign when the leaves fall before their time. Ste. Cécile protect chère madame and pauvre mignonne.’

“‘Liens! chatterer,’ says Francis, ‘that the wind whirls off the green leaves tells a tale of a frost that is gone, a storm that comes.’

“Children, I think, are instantaneously struck with surprise on seeing their friends diverge from their usual manner of acting; that was what kept me peeping; but then children only wonder, they never connect or conclude, so, as Francis ceased, I danced out of my hiding place into the arms of M. the Dr. Le Brun.

“‘Where art thou going, my little one?’ questioned he.

“‘To mamma, of course, with my flowers,’ and shouting merrily at the question, I bounded past him up to my mother’s room.

“Our room was a very large one, with low ceiling and dark wood walls. Almost the whole of one side was occupied with the large chimney and fire-place, and the polished hearthstones were bare. The rest of the room mamma had carpeted, and the furniture and nick-nacks were beautiful. You can fancy what a strange