

but rather with loving pride and satisfaction, feeling complimented that the strangers were pleased to dwell so long among them. There was no child in the village who did not know and love the kind ladies, who possessed an unlimited supply of *bonbons*, and did not scruple to distribute them with lavish hands. As for good Father Lacoste, he dreaded the time of their departure, having found in the English gentleman a kindred soul. Poor little Father Lacoste—a scholar and a gentleman of the truest stamp—had very little scope in his rural parish, and his life was a monotonous round to which at times his people's love could scarcely reconcile him. If Madame had a favourite among her guests it was Joan, and she would have gone down on her knees to serve her. It was a real joy to the kind soul to watch the gradual improvement in the fragile lady, and to see the return of the bloom to the cheek, the lustre to the eye, and the buoyancy of health to the step which had been so feeble and slow the first time it had trodden Breton soil. But it was not Breton milk and eggs, nor yet Breton sea breezes, which had wrought all the cure; nay, there was something more, which Madame did not know. It was September, as I said; the cornlands had yielded their golden harvest, and the magnificent tints of autumn were tinging upland and lowland, but not yet had the leaves begun to fall. It was a kind of Indian summer—a calm, delicious, sunny time, before the first snows should touch the distant hills, and charge the air with the winter's cold. Often now the ladies would join Mr Angus and Father Lacoste in their excursions, and Joan laid up a store of rich material for future use, as well as a store of health, that autumn time among the hills and dales of Brittany.

One morning an excursion had been planned, which, to Joan's astonishment, did not include her. It was too far, Mr Angus said, with a twinkle in his eye; she would be better at home. She laughed, and said she could enjoy herself very well independent of them, and she did not