

the house. During the five years of her residence at Granpere, she had thoroughly learned the mysteries of her uncle's trade. She knew good wine from bad by the perfume; she knew whether bread was the full weight by the touch; with a glance of her eye she could tell whether the cheese and butter were what they ought to be; in a matter of poultry no woman in all the commune could take her in; she was great in judging eggs; knew well the quality of linen; and was even able to calculate how long the hay should last, and what should be the consumption of corn in the stables. Michel Voss was well aware before Marie had been a year beneath his roof that she well earned the morsel she ate and the drop she drank; and when she had been there five years he was ready to swear that she was the cleverest girl in Lorraine or Alsace. And she was very pretty, with rich brown hair that would not allow itself to be brushed out of its crisp half curls in front, and which she always wore cut short behind, curling round her straight, well-formed neck. Her eyes were grey, with a strong shade indeed of green, but were very bright and pleasant, full of intelligence, telling stories by their glances of her whole inward disposition, of her activity, quickness, and desire to have a hand in everything that was being done. Her father, Jean Bromar, had come from the same stock with Michel Voss, and she, too, had something of that aquiline nose which gave to the inn-keeper and his son the look which made men dislike to contradict them. Her mouth was large, but her teeth were very white and perfect, and her smile was the sweetest thing that ever was seen. Marie Bromar was a pretty girl, and George Voss, had he lived so near to her and not have fallen in love with her must have been cold indeed.

At the end of these five years Marie had become a woman, and was known by all around her to be a woman much stronger, both in person and in purpose, than her aunt; but she maintained, almost unconsciously, many of the ways in the house which she had assumed when she first entered it. Then she had always been on foot, to be everybody's messenger—and so she was now. When her uncle and aunt were at their meals she was always up and about—attending them, attending the public guests, attending the whole house. And it seemed as though she herself never sat down to eat or drink.