

before," said Marguerite. "He knows that she gets him, or not—then why read again?"

"Let him do as he likes: does he not pay his 'pension'?" replied Armand.

"He pays—true. But it saddens me to see any one act unwisely." Whereby she meant: act otherwise than she would. She must often have been—pleasantly—sad.

Jules paid. He earned a sufficient livelihood by working for provincial jewellers. He was a good enameller. And, especially, he had great taste in the designing of small trinkets. In his free hours he did work of his own that way. The good wives, the shy sweethearts of the countryside brought him old bits of silver—a broken spoon, a battered jug—odd stones or colored beads: these he fashioned into new-fangled ornaments, imitations—often wonderfully beautiful—of flowers. He was a genius, in his own little way. For the ladies of the château, now safely housed in Brussels, he had once shaped a spray of hawthorn which the great Dalize had admired.

Armand, the gardener, had been away, to the war, in active service. He had not seen much fighting, by the Loire, but a cooking-pot had fallen on his foot and disabled him. He came back, to boast widely of this Prussian bullet, showing the clean hole through the boot.

Jules had, of course, not been called on to serve. "So he stayed at home and idled, like a girl," said his sister-in-law, unaware of his fruitless excursion to Provins to volunteer, and unappreciative of his increased activity in his little workshop, half the night.

"Thou?—what dost thou for thy country?" cried Marguerite. "Thou dost nothing. See Armand: he limps! He should have had the cross of honor! Was it not in assisting a great, fat officer? Had thy burden been less heavy, thou hadst not been wounded—eh, Armand?"

"Assuredly," said Armand, who had dropped the cooking-pot, and often told the story.

Jules bent in silence to his enamelling. He considered that his brother's path nowadays was also by no means a path—figuratively—of roses. The Teutons ate his fruit and picked his flowers. They did worse things, innocently: for instance, they flung the fruit-stones among the flow-

er-beds. Armand had long ruled his own "proprietors" with a rod, pickled in salt. He gazed in sneering silence after the clanking conquerors, a cherry-stone, extracted from a rose-bud, upon his open palm.

"I, for one!" cried Marguerite. "I would prowl in the woods at nightfall! I would—what is your word?—pot them! So would Armand, did he not limp!"

"Yes," said Jules, at his work. He knew the little-known truth about his brother's wound, knew that Armand had indeed "potted" himself.

"Ah, the dirty pigs! Do we not treat the wild hogs so?" screamed the wife.

"Surely. And so the hogs treat us."

"Thou carest not! It is not *thy* country they have taken!" Marguerite burst into tears. A loud uproar of deep-throated laughter came echoing from the terrace. Ha! ha! ha!—it struck against the quiet white and green of the old château, crashed along the tall-roofed out-houses and died away across the sunlit rose-fields and vines.

"Ah, the pigs! They laugh, and my Alsace weeps." She busied herself, sobbing, with her admirable cookery, in the brightly burnished kitchen, all sweet perfumes and savory smells. She bent out of the window, where Jules sat doubled up over his paints and bits of silver against the trellis: the bees hummed around him in sunlight and flowers.

"What makest thou?" she said. "Ah, the arms of Alsatia! What, then, is the use of that? For the square-heads, perchance?"

The pale man turned brown-red at last. "No," he said. "No, by God!"

She was always satisfied, for the moment, when she had angered him. It was a temptation to him: as long as he looked offended, she left him in peace. After the noonday meal he forgave her, over his coffee: he told that he had received a commission, from Rheims, for a small design of the arms of the lost provinces, enamelled on silver shields. A souvenir, studs or pins. Every one spoke of the lost provinces. Already the Strassburg statue in Paris had received its sad tribute of wreaths.

"*C'est mon pays*: I will wear it everywhere, in buttons," said Marguerite. "Thou must make the buttons for nothing." She took her shawl for her daily