

LE BON CHEF.

By Anne M. Prescott

PART II.

THE HUSBAND AND WIFE.

(Jacques and Madeleine.)

Madeleine had come into the region of the Garonne to live, and Jacques had passed her on the road, leading her tiny bit of a sister, that eventful morning when they were all caught in the down-pour, that painted a rainbow on the western sky. No one, however, got cross, though everyone got a ducking, for the drops were the largest known that season and very watery. It was a first-rate shower and washed everything in sight, and made Jacques start back and catch up the little wote in his arms, and taking Madeleine by the hand, they ran like children to the nearest shelter, which proved to be Henri's, the blacksmith; he was busy hammering a horseshoe and the sparks were flying up the chimney, when they ran in pell-mell, laughing and shaking off the rain, now dripping in little rivulets from their hats. But the fury of it was soon past, and the hot sun sending up clouds of vapor from every wet bank and road.

Madeleine thanked Jacques for his kind help, and telling him they had but recently come to an outlying vineyard to live, and bidding the blacksmith good-bye, and thanking him for his kindness, she went down the road in an opposite direction from Jacques' place, picking her way through the wet grass. They had not a mile to go and soon reached home.

Jacques was the old-time Jacques never again; he had met his fate, and was in love—love at first sight. We have all heard of that before. It is the old story, ever new, and as sweet as sweet home. For it is love, true love that makes the home, no place like home. It is the love the love of a true man for a good woman that makes this little world of ours go round.

And Jacques was in love. Madeleine was pretty and as good as she was pretty—indeed and indeed she was a charming demoiselle. We

too, fell in love with the little, dainty, brown-eyed maiden. And she was a sensible, unaffected girl, as well-bred French are, no jewelry, no finery, no airs. And now, nothing would do but Madeleine. The whole world held but one woman for him, evermore. Would anyone be that foolish to argue with a lover?

The choicest flowers of the garden were watched and guarded to send to Madeleine. The young linnet just starting into song, must have a golden cage and go to Madeleine. The sweetest berries, the juiciest fruit, must go. There must be a new stamp for the butter, and Jeanette must make a perfect pat to send. A handsome jug of French pottery, and in it the thickest cream—Oh, was there ever such a crazy lover? Yes, they are all the same, all the same. And for a home-coming there would have to be a new room built on, and an arbor with vines and roses, and beautiful paper on the walls, and carpet of flowers, and chest of drawers, and prettiest china, and an English tea table, and a sewing-chair, he would buy them all; and after two years they would go to Paris and have a real wedding journey. And how was all this to little demure Madeleine? Would she leave her home, her parents, and big brothers and tiny Elise? She was sure she had never seen any eyes anything like Jacques!!

And before the vintage was gathered in that year, the good priest had given them his blessing; and Henri had sent to them a set of perfect horseshoes. There was merriment and rejoicing throughout the country-side when Madeleine came home to share Jacques' fortune for good or ill, for richer or poorer.

Jacques had taken in a good man and a good journeyman, to be his constant help; so that with the lad who was handy and clever, and Jeanette, his mother, a widow who could manage the little dairy and help Madeleine, the little household went bravely on. All who came to the pretty, neat *boutique* liked to have Madeleine wait upon them, for in voice and manner she was cheery

and helpful, and had learned some things that they did not all know, and was willing to show them and to teach them. For one thing, she knew the art of making flowers, and certain kinds of lace that they had never seen. She had learned many things in the convent. She was kind to the young girls, and ready and would shew them how to make a pretty cap or bonnet, or a lovely apron. They would come about her like bees about a hive, and the little shop was a sort of open door, you see. That rich, warm, wine-producing southern land makes men and women honest, hard-working, simple-minded, good and true. It is a blessed country there, healthful and sweet, and home life, there, a model for the world. Don't talk unless you know what you are talking about, my reader. It is an anomaly, to see a man intoxicated in southern France. It is the vices, the adulteration of good produce, the wickedness of big cities, like London and Paris, etc., that are the world all wrong. It is a sad, sad truth that cities endanger humanity every day. Many go to them and go directly away from God in going.

It began to be talked over again by Jacques which was the better route to Paris? He wished to keep outside the towns as much as possible, and to learn what he could of the country; and then as a happy thought it came to him, why could they not go in their own little cart? It was covered and light, and the horse was a strong, sturdy roadster. They could put in a small trunk, pack a hamper to last a week, take a convenience for making coffee, and buy anything needed on the way. They could be independent and happy. They would stop at a good inn at night, and see that the horse was fed and groomed, starting off early in the morning. The *Cure* could tell them of the first rest and many other points, and also give to them a few letters in case they could make use of them on the way. So they already felt quite at home, as to the journey. Madeleine's objective point was the church of Notre Dame, and Jacques, was go-