

“I ting I give you good ’ug for dat.” Euphrasie put her arms around her father’s neck.

He shook his head slowly as he filled his pipe, and said no more.

Joi Billette sat in the corner, watching everything and listening. He was restless and uneasy. He was quick to see the great change that had come over Euphrasie. She was no longer his little girl of St. Valerien. The change meant more to him than it did to the others. More than once it seemed to him that some other girl had donned Euphrasie’s face and voice for a New Year’s masquerade. He had heard of such things in the fireside folk tales. Would Euphrasie look at him scornfully or speak to him mockingly, as this vision of beauty did? No, it could not be so. He looked at his hard and horny hands, at his coarse and dirty shoes, at his rough clothes, and then at the trim, neat figure of Euphrasie, her white hands and dainty feet. He rose, playing with his hat nervously, and would have slipped away, but Pierre Charette laid a detaining hand on his arm.

“Wouldst thou go, then? Thy place is here. Let the women talk.”