

Ronnie, as she called him, twisting the "r" so that the name sounded like a charm.

Now the Sister Superior, an inwardly happy, girlish person, with silver-rimmed spectacles, came bustling up from another class, her black robes spurting in front, as her feet kicked beneath.

"Bonjour, messieurs," she said hurriedly, "I hope that everything is ready. The girls have been practising for hours."

"Merci, ma Soeur," replied the interpreter politely. Turning to the mechanic he asked, "Ready, Jim?"

"Sure, let them go," the latter answered. "But they'd better give it a trial run-through first."

"Good, I'll ask them to try it now." Turning to the nun in charge of the class, he asked, "Ma soeur, do you think that we could try it through once, so that we could test the machine?"

"Bien sur, M'sieur," said the nun. She raised her hand and the girls sang. Arlette sang with her eyes on the ground, but every few seconds she cast them up through the screen of her dark lashes, and looked longingly at the interpreter. He smiled briefly once or twice, and then, being embarrassed, looked away. Finally, in distress, she kept her eyes fastened on the ground.

"C'est tres bien," encouraged the nun when the trial was over. "Sing as well as that next time, and it will make a lovely record." The Sister Superior smiled approvingly. She was very benign and lovable.

"Are they ready?" whispered the officer in charge to the interpreter.

"Yes."

"Well, tell them to start when I lower my hand," and he lifted his right hand in the air, and looked at the stop-watch in the other. All those eager faces were turned to him, except two, as the table started revolving; then the hand fell.

"Douce Caledonie, pays baigne d'azure," they sang, their lively faces concentrating on making the beautiful sounds, their eyes flickering to and fro among the men opposite them. Again Arlette sought the eyes of her lover, but he smiled only briefly, and then his glance passed on over the others.

The girl began to feel oppressed, even miserable. "Why can't he look at me? He ought to smile. Oh, darling, smile," she said, and to her, it sounded almost as though she had spoken aloud. Now her lithe body was quivering with her longing and her misery. She moved from side to side, like a bow. She touched her hair, and her hand wandered over her dress. She felt like a spring which cannot release itself. Again and again her lover's eyes passed over her without any expression in them.

The song finished, and they commenced another with the same procedure. It was a delightful melody called "L'Hanneton," the cockchafer, and three girls, among them Arlette, sang as altos. On that white plateau of a playground, it was a pure and lovely thing to hear the contrasting voices rising in the air like differently toned bells.

"Hanneton, vole, vole, vole,
Va par ci, va par la,"

they sang, while Arlette kept her eyes lowered. "Why doesn't he look at me?" she moaned.

They came to the end of the song, and the rapt faces changed and became curious and playful. The mechanic made a few adjustments, and then said to the interpreter, "Tell them that we'll play it back."

"Ma soeur, we will play the record now, and you will see how well the children have sung." The sister nodded excitedly, and explained to the children, and then composed herself to listen.

Down came the needle and the strains of the first song came floating back. The girls gaped for a moment in wonderment, and then collapsed in giggles. "Ecoutez, écoutez!" they whispered.

"Hanneton, vole, vole, vole," they heard and even the nun was in fits of laughter, but it was suppressed in accordance with her position.

Arlette felt a sudden desire to giggle with the others, but could not, and the result was almost to cry. She saw the Sister Superior, so kind and benign, laughing with the nun who had led the singing; she saw the other girls turning among themselves, and giggling. She felt some of them nudge her. Once,