

**THE STORY OF COLETTE:
FROM THE FRENCH OF LA
NEUVAIN DE COLETTE**

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The Story of Colette: From the French of La Neuvaine De Colette by Jeanne Schultz

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JEANNE SCHULTZ

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She had to mount on a table.

(Page 132.)

THE
STORY OF COLETTE

FROM THE FRENCH OF
LA NEUVAIN DE COLETTE



*WITH SIX FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS AND THIRTY VIGNETTES
BY JEAN CLAUDE*

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1892

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THE STORY OF COLETTE.

March 1, 18--.

"KEEP me, O Lord, from dying of despair and *ennui*, and do not forget me, buried in this snow, which deepens every day."

I have so often said this little prayer that now my patience is exhausted, and I write it. Written words have so much more force, it seems to me; they last longer.

Also, because as a spoken phrase, which reverberates against the high sculptured ceilings of my rooms, takes more time than to think the words, so writing takes the most time of all, and I will write. This for to-day. Alas! what occupation shall I find for myself to-morrow?

My materials are scarcely sufficient, certainly not elegant. My journal has no back, the ink is dried up in the bottom of an old bottle which I have discovered, my pens are lost, and I have never had a sheet of paper here. Why should I have paper when I write to no one?

To reach the village is impossible. There are three



feet of snow on a level, without speaking of the drifts, which are high enough to bury the stage-coach to the top of the wheel.

I have read how prisoners have written with their own blood on pocket-handkerchiefs. I do not believe it, for the writing blots, and one can not read it. I know, for I have tried.

But I have mixed my dried ink with water; I have borrowed two long quills from the tail of a goose, who bore the loss with patience; and, by searching in closets, I have found some old rolls of parchment, as yellow as saffron and as thick as cardboard, which, fortunately, were written only on one side—the other was left for me. I have the advantage of reading as I write. They relate to the quarrels and lawsuits between a certain sire, John Nicolas, and a lady of Haute-Pignon, whose rabbits ravaged his clover-fields, and the limits of whose fields were always in dispute.

Give me, High Powers, as neighbor, a John Nicolas disposed to quarrel, and a domain whose borders may be always in dispute.

Are there many people, I wonder, who realize the entire meaning of the word "solitude"?

"Solitude," says the dictionary, "state of a person who is solitary"; and, again, "solitary, without company, not with others."

And that is all, no commentaries, no remarks, nothing which indicates that these words relate to one of the most terrible afflictions of existence, nothing which classifies, which says — there is solitude and solitude,