



Perilous Adventures.

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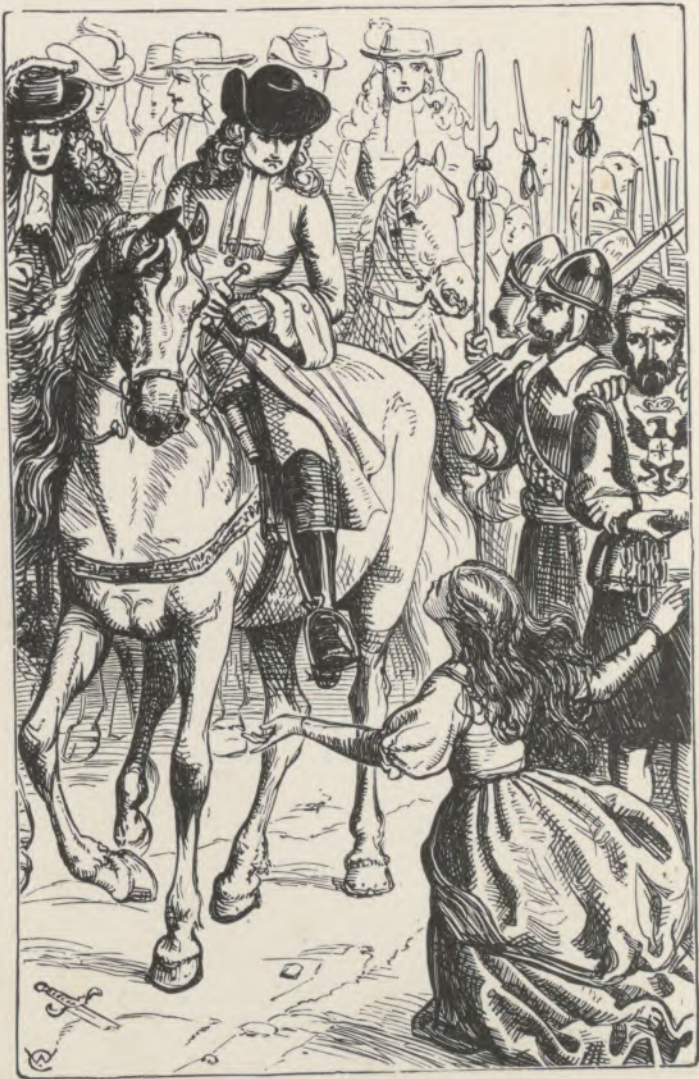
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Tarporley Sunday School

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Bertie Fleet.



PERILOUS ADVENTURES

OF A

FRENCH SOLDIER IN ALGERIA.

TRANSLATED BY

MRS. CAMPBELL OVEREND.

“ While over life's wide darkling plain,
Unheeding as we roam,
Through many a path of joy and pain,
God leads His children home.
And though sometimes, in prospect viewed,
The winding way seems dark and rude ;
Ah ! who the backward scene hath scanned,
But blessed the Father's guiding hand.”

BOWDLER.

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PERILOUS ADVENTURES
OF A
FRENCH SOLDIER IN ALGERIA.

CHAPTER I.

FRANCIS IS SENT TO ALGERIA.

WHEN I put on my uniform for the first time, I little thought what perilous, strange, and dreadful adventures I should have to pass through, and how what seemed then the most unlikely thing of all, a soldier's life, should bring me to a knowledge of many precious truths.

I was forced by the conscription to enter the army, and was soon afterwards sent to join the depôt of my battalion, then in Algeria. The aspect of the capital of Algeria

is well calculated to astonish a simple-minded countryman accustomed to the sight of the monotonous plains of French Flanders, my native country. This city, with its houses of dazzling whiteness, built in the form of an amphitheatre on the sea-shore, and with its triangular shape, stands out in bold relief from the foliage and verdure which surround it; and in the background is seen a long chain of high mountains. Another still more distant range of blue looking mountains bounds the view, which forms a picture at once beautiful and magnificent.

I was proud to belong to the great nation which had commenced to found a new France in a region hitherto a nest of pirates; nevertheless I confess, when I thought of my native place where I had passed the days of my youth, and that my mother was perhaps weeping by her fireside on account of my absence, that my heart sank within me, and my imagination wandered across the blue waves of the Mediterranean—across the smiling provinces of the south of France, far away to an obscure little nook near the

frontiers. And I recalled to remembrance the winter evenings around the great fireplace of the farm-house, and also the songs of the mowers, the reapers, and the milkmaids.

I was awoke out of some such reverie by hearing the military songs, sung by my comrades, and repeated by the sailors, accompanied by the measured splash of the oars which struck the water as the boats were conveying us from the ship to land. I now set foot upon the shores on which so many nations in their turn have imposed their laws and customs, which have disappeared in like manner when fresh invaders succeeded one another. France has already called into new life the germs of the civilisation planted by the Romans, and the healthful influence of Christianity will in time develope, let us hope, the fruits of peace and happiness.

A few days after my arrival I had an opportunity of seeing that peace did not reign in this country, for my battalion, encamped at Afroun, was ordered to form a part of the expedition to Medeah. Abd-el-

Kader enclosed us on all sides. It was necessary to strike a decisive blow. The campaign was about to begin, and there was every prospect of some severe fighting.

We were soon in front of the enemy, who were posted upon the adjacent heights. They concealed themselves; but when we advanced, terrible shouts and yells revealed their presence, and they came down into the plain to encounter us. After a discharge of musketry, the Arabs retreated and regained the neighbouring redoubts and gorges from which they had issued. We followed them closely and carried the centre of their position at the point of the bayonet. Several days were employed in making preparations for a movement against Medeah, and for crossing the Atlas. The narrow pass between the mountains, called the Col de Mussaia, had just been fortified by Abd-el-Kader, and he occupied it with several regiments of regular troops and a considerable force of cavalry.

On the 12th of May, at three o'clock in the morning, the signal for attack was given, and the French columns began rapidly to

ascend the steep faces of the rocks. A thick fog which enveloped the mountain concealed our bold advance from the enemy. A flourish of trumpets announced that our advanced guard had taken a redoubt. The general then ordered the rest of the army to attack. At the same moment the sun, dispersing the clouds, poured a stream of light into the gorges of the Col de Mussaia. All along their summits might be seen the white garments of the enemy, who, with their fingers upon the triggers of their muskets, and their eyes upon the watch, were preparing to hurl the French into the depths below.

We clambered up, clinging to the projections of the rocks, and to the shrubs which grew on the steep acclivity, and we arrived at last in front of the redoubts. A terrible fire made us waver for a moment, but at the voice of our chief the charge sounded, the ranks closed up, and with the cry of "Vive la France!" the three attacking columns, arriving almost simultaneously, planted the tri-coloured standard on the highest summit of the Atlas.

Our enterprize was thus crowned with

complete success, for the enemy, entirely crushed, could not dispute our entrance into Medeah. This town is an ancient fortress built by the Romans, enclosed all round by a wall, and has a dull aspect, like many of the towns in Africa. The inhabitants showed us great kindness, and leaving a garrison in the place, the expeditionary force left it on the 20th of May.

Whilst our cavalry and baggage train were passing through the wood of Oliviers, Abd-el-Kader made a vigorous attack upon our rear-guard. We received the enemy with firmness, and when they came to close quarters, we charged them with the bayonet.

After a sanguinary conflict the enemy's cavalry paused in order to wait for their Arab infantry to come up. The regulars tried to force our position. The cavalry of Abd-el-Kader, dismounting from their horses, supported the foot soldiers.

To this mass of foes we opposed a cool and steady front, and above all, rapid and well directed volleys, which enabled our cavalry and baggage train to pass through the defile.

It was then that I was first promoted.



CHAPTER II.

FRANCIS IN THE HOSPITAL.

THE heat not permitting us to continue the operations of the campaign, the army returned into its quarters. I was there obliged to enter the hospital of Algiers. A malignant fever, occasioned by the fatigues of the expedition, laid me upon a bed of suffering for two months.

Until then I had led the careless life of a soldier, and had scarcely thought of the parting advice of my mother. The time came when my sickness allowed me some intervals of ease, and sad but comforting thoughts recalled to remembrance the parting scene at home.

The conversation of the sick men around

me but too often ill-accorded with my better feelings, and I had only bad examples from my companions. I did not dare to reprove them for their language and conduct, for I felt that I had not always acted in accordance with what I knew to be right.

God sent me the help I needed. One of my comrades came to see me, Joseph Marty, the son of a pastor in the department of the Drôme. Before he had entered the Zouaves, he was engaged in the laborious employment of a colporteur. After some comforting words, he offered to lend me a New Testament. I thanked him, and recollecting the last gift of my mother, I begged him to leave his book until he could bring me the one that I had left in my knapsack since our arrival in Africa. He gladly consented, and got it for me, at the same time not omitting to recommend certain passages especially to me.

After the departure of Marty, my fever returned, and it was not until the morning of the second day after his visit that I was able to feel the power of the precious invitation of our Saviour: "Come unto me, all ye that

labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). I derived fresh strength from my reading, and also from the pleasant conversation of the friend whom the Lord had sent to me, and I soon returned to my duty, re-established in health and strength.

My stay in the hospital had cured me of my physical ailments, and aroused me out of my former state of moral torpor.

Since then, a single day has not passed in which I have not had recourse to the true source of spiritual light, and I can assure you that the Book has been a great help to me in certain most remarkable circumstances in my life, that I shall presently relate.

When we had leisure off duty, Marty and I used to go out of Algiers, and pass our hours of liberty in the inextricable net-work of winding roads which traverse the surrounding country in every direction, and make it a perfect labyrinth. There, at the sight of the rich soil, covered with vines, orange trees, honeysuckles, poplars, mingled with nopals and numerous other shrubs and flowers, we raised our thoughts to the Creator

of all these wonders, and night sometimes overtook us in the midst of fields surrounded with the thorny foliage of the cactus, with its prickly leaves and fantastic stem, and with aloes extending their immense branches like the weapons of a race of giants.





CHAPTER III.

A QUARREL WITH THE BLACK CHASSEURS.

ONE evening as we were returning through the gate Bab-Azoun, we were accosted by some non-commissioned officers of the Chasseurs de Vincennes, who were standing by the door of a liquor shop. They invited us to enter to take something to drink, but we civilly declined their invitation.

“It’s truly said that the Zouaves are ‘jackals,’ and that they don’t like civilised society,” said one of them, who was slightly intoxicated.

We made no reply to this jest, which put us in mind of one of the nicknames given by the Arabs to the corps to which we belonged,

and we quickened our pace; but this was not what these men wanted.

“I say, you green turbans, will you, yes or no, have a glass with the Black Chasseurs?” At the same time, we saw ourselves surrounded by five or six soldiers.

I kept silent, justly thinking that Marty, with his habitual gentleness and calmness, would extricate us from the affair better than I could.

“Comrades,” said he to them, “we have not got leave of absence. It is nearly time for us to be in barracks. Let us go on our way.”

“No, no,” replied the first speaker, evidently vexed. “You look as if you despised us. You *shall* come with us; or if you don’t—”

“If we don’t, what then?”

“Why, we will drag you in!”

“It’s not often that six soldiers take advantage of their numbers to force two soldiers to neglect their duty. Please leave us alone.”

“You are afraid to take a glass with us, then?”

“I have already told you that we have not time.”

"That's what we shall see," said several chasseurs, drawing their swords. These men were completely intoxicated.

I sprang towards them, but Marty held me back by the arm, and said to me—"Stay close to me, and do not lose your temper, if you wish us to be in the right."

"Right!" replied the originator of the disturbance, "yes, you shall do what's right, and that pretty quickly. Come along, let us go in, or I will say everywhere that the 'jackals' have become a lot of cowardly fellows."

Our position was evidently embarrassing. It became more and more difficult to get rid of these men rendered furious by drink and pride. Fortunately, a superior officer appeared at the other end of Casbah Street. Our assailants retreated precipitately into the liquor shop, with the exception of the most determined of them, he who had first addressed us.

We were thus able to walk on; but when the officer was out of sight, the chasseur who had hitherto followed us, without saying a word, came and placed himself in front of my friend, and said to him, with a furious look—

“For a long time I have promised my sword the pleasure of thrusting it into a Zouave. If you are not a coward, you will come to-morrow with your comrade, and I will bring a chasseur.”

“Very well! My name is Joseph Marty, and you can call on me at my quarters.”

“All right! My name is Louis Cornault, but I am fortunately not in the Zouaves. I shall be at your place at six o’clock, my good fellow, and we shall see how you can handle your steel.”

“To-morrow, then,” replied Marty, and, quickening our pace, we moved forward, however, not without being subjected to further sarcasms from the chasseur.

This scene had greatly excited me, and without reflection, I promised myself to engage in an affair of honour on the morrow. In the French army, even private soldiers are allowed to settle their disputes by duels, and these encounters are by no means very infrequent.

Marty and I shared the same chamber, and when we found ourselves alone for the night, I was astonished at the placid manner

in which my friend asked me if I intended to fight.

"What should prevent me?" replied I, "have I not been insulted?"

"I have," replied he gently.

"Do you think," continued I, "that I will leave you to meet alone the danger that we did not seek, and that you wished to avoid?"

"I will never cross my sword with that of a fellow-countryman. Bring me face to face with the enemy, and that is another thing. The state of war compels me to do this; it was not my vocation to fight, but I conform to that which the Lord has determined for me. Here it is not the case; I can avoid committing a crime, and the Lord will give me the necessary strength and courage to do my duty. Only I must beg you to leave me to arrange the affair without your interference."

I scarcely comprehended in what manner he would carry out his purpose, and nevertheless I did not doubt that he would know how to accomplish it.

Some moments afterwards, he opened his Testament, and read in his sympathetic and

sonorous voice, the verses that I have underlined in my Testament, and I am about to repeat, perhaps, for the hundredth time, for this scene, so different from that which had preceded it, will never be effaced from my memory: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17).

"Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous · not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. iii. 8, 9). "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 18-21).

Marty then placed his book upon the table, knelt down, and offered up an earnest petition to the Lord that it would please Him to turn the hearts of those who, in spite of us, had become our adversaries.

I drew closer to him, and united in heart in his supplications.

What consoling thoughts then came to me ! Instead of the feverish excitement which is usual with those who are about to fight a duel, I experienced an easy frame of mind, a sweet and benevolent hope, so rare in such cases, but of which I tasted all the value. After the Lord, it was my friend to whom I owed this state of tranquillity and peace of mind during those moments in which agitation and inquietude as to the issue of the struggle so often depress the greatest courage. And to this friend, so devoted and loving, whose touching conversations and living example recalled to my memory the favoured days of my childhood, the happy evenings at the farm, when I heard the voice of my tender mother beseech Christ to protect me by His almighty power.

A short time afterwards, the silence of

the night was only interrupted by the breathing of Marty, who slept as peacefully as an infant. The emotion that I felt long kept me awake ; but at last I was able to enjoy the repose which I so much needed.





CHAPTER IV.

AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR.

THE next morning at six o'clock, I was aroused from my sleep by the arrival of the two chasseurs.

Cornault did not appear to me to maintain the provoking mien of the preceding night. Evidently, whether on account of his excesses, or whether on account of reflecting in his sober moments on the gross provocation he had given, or perhaps for both reasons, a remarkable change had taken place in him.

His companion appeared to be more resolute, though he was a very young man. It can scarcely be believed what strength a false notion of honour has in the French army: a soldier would think himself dishonoured, if for the most trifling dispute he

were not ready to draw the sword, that ought to rest in its scabbard until in presence of the enemy.

My friend invited them to be seated, whilst I was getting ready, and whilst he was finishing an account that it was his duty to give to his captain, adding that he had slept longer than he wished.

The young non-commissioned officer then placed upon a trunk two swords which he had held concealed under his great-coat, without the proceeding seeming to attract the slightest attention from Marty. I had completely made up my mind to await silently the result of this interview, and if I had felt the slightest doubt as to its favourable issue, I should have been entirely reassured by the calm and tranquil expression that I saw in the features of my friend's face.

By the time I was ready, Marty had finished his writing. After having arranged his books and papers, he advanced towards the chasseurs, who rose from their seats when he approached. Then, as though it were the object he had in view, he took up one of the swords and tried the suppleness of its blade

by placing the point of it on the floor and bending it to and fro. As he did so, he asked Cornault if he did not happen to be related to a person of the same name, and who resided in a town in the department of the Drôme?

"It is my father," replied he, much astonished at so unusual a question under such circumstances.

"I had the pleasure of staying at his house two years ago, and then I was far from thinking that one day your mother might hear I had an encounter with the son of whom we have so often spoken."

"Did my mother speak to you of me? oh! my good mother," said he, sighing and allowing himself to follow the current of his thoughts, which leading him back to the pleasant remembrances of his childhood, seemed to make him almost lose sight of the object for which he was there.

"Quite a sentimental scene," observed his young companion, in a sarcastic tone. Cornault did not seem to hear him, for he continued: "My father is in trade. Were you a commercial traveller? In what line were you?"

“I was engaged in selling books, which ought to be in every house, and I hope with the help of God that I shall again be permitted to pursue this desirable occupation.”

“But what books?”

“The same as this one” said Marty, handing him the New Testament which was lying on the table,

“What! you were a Bible colporteur, and are now a soldier; but then?” . . . And Cornault opened the book and turned over the pages quite out of countenance.

“Are you going to preach a sermon divided into three heads?” said the other young man. “I must beg you to remember that I am here for quite another affair, and I wish to come to the point. I am in a hurry to finish it. I have an appointment at nine o’clock, and I cannot miss it.”

I cannot exactly say what was passing in the mind of Cornault, but this man, whom I had seen the evening before full of vanity and hatred, seemed to be suddenly changed. I approached him, his eyes were fixed upon one of the passages which Marty had marked the night before: “Avenge not yourselves, but

rather give place unto wrath ; for it is written, vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord. . . . For in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head," said he in a low tone ; then : "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 19-21), continued he more distinctly. He appeared to reflect for some moments, and returning the book to him whom he had provoked, he added : "Yesterday, you received insults from me ; will you to-day accept my hand as a token of reconciliation ?"

"Gladly," said Marty, eagerly. "Why should we not be friends ?"

"Let us say no more about the matter. It is pleasanter to gain a new friend than to exchange sword thrusts.

"This is all very well," exclaimed the young non-commissioned officer, "but do you think that the affair can be got over in this way. I have a voice in it. I'm come to give or receive a thrust or two, and I stick to it.

"What's going on here?" said the voice of a new comer. We turned round and saw our captain at the door. He entered.

“What ! swords? Duel, perhaps? And about what? Is it you Marty? is it you Francis? And you, chasseurs, with whom have you a quarrel?”

He then remarked the resolute air of the young man, and went up to him: “You are probably,” said he, “the person principally interested in the affair which you were occupied about when I came in, for I heard what you said. Against which of my two brave Zouaves do you bear a grudge? Answer me. Are you not in Captain Garnier’s company?”

“Yes, captain; we have come to settle a little quarrel, and now it seems to be settled another way, and that doesn’t suit me.”

“But that does suit me,” replied the captain. “I do not know, and I do not want to know, who is the aggressor, but your countenance tells me enough. How is it when every day you may have to fight the Arabs, you seek to throw away your own life and that of another, and that probably without a sufficient motive? I do not condemn bravery, but I execrate a temerity which goes the length of exposing lives which do not belong to us, without any other object

than that of proving that we have no fear. Know that your superiors have but little admiration for this puerile vanity, which prompts you to the commission of a deed uniting both murder and suicide. The soldier who mutilates himself, is justly punished as a deserter from his colours; in my opinion a duel is a double mutilation. Reserve your blood for *the hour of battle*, and if you fall, it will not be at least by the hand of a fellow-countryman, of a brother in arms, and you can then say with greater truth, 'Honour is satisfied!'"

The young man made no reply. Cornault then spoke: "Captain, I alone am to blame. My friend Carlos has come with me as my second, and when you arrived, I had just made it up with Marty whom I grossly insulted last night. I will not excuse myself by urging my state of intoxication, for it will only aggravate my faults; I have gone the length of pretending that I had a hatred against the corps of Zouaves. This was boasting. To-day I have reflected upon all that was ungenerous in my conduct, and, before you, I ask my brother soldiers to accept the

apology which I make in my name, and in that of Carlos, who can take his revenge the first time that *powder is burnt.*"

"Well, after all, you are right," said Carlos eagerly, with a vivacity quite French; and he held out his hands to us, which we shook cordially.

"You are brave young fellows" said the captain kindly, "and I am persuaded that you will be pleased to hear the good news that I am come to tell Marty."

"Oh! certainly," exclaimed we with one voice, but without understanding what it was about.

The captain then took Marty's hand and shook it warmly, saying, "I asked the general's permission to be the first to communicate to you that you have been appointed a chevalier of the Legion of Honour, for your distinguished conduct during the return of the expedition from Medeah. Your modesty has not allowed you to talk about it, but all the army well knows with what intrepidity you then sustained, at the head of a handful of brave fellows, stimulated by your example, the first attacks of the cavalry of the Emir Abd-el-Kader, which brave action

allowed the rear-guard to stand against the shock, and thereby secure the passage through the defile."

"Thanks, captain," was all that my friend could say, too much moved by the scene to add another word.

"For my part," said Carlos, "I am glad to congratulate our comrade Marty. It is much pleasanter than our conversation was just now. If the captain will allow us, I propose, in honour of the new cross of the Legion of Honour, that we have, at the nearest café, a better breakfast than we generally get in barracks."

"If you wish very much for this breakfast," said Cornault, "I think I now know Marty sufficiently well to suppose that without his saying anything against the café, he would prefer that we should have it here, which would permit us to invite the captain." And without waiting for any reply, Cornault darted out of the room, and soon returned with a waiter carrying a modest collation which was accepted by all, and partaken of, with the greatest cordiality.

This day, commenced under auspices so

happy, was then passed in taking a walk in the suburbs of Algiers with our comrades the chasseurs. It was about the middle of February. In our country, at this time of the year, the fields are usually still covered with snow, the naked trees seem dead and stripped of all foliage. In this beautiful land caressed by the sun, the wheat, barley, sainfoin, and luzerne, cover the earth with a rich verdure and abundant pasturage; the apple and cherry trees, the lemon and orange trees, in sheltered situations, are losing their blossoms, and the fruit is already setting; strawberries, peas, and all sorts of vegetables are being gathered; and the blossom of the fig tree is coming out. Myrtles, laurels, and barberries grow abundantly, and the sweet-smelling lavender perfumes the air. From the various shades of green, more or less dark, of the thickets and hedges, the bright-red flowers of the cactus and the wild rose stand out like brilliant stars, and the rose bay forms on the sides of the brooks purple borders which mark the windings of their courses.

It is God who created all these blessings

on a soil which is always cursed by war or slavery. Our aspirations carried us to the time of peace to come. The day will arrive, thought we, when the weapons of war, rendered useless, will leave the labourer to gather twice in the year his harvest of golden grain; the desert, cleared of its monsters, will be traversed by the locomotive; and instead of hearing the gorge of the bare Atlas echo to the roaring of the lion, a sweet concert will rise to heaven chaunted by the multitude of those who will have received the good tidings, and will thank the Lord for giving them peace of mind and faith, with love and charity.

It is a beautiful dream, is it not? but I believe that if we shall not live to see it realised, that those who shall be born after us will live to see this happy day, when, casting aside the instruments of war to take up those of labour, men will press forward with the word of God in their hearts—regulating the actions of their lives.

In the evening, when we re-entered Algiers by the same road that we had followed the night before, in a very different frame of mind, Cornault, in passing before the house, the

witness of his folly, assured us that he would never again in his life enter a similar place, and I have every reason to believe that he has kept his word.

Several months were passed in the intercourse of true friendship, and the good counsels of Marty prepared the young man to receive the Gospel.





CHAPTER V.

ACTIVE SERVICE.

ABOUT this time our company was detached to the camp of Douera, and it was a very painful thing for us to go, because the chasseurs remained at Algiers.

When we were bidding one another adieu, Cornault asked Marty if he would not on any account part with his New Testament.

“I cannot do without it,” replied he; “but have you not got one?”

“Yes, I only hoped that you would give me, in exchange for mine, a book to which I owe both a friend and better feelings.”

“Oh! most willingly,” answered Marty.

The exchange was made, and the eyes of

the chasseur sparkled with joy when he held in his hand the object of his wishes.

We parted with promises of writing to one another, and Carlos told us that he hoped soon to rejoin us; "for," added he, "I feel that I have need of your presence; I am not so far advanced as Cornault. Pray to God for me."

The fortified camp of Douera was placed on the hills of Sahel, near the military road traced out and made by the French, and which extends from Algiers to Blidah, and crosses the plain of Mitidja. We arrived there at nightfall. No other expression can better describe the thick veil that in less than five minutes envelopes the whole face of nature in Algeria.

The aspect of a camp, a perfect little entrenched town, changes at every hour in the day; and at night, when it presents an image of repose, the drum of the staff beats at every hour a number of strokes marking the time.

After staying here a month, I was obliged to separate from my friend, as I was sent with fifteen men to a post situated between

Dely-Ibrahim and Douera. I had just been made a sergeant.

We had been at Hazel-Kroudja for several days, when one morning I started on a reconnoitering expedition with five men. The fog was very dense, as is usually the case in this part of the country, where the nights are always chilly. Objects a few paces off could scarcely be seen, and we advanced with caution and in silence.

At the winding of a ravine we were surprised by about fifty Hadjutes mounted on horseback; they are the boldest robbers in Africa. We were surrounded on all sides. Notwithstanding their numbers, and the impossibility of retreating, we faced them by receiving them with a volley, which caused some of them to fall. They scattered themselves according to the custom of the Arabs, by making wide curves, and replied to us by a fire from sharpshooters that severely wounded two of my men. They kept out of the range of our muskets for a few minutes, and we hoped that we had got rid of them, when the sun, dispersing the mist, revealed them to us drawn up in a line

and motionless, at too great a distance for our balls to reach them. Their long firearms carrying farther than ours, we resolved to charge them with the bayonet and attempt to regain our post. We sprang forward, but three of my companions fell by a discharge. Seeing myself surrounded by so great a number of enemies I thought my last hour had come. In this solemn moment I bowed my head and prayed; then I raised it full of resolution and confidence which I attributed to the strength given me by God.

I made ready to receive them, and I had already taken aim at the man who appeared to be their leader, when I felt myself thrown to the ground. A noose had been thrown over me from behind, and I was then caught up and lifted on the croup of the saddle of one of the horsemen. The Arabs then took to flight, after having cut off the heads of my unfortunate comrades.

The alarm had been given to the camp of Douera. The firing had been heard. I perceived in the distance a squadron of chasseurs, but I soon lost sight of them, as the Hadjutes profited by their knowledge

of the country, to disappear out of the sight of the French.

After riding for three hours, and seeing themselves in safety, they halted. They then stripped me of my property, and bare-footed, clad only in my trousers, I was fastened to a cord and obliged to follow them in this manner for two days. At last my feet became so torn and useless from fatigue that my captors were forced to hoist me on a horse to enable me to accompany them. We arrived in this manner at the camp of the Califah Sidi-ben-M'barak, to whom they presented me to obtain the reward. They received eight Spanish douros, about thirty seven shillings.

I was very miserable, but notwithstanding all, I felt a sweet consolation in the thought that I had succeeded in saving the book,—the last gift of my mother,—by hiding it in the lining of my trousers.

But I was not at the end of my torments. Placed in the hands of other Arabs who were to conduct me to the camp of the Emir Abdel-Kader, I was again obliged to walk, in spite of my weakness and the frightful state of my

feet. Whenever I fell, they compelled me to get up and go on by blows from a stick.

After two days of journeying we stopped with a tribe which the French had recently punished for their depredations by making a razzia upon them. The fighting men were absent—wandering in the mountains; but the women and children, furious at their defeat, assailed me with volleys of stones. I was unable to expostulate with them. They took advantage of this to spit in my face and bespatter me with mud and filth. At night I was fastened to a stake outside the tents, and my guards lay down close to me. One of them even made one of my limbs serve for his pillow for fear I should take to flight.





CHAPTER VI.

FRANCIS AND ABD-EL-KADER.

FIFTEEN days after, at the end of marches and counter-marches for the purpose of avoiding the French, who were then engaged in an expedition in this part of the country, and during which time I was always ill-treated—and in a condition I cannot describe—we arrived at the camp of the Emir, then in the plain of Milianah. The *chaouh* (executioner) put irons on my feet and round my neck, and in this state, after having been deprived of my book that I had been able to keep until now, I was taken before Abd-el-Kader.

When I entered his tent he was seated, holding a rosary of beads in his right hand, and appearing to be plunged in a sort of

religious ecstasy. Most Mahometans wear such a rosary, and they count the beads while repeating sentences out of the Koran. The Emir questioned me respecting several vessels which had just arrived full of troops at Algiers.

“Do not lie, Nazarene,” said he to me. “I know what is going on among you;” and he showed me a packet of French newspapers.

I replied that he must be much better acquainted with the latest news than I, who had been a prisoner for three weeks.

“Tell me the truth, are there many soldiers on board these vessels?”

“Enough to drive you into the desert.”

“Dog of a Christian, do you think because you swarm like clouds of locusts, to-day here, and to-morrow there, everywhere the masters of the field, that you will always be as fortunate? A stream of blood will sweep you back into the sea whence you have come.”

“Others would come, should this happen. France is full of soldiers.”

“He was silent, and took up again his rosary. Then he suddenly exclaimed—

“Have you anything to ask of me?”

“Send me back to Algiers, and in the meantime let me have returned to me a book which your people have robbed me of.”

“What book is it?”

“The word of God.”

He gave orders, and my New Testament was soon placed in his hands.

After he had examined it, he gave it to me, saying: “Your book says that God has a Son. It is a falsehood. Allah has no equal, for He is the only one. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, is a witness like Mahomet; both are spirits who came from God. They are in His eyes what Adam was, made of dust. There is only one true religion; it is that which God gave to Noah, which was revealed to Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet.* Will you follow it? I will make you an officer in my army. You

* M. Renan, says the *Evenement*, left Europe in November 1864, for Alexandria, after visiting Egypt; he afterwards went to Beyrout and Damascus, where Abd-el-Kader received him hospitably. Here a curious incident occurred. M. Renan, who speaks Arabic, was conversing with the Emir of the past and the present. “Let us speak of you,” said Abd-el-Kader, “and of your

shall have tents, splendid arms, plenty of gunpowder, and great riches."

"You have given me back my book, I thank you for it. Please also to give orders that it shall not be again taken away from me. I have been told that you have a good mother, her name has reached our camps; our soldiers, your former prisoners, remember her with gratitude, and they venerate the good Leila Zahra. Well, then, know that this book was the last gift that my mother gave me."

He appeared touched, and said to me: "I have had it returned to you; henceforward nobody will take it away. But become a believer; accept what I propose to you."

"I can neither betray my Saviour nor my country. In my turn I will say to you, become a Christian, and come to us. You will perhaps lose the prestige which you now 'Life of Jesus.'" "You have then read it?" said M. Renan, with surprise. The Emir sent for the volume, and opening it, said: "See! not only have I read it, but I have annotated it." The "Life of Jesus," annotated by Abd-el-Kader, would be certainly a very curious work.

enjoy; but God will recompense you a hundredfold when you shall ascend to Him."

"You are a fool,—begone!"

I quitted his presence and never saw him again, as he sent me to Takdempt, where I found some hundreds of French prisoners, and also the workmen whom he had obtained by the treaty of Tafna, engaged in the manufacture of gunpowder and arms. Their misery was extreme. Constantly beaten, scantily fed, exposed during the day to the heat of a burning sun, frozen at night, almost naked and without covering, they perished in great numbers, and many of them were buried every day. My fate was not happier during the month that I passed there. At this period a French expedition advanced against this town, and we were sent on to Tlemcen.

I again experienced, as also my unfortunate companions, all that the cruelty of the Arabs could invent to gratify the hatred they bear to Christians. Harassed, and constantly beaten, we marked the course of our journey by the corpses of those who sank and died under their sufferings.

We were nearly three months on the road, as our guards, in order to escape the French, who held the plain, made us travel in all directions. Sometimes we repassed through districts which we had already traversed, and it was thus that we came upon fragments of well-known uniforms, and of bones scattered here and there, showing that the hyenas had devoured the rest of our unfortunate comrades.

Truly I must have been supported by the great goodness of the Almighty, for I was able to bear all this deep misery without murmuring. Alas! several of my companions, emaciated, almost driven mad by the ferocity of our tormentors, and not seeing any other means of escaping from these horrors, devised plans to provoke their malice still more, hoping thus to have their sorrows ended by the yatagan. I endeavoured to console them and inspire them with hope, but though it was granted to me to save some of them from despair, yet, alas! there were many who roughly repulsed me. They were much to be pitied.

At last Tlemcen appeared in sight. This town, with narrow and ill-arranged streets,

but filled with beautiful gardens, embellished with delicious arbours, is cooled by many fountains. It was for us a sort of refuge, and we hoped for a short respite from our sufferings. Our expectation was deceived.

They made us work in the cannon foundry for some time, then they sent us about twenty leagues to the south to finish the construction of a fort. The daily handful of barley that we cooked in rancid oil, not sufficing for our subsistence, we profited by the visits that we made to the forest to collect acorns, and to fetch the wood which we had to carry back with us to the fort. But this poor resource often failed us; so deprived of all, lying on the bare ground without any covering to shelter us in a region where the nights are always cold, two or three of our comrades died every day. We were permitted to bury them, but our feeble hands could not dig very deeply, and the wild beasts managed to get at and devour their remains.

We were afterwards employed in making furrows for the corn.



CHAPTER VII.

FRANCIS RESOLVES TO ESCAPE.

QUONE day, when our guards were a short distance off, the idea of running away occurred to me. I struggled against it at first. I said to myself that, having been better able to support the tortures, I ought to remain to comfort and assist my companions in misfortune. I disclosed my plan, and expressed my doubts to some prisoners who worked with me.

They replied, that it was difficult to escape, and that if I were to evade the pursuit of the soldiers of Abd-el-Kader, I should certainly fall into the hands of other Arabs, and that if I could reach Morocco, from which we were not very far off, it was not certain that I should not again fall into captivity. As

for them, they were resigned to wait, thinking that some day the French would retake them, if they could until then escape the teeth of the hyenas.

This reply deeply afflicted me ; above all, as I saw in what a moral state these men were.

“The French retake us!” said I, vehemently; “I well know, that our brave generals, if they knew that we were here, would make an effort to deliver us ; but do they know it ? do they suppose that prisoners are living in a place so distant from the province of Oran ? Well, they shall know it, with the blessing of God ; my decision is taken, I will go alone, since you will not accompany me, and I hope we shall soon see each other again.”

“Francis,” said one of them, “you are a good lad, but you will only get taken prisoner again, we shall gain nothing by it, and you will perish under the stick.”

“Do not seek to hinder me from going, my friends, I might hesitate at the thought that I was forsaking you like a mean selfish person, but I have set my heart upon executing my design, now that I have the hope of being useful to you ; if I die in these desert plains,

or under the blows of the Arabs, I shall have the consolation in my last moments of not having been the cause of the ruin of a comrade. On the contrary, if I succeed, I will inform the first French post of your state, and I hope you will be delivered."

My companions, not insisting any longer, I made preparations for my departure. After having embraced them, and accepted for my provision a part of our meagre pittance for the day, I started. Nevertheless, I did not leave before I had asked the help of Him from whom deliverance comes. Those who stayed behind, joined in my prayer, and then I quitted them.

It was about five o'clock. The month of July was drawing to a close, and the heat was very great. I resolved to hide myself during the day, and to journey during the night, so as to protect myself from the burning rays of the sun, and the pursuit of the Arabs. I directed my course towards the forest in which we were accustomed to cut wood, and I waited there until it was evening. Then, without knowing the direction I was taking, I walked on until morning.

At sunrise, I found myself in a small barren plain, enclosed on all sides by mountains, covered with the most luxuriant vegetation. I decided on the direction in which I thought I ought to proceed, and I continued to walk on, pressing forward towards the north-west, to get nearer to the frontiers of Morocco, and reach the Spanish possession.

I thus walked on for three nights through a magnificent country, reposing and hiding myself during the day. The *Pistacia Lentiscus*, or mastic tree, palm trees, and a vast number of shrubs grow wild in this country, and I was thus able to find shelter, and even my food, which consisted of a fruit similar to the medlar in colour, but smaller, and containing a stone. I also ate of the inside of the root of the palm tree, which I dug up with great difficulty.

On the whole, although I suffered from thirst, I was less to be pitied than when among the Arabs, and I possessed a hope which supported me, and made me forget the long sufferings of a captivity of sixteen months. God strengthened me, and I returned thanks to Him, and also besought

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Him never to let me forget that He had supported me in my tribulations, and to give me both perseverance in prayer, and the virtues which are the true strength of the Christian soldier.





CHAPTER VIII.

FRANCIS AMONG THE ARABS.

QUON the morning of the fifth day after my flight, I had just found a resting-place under a thicket, formed by numerous plants of laurels, broom, and other shrubs, when I was surprised by a shepherd, who gazed at me with astonishment.

I was on the point of taking to flight, when he said to me—"Fear nothing; I am a friend of the French. I will lead you to my hut, and the women will receive you kindly."

I did not know what to do. Flight was impossible; he would soon have overtaken me. I remembered the proverb: "Be always distrustful of the Arab; let distrust be thy clothing." I also remembered the case of a

fugitive prisoner, led back to the fort of Tafraoua by shepherds, and who was condemned to receive two hundred blows from a stick.

But the shepherd continued, "You may trust me. I have been well treated by your brethren. Praise be to God, I am happy to serve those who know how to act justly and honestly."

At last I determined to accompany him. On reaching the "douair," the dogs gave notice of our arrival, and I entered with my guide into a tent formed of woven camel's hair, firmly fastened to the ground, and supported in the middle by a pole seven feet in height. Two women were there squatted on the floor, with their arms crossed on their "haicks." "Nazarene," said one of them to me, "you are welcome; you are the guest God has sent to us."

They presented me with a plate of cous-coussou, a sort of paste cooked by the steam of broth. For a long time I had not made so good a meal, as for four days I had lived upon fruits and roots. You will not then be astonished that I partook of this

strengthening food with pleasure. It reminded me of the excellent pastry of French Flanders, such as I had often eaten at home, and which my mother knows so well how to make.

The name of my generous friend on the frontiers of Morocco, was Ben-Aïda. But for him, I believe that I should have died.

He begged me to repose for the rest of the day, adding that I might hold myself in readiness to start in the evening, because his neighbours might, if they discovered me, take me back to the fort of Tafraoua. He informed me also, that we were ten leagues from Melilla, a town occupied by the Spaniards.

I slept better than I had since my departure from Algiers, and the sun had sunk very low in the horizon when I was called by my host. The women then entered, and I was told that one was his mother and the other his wife. He had served the Emir in the regular army. Taken prisoner by the French, and detained at Marseilles, he had been very well treated. Restored to liberty, he had resumed the tending of his flock, and had since married.

We partook of a repast, which consisted of

roast mutton, water-melons, and dates—sour-milk was our beverage.

We left the hospitable "gourbi" at night-fall. Two mares were saddled and tied to a stake, in readiness for our departure.

Ben-Aïda and the women knelt down to say their prayer at sun-set (*salat el moghreb*); for my part, I implored the Lord that He would graciously protect and guide me during this night in which there was the chance of my seeing the end of my sufferings.

When the Arab arose, he gave me his hand. "It is well you venerate Aïssa, the Soul of God (Jesus Christ); your brethren never implore Him, at least those I have known. I am happy to be able to help you, for you are a servant of Allah."

Then he knelt before his mother, who besought the blessing of the Almighty for him; he embraced his dear Fatima, and leaped into the saddle. I saluted these worthy women, and we started at a gallop.

During this rapid journey, we passed several hours without exchanging a word, and the silence of the night was only broken by the cries of some troop of jackals, which

arose at intervals from the bottom of the ravines, or from the crests of the mountains which we traversed.

About midnight, we slackened our pace ; at three o'clock we stopped : " Let us wait here for the sun," said Ben-Aïda to me ; " you will have nothing more to fear ; you will see the white walls of Melilla the moment he throws his light over the lake, along the banks of which we have been journeying."

It was a beautiful morning, the air was warm, a light breeze wafted to us the scent of the sea. I inhaled with delight this perfume, which reminded me of my distant country. The dim light of dawn permitted me to discern the white dress that enabled me to distinguish the slim figure of the son of the desert, and I thanked God for having placed him in my path. The day broke ; we gained the sea-shore. In treading the shore of the sea, which I had not seen for so long a time, I forgot my past sorrows, and in a transport of joy, I opened the book that I had saved, and that had always spoken to me of salvation, even in the midst of my greatest distress.

A boat was at anchor, and I was cordially received into it by a fisherman, who pointed out to me the desired haven, which was several leagues distant. I quitted my deliverer, who, placing his hands upon my head, invoked the protection of Allah for the French soldier. It was amidst tears of gratitude that I saw this man, so good and so generous, slowly disappear in the distance, and whom I have so many times wished to see again. But this happiness has not been given me.





CHAPTER IX.

A HAPPY MEETING.

FSOON landed in the Spanish possession. Melilla, one of the four fortresses that Spain has kept on the African coast, is impregnable; and although, according to the statement of geographers, it has a dull and monotonous aspect, it appeared to me a perfect Eden. On my landing I was received by some officers and soldiers of the garrison. The news of my arrival soon spread over the town and everybody vied with each other in showing me acts of kindness and offering me their congratulations. They knew that there were some prisoners not far off, and orders had been given by the governor to

receive those properly who should seek an asylum in the place.

I was lodged at the house of an old captain who had served in our army during the French invasion of Spain under the Empire. His wife, born in France, welcomed me as a countryman, and during the eight days I passed under their roof I was the object of attentions of which I shall always preserve a grateful recollection. They gave me decent clothes, for I need not tell you that I was scarcely covered with a few rags when I escaped from my captivity.

I quitted this hospitable place and these good people not without shedding tears. I deeply regretted being obliged to leave them; and the name of Captain Sanchez will be remembered by me together with that of Ben-Aïda, as long as I shall breathe; and I always remember them in my prayers.

I took a passage on board a galliot bound for Algiers, and I soon landed in this port.

I had some difficulty in making myself recognised. I had been thought dead. Fortunately, my company, which was then engaged in an expedition not far from the

part of the country where I had been detained, had left some men in Algiers, and among them was my worthy friend, Marty. I cannot express to you what happiness we felt when we met. He said to me with deep feeling: "God has heard my prayers. I see you again."

I inquired after the fate of our comrades, and I learned with great sorrow that Carlos had met his death in the action at Bab-el-Taza against Abd-el-Kader. Our friend had seen him fall not far off from him, and was able to hear his last words. Full of faith and hope of pardon, Carlos felt himself in the hands of the Saviour; and the passage which a soldier ought always to be ready to take, was made by our young brother, with a resignation full of confidence in the mercy of the Lord.

Cornault was on the point of returning to France. His father had recently died, and he had obtained an unlimited leave of absence to go and comfort his mother. I saw him before his departure, and I had the satisfaction of learning that he continued to walk in the right way to which Marty had

directed us both. He made us promise to come and see him on our return to France.

On my arrival at Algiers, the Governor-General sent for me, and my first care was to call his attention to our unfortunate countrymen who were prisoners. Their existence among the Arabs was known, but all official communications with Abd-el-Kader were then broken off, and their deliverance by force of arms was impossible.

However, God raised up two men to accomplish this work. M. Dupuch, the bishop of Algiers, opened the negotiations, and his vicar, M. Suchet, devoting himself to the work, went alone to treat for an exchange of prisoners, with an officer of the Emir. Entire success crowned the enterprise, and this gave me the gratification of seeing again several of my friends, who had shared my captivity.

After this time, Marty and I were in the different actions in which our company was engaged. It is needless to mention them here. My friend obtained his discharge after the great expedition against the Ouarensenis. I won the cross of honour

Marty was offered a commission, but as his military career was ended, he hastened to follow an occupation which he preferred, and to which he felt himself called, and which already bears blessed fruits in the place where he has become a teacher.

In 1845, I exchanged into a regiment of the line, with the rank of sergeant-major, and followed the example of my friend in refusing a commission, in order to return to my mother, and never leave her again. It was she who planted the seed in me, which a friend watered, and which God will cause to grow, by His grace in the blessed light of His infinite love.

On my return to France, I met Cornault and Marty at Valence. The former had married a gentle and pious woman, whom he had known from childhood, and who had promised to wait for him until his time of service should expire.

“You see,” said he, “I did not deserve such devotedness when but God has pardoned me.”

Marty, entirely occupied with his school, is not yet married, but I have reason to

think that still closer ties will unite him to his old antagonist of Casbah Street, and that he will find in the sister of Cornault a helpmate similar to himself in contributing to spread a knowledge of the word of life in the hearts of the young.


May his example inspire those whose services are claimed by their country with fidelity to their colours, may it incite them to forego impure pleasures, and noisy quarrels, and as much as is in their power to live at peace with all, and do good to all around them. May all of us ever remember that in the hour of prosperity, as in the time of tribulation, we are always in the keeping and in the sight of God.





CHAPTER X.

THE FATHER OF FRANCIS AND THE SMUGGLER.

HILE the scenes we have described were passing in Algeria, the following events were occurring in Francis's native place, after he had been forced to leave it by the conscription.

At a short distance from Bavay, the road between Lille and Sedan passes along the side of a wood situated on the frontiers of France and Belgium. This wood is a favourite resort of smugglers, and is often therefore searched by the custom-house officers. For an extent of several miles there are guard-houses erected at short distances from each other, at the door of each of which stands a custom-house officer, armed with a gun. It might

have been supposed, that by such stringent measures as these, smuggling would be completely suppressed; but at the time of which we write this was not at all the case; on the contrary, the contraband trade was carried on, on a large scale. Men were associated together, forming a system of insurance societies against the chances of their goods being seized; and foreign merchandise of all kinds was carried into France in many various ways. Sometimes small things were carried by dogs trained to run away from all whom they met. Sometimes the smuggling was carried on by armed bands, that attacked and often overpowered the custom-house officers. All kinds of tricks were employed, and cunning was used against cunning; on the one side by the hope of gain, and on the other, not only because it was their duty, but because of the pride they felt in the skill they displayed in defeating the designs of the smugglers. On crossing the frontier, the writer has often remarked bands of children, ragged, barefooted, and apparently in great misery, begging from house to house for a morsel of bread. When the inhabitants of

the country were asked about these children, many of them had no hesitation in replying, that they were young smugglers. Men lost to all sense of principle take advantage of the poverty of the country people at the time when the work ceases in the fields, and by the bribe of a small piece of money corrupt the poor children of the labourers. Left to themselves, without any clear notion of *meum* and *tuum*—that is, that they do not distinguish properly between their own and their neighbour's property—these young smugglers become, at a later period of their lives, thieves and vagabonds.

It is not our province to determine whether custom-houses are useful or hurtful to the prosperity of States. We leave to others, better qualified, the task of discussing this question of political economy—a science entirely out of our way. But what we do know—and what we wish that all should acknowledge—is, that we owe obedience to the laws of our country, because our Lord has commanded it; and He taught the same truth by His own example, when He paid the tribute-money, and when He said, “Render

therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. xxii. 21). Numerous people, accounted honest by many in the world, have no scruple in buying and using contraband goods. Those who act thus are not practical Christians, or they would abstain, not only from doing, but also from encouraging every illicit action—and would consider those as thieves who thus defraud the revenue.

One fine morning in autumn, more beautiful in French Flanders than even the mornings in spring, an old man was occupied in clearing out a ditch, which separated the high road from the wood of which we have spoken. The expression of his face was calm—he seemed to enjoy the contentment that arises from peace of mind. His voice, tremulous with age, singing a rural song, kept time to each movement of his spade. His daily task was well advanced, for he had been working from sunrise. He came out of the ditch—took down a linen bag which was hanging on the branch of a tree close by—took out of it some bread and cheese—and,

sitting down on the grass, breakfasted with an air of perfect contentment. He drank along with his frugal meal a little fresh water from an earthen pitcher, which he had put in a cool place—in a hole near the foot of the tree.

Just as he had finished breakfast, a young man came up. He was tall, slight, and apparently about twenty-five years of age. His determined and rather haughty bearing was softened into a tone of deference, when he said “Good morning” to the old man—of whom he immediately asked, if he had seen dogs, with burdens on their backs, pass that way.

The old man answered in the negative.

The young man appeared uneasy,—he looked towards the openings in the wood. Steps were heard approaching—a man soon appeared. He was going to follow one of the paths through the wood, when he perceived the two persons whom we have already mentioned. The last comer belonged to a class of small farmers, whose farms are their own property.

“Well, Father James,” said he, “you have

not yet found the hen that lays the golden eggs. I see that you cannot afford to eat meat, and your pitcher has not been filled from a cask of wine. As for you, Philip, your present appearance shows that you are not in easy circumstances;" so saying, the farmer laughed heartily.

"Mind your own business," said Philip, angrily; "you need not boast of your fortune: every one knows how you got your money. I would rather be a smuggler than . . ."

"Hold your tongue, young man, or I will take you to a place that you will not like. . . The trade you carry on may bring you into trouble, and your father . . ."

"You have said enough," said Philip, in a furious tone; "you remind me that I have not avenged him."

"Vengeance belongs to God," said James, in a gentle voice; "and yet He pardons sinners who repent."

"There is Father James preaching his sermons as usual," said the farmer.

"Leave Father James alone; he is a better man than either you or I."

"Come, let us not get angry," said James; "let *me* answer Mr Lamblin, Philip. He thinks me poor. I am richer than he is. He spoke a few minutes ago about the hen that lays the golden eggs. Well, what will you say when I tell you that I have found a treasure, and that I wish to share it with you, and . . ."

Suddenly, about twenty enormous dogs rushed out of the wood. Each of them carried a large bag fastened on his back by a leathern strap. Notwithstanding the heavy burden, they ran at full speed, crossed the road, and disappeared on the other side. The sounds of shots were heard. Philip darted off after the dogs, although James vainly attempted to detain him. A few minutes afterwards he returned.

"The dogs have passed safely," said he; "and the custom-house officers have wasted powder and shot."

"Tell me, Philip," asked James, "when will you give up this trade? I have often spoken to you on this subject, and I am not without hope that you will give it up some day."

"It is quite possible. Yet, when I go out on a smuggling expedition, I feel more excitement and pleasure than at one of our village fêtes. The wild life I lead gives me an idea of California, of the backwoods and prairies of America, and of the cunning artifices of the Indians of which I have read so much. Besides, I have always led this sort of life, and I could not lead any other."

"We can always become better," said James; "and to be able to do so we must ask the help of Him with whom all things are possible."

"You would have made a famous preacher, James, if you had begun young enough," said Lamblin.

"You are meddling with James again, and if you dare . . ."

"Philip! Philip!" said James, interposing, "don't get into a passion. Mr Lamblin *will* have his jest; and, as for you, you are as inflammable as gunpowder! Well, I hope with the blessing of God to see a great change in both of you. I myself have been greatly changed."

“Well, I hope it is for the better. But as for any change in us, I think you will have to wait long enough before you see it.”

“I should like to be as patient as you are, Father James,” said Philip—“perhaps I should be happier. But how can I become so?”

“If you will listen to my story, Philip, you will hear that I was very sick when the great Physician of souls came to heal me—and remember that there is great joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.”

“Tell us your story,” said Lamblin and Philip together.

“I was born in the neighbourhood of Cambrai. I possessed a small farm of my own. I had a good wife and children who might have made me very happy in my home, if I had chosen to be so; but I preferred to go to fairs, and to indulge in gambling and drunkenness. I ruined myself, and misery came into our home. Soon afterwards my eldest daughter died, and my son Francis, who was a hard working young man, was taken from us by the conscription—forced to enter the army—and became a

Zouave. He is now in Algeria, poor fellow ! and I do not know whether he is living or dead.

“My wife Catherine bore her afflictions courageously ; she exhorted me to be patient ; she never reproached me, even though I continued in my evil courses, and she used every gentle means to persuade me to do better. I could not help envying her tranquillity of mind. I often found her reading the Bible. It was in this book that she had found comfort and consolation. I continued to drink and gamble, and was not aware that my wife almost starved herself to endeavour to keep a small piece of ground, the remains of our former property. Even this had to be sold at last ; and when nothing more was left but the house we lived in, Catherine fell dangerously ill. I was at the public-house in a miserable state of intoxication, when they came to tell me that my wife was dying. I staggered home.

“At first I scarcely understood what was passing around me, but when Catherine looked at me as she did, and when I became aware she was so ill, it had a sobering effect

upon me. I approached her bed. She took my hand, and in a voice so weak that I could scarcely hear her words, she said :

“ ‘ James, my dear husband, I am glad that you have come while I am still able to speak to you, I fear, for the last time. I have no fear for myself. I trust in my Saviour, and I know that He will receive me. Let us pray to Him to forgive you also, and to change your heart. I have not been able to make your home as attractive as I would have wished to do, and you have been ruined by frequenting fairs and other public places. Promise me that you will amend—that you will give up your false friends, and that you will seek the Friend of sinners. He alone can bring you back to the right way.’

“ She stopped speaking, and fell back exhausted. The Bible was lying by her bedside. I took it up. It was open at the eleventh chapter of St John’s Gospel, containing the account of the death and resurrection of Lazarus. Catherine looked up and saw the book in my hands. She made a sign to me to read, which I did.

“The doctor then came in, and after seeing Catherine he took me aside and told me that the crisis of her illness was at hand, and that if she could sleep, there was still hope of her recovery. I need not tell you how earnestly I prayed that night.

“My prayer was heard. My Catherine recovered; and from that time we have read the word of God and have prayed together. I have been enabled to forsake all my evil ways; and although I have been obliged to become a day labourer, we enjoy peace and happiness that the world can neither give nor take away.”

The two listeners were deeply moved. They knew and appreciated Catherine’s admirable conduct. Yet Lamblin did not wish to show that he felt anything, and he went off humming the words—

“When the devil was sick,
The devil a monk would be.”

Philip promised the old man to pay him a visit the next day, which was Sunday. They shook hands, and the smuggler went slowly towards the frontier. James sighed, prayed

silently for a few moments, and then resumed his work. But he sang no more that day; his heart was too full of anxiety about his friends.





CHAPTER XI.

THE CAPTURE OF THE SMUGGLER.

THE night was dark and tempestuous ; the west wind was blowing furiously. The withered leaves were whirling down from the trees, violently shaken by the storm. Rain was beginning to fall. A man, wrapped in sheepskins, which were sewed up like a bag, and which entirely covered him, and left nothing visible but his head, was lying in the forest on a kind of moveable bed formed of bars of wood which could be easily and quickly separated. A large dog, which had been lying near him, suddenly rose, went softly a few steps towards the Belgian territory, and then returned to his master. Silently, without even a growl, the dog gently scratched the sheepskin bag

several times. The custom-house officer raised his head, rose, got out of the large bag in which he was wrapped, drew out his gun from its case, and put a cap on it, passed a cord through a ring fastened to the dog's collar, and then both man and dog crept gently through the trees and hid themselves in a thicket near the high road.

The rain was now falling in torrents. The watchers in the thicket had not waited long when a slight rustling was heard among the withered leaves, and a man came up holding a dog by a rope fastened through a ring in its collar, exactly like the one of which we have already spoken, but carrying a burden fastened on its back.

The custom-house officer emerged from his hiding place, and taking aim with his gun commanded the smuggler, in a loud voice, to surrender his contraband goods.

Instead of replying, the smuggler urged his dog to run on, and then a race began, so singular, that without having seen it, one can scarcely form a correct idea of it.

The smuggler's dog, an unusually strong and powerful animal, trained for this work,

ran at a pace as swift as a horse at full speed, dragging after him his master, who held fast by the rope, and who, as well as the dog, had been trained by constant practice to run so fast that his swiftness was truly extraordinary. The custom-house officers also train themselves and their dogs, so as to be able to pursue the smugglers. In the frequent struggles that take place, the dogs often change masters, and are employed, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other; but in general they seem to prefer the service of the smugglers, who treat them with the greatest kindness.

The smuggler and his dog ran on, closely followed by the custom-house officer. On they went, across marshy ground, through pools of water, among bushes and brushwood, over rough ground; nothing stopped them in their wild race; sometimes one of them fell; sometimes the other; but they were soon on their feet again, rushing on as before. The one wished to save his contraband goods, and also to escape imprisonment; the other wished to gain the reward offered for the capture of the smuggler.

After extraordinary efforts, the smuggler had almost got to the edge of the wood. In a few minutes longer he would have been in safety. He reached the ditch, tried to leap over it, but stumbled into a heap of soft mud that had recently been cleared out of it; he tried to rise, but his feet had stuck in the wet mud, the dog still dragged him on and he fell into the ditch, where his pursuer soon made him prisoner. He had let go the rope, however, and the dog escaped with his burden still fastened on his back.

"It is strange that I should be taken prisoner at this spot," thought Philip (for it was he who had been thus caught); "a few yards farther on and I should have been safe. Oh! James, how little either of us imagined when we were talking here this morning that I should end my career as a smuggler by stumbling into the wet mud which you were then clearing out of this ditch."

Philip was taken to the nearest guard-house, where he was permitted to throw himself down to rest on a camp bed, but he was too miserable to sleep. In the morning he

was transferred to the prison at Avesnes, where, after awaiting his trial for three weeks, he was condemned to six months imprisonment, and to pay a fine of five hundred francs. As he was not to be released till this was paid, and he was too poor to have any means of doing so, he had the prospect of prolonged imprisonment.

The unhappy man, accustomed to the free, wandering, and adventurous life he had hitherto led, was very miserable in prison. He often thought of the advice James had given him, and the only gleam of comfort he had was the thought that James would still remember him kindly, and would pray for him.





CHAPTER XII.

PHILIP IN PRISON.

PHILIP was imprisoned in the autumn. That year, the winter was unusually early and severe — snow fell in abundance, covering the fields and roads with a thick white mantle. James was thus prevented from going to his usual work, and had therefore some leisure time. He was most anxious to see poor Philip, and resolved to take advantage of this opportunity to go to Avesnes.

Words can scarcely express the delight of Philip, when he saw his kind old friend come into his cell,—it was like a gleam of light in the darkness.

“A thousand thanks, Father James,” said he, “for your goodness in coming to see me ;

you have always been so kind to me, I felt sure you would come to comfort me. I am very miserable here. How bitterly I repent that I did not take your advice at once. But indeed, that very day I had resolved that it should be my very last adventure. Then, was it not terrible to be caught, when I was almost in safety? Had I not fallen, I would soon have reached a shelter, where the custom-house officer could not have found me”

“It is the will of God, Philip: ‘His ways are not our ways.’ He has suffered you to fall into this trouble, to lead you to repent of the sin you were committing, and to make you hate it more, and resolve more earnestly to forsake it. Let us pray together that He will give you true repentance, and enable you henceforth to lead a better life.”

After a short prayer, the good man said—

“I blame myself, Philip. I ought to have tried more to keep you from leaving me on that unhappy day. And you had really resolved that it should be your last expedition?”

“Indeed, I had,” sighed Philip. “I had determined to take the advice you so often gave me, and give up my wild courses,—this

terrible trade that cost my father his life, for he was killed in a fight with the custom-house officers, and his death brought us all to misery and poverty, so that my poor mother did not long survive him. She would not let me join the smugglers while she lived, and she tried to teach me better things. But she died when I was only eight years old, and I soon forgot her teaching. Many things she said, however, have come back to my memory since I was in this cell. Oh! if I ever get out of prison, I will try to lead a new life. But how could I? Who would employ me, after having been in prison? . . . Then I have little hope that I shall ever get out, for I shall never be able to pay the heavy fine. Oh! my friend, what shall I do? I feel as if the air in this cell were suffocating me."

"Go to God in prayer," said James. "He will never cast out any that go to Him, confessing their sins, and imploring pardon for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. He can give you peace of mind even in this cell; and in His own good time He can open a way for you to begin a new life."

“Will He receive me,” said Philip; “one so wicked as I have been? You know, I was called by my comrades, ‘The Wild Boar,’ because I was so bold and reckless. Will God indeed hear my prayer?”

“He has promised not to cast out any who go to Him. He had mercy on the sinful woman—on the publican—on the thief on the cross. He invites every penitent sinner to come and obtain pardon and peace. I will send you a Bible that you may read His blessed promises.”

“Thanks, James, many thanks! Take this pipe, the case is silver; it is the only thing of value I have; sell it, and send me a Bible as soon as you can.”

“I will send you one my friend, but keep your pipe; I will find means to get the good book for you.”

“Do not refuse to take it, James; it is of no use to me now, and I know you have not much to spare, generous as you are.”

The old man took the pipe, and said good-bye to Philip, leaving him much more comfortable and hopeful than he had found him.



CHAPTER XIII.

LAMBLIN'S REPENTANCE.

JAMES bought a Bible from a colporteur for Philip; and, as he could not return to Avesnes for some time, he asked Lamblin to take it, which he agreed to do, as he intended to go to that town in about a week afterwards.

Lamblin was not at all happy, and felt more inclined to oblige James than to sneer at him and mock him, as he had been wont to do. Lamblin's conduct had been much worse than Philip's, although he had hitherto escaped detection. He had been intent on making money, no matter how—honestly or dishonestly. He had bought contraband goods from the smugglers, and had even sometimes joined them in a venture when he

thought that it was a very safe one; and he had managed this with so much cunning, that he had never even been suspected. On the other hand, he had often acted as a kind of spy for the custom-house officers, betraying even those with whom he associated on friendly terms—secretly sharing part of the reward as the price of his treachery.

It was Lamblin who had betrayed Philip on the night when he was taken. He acted thus treacherously, partly from spite because of the angry words that had passed between them in the morning, and partly from the fear that Philip might betray him, as he saw that the young man was aware of some of his unjust dealings.

From the moment he had given information against Philip, Lamblin had not had a moment's peace. He felt that he himself had been much the more guilty of the two, and his conscience was ill at ease. He had less excuse for his evil ways than poor Philip, who had been left a destitute orphan at eight years old; while Lamblin had been carefully trained by good parents, and he knew well what was right, though he chose to do what

he knew was wrong from the "love of money," which is truly said to be "the root of all evil." His slumbering conscience had been partially awakened by James, and he was tormented with remorse for his last act of treachery.

He was in this state of mind when James met him, described to him the sufferings of Philip in prison, and the little hope he had of being set free; and asked him to convey the Bible to Philip the next time he had occasion to go to Avesnes. Lamblin willingly undertook the commission, glad to soothe his conscience by doing any trifle that might alleviate the suffering he had caused, and he took the Bible to his house.

It was long since he had opened a Bible, though he once knew its contents well—having read it daily with either his father or mother. He could not resist opening it, and the well-remembered words called up the memories of his youthful days before he plunged into a course of crime. Many of the verses he read as he turned over the leaves seemed addressed to himself, and brought his sins vividly before him. He remembered how he had grieved his parents,

and even robbed them—how he had broken his wife's heart, and after her death had neglected the two young daughters she had left to him—how he had betrayed his friends, and defrauded his poorer neighbours, all for the sake of gain.

It would take too long to describe all that took place in the heart of Lamblin, during the week before he went to Avesnes; suffice it to say, that he became a thoroughly penitent man, and not only besought the pardon of God, but resolved at the same time to atone for what he had done, so far as it was in his power.

He took the Bible to Philip, and confessed his treachery, imploring forgiveness, which Philip, also humbled and penitent, readily granted. Lamblin daily visited him in the prison, and these men, once enemies—Philip the violent, and Lamblin the cheat—were now friends, and willing to aid each other in good, as they had formerly been occasionally confederates in evil.

Lamblin went to the custom-house, and paid Philip's fine. The young man had behaved very well since he had been in

prison, and, at the intercession of the chaplain, who had become much interested in him, he was pardoned, as the confinement was injuring his health, upon his giving a solemn pledge never again to engage in the contraband trade.

When Philip left the prison, Lamblin met him, and took him to his farm, where he gave him employment as superintendent of some of his workmen. Philip, energetic in all he did, clever, active, and very grateful to Lamblin, soon became a most valuable assistant.

Lamblin then invited old James and Catherine to live with him, that Catherine might be of use to his neglected daughters, and teach them the womanly duties which she had always fulfilled so well. Estelle and Marie were naturally amiable, and had not quite forgotten their mother's instructions. They welcomed Catherine, and were glad to learn of her. James continued to work on the farm.

From that time forward Lamblin had begun a new life. He was gentle to his workmen, kind to his family, generous to the poor, true

and just in all his dealings, and anxious in every way to atone to all whom he had ever injured for the injustice he had done. With the assistance of the pastor, he founded a school for the poor children of the parish, in which they were taught, above all other instruction, to read and value the Bible, as the rule God has given for man's daily life.

The poor and sick were encouraged to go to Lamblin's house, where Estelle and Marie, with Catherine's assistance, distributed linen, medicines, and nourishing food to those who needed these things. He was the benefactor of the whole district, and became as much loved as he had once been feared and hated.





CHAPTER XIV.

THE HARVEST HOME.

IN a fine day in autumn, there was an unusual bustle at Lamblin's farm. He had just got in an abundant harvest, and preparations were being made for the harvest home, which was to be celebrated the next day.

Estelle and Marie, who were now, under Catherine's instructions, skilled in cooking, were preparing pastry and sweetmeats, and excellent preserves from the fruits of their own orchard. Catherine was busy making pies and cakes. Some of the female servants were boiling and roasting large joints of meat, which were to be eaten cold, others were gathering fruit and flowers. All were busy.

Some of the workmen were preparing

tables and benches in the orchard, as the feast was to take place under the shade of the trees, and the guests expected were very numerous, as Lamblin wished the poor of the neighbourhood to share in the harvest rejoicings.

Philip was absent on a special message. A guest was expected from a distance, and Philip was sent on horseback to see if he were on the road, as a large party intended to go out to meet him.

In about an hour Philip returned at full gallop. He entered the house exclaiming—

“He is on the road, friends! I have seen him! I have come back as fast as I could to give you time to meet him at the turn of the road. He will be there in half-an-hour. Come, Madame Catherine, there is no time to lose.”

Catherine scarcely waited to wipe the flour from her hands; she hastened off, accompanied by all the family and the servants. Old James was not the least nimble of the party.

What caused all this commotion?

A man was seen approaching with hasty

steps. He must have been very much fatigued, for he had been travelling on foot for several days ; but his pace was quick,— he knew his journey's end was near. His complexion was brown from exposure to the burning sun of Africa ; he wore the uniform of a sergeant-major, and on his breast was seen the Cross of the Legion of Honour !

There was an expression of joy in his countenance as he drew near the turn of the road, from which he could see the end of his journey.

The party from the farm met him at this spot ; he saw them from a distance ; rushed forward, and was clasped in his mother's arms.

Who can describe Catherine's happiness when her son was thus restored to her ! James also cordially and affectionately welcomed his son, who then shook hands with all near him, even with those whom he had never seen before, as he felt sure they were all friendly to him.

Lamblin's young daughters remained timidly in the background, as if fearful to disturb the meeting of the son with his

parents; but at length attracted by the sergeant's frank manner, they also shook hands with him kindly.

When Catherine had overcome her first emotions, she said to her son—"Francis, have you kept my last gift to you?"

"Yes, mother, I have kept it and treasured it. In garrison and in the bivouac, in barracks and in the field, in battle and in captivity, I have kept it always with me! It has comforted me in many an evil day, and has always reminded me of you, my dear mother, and of your advice. Here it is," continued he, drawing out of his pocket a shabby-looking well-worn book.

"My dear son, you have proved that even in a difficult position, and exposed to much temptation, it is possible to act like a Christian, and to serve your country without forgetting your God."

The party then returned to the farm, and Francis, even while partaking of the repast set before him, was eagerly called upon to relate his adventures in Algeria, with which the reader is already acquainted.

The next day, long tables were spread

under the shade of the trees in the orchard, and a happy party assembled round them. Their poor neighbours shared in the feast, and in the general rejoicing.

On the day after the fête, Francis, who had refused a commission in the army, because he wished to return to be a comfort to his old parents, contentedly put on a labourer's dress, and went to work in the fields.

His energetic character displayed itself even in this humble position, and he worked so successfully, that he was in time able to take a small piece of ground to farm on his own account. He married Lamblin's daughter Estelle, who was much attached to Catherine. After the marriage, he was able to offer a happy home to his parents in his house, and Estelle did all she could to make them comfortable.

Lamblin entrusted the care of all his concerns to Philip, who was devoted to his interests, and was treated by him as a son, which he at last became by his marriage with Marie, with her father's consent and approval, as he thus secured a happy home for his old age, attended by those who truly loved him.

98 *BREAD CAST ON THE WATERS.*

Lamblin's numerous charities never impoverished him. On the contrary, his prosperity increased. The blessing of God made him rich, and he practically realised the saying of the wise king—"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; and *there is* that withholdeth more than is meet, but *it tendeth* to poverty."



