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REMINISCENCES
OF
THE FRANCO-IRISH AMBULANCE;
OR,
OUR "CORPS"
WITH
THE MOCQUARTS AND ON THE LOIRE.
1870—1871.

BY
M. A. LEESON.

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1873.

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ROY WEN
DUBIN
WEN

TO
THE IRISH PEOPLE

This Book is Dedicated,

BY
THE AUTHOR.



God's dearest blessing dwell with them ;

God bless the race they foster.

J. K. CASEY.

NEW YORK
1872

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NATIONAL
AMBULANCE COMMITTEE,

1870-1871.

VERY REV. THOMAS BURKE, O.P.
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SIR JOHN BRADSTREET, BART.
ALDERMAN P. P. MAGSWINEY.
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JEREMIAH TWOHILL.

Hon. Secs. { P. M'CABE FAY.
A. E. LESAGE.
EDWARD M'MAHON.

R O L L
OF THE
IRISH AMBULANCE ON THE LOIRE,
1870-1871.

De Chanzy, G.I.C.L.A.
C. P. Baxter, S.I.C.I.A.
M. Picard, *Director*.
M. Myles, *Adjutant*.
G. Wilkinson, *Sergeant-Major*.
R. Burges, *Master of the Horse*.
M. O'Loughlinn, *Paymaster*.
P. A. Ryan, *Special Correspondent*.
— Moore, } *Orderly Sergeants*.
— M'Keane, }

FIELD DEPARTMENT.

<p>*Byrne, J., Dublin. Balfé, J., „ Bell, T. C., „ Cunningham, T. T., Boyle. Craven, P. J., Dublin. *Conlon, M., Dundalk. D'Arcy, M., „ Doherty, R., Dublin. †Dillon, J., „ Fennessy, — Kilkenny. *Farrell, — Dublin. †Greely, J., „ *Hopkins, Wm., Dublin. Hayes, D., Charleville. Kelly, P., Dundalk. *Kavanagh, J., Dundalk.</p>	<p>Kelly, P. J., Dublin. *Lawlor, P., „ Leeson, M. A., „ *Maguire, P., „ *Molony, D., Dundalk. *Montgomery, A., Dundalk. M'Carthy, J., Dublin. M'Grane, J., „ *M'Mahon, J., „ *O'Neill, B., Dundalk. Smyth, J. A., Dublin. Shiels, T., „ Sleator, E., „ White, P., „ Winslow, W., „</p>
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* In charge of wagons

† Carriage-smith.

‡ Cook.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Surgeon Ryan.	Assistant-Surgeon M'Elevy.
„ Widdup.	„ M'Keon.
„ Thompson.	„ O'Flynn.
Assistant-Surgeon Brown.	„ Ryan, J.
„ Baxter, J.	„ Scarry.
„ Carolan.	„ Woodlock.
„ Campbell.	—
„ Cassidy.	ATTENDANTS ON SURGEONS AND
„ Clarke.	ON HOSPITAL DUTY.
„ Delaney.	— Clancy.
„ Dobbin.	D. Foran.
„ Geraghty.	P. M'Cann.
„ Healy.	J. O'Connor.
„ Hayes.	J. Walshe.
„ Henley.	—
„ Kelly, D'dalk.	NUNS, LADY VOLUNTEERS,
„ Mulligan.	and
„ M'Carthy, J.	CONVALESCENT MOBILES.

In the foregoing Roll, there are many of the volunteers and members of the medical department of our "corps" who have given their Dublin address, though they invariably belong to the provinces—a fact which goes to prove that the national sympathies were aroused in every district of Ireland in favour of France.

R O L L
OF THE
IRISH AMBULANCE CORPS

ON SERVICE WITH

COL. MOCQUART'S FRANCS-TIREURS,

1870-1871.

—•—
Mocquart, *General-in-Chief.*
Maguire, *Surgeon-in-Chief.*
O'Scanlon, *Director.*

FIELD DEPARTMENT.

Allan, J., Dublin.
Carter, J., „
Daly, J., Kanturk.
Doyle, M., Dublin.
Gaffney, H., „

Kerr, A., Dublin.
Meade, L., „
Quinn, J., „
Webb, H., Kanturk.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Surgeon Cremin.
Assistant-Surgeon Connolly.
„ Farrelly.
„ Geraghty

Assistant-Surgeon M'Carty, C.
„ M'Cullagh.
„ O'Carroll.
„ Ryan, R.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS work on our "National Ambulance Corps" suggested itself to me even during my service with that corps on the Loire; but owing to the continual round of duty which devolved upon each member, together with the fear of making notes, lest such notes might fall into the hands of the enemy, an occurrence which would undoubtedly prove fatal to the honour of our corps, I was prevented from commencing this work earlier, and, when commenced, had to rely on my own recollections of our days with the Army of the Loire, and also of those whiled away in the North of France, during our term of service with the Franc-Tireur corps under Col. Mocquart. Therefore, and as memory has been my only guide, I would ask the reader to bear with me throughout, only remembering that the subjects under notice are connected minutely with that war of 1870-71 which was never equalled, and probably never will, for its severity, and were, one and all, witnessed by the author—facts which might incline to leave anything but pleasant souvenirs.

I have endeavoured "to give justice where justice points its due." Members of independent corps, such as the Volunteer Ambulance, the Franc-Tireur, and other free companies I have met with, I have noticed

particularly. To the Mobiles and regular troops of the French Republic, to the Landwehr, Landstrum, and regular troops of United Germany, I have devoted that attention and space which banded patriots claim—which men who rush on to battle for their country's weal, in defence of their country, should unquestionably have.

Barney O'Neill, a most exemplary character, I have given prominence to in these pages, not so much to create a subject, as to show that our Irish corps was not minus a *bon-homme*—a “spark” of the “ould land;” and if I have written anything which might be construed as disrespectful to him, I ask the reader to consider it with good meaning, for I have written with good intent, rather to serve the hero of the “big wagon.”

General engagements and skirmishes I have described minutely, also the duties of “our corps” present thereat, with special notes of guerilla warfare. The fierce encounters between the people and the Uhlans of the enemy I have detailed as they occurred. The admirable strategy of the Francs-Tireurs, which caused such trouble to the Germans—the ambush, the surprise and capture of Uhlans, and oftentimes of the enemy's “van,” with all the attendant incidents, are noted in full.

Our reception by the French people, the soldiery, the Papal Zouaves, the foreign companies, the distinguished foreigners who flocked under the standard of “the Conservative Republic,” and their continued kindnesses to the Irish of the Ambulance, I have considered worthy of notice. Garibaldi's “red shirts” are brought before

the reader in all their hideousness, as also their tribuned supporters in the Assembly of National Defence. The hatred in which they were held by the people, and the damaging results their presence in France had on the Mobiles, and even on regular troops, develop themselves throughout my work, proving clearly that wherever the accursed pioneers of wickedness and infidelity trod, there followed misery and ruin.

The causes which led to the formation of our National Ambulance, and the probable results which will arise, sooner or later, are given.

I feel myself but poorly competent to pay due tribute to the gentlemen of our National Committee, who have done, and still continue to do, so much in the cause—the sacred cause of faith and country. But let the reader “take the will for the deed,” and be assured that “their praise is sung by loftier harps than mine.” Ireland and France accord them thanks; all civilized people bless them; God, their Leader, crowned their gigantic efforts with success.

The visit of the French Deputation to Ireland is also brought under notice, and may not be considered as a subject outside my work, as it is closely connected with our Ambulance, and with the nearest and dearest sympathies of the Irish people. It was, as it were, the return of illustrious exiles to their country, the while representing the Queen of Nations—France.

In my work I have omitted the names, MM. Ducay and Bourse, two gentlemen connected with our “corps” on its first appearance in the field; but such a course I consider prudent, as of *them* I could say nothing

favorable—that is, as far as their connexion with our Ambulance. Madame de Chantal, Superioress of the Black Sisters in Chateaudun, a lady to whom members of our corps are deeply indebted for the kindness invariably shown them by her during their stay in Chateaudun, the Duchess de Mirpoir, the Marchioness de Montmorency, the Duc de Rochefoucauld, the Marquis de Nadillac, and many other names of note I have omitted in the body of my work. This is not entirely due to neglect, but to forgetfulness. The reader can quite understand how easy it is for an author, who writes on such a subject as I have taken up, to forget even names which should be cherished. Change of scene, new faces, and many other things there are to be found in war, which often puzzle the longest memory; therefore for these omissions I claim your indulgence.

The work I consider national, and therefore dedicate it to the Irish people. The Irish Ambulance Corps was the offspring of the national will, and the organization had with it the hearty approbation of the Irish people; therefore I have written with a view to bring before my countrymen the “doings” of that “corps” which they furnished with men and money; the respect shown to their volunteers by the conquerors of the Commune—the people of France; and the happy results which must undoubtedly follow the revival (if I may so speak) of the fraternal relations which mark the histories of France and Ireland.

M. A. LEESON.

Patrick's Day, 1873.

REMINISCENCES

OF

THE FRANCO-IRISH AMBULANCE.

CHAPTER I.

8TH OCTOBER, 1870.

“ And all that we love to our thoughts shall succeed,
Their image each labour shall cheer ;
For them we will conquer, for them we will bleed,
And our pay be a smile or a tear.”

R. HEBER.

THE Volunteers were embarrassed—the people excited. That day, the 8th of October, 1870, Ireland was reviving memories of “the olden times;” it was fixed as the day of departure of the Irish Ambulance Corps for service in “Old France;” and as such an organisation—the offspring of the national will—had with it the hearty approbation of the Irish people, it is superfluous for me to state here that excitement ran high, or that the enthusiastic demonstrations of the people were animating and consolatory. Anxious friends swarmed, as it were, around their volunteer to say, “Farewell”—perhaps a last farewell. Others, of noble and warm heart, grasped the hands of many a volunteer, in many instances without ever seeing him previously, invariably because he was of the Ambulance. Old, decrepit men, vacated their homes, perhaps the first time for years, to witness the ceremonial attendant on “the departure,” to look on “the Volunteers,” to bestow a blessing on their countrymen who were destined to be members of “our National Ambulance.” In and around the Rotundo Gardens the excitement was intense, as the public flocked thither in thousands to get a view of the Ambulance wagons which

B

were destined, alas! to be filled with the victims of destructive war, or to see the noble animals which were to bear them away from the harvest of death.

There was a crowd in every available nook along the line of route to the quay where *La Fontaine* lay, and notwithstanding that the rain poured down in torrents, great numbers paraded the streets, or congregated on some commanding position, from which they could obtain a good view of the corps as it moved on to the place of embarkation, never seeming to bestow a thought on their uncomfortable situation, so that they could attain their desires.

Now and then some mother would single out her boy, call him over that she might give to him some good advice; many crushed their way through the throng to bestow a present on her young volunteer. Such were the scenes taking place outside the Rotundo, until the bugle sounded parade; then might be witnessed the enthusiasm of a warm-hearted people. Volunteers bade adieu to all friends, offered a prayer for their country, and took their places immediately. The word "March!" was given, and obeyed with surprising alacrity and precision (a precision which afterwards gained the admiration of Von der Tann, the Bavarian general). Along the route to the North Wall, where the French vessel *La Fontaine* was moored, the excitement increased, until at length guards had to be posted to keep the thousands of well-wishers from breaking through the lines. In this there was no trouble, as they had only to be told to keep the way clear, when it was done. At length the tricolor and red-cross flags flying from *La Fontaine* appeared to view, and directly after the vanguard of our corps crossed the gangway, and were promenading *à discretion* the well-kept decks of that noble vessel. The main body of our men arrived immediately, and took up their position on deck, to return the cheers, which were kept up with *éclat* by the multitudes on shore.

In the meantime sounds of music were wafted on the breeze towards them from Ringsend; first thoughts were that the British Executive changed their minds, and permitted the trades' bands of the city to march, but such was not the case, as presently boats appeared freighted with the

really true Irishmen who form the trades' bands of Dublin, playing Irish and French airs alternately. At ten o'clock the anchors of the good ship were weighed, and by eleven o'clock she was making headway; the bandsmen returned to Dublin, carrying with them the blessings and thanks of our volunteers. By this time all became cognisant of the fact that a member of the corps saved a man from drowning during the embarkation of horses and vehicles—the member being no other than Dr. Maguire, who, on being recognised, received the congratulations of all on board. Sunday morning found *La Fontaine* anchored in the man-of-war roads, Kingstown; speculation was rife as to the cause of delay, but it leaked out at a later hour. Twenty-five men were found on board who did not pass the committee, and, therefore, were not entitled to proceed. A tug-boat was signalled for, and much to the disappointment of the would-be warriors, they were transferred to the steam-tug to be left safe in Dublin. However, they were honest men, and had they lived under any other government, they probably could attain their desires. *Apropos*, I may mention that many on board thought to themselves, by ten o'clock on Sunday morning, that they would be happy if they never saw the French vessel *La Fontaine*. By noonday the steamer weighed anchor, and was making full way for the port of Havre.

Passing the coast of Wicklow and Wexford, what cries reverberated on the breeze! What happy and mournful thoughts were conflicting in the patriotic breasts on board! These shores, they thought, which the Roman never dared approach in all his power, are conquered by treachery, and in the grasp of relentless and fanatical tyrants. Yet, on the other hand, they sang the old songs of Ireland, and made resolve that their willing hands, if required by their own countrymen, should not hold a sheathed sabre until they conquered, or received the martyrdom—that immortal name which many have won in the cause of our oppressed country.

Rounding Land's End, prayer-books, rugs, rack-combs, etc., were furnished us. *En passant*, I may remark that there were those on board who availed themselves of rugs, but neglected prayer-books, rack-combs, and soap; these I shall

refer to in a future chapter. Nearing the Eddystone lighthouse, a good number presented a tidy appearance; but many who could not procure fresh water, having washed themselves in salt water, they could not rub it off; as a result, their appearance was ridiculous in the extreme. Roaming about on deck in search of fresh water, they even extracted laughter from the many who were suffering from *mal de mer*.

Organisation on board *La Fontaine* there was none up to this. However, everything now assumed a pleasant aspect. Captain Ballard's order to drop anchor was received by some with apprehension, lest the English government sent vessels of war to intercept us; while others, who were aware of more "stowaways" being on board, came to the proper conclusions. A pilot boat was signalled for, into which were lowered all the "stowaways" who could be found in the nooks of the vessel. Having furnished the poor fellows with as much cash as would afford them a trip, *via* England, to the gayest city in the world, Dublin, with heavy hearts they allowed themselves to be lowered into the small boat; and it would appear from their downcast looks, that they considered their treatment cruel. Yet, to preserve order, it was necessary that sympathy for them should be set aside, and only strict discipline attended to. The dawn of the 10th, our vessel was within view of Cape de la Hague, with the waters of the English Channel as still as those of Westmeath's Derevaragh—not a ripple, except where the cormorant croaks and dives, or the craft of the fisherman moves to the tune of the slightest breeze. Such was our situation at nine o'clock.

During the night passed over, companies had been forming on board, and what was a scene of confusion during Saturday and Sunday, now was transformed into thorough organisation. To drill was attached great care. Go on deck at any time, you were sure to see our volunteers as studious and attentive to their drill-sergeants as if they were in the service of the great Napoleon, and knew that he was looking at them. Such trouble was to have its reward, as will be shown hereafter. Passing Cherbourg same evening, numbers assembled on deck; some, whom the

idea of campaigning made imaginative, attracted the attention of others to the fortifications. Some condemned them emphatically; others proclaimed them to be unequalled; while others remarked that a little education was dangerous, which remark was taken up by the engineering parties as insults, and almost led to a severe struggle on deck, which luckily was quelled by the neutrals. Immediately signs of recognition reached us from shore, our men returned the salutation; and while doing so our attention was attracted by cheering on our starboard bow; they were the crew and passengers of the Cork steamer which plies between Cork and Antwerp. The crew hoisted a large green flag; some of our men hoisted another on *La Fontaine*; and then cheer after cheer, with *vivas* for Ireland and France, pealed across the waters, until sound was drowned in distance. *Pour encourager les autres*, we raised our hats once more to the sons of La Manche, who still continued to wave bannerets, hats, and handkerchiefs. We would only wish that Captain Ballard would go ahead faster, and not keep the honest people shouting, for we really thought that if we remained in view of the coast until morning, they would still continue. However, the captain of the *La Fontaine* gave orders to put on steam, and by sunset Cherbourg disappeared, disappointing the few who wished to witness, for some time longer, the gestures of the people on shore, and satisfying the greater number who were anxious to reach Havre as soon as possible.

The night was passed in merrymaking; a number of amateur vocalists, having taken positions along the sides of the vessel, commenced to sing. All national melodies were encored again and again. An ingenious musician managed to bring a concertina on board, and performed some charming solos. As the night was all that could be desired, the lovers of dancing thought they should go through a measure. They did go, but finally had to cease, for a dancing mania seemingly took possession of the majority, leaving no room on deck for anyone to enjoy a measure. Singing was then renewed; but in the midst of it we had the pleasure of being informed that a deputation from the people of Havre was coming on board; the music was hushed while the ceremony

of formal reception was being gone through. At six o'clock, a.m., on the morning of the 11th, the deputation departed; but it was seven o'clock of the evening before *La Fontaine* cast anchor directly inside the harbour. The scene now presented was really splendid; the lights illuminating the mariner's chapel on the hill (where the imposing evening service of the Catholic Church was being gone through); the electric lights higher up, the brilliancy of which cannot be surpassed; these, with the lights of the workmen engaged at the new redouts on the heights towards Hâleur, formed a splendid panorama, which will always be remembered with pleasure by our men. We were allowed to enjoy this scene thoroughly; for, at twelve o'clock, midnight, we were informed by the Surgeon-in-Chief, Dr. Baxter, that all should sleep on board that night, as the public reception would not take place until the morrow at one o'clock of the afternoon. Well, I must confess, that very few went to berth, as the majority, finding it far pleasanter to remain on deck, did remain. However, as I shall try and describe to-morrow's reception in the next chapter, I will show that the love borne for the scenery by moonlight was eclipsed by that borne for the inhabitants by daylight.

CHAPTER II.

“Grave his name upon your hearts,
Tell it to your children, too;
Vow, until your life departs,
Ye and they will be as true—
True, to the shedding of your blood,
For hapless Ireland’s nationhood.”

LEO.

AT six o'clock on the morning of the 12th of October, all our men were in uniform, and on parade at seven o'clock. A cordon of the Garde Nationale was drawn up along the quays, to prevent the more curious of the population from reconnoitring our breakfast preparations. This the gardes effectually accomplished, though we thought the military were as curious themselves as they could conveniently be. Still we made up our minds to rough it, and did not care if the whole French and Prussian armies were inspecting our mode of eating. By this time it was evident that cognac was brought on board, contrary to the orders issued by the Surgeon-in-Chief, who again ordered that any member found going ashore before the hour appointed for reception would be sent home. Notwithstanding this admonition, an enterprising *attaché* of the corps managed to steal over to the Café Anglais, where he procured six bottles of cognac, and returned on board unperceived, to share them with his friends.

At eleven o'clock, the people of Havre assembled along the quays in dense masses. The steamers plying between Cherbourg, Honfleur, and Havre, steamed up the Seine; while large bodies of country folk were seen coming from the direction of the Rue de Paris. Not an angry gesture could be remarked on the countenance of any individual in that surging crowd. As the hour of ten o'clock drew near, windows, balconies, and stands erected for the occasion, were filled with the fair ones of Normandy, to witness the arrival from Ireland of the descendants or countrymen of illustrious exiles

who often were received before, and who afterwards won distinction in the cause of France, while shedding lustre on the land of their birth. All is expectation; anxious glances are cast along the quays to obtain a first view of the city dignitaries on whom the duty of reception devolved. "They come! they come!" resounds on all sides, as the splendid regimental bands of the Army of the North appears, the regiments following at quick pace. Next were the trades' bands of Havre and trades-union men marching; then came the city magnates. As each band had passed with their followers, they received the hearty cheers of the people; but when the patriotic mayor, with the other popular members of the corporation of Havre, filed past, the cheering became deafening. Our Volunteers were being drawn up in small companies, each man possessing a manly pride as being one of those who represented his country in the land of the fraternal Gael.

Then, in the midst of the greatest enthusiasm, the reception committee entered; the while the bands continued playing French and Irish airs, until the mayor took the chair amidst a flourish of trumpets. He read the address of the people of Normandy welcoming us to France—a welcome echoed through France the same evening. Mr. P. J. Smyth replied on behalf of the Irish people at home and abroad. The ceremony of reception being so far gone through, the order to "march" was given. The marching was excellent, and worthy of the veteran troops of any nation. However, preceded by numerous military bands, we reached the Prefecture, where the ceremony was brought to a close in rather a substantial manner—sandwiches and wine were handed round by the ladies of Havre. Afterwards, when a goodly number of speeches were made, we were ordered to the Elysee, where a sumptuous dinner was given to us by the people. It was nine o'clock in the evening when the dinner party broke up, and our men were left at liberty to ramble *à discretion* through town. *Sans doute*, we were among friends—true, warm-hearted friends. Nothing occurred that evening to mar the pleasures which were held out to us on every side, and as it was whispered about that our stay in Havre would be for some days, it was absolutely neces-

sary that we should behave in such a manner as to show our appreciation and respect for the people who welcomed us to their shores with all the enthusiasm and kindness which they could summon up. To this end a few were asked to instil into the very few who required the hint a sense of dignity. *En passant*, I may state that there were some members of the corps whose inconsolable grief was such, at seeing themselves deprived of their native whiskey, the only thing, they imagined, would suit as a substitute was the redoubtable cognac, in which they seemed to indulge to their heart's content, notwithstanding the cautions of their friends, for, on their return to the Elysee, they helped in a good measure to disturb that repose so much needed by all. Finally, arrangements were made for keeping them in order, and at midnight most of our men were enjoying a quiet sleep.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 13th, they were aroused from their reveries: the *reveille* sounded in the gardens, and in a moment afterwards the space around the pump was occupied by a number of stubborn fellows who were fully determined to have a "wash" at any cost. One rushes towards the pump, succeeds in getting his bucket under the "spout;" but before his exertions sufficed to raise the water, the bucket was sent flying through the air at a dangerous rate towards his rendezvous, situate in an arbour in the garden of the Elysee. To say the least of it, the owner of the bucket looked puzzled; still, believing "prudence the better part of valour," he walked off from the scene of his disappointment. Such were the matinal scenes of that day.

By 6.30 all were assembled on parade; the Surgeon-in-Chief, accompanied by Mr. O'Scanlon (the representative of our Irish Committee at Havre) and a number of the French Reception Committee, appeared on parade ground, when the men were put through their drill, and performed the different evolutions with the greatest ease. On leaving, the visitors were pleased, and complimented all on their efficiency and general appearance. Parade was then dismissed, leaving the volunteers at liberty to walk through town until half-past eight o'clock, the time appointed for *dejeuner*. The majority availed themselves of this per-

mission ; some went to the hatters and purchased becoming *kepis*, instead of the old hats which were supplied in Dublin. As a rule, all did away with the "blue blouse" (which looked well when a number were together, but when our men rambled in squads, it bestowed on them such a ridiculous appearance, that many had to pull it off in the streets and carry it back to head-quarters at the Elysee) purchasing tidy military tunics instead ; so that on returning to quarters, it looked as if they received commissions in some line regiments, and were merely coming in to pay a farewell visit to old chums. However, at half-past eight o'clock all were seated to *dejeuner*, which was served up in the round room of the Elysee. After doing it justice, and before they separated, they received notice that Mr. P. J. Smyth would address them on an important subject at twelve o'clock, noon. Certainly, all were anxious to hear Mr. Smyth speak, and also to have a look at his honest countenance ; and so, resolving on assembling at noon-day, they separated to take a general survey of the town. At the hour appointed for the reading of the address, mostly all were assembled ; some few indeed, who had not such a *gout* for speech-making as they had for amusement, absented themselves, and those were relieved from anxiety for the time being, as Mr. Smyth was obliged to state that only a few could be retained on the Ambulance service, and that any person who was not chosen for that service could get home free, or join the foreign regiment, which was in course of formation. On receipt of this inauspicious information, consternation seized on many, mutiny was imminent, guards had to be posted at the posterns of the Elysee. Communists made themselves as agreeable as possible towards our men, seeming to sympathise with them, while they in reality were urging them on to a conflict with the military. However, the sound reasoning of Alderman M'Cann, of Dublin, prevailed, and the Communists, who entered by stealth, were evicted, much the worse of their visit.

As the hour of parade for selection came round, excitement ran high. Who were to be, or not to be, on the Ambulance ? was the question asked by every one. At length, the sergeants who were appointed during the voyage, were

informed that it was their duty to select the best conducted man in their company, and to send his own name, with that of the person selected, to the office of the Surgeon-in-Chief. This was done impartially and without fear. At eight o'clock the Surgeon-in-Chief, accompanied by Mr. O'Scanlon, appeared ; when the names of those chosen were proclaimed, and as the names were read out, their happy owners left their place on parade, and formed in line on the right. It being found that only thirty-six answered, four others were named ; then the list was closed. The men for Ambulance service being selected, all retired to supper, and when supper was over the unwelcome order was read—viz., that all who were not selected for Ambulance service, and who intended joining the "foreign regiment," must leave the Elysee, and make for the Alcazar, where organisation was in progress. Those who were intent upon returning home were to go on board a steamer which was in readiness to convey them to Ireland. There were a few sent back who would disgrace a nation, but I believe they were not allowed to be fellow-passengers with the men who, believing themselves wronged, returned of their own free will. At nine o'clock the last call was sounded for stragglers to leave the gardens ; then many a stout man shed a tear at parting from a valued friend, while others took the whole affair as cool as possible. The gardens were at length clear of all except the members of the Ambulance Corps. Guards were posted at the outer and inner posterns, with special orders to allow neither ingress or egress to any person unless he presented the written order of the Surgeon-in-Chief, and everything within the Elysee seemed to exist under the mild sway of discipline. *Apropos*, there were Mobiles on duty at the posterns, to enforce the orders of our own guard, if any such untoward event took place as to require their interference. None but members chosen on the corps now remained within the Elysee, and tranquillity reigned until early on the morning of the 14th, when one of our men rushed suddenly past the guard at the gates, into the street. He would not be permitted to re-enter, and went off howling for the English consul, for whom, in his official capacity, we cared very little. The howling of our would-be associate had

not abated when a rumour was in circulation that the Prussians appeared near the new redout on the hill above the town. Our men, dressing hurriedly, rambled up the hill, only to find that the rumour was unfounded. Disappointed as they were, the greater number of them marched towards Hafeur, and returned to breakfast. At ten o'clock the following address was read, and copies presented to each member of the corps :

“Men of the Irish Ambulance Corps, you have undertaken a heavy task, but one which, if worthily performed, will gain for you the gratification both of your own country and of France. You go in this hour of her dire distress to France, to assist in the care and relief of her wounded soldiers. You go to prove the sympathy which Ireland feels for France; but your work is one of humanity, and on the battle-field you will go to the relief of all the wounded whom it may be in your power to save, even if they be the enemies of France. Members of an Ambulance Corps, you must take no part in the conflict; your only part must be to save and to relieve. To perform your task worthily and well, you must maintain strict discipline. You will be in the service of France, as your corps will be subject, as an Ambulance Corps, to the orders of the French Government. Merit the respect of the French, and the praise of your own countrymen, by your courage, your patience, your sobriety, your humanity, your faithfulness. Think that the loving eyes of Ireland are upon her sons representing her abroad in this holy and noble work! Think how your faults would grieve Ireland—would disgrace Ireland! Think how your virtues will give joy and honor to Ireland! Forward, then, sons of Ireland, on your glorious mission! Your duties will be arduous and dangerous, but you will face all those difficulties nobly, remembering that they are endured for France and Ireland!

“The spirit and energy of your race, well-tried in many a field of toil and danger, will carry you over all obstacles, and win for you an honorable fame, which France and Ireland will record in history.”

The reading of the address over, each man resolved on adopting it, and preserving, as far as in his power, the prin-

ciples advocated therein, and as future chapters will demonstrate, there never was the least act committed that would tarnish the honour of the Ambulance Corps.

Each man, with a copy of address in his passport-book, separated to make arrangements for spending the day ; and though there were only few old friends to spend it with, yet those few, together with the men chosen on the Ambulance service, were found to be substitutes possessing qualities equally as gay as any of our lost friends. Therefore, in less time than I take to write it, our men found each a comrade, and were off for a stroll on the promenade. The universal politeness was so exhausting, that even the *kepis*, quite new that morning, had lost the peaks, before their owners returned to dine. No matter where our men rambled, there was a general doffing of hats ; children would catch their hands or coats, and walk along with them, as if they were absent members returned to their homes. On all sides *Viva l'Irlande!* resounded ; a few indeed, who thought that *Viva la Merechale MacMahon!* would afford the greatest pleasure to the members of our corps, were not slow in shouting these words ; another few went so far as to shout *Viva la Republique d'Irlandaise!* but the majority were content with *Viva l'Irlande!* or *Bonne Irlandaise!*

Such was the course taken by the populace to display their enthusiasm in the earlier part of the day, but in the afternoon enthusiasm took another form. The salaam and shaking-hands mania seemed to extend from the juveniles to the military, and later in the evening to the elder portion of the civic population. Yet the people were not satisfied until they brought our men to their homes, and at six o'clock that evening it was a rare thing to behold a member of our Franco-Irish Ambulance in the streets, for all of them were within the homes of Frenchmen, who made them feel quite at home and happy. Within many of these homes there were grand-papas who entertained our men with stories of Ireland and Irishmen ; indeed, they could remember

- almost the faces of the refugees who flocked to the hospitable shores of France from the oppression practised against their creed and country at home. Invariably our men

whiled away such an evening as set them wishing for a prolongation of their stay in Havre.

The day of the 15th October was passed in such another manner; and when returning to the Elysee that night, we learned that everything was in readiness for departure, which would probably take place on the morrow, as orders were expected every moment.

Long after our men were reported to be in for the night, and at a time when most of them were sleeping, cries of pain were heard proceeding from the garden. Instantly a number of them rushed out, and advanced cautiously to the place where the supposed victim to accident—or, perhaps, to an assassin's knife—was heard to groan pitifully. On approaching near to the place, they found that two garden seats were stretched across a shaded walk, and that on these seats were stretched two men, one of whom proved to be the injured man—none other than Barney O'Neill, one of our principal drivers. O'Neill, thinking that he heard footsteps approaching, ceased his lament, but on finding that no one appeared, he commenced again to ejaculate sorrowfully:

“Och! mille murther! oh, what will I do, at all, at all. I'm kilt now out an' out; me ribs are in smithereens” (here he called his still sleeping comrade, who did not pay the least attention). “Och, Dochter Skelly, dear! och, Dochter Skelly! what am I to do?” (*sotto voce*—“divil take thim for docthers!”) “Och, murther! after comin' all the way from Dundalk, to be kilt in these gardens!”

Having got so far, his comrade awoke, and rubbing off the dew from his eyelids, he opened his eyes, and turning round affectionately to O'Neill, inquires, “What's up with you, O'Neill?”

“Och, thin, I'm kilt, through an' through, Hopkins; and shure I thought you'd give me the layst assistance. I'm dying now, an' you needn't say much about it.”

“Barney, come try and get up, my poor fellow. I'll get some cognac for you. Poor Barney, I didn't think this would happen you. Come into the room,” said the good-natured Hopkins.

“Lift me up aisy. Get the cognac quick; here's a bottle for it,” cried Barney, feebly.

Hopkins went for the cognac, and while he was absent, the men (who I have said approached near to the place) came to the proper conclusion, that O'Neill was merely playing upon Hopkins, and agreed that as soon as the latter individual would return with the cognac, that the bottle and liquid should be wrested from O'Neill *par vie*. Hopkins hastened back, and was in the act of giving the *medicine propre* to O'Neill, when the men in ambush rushed on the doctor and his wily patient, depriving them instantaneously of the favourite medicine. O'Neill jumped from his *al fresco* bed, rushing into the sleeping-room wherein were our men, and had all on their limbs in a moment by the manner in which he shouted, "Prussians! murder!" and different other exclamations.

The whole affair resulted principally from O'Neill's pranks, having been afforded an opportunity of playing them by one of our men, who, taking a walk through the gardens, saw the seats stretched across a gravel walk; and never dreaming that there was a second seat *tête à tête*, nor that two men were reposing on them, took a notion to have a leap across the seat perceptible, and in doing so he leaped on O'Neill's carcase. The meeting between Hopkins and his former comrade was anything but cordial. Hopkins vehemently denounced O'Neill; the latter tendered apologies; but nothing could satisfy the injured Hopkins, who brought his tirade to a close by saying, "Save me from my friends."

CHAPTER III.

“A trumpet call gathered the scattered;
 The urns stood alone on the plain;
 By the sea wave, with face turned westward,
 You lifted the banner again.”

LEO.

EARLY on the morning of the 16th October, the *rappel* was beaten; and as parade was ordered for half-past six o'clock, that hour found our men in their places on the ground. The usual drill being gone through, the orders for the day were read out by Orderly-Sergeant Moore, from which we learned that the men of the medical and field departments were to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to Rouen, as orders were momentarily expected; and also that members would not be permitted to leave the Elysee without written orders—unwelcome news enough for those who wished to pay their *devoirs* before leaving Havre. However, anyone who wished to leave head-quarters for that purpose could do so on giving the name and address of the friend or friends whom they intended visiting, and receiving the Surgeon-in-Chief's order, which, as a rule, limited their leave to one hour. Many of our members availed themselves of this opportunity, and returned precisely an hour after parting on their visiting expedition. Once more all were caged within the Elysee; of course, the gardens and *salons* were open to them. Nothing was heard within this lovely prison but the whispering of friends, as they congratulated each other on the results of their morning visits; or the singing birds' tuneful lay, from amidst the laburnams and lime trees. Tranquillity reigned until dinner was announced, when the men who were on guard duty joined us. After dinner, toasts and speeches were given; everyone did their utmost to make themselves agreeable, and resolved,

“If any pain or care remain,
 To drown it in a bowl.”

The carrying out of this resolution was postponed *pro tem.*, for the French reception committee, with the accomplished M. O'Scanlon among them, just "dropped in;" also the diligent guards, who were supposed to be on duty at the stables joined us, and, with an amount of *sang froid*, moved their chairs to table. Only now our *corps d'esprit* was in the ascendant. The patriotic Mayor of Havre being moved to the chair, he addressed us in a lengthened speech, and proposed the toast of the evening, "The Pope," coupled with Ireland and France. Need I say that its reception was enthusiastic, it being responded to by one of the corps; a number of other toasts were given and drunk to; and it is probable our merrymaking would have extended into the small-hours of morning, had not the orderly head of our orderly-sergeant protruded through the doorway (the door was ajar), *sans ceremonie*, opened his book, and read the expected order, viz., "That the members of the medical and field departments of the Franco-Irish Ambulance be assembled on parade-ground at ten o'clock, with everything prepared to proceed to Evreux by night mail train."

Having imparted this unwelcome intelligence, he left for the stables, to read the order for our horsemen.

At the hour appointed all were on the ground, and marched from thence to the terminus of the Western Railway; but on finding that this train did not pass Rouen, we had the agreeable alternative left us of marching back to the Elysee and remaining there until four o'clock, when we were to return to the terminus and leave by half-past four a.m. through train, to Serguinny Junction. However, before we left the station, we saw our horses boxed and our wagons placed on trucks. An incredible number of people assembled to witness our departure, who, on hearing that it was deferred until half-past four o'clock of the morning of the 17th, remained promenading the platform until that hour; for when we returned at four o'clock we found that the people had rather increased than diminished in numbers.

Shortly before the train left, a general scene of bustle ensued—the people should shake hands with our men, and to attain this they rushed *en masse* on our members, to take a last farewell; the whole affair resembled the scenes which usually

take place at railway stations in Ireland, when her sons and daughters are forced to emigrate to seek that employment and liberty beyond the seas which is denied them at home. At length the railway officials were forced to clear the platform, and our men, on jumping into the carriages, were being carried away to the seat of war.

Day was dawning when we arrived at Rouen, and still, at that early hour, we found that the populace were *en vidette* for our arrival. Asked to breakfast by Cardinal Bonnechose ; received addresses from the corporation and trades' societies ; and being taken through the interesting buildings in which Rouen abounds, we crossed the river Seine, and entered the carriages which were in waiting to convey us to Serguinny. A scene of unbounded enthusiasm prevailed at the railway station, many of the people offering presents, and displaying their feelings in different other modes.

At ten o'clock that morning, we were again on our journey, and arrived at Serguinny by two o'clock. There we learned that the lines were cut near Bonville ; but as men were working at them, who expected to have them complete by four o'clock that afternoon, we might rely on proceeding by special train at that hour to Evreux.

Sauntering through the quiet and picturesque hamlets which are scattered about the country near to this isolated junction, our presence caused a great amount of excitement. Numbers of the peasantry conjured up the forms of Prussian Uhlans ; and as soon as they convinced themselves that our men could be none others, they re-entered their homes to frighten women and children, by telling them that German "bug-bears" were already in their midst. However, through some means the people found out who we really were, and before the special train steamed up to the station, we had received different apologies from the scared peasantry for their identifying us with the robber Uhlans of Germany. At four o'clock precisely the "special" left the station, *en route* to Evreux, amidst the cheers of the hundreds who had by this time assembled. The *reveille* was sounding when we marched into Evreux, where, to our great relief, there was no preparation made for giving us a public reception—partly because we were not expected for two days more, and be

cause the Germans were threatening the town. On reporting ourselves to Colonel Mocquart, we were ordered to the Hotel du Cheval Noir, where a substantial dinner was served up, of which having partaken, we took a ramble through town. In doing so, two of our doctors were arrested as German spies. All their protestations to the contrary would not satisfy the Mocquarts, who led them captive into the presence of their colonel. The latter immediately recognised them, when he apologized for the acts of his men, and made *them* also apologize. The remainder of the evening passed off jovially; the brave commander of the brave Franc-Tireur left nothing undone that might insure our comfort.

CHAPTER IV.

“ From camp to camp, through the foul womb of night,
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fixed sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch ;
Fire answers fire ; and through their paly flames
Each battle sees the other's umber'd face :
Steed threatens steed in high and boastful neighs,
Piercing the night's dull ear.”

HENRY V.

ON parade ground at six o'clock on the morning of the 18th of October, and after going through the usual exercises, the general orders of the day were read out. Among those orders was one, giving the members of the four departments of our Ambulance imperative instructions not to absent themselves more than ten minutes from the Caserne du Cavalerie, as orders might be expected at any moment to proceed to Pacy, where a severe engagement was imminent, there to enter on duty. Notwithstanding those instructions, our men, after breakfast, resolved on having a stroll through the town, and this they carried out *à discretion*. Of course the cathedral was the first object that offered, and well it repaid the visit. Its hundred altars, its paintings, its statuary—in fine, everything within and without was enough to satisfy the most curious, as also the most ardent admirer of ecclesiastical architecture, statuary, and painting. It was noon-day before our inspection of this splendid cathedral was brought to an end, after which the different military barracks and courts of justice received a share of our scrutiny. On our return to the Caserne du Cavalerie, we found a stir pervading at head-quarters' office ; immediately the bugle sounded a “recall,” and when all were assembled we were informed that we must be on the route to Pacy by a quarter past seven of the evening ; and also a civil hint threw out that each would study his own inte-

rest by having every preparation made for a "hard night." Such a hint was unnecessary, for by the time the men assembled, preparatory to leaving on this journey, they had their haversacks and flasks tolerably stocked, rugs and sur-touts strapped on to knapsacks; and, in reply to the adjutant's question if all were prepared, he was answered in the affirmative. In the meantime the drivers received the order to proceed, and in rere of the wagons our men followed. Passing the general hospital, a vanguard was pushed forward, and from the cemetery our march assumed a surprising regularity.

We were now *en route* to the unhappy village where our duty was to be commenced. All were buoyant in spirits; jests were given and taken in the best part, though some of them, directed with malicious sarcasm against a few members of the corps, called for a retort in the line of a substantial "thumping." However, nothing so disgraceful occurred, and we were permitted to march along in perfect harmony.

On reaching the forest of St. Andre, the wary sentinel (stationed to guard the uneasy sleep of the noble Franc-Tireur) hailed us with a well-known challenge, *Qui va la?—halt—à la!* Dr. Ryan replied with the password for the night, when we were allowed to renew our journey with a caution from the sentinel to keep quiet. We knew now that we were within the lines of men who expected no mercy from their relentless foe; and if we spoke aloud in the English tongue that night, it is probable we would receive, as a response, the whizzing sounds of bullets from the "Spencer repeater" (a rifle so well handled by the Moccas), or they even would try what effect a discharge from the death-dealing mitrailleuse would have on us. In such a place, and under such circumstances, we found ourselves at midnight; however, we continued our march along the splendid high-road, and passed the last sentry, who almost whispered his challenge, and told us beware of the Prussians, whom he said were in our advance. Altogether, our position was anything but enviable on that bitter cold night, with the outposts of friends in our rere, and those of bigoted and cruel enemies in advance; yet we marched onwards, and though keeping quiet, we took the whole affair

coolly. But who are the horsemen before us? They must be the Prussians—no, they are the French lancers. *Parbleu* they are the Prussians! However, they would prove to be one or the other directly, for they galloped quickly towards us. They were Bismarck's cuirassiers. Seemingly having surveyed the extent of our company, they surrounded us, and were in the act of forcing us off as prisoners, when the self-same "Spencers" which were prepared for us a few minutes before, were we unable to reply to the challenge of the sentinel, sent showers of lead among the horsemen. These latter scowled, and cursed, and galloped in a body down the road, there to be trapped again; all that were not placed *hors de combat* by this time galloped towards us again, and throwing themselves from their horses, went crouching, like to frightened lunatics, before us—us! whom they were on the point of consigning behind their own lines, had not the *Francs-Tireurs* come to our rescue in such good time.

En passant, I may note that not one of the *Francs-Tireurs* received even a wound; and it was a miracle how our drivers or ourselves escaped. Such was the first scene afforded us on that night. Having picked up the cumbrous wounded of the cuirassiers, we placed them in our wagons, and continued our march towards Pacy.

Five miles more of the road being passed over, we came in view of the *Mocquarts'* camp; the blazing fires and electric lights, brightening up the face of night, gave to the place a peculiar aspect, easier imagined than described. The cries of the owl in the adjacent old chateau, and the abrupt challenge of the sentry, all tended to add to the grandeur and solemnity of the scene. After passing a few more sentinels, we found ourselves in the principal street of Pacy. A halt was called, while a *Franc-Tireur*—mounted on a splendid charger, which he had taken from one of the cuirassiers—rode off with the news of our safe arrival to his valiant chief—*Mocquart*. The latter, on hearing from the *Franc-Tireur* that we arrived, came in all haste to make inquiries regarding our escapade on the road. When the Surgeon-in-Chief informed him, that neither horse nor man connected with our corps got even a scratch, his joy was unconfined, and

exclaiming aloud—*Bien, mon brave Irlandaise, déjà les Prusse savent vous!* he introduced us to the mayor of Pacy, who placed comfortable lodgings at our disposal.

By four o'clock on the morning of the 19th of October, all were invariably sleeping—a sleep which was not destined to be of long duration, for at six o'clock the *generale* was beaten in the streets, which resulted not alone in bringing the troops under arms, but brought our men from out their beds.

“The Prussians are coming!” was whispered about by everyone, and *sans doute* they were; for, from the cemetery on the hill to the forest of Villiers was literally covered with their troops; on the heights above the mortuary chapel they were seen to get their guns into position—a commanding position, too. At this juncture, the mayor rushed towards us directing us to fly; but the adjutant could not be prevailed upon to take this course, and instead of flying, he gave orders to push on to the open ground north of the village. This order was obeyed, to the surprise of not a few of the Mocuarts who were in ambush for the Uhlans who might enter. From our new position, we had an unobstructed view of the streets of the village, and to our great surprise we perceived that the Francs-Tireurs had totally disappeared from off the streets, which left us perplexed with regard to what we were to do. However, we resolved to remain for thirty minutes longer, and then test our relations with the Germans by making an effort to retreat. But by the time the thirty minutes had expired, any hopes we might have entertained for “hooking it” expired also. The Germans were moving down on the town; and seeing none of the Franc-Tireurs, the Uhlans who had entered the town brought back information that the Franc-Tireur had evacuated the position. The guns, which I have said to be in position above the mortuary chapel, were then limbered up and brought forward in the *van*. It was near eight of the clock; some thousands of the Germans were already in the streets, when the Mocuarts, who, as the reader may remember, disappeared so suddenly, rushed from their ambush *en masse*, and carried on the attack at the point of the bayonet. In the meantime, the Franc-Tireur

who took position within the houses, brought the Spencer repeater into requisition. This unexpected attack spread consternation among the Germans, who were forced to retire, leaving two guns in the hands of the Moccquarts. They came on again in force, and carried on the attack successfully, driving the Franc-Tireur across the river Eure. At this critical moment, the noble form of the Franc-Tireur chief (who up to this was looking on from the plateau beyond the town) appeared in the midst of his men, and, rallying them, they made another desperate stand. Down went the well-disciplined Bavarian—down went the cuirassiers and hussars before those resolute followers of a resolute chief; and to the deafening cry of *Vive la Moccquart!* the Franc-Tireur dashed off in hot pursuit of all that remained of three great regiments of the Prussian army. Meanwhile, towns-people were busily engaged clearing off the dead; and when our men returned into the village, after retiring from service with the pursuers, they carried with them the mangled bodies of two victims to Prussian cruelty.

The excitement was intense when this fact became generally known; and after the dead being flung into the trenches, the sad duty remained for us to witness the burial of the two men, who, through bravery and zeal, carried havoc so far into the Prussian columns that they were at length made prisoners, when a number of the hussars gathered round, and with savage cruelty hacked them to pieces. All the portions of their bodies that could be found were placed in a rude coffin made by their comrades; this done, the box was conveyed on the carriage of one of the captured guns to the cemetery on the hill, and there consigned to the cold clay. Before the grave was closed, Moccquart made a stirring speech, and, after paying tribute to his two men who were now no more, he turned towards the *corps de l'Ambulance*, thanked them for their services during the morning of that eventful day—thanked them for the compliment they paid his country, his soldiers, and himself, by being present at the burial consequent on the noble death of noble men; referred to Ireland and the Irish, and having briefly recounted the tyranny practised against Ireland, he, with tears in his eyes, called upon his men to

cross their swords over the grave, and swear to avenge the murder of their comrades.

This novel ceremony being brought to a close, the clay was filled in, and the mourners turned towards the village deeply impressed with what they had seen and heard. Strange to say that in this desperate hand-to-hand conflict, only fifty were wounded, while over three hundred were killed; and stranger still is the fact that in this list of casualties only four were wounded and sixteen killed on the French side. The wounded of friends and enemies we placed in our wagons, and having done so, went in search of a breakfast, but did not succeed in getting one. On our return from a fruitless search, orders were awaiting us, the substance of which may be summed up in a few words, viz., that the members of the field and medical departments were to accompany the wagons to Evreux—that all must be *en route* directly. This order, above all others, did not look promising; fifteen miles of a deserted country before us, a drifting hail-storm, nothing to eat, nothing to drink (except water), fatigued after a night's hard work—all those things, occurring at a time when half the programme would prove more than sufficient to try the perseverance or temper of our men, I shall leave the reader to picture the sufferings endured on our return march to Evreux. Many of the wounded had to succumb to their wounds during the journey, when their bodies were taken from the wagons, and left unburied on the roadside; so that by the time we entered Evreux (seven o'clock a.m.) twenty-six men were numbered with the dead, twenty-two of whom were German troopers.

The news of our doings at Pacy reached town before us, and so delighted were the people (including a few Irish families), that instead of having to wait for dinner, which it was our intention to order, we were rushed upon by the inhabitants, and brought off to their respective homes, where invariably we found sumptuous dinners and hospitable hosts. Entertaining no doubts as to the genuine welcome offered us, we resolved upon not surrendering our pleasures—at least until the evening was past; and to this end, we made ourselves quite at home—cosmopolites, *sans ceremonie*—a proceeding which elicited hearty laughter from hosts

and guests. It was long past midnight when hospitable "paterfamilias" called upon his guests to recite some of their adventures at Pacy to anxious listeners. Of course, this request was complied with, and, during said recital, I am told that invariably, no matter where our men were entertained through town, the eyes of the audience would light up with enthusiasm and pride, while now and then the people would cry out, *Vive l'Irlandaise et Française ! Vive Mocquart !* and in many cases the cry of *à bas les Anglaise et Prusse !* would get an echo even from the little ones.

The day of the 20th dawned on rather a strange scene, and one perhaps never before witnessed in Evreux—namely, when our men were emerging from the houses where they had been entertained during the night, for the purpose of appearing on six o'clock parade, a general shouting of *Vive l'Irlande et France ! A bas l'Angleterre ! Vive le Pape !* disturbed the tranquil morning, and by the time we reached the Caserne du Cavalrie, a regular demonstration took place, the representatives of the town taking a leading part.

What were the thoughts conflicting in the breasts of the Irishmen present on witnessing these demonstrations of respect in their favour, can be easier imagined than described. Suffice it to say that many of us were deeply affected, as we experienced the regard felt for Irishmen in the country, which, notwithstanding the reverses of its Imperial army, may be properly styled "mistress of the world," and thought on the tyranny exercised over our own land by the bigoted fanatics of England; yet we consoled ourselves with the belief that the day was not distant when England would be called upon to render an account of her misgovernment.

On parade being dismissed, our men rambled into the great dormitory of the Caserne, where everything possessed an air of quietness. However, this quiet was destined to be disturbed in a most unexpected manner, for silence was broken by an explosion, followed by an oath and cry of assassination. The sounds proceeded from the extreme end of the room, but the individual who uttered them was invisible. Rushing towards the place where the victim was supposed still to breathe, we were surprised to find one of our men lying in a deplorable condition beneath a bed,

enjoying himself with launching curses on every one and everything which his then imaginative brain could construe as existing, our corps and our country not excepted. Again, he would refer to foul murder, and even went so far as to accuse some individual (unknown at the time) of regicide (probably he thought himself "monarch of all he surveyed"). The whole affair was as a riddle to the men who came on the scene, but not so to a few who by this time attracted attention by their gigantic efforts to smother the laughter which at length broke out boisterously and uncontrolled, proving them to have some knowledge of the attempt on Peter's life. The would-be victim, on catching sight of his would-be assassins, seized a cutlass and revolver, rushed on them, and would probably have placed one at least *hors de combat*, had he not been overpowered. Having calmed his troubled mind, our sergeant-major elect enticed him to have a sleep, and he had one. During his "nap," the culprits entertained us with the cause of Peter's anger, and the probable result which would arise out of an experiment which they made to check his borrowing propensities. As related by one of our men, I give it *in extenso*:—"As you know, this 'victim to deception' was an ardent lover of the 'weed,' and had a particular fancy for borrowing a 'smoke' from anyone whom he chanced to see enjoying that luxury (for though he smoked more tobacco than any three, he was never known to carry either pipe or tobacco). Well, the men whom he annoyed most came to the conclusion that something must be done to prevent the incursions of Peter on their 'doodeens' and tobacco-pouches, but could not devise any effectual means until George Pike was consulted, who recommended them to try the effect a 'blast' of 'diamond' powder would have on him. No favourable opportunity offered itself until this morning, for while the townspeople were paying us their respects, Peter requested a 'pipe of tobacco' from every one of the corps, and on everyone refusing him, he strolled into this room, and lay on the bed under which you beheld him on your entrance. George Pike then reminded us that the opportunity had arrived, and we availed ourselves of it, with what success you will presently learn. Purchasing the large clay pipe which

you may have remarked on Richard's show-window, we cast lots to fill it. The lot fell to your humble servant, and I instantly set about the work. Putting a portion of the ounce of 'weed' in the heel of the pipe, I filled in the powder contained in a chassepot cartridge over it, and then filled in more tobacco. This done, we returned to the Caserne, and hobbled into this here room in a manner that could not rouse our victim's suspicions. Instantly, Peter came towards me, renewing his application for a 'smoke,' and with seeming reluctance I yielded to his request.

"'Always the same good-natured Fennessy,' muttered Peter, 'never refused me only once, and only then because that "cur," Mocquart's secretary, told you not to give your pipe to anyone: But, by-the-bye, do you not feel annoyed when I ask your pipe? For myself, I lend the "weed magazine" to any friend. Ah, do tell me, Fennessy, do you ever feel annoyed?'

"'Smoke ahead, Peter; I assure you, old boy, it would give me very little trouble if you smoked the Caserne; however, you had better hurry on, for I must enjoy myself directly.'

"'Bravo! Well said, Fennessy; ten minutes will suffice, and then I'll bid an *au revoir* to the "steamer," until another friend compliments me, or I should say .obliges me. Now for the smoke!'

"Having said so much, he retired to the bed, and applying a light to the pipe, he was enjoying himself. Everything looked prosperous now for us; yet we feared his leaving down the pipe before the powder would catch fire; but we might not be alarmed on this head, for, as a rule, Peter never relinquishes a pipe until he consumes the tobacco it contains. Taking another long pull, he took the pipe from his mouth, yawned, and lay back on the bed. At this point we were a little startled, lest he should discontinue smoking; but we were relieved when he raised the "steamer" again to his mouth, and kept smoking as before. By-the-bye, his pulling now attained a singular regularity, sending forth volumes of smoke, as if to conceal his imminent discomfiture.

"'I say, George,' whispered one of the mischief-makers, 'is there any sign of a "spill"?''

“ ‘Hold your tongue !’ replied George ; ‘ in a moment it must come.’ And as he spoke the pipe exploded, sending splinters about our heads, and the ‘ shank ’ a reasonable distance into Peter’s mouth.”

Here Fennessy ended his description, leaving the result to be proved—and proved it was ; for Peter bought a pipe on his waking up from his reverie, and afterwards he never ventured on his “ pipe-borrowing.”

At eight o’clock, an *eclairneur* galloped in with orders to proceed to Conches without delay, and by nine o’clock men, wagons, &c., were *en route*. The morning was all that could be desired, and added, in a measure, to our *corps d’esprit* ; the regular quick march of our men was excellent, and that, with the possession of health, promised to make our march as agreeable as possible. *Apropos*, I may add that the state of flask and haversack detracted nothing from the agreeable prospect of a march to ancient Conches ; but, on the contrary, created such a feeling of confidence in our resources, that we did not mind having a walk of thirty-six miles instead of the eighteen expected of us. Our route lay through the splendid country west of Evreux, along the river Iton, until reaching Bonville, where, after having to pass through the trials of a public reception, we were informed that the Germans appeared on the high-road to Conches ; and, to prevent both danger and trouble, we should take the route to Louverey, and then push southwards to Conches. However, five miles of a round did not fret us, and we renewed the journey over the route given, reaching the quiet *provençal* hamlet of Louverey at the time when the juveniles of the village were released from school. Our appearance caused no small amount of apprehension—the children ran back into the school, and in their place appeared the antique school-master of the village on the threshold of his kingdom. Can they be Prussians ? No ; for they are minus the spiked helmets.

Bavarians ? No.

Uhlans ? No.

Garibaldians ? No.

To all these questions the learned man answered negatively, and in a moment addressed the crowd of old women,

who had assembled round him. "I bet my life they are the Irish! Yes, they are!" and directly he leaped from the threshold down the few stone steps which led to the doorway, and after standing on the corns with which one of his elderly female audience was afflicted, rushed towards the most responsible man among us, and demanded (independently, too), "*Etes vous Irlandaise ?*" Being answered in the affirmative, he hastened towards the women (three or four of whom were engaged in affording relief to the old lady whose corns still caused her pain), and informed them that the Irish were in their midst. This information took some great effect on them; at first, we thought fear had seized on the lovely fair ones of forty and upwards, for they scattered in a second; but this conclusion was wrong, very wrong—the old ones appeared again, carrying plates of bread and cheese, tins of milk, wine, and cider, and, though last not least, packages of tobacco. Lucky five miles! worth marching, if only to witness the enthusiasm of "hags!" Happy the men who are thought worthy of such receptions! Altogether, our brief halt in Louverey was pleasant in the extreme; and though the *maitre d'ecole* is said to rule this village with despotic sway, we could see nothing that would confirm the saying; perhaps he had given the women and children a half-holiday, in compliment to the visitors. Leaving Louverey at five o'clock, we were *en route* to Conches, and arrived there at six o'clock of the evening, well pleased with the march and the scenes afforded us.

CHAPTER V.

"I'm a rough and ready fellow,
 Seldom seen about the town ;
 But you'll find me on the mountains,
 Far amid the heather brown.
 There I own a simple cabin,
 Sitting on the crags above,
 Where I live devoid of riches,
 Poor in everything but love ;
 Like a rough and ready fellow,
 Scarce in everything but love."

LEO.

CONCHES—an ill-looking town, which would remind one of the ruins of Newgate, Dublin ; and furthermore would be minus one good feature, had not a splendid church been handed down to the present inhabitants by their ancestors ; and the ruins of a once celebrated castle, being adjacent, attract numbers of tourists ; an accomplished mayor, mayoress, and several young mayoresses, who dispense welcome to those who deserve it ; a good hotel and an honest blacksmith—these are the only symbols of departed greatness, for the inhabitants say, "once on a time there was no such place as Conches." Be this as it may, nothing remains now worth noticing except the personages and places enumerated above. *En passant*, I will state that the priests have not come to pay us their *devoirs*. Perhaps—and it is more than likely—they are officiating at evening service in the convent chapel. However, if they do anything so rash as to banquet us, I will notice them at length in future pages.

After dinner, we had a promenade through the streets ; it was a market evening—the fixtures of the huxters were not yet removed, neither were the peasantry left town ; so that we had at least a variety of faces, and several other things to scan—a privilege extended to the tourist in Conches only once a week. How fortunate and timely our arrival was ! Here we were, just in time to be late for the

market, and in for the fun! Lucky fellows! a market evening in Conches is looked forward to by peasant girls—aye, even boys—with the same degree of expectation as in Ireland; and what would prevent our men from joining in their innocent gambols? Nothing; neither did there. The Cafe de la Place had a pleasant appearance, and into it a few of our men made their way. Not a few of the then occupiers of tables and chairs were there perhaps for some hours previous; and though they listened to new-comers debating on the chances of their visitors being Prussians, or any others but whom they really were, they paid no attention, and were rather surprised when our men entered. The latter subscribed the price of thirty-six bottles of brandy, ordered them, and when *madam* and *monsieur* were about placing them in cases, our men relieved them of the trouble by taking the bottles and placing them before the astonished peasantry, telling them to drink *ad libitum*. The while our men left them in total ignorance as to whom they were, and their business in Conches. But their discovery was accomplished immediately, for a gendarme entered, and with a salute handed one of our men a note signed by the Surgeon-in-Chief, informing him that a deputation from the inhabitants was about presenting an address, and that it was necessary all should be present.

On their way back to the hotel, they were followed by hundreds of people, who would fain ask them to their homes. In for an introduction to the municipal authorities, and also for the reading of the address, they related how they astonished “the natives” in the Cafe de la Place, and how they were titled by the rustics. The man who received the salute and letter from the gendarme was supposed to be none other than the brave Charette, the soldier *par excellence* who fights under the banner of the Red Cross, while the other men were actually said to be members of his staff. So much for the rustics. It was late that evening when the deputation withdrew, and at nine o'clock we received billets on the more comfortable portion of the population, and made for the lodgings indicated in them. At ten o'clock the greater number of the corps were in their beds, and sleeping soundly—a sleep left undisturbed until the 24th

day of October dawned, when the *reveille* sounded at head-quarters. Dressing hurriedly, we made for the hotel, getting a cold *douche* for our pains, as the morning was ushered in with heavy showers—the French proverb, *Les jours se suivent ne ressemblent pas*, was ratified, yesterday being a glorious day, and this morning as miserable as rain could render it. The towns-folk study their comfort by keeping indoors—or rather, I should say, in bed; and we were at liberty to scramble from our lodgings to the hotel. On entering this latter place, we saw at a glance that the mayor (probably with a view to our comfort) issued billets on the neighbouring gentry as well as on the towns-people, for six or seven of ours were so drenched, that the Surgeon-in-Chief directed them to go to bed or otherwise dispose of themselves while their uniforms would be drying. At nine o'clock, breakfast-bell rang out its welcome tones, and all were supposed to be seated. Formal roll was called, when one renegade did not answer his name—O'Neill, the irrepressible Barney, was absent. However, knowing his turn of mind, we did not trouble ourselves much about his absence; his foraging character stood the test before this period of his existence, and wherever he was located we might consider him safe.

We were doing justice to the good things which the proprietor of the hotel provided for us, when a splendid carriage, with the arms of some count or other emblazoned on its panels, was brought up outside the hotel, and to our surprise we saw our hero leaving the carriage, and then offering a five-franc piece to the *coacher* which the latter would not accept until the former forced him to take it.

Could it be possible that the accomplished Bernard had conquered the heart of a widowed countess, and the effects of an extinct count?

Impossible! as difficult a task for our hero as it would have been for the hunchbacked Richard to re-conquer the heart of the Lady Anne, had she been again a widow.

And how comes it that Nancy's groomrides in a carriage, bestows money on the John and on the *coacher*, and behaves in a manner puzzling to every one but his own dear self?

These questions are soon replied to; for on Barney's

D

entrance into the room, he strides to the seat occupied by the Surgeon-in-Chief, and there discloses his secrets *à discretion*, commencing his narrative by giving the Surgeon-in-Chief to understand "that not himself alone, but the whole corps were not worth their grub." He continued, in reply to the Surgeon's query, "How is that, Barney?"

"Faith, an' that I'll tell you as plain as A.B.C. In the first place, you know I ate no breakfast here this mornin'."

"Yes, Barney, I am aware of that."

"Well, begorra, Docther, you couldn't know more—an' I'm right glad ye know all that; but it will be a comfort to the whole lot of yes to hear my story, and larn to make yourselves useful in this smithering war. So here's at yez: You know that paper that the French polis-officer gave me last night?"

"Yes."

"Well, that was the queerest billet I iver got in me life. Oh, blazin the bit ov it I could read, so I gives it to a gossoon for to read, an' he did read it loud enuff, but dang to the word I could undhersthand. Meself then tould him nicely to show me the house, but the young rascal ran away laughing. Ah, begorra! myself was too smart for him, an' I had him by the neck before he wint tin yards; he knew what I myself meant thin, an' he walked aisily along-side me. He tuk iver such a long way off; but be the Hexthers, if the thought didn't strick me that he was ladin' me into the Phrooshan lines. I towld him not to lead me astray, or I'd 'caput' him—an' Lord! if he didn't bigin to cry. So whin I seen him bawlin', meself towld him not to be afeered as I was only jokin, an' I gives him a Frinch shillin' into his 'mit'; it had a wonderful effect, Docther, for the goslin' shut his mouth an' didn't cry agin. Anyways, the frekening done him no harm, for in two minutes aafter given him the 'bob,' he says to me: '*Wurra wurra, monshi!*' Begorra, meself thought the chap knew Irish, an' that he was goin' to say *wirrasthrue*, but he didn't—what he meant was, the castle up a bit in the fields. Up meself wint an' brought the gossoon along wid me; knocked at the door. In a minute, Docther, the door was opened be a fine comely-lookin' girl. '*Bob shaw monshi,*' sis she. 'I'm not Bob Shaw,' sis I; 'but I know a

boy ov that name in Dundalk. My name is Mr. O'Neill, sis I; so with that I handed in the paper, and, *accushla machree*, if she didn't run off like a race-horse, lavin' meself an' the gossoon standin' in the hall. After a short time, an' ould gentleman came to the top of the lobby, and bickened me to draw near; so I did, an' I brought the gossoon along wid me, an' introduced him to the ould man. Thin he tould me to go into a room at the secind landin', as well as meself could know, an' gave me the candle on purpose. Well, Dochter, up I goes an' bowled into the room; an' before meself could tell what's what, I seen a baker's dozen of women runnin' out like hares, the whole lot ov them bawlin like as if they seen ould Nick himself; an' they went roarin' down the stairs, draggin' the ould gentleman wid them. Begorra, meself thought the boys got me sint into a lunatic's house on purpose—or the ways it was I didn' know what to think. Faith, the Prussians might be comin' in the back-way for all I knew. Anyway I took a right good peep through the room, an' found out that meself an' the gossoon had three beds—warm wans, too, for all the mad women ran helther-skelther out of them the very minit myself pushed in the door. So I turned the key in the door, hunted the goslin' into wan bed, an' meself bounced into another, an' I'm in the belief that meself or the young cove never slept better. But that was all very fine, Dochter, until this mornin' come round, whin the ould man rapt us up, an' tould me breakfast was ready. So I bounced out ov bed an' let him in; an' if he hadn't two bottles of Jamieson's whiskey, me name is not Barney O'Neill. Ov coorse I tuk a right swigg; and whin I put on me boots an' great coat, the ould gentleman threw his arm into mine an' brought me down to the breakfast-room. That's where ye misht it, Dochter. Devil a lie I'll tell ye, whin I say that there was seven damsels, as nice as any ye'd get in Dublin or Dundalk, waitin' breakfast on me. Anyways, I was takin' a chair over to the table, whin a very purty girl come an' shook hands wid me, an' axed me was meself from America.

“ ‘Oh no, miss,’ says I, ‘I’m from ould Dundalk.’”

“ ‘Is it Dundalk in Ireland?’ sis she.

“ ‘Devil another, miss,’ sis I.

“ ‘Well, yer a horrid man,’ sis she, ‘not to tell us that last night. What’s ye’r name, now aself? an’ tell me how do all the people in Dundalk feel?’ sis she.

“ ‘It’s wonderful that ye didn’t hear ov me name afore this, miss,’ sis I. ‘Anyways, I’ll tell you now that Barney O’Neill, driver of the large wagon, is me name an’ profession, an’ all the people in Dundalk was in the best ov spirits whin I was lavin’ it.’

“ ‘Is that long since, Mr. O’Neill?’ sis she agin.

“ ‘Oh, thin, begorra, miss, it’s long enough.’

“ ‘How did you come over here, Mr. O’Neill?’

“ ‘Och, thin, I had to walk over here last night; an’ begorra, meself thought I’d never find yez.’

“ ‘I don’t mean that,’ sis she; ‘I mean, what brought you all the way from Dundalk to France,’ sis she.

“ ‘Begorra, I put it down to me usual bad luck,’ sis I.

“ ‘Well, if she didn’t laugh out an’ out, there’s not a show-board in Dublin; an’ meself thinks she’d kill herself if I didn’t give her a taste of the hard stuff; an’ faith it revived her so much that she begun agin to ask me about everything.’

“ ‘Is it in the French sarvice you are, Mr. O’Neill?’

“ ‘Of coorse it is,’ sis I.

“ ‘What regiment are ye in now?’ sis she.

“ ‘That was a puzzler, Dochter. I was very near sayin’ I was in a regiment ov blackguards, for the way the same boys dragged me about, they couldn’t be called anything better. Anyways, I spoke up bouldly enough to her an’ said: ‘I belonged to the Ambulance corps.’

“ ‘What Ambulance?’ sis she.

“ ‘Of coorse, the Irish wan,’ sis I.

“ ‘Well, ye’d think she was in the ‘gigs’ the way she got on. She sent out for the *coachy*, an’ axed him did he know anything about the arrival of the Irish in Conches. The *coachy* said he didn’t; and thin she turned up her nose an’, sis she: ‘Stupid old coachman!’ Whin the *coachy* was gone, she sis to me, ‘Take care now, Mr. O’Neill, are ye tellin’ lies—where is your corps,’ sis she.

“ ‘Oh, thin, the Lord knows, miss, they’re in no great place, for I think they’re all starvin’ in that village where I got the letter I gave to the ould gentleman last night, an’ I

must go back now as fast as I can lave a foot to ground, for I know poor Nancy is badly trated by 'Lash,' an' 'Sloth,' an' 'Lady,' an' every wan that goes near her exceptin' meself.'

" 'An' who is this Nancy ?' sis she.

" 'Oh, thin, it's meself that's glad you axed me, miss ; an' if you drive into town durin' the day you'll see the animal ; an' I'll give you an eight-in-hand drive back with Nancy laden ; but, if there's any music about, I'm afeered I must lave her behind me, for she's the divil aself for dancin', an' the laist music she'd hear would set her into reels and horn-pipes ; an' shure the way she has for squeelin' would frikin 'all the cats on the rocky road to Dublin.' Sometimes she entices the other horses to turn a country dance with her, whin it's all up the spout with the driver. I can tell you, miss, that in a place called Have-her (Havre) she was near puttin' wagon an' all into the gripe ; an' if it washn't for meself drivin', there would be no end to the loss of life—now that's the whole truth, miss.'

" 'Well, Mr. O'Neill,' sis she, 'I'm very glad that the Ambulance can boast of such a good driver.'

" 'Faith, then, it's very little thanks I get for it,' sis I ; 'all the boys do be down on me, and I dun know what they do be thinkin' of at all at all. On our way to that town beyant, yestherday morning, meself had to take Nancy from the wagon on account of Byrne, the Papal Zouave, playin' a flute. Dr. Ryan thin towld me that meself would be betther on horseback than walkin', so with the help of a lift I was in the saddle in a minnit, an' as soon as they saw me there, they began to sing *O'Donnell Aboo*, or some other rebel song, an' Nancy began to take great delight in it, as if she knew the songs of the country she came from (an' she came from Connaught, so I'm towld), began to neigh, rear, lash, yell, an' faix to do everything that she could think ov ; that was hard enuff on me, but it got worse when the Papal Zouave man tuned up *Garryowen* ; she made all sorts of figures on the road, an' when she come to the side-step part ov the dance she went in on the road-side, an' gave such a suddint jump that the thief threw me into the mill-pond. Begorra meself was drownin', only that Dan Molony lep'd in

and pult me out. Whin I come to my senses I was in wan of the wagons, an' could hear all the boys laughin' an' singin' the same as if nothin' happened. You wouldn't think that good tratement for an O'Neill. God knows the same family suffered enuff from the low, mean English, and not to be now humbugged by Irishmen.'

"Well, indeed, Mr. O'Neill, sis she, 'it's horrid tratement, an', above all, your name should be honored for the way they held to their religion, an' fought for their country, an' I hope they will agin,' sis she.

"Begorra, miss, I think an' hope wid you, but now I must be goin' away in two minits.'

"Is it in this heavy rain, Mr. O'Neill? Oh! no, you will not lave yet a bit,' sis she.

"Oh! faix, miss, I must be aff, for them divils from Dublin would go away in a minit, an' lave me here wid you.'

"Well, you would be welcome,' sis she, 'or any other Irishman; an' I lave you at liberty to invite any of your Irish out.'

"She was just speaking whin the splendid carriage you saw me coming in wheeled up to the hall-door; an' after biddin' all good bye—begorra meself was near cryin'—I lept into the wagon an' we all had a drive.' Now, Dochter, that's the whole conversation I had with the very purty lady. Oh! begorra, I've a letter for somebody, so I'll give it to you; read it as-fast as you can, an' send an answer back by the coachman. If you got billets like mine for all the boys, we could send back money to Ireland instead of the Irish sendin' it out; an', I tell you, Dochter, we'd be all betther off."

This sound advice (given with all the candour which O'Neill could assume *à plaisir*) to our excellent Surgeon-in-Chief, brought the recital of his *one night's* history to a close; and we were therefore left to "spin out" the remainder of the evening *sans eclat*, for the rain still continued to pour down incessantly without, and *le maitre de Hotel Gris* kept incessant watch within, lest billiards or cards might be introduced (the latter game he never permitted within his house), thereby depriving us of such amusement as those

games offer; however, we managed to while away the night in songs and fireside "chat;" and thus we whiled away the hours until the rising sun reminded us that the 25th day of October had arrived. Ushered in, as it was, in splendour, we felt our spirits in the ascendant (for rainy weather is the worst enemy to campaigners), and resolved on seeing everything in and about Conches. To this end we proposed early parade and likewise breakfast, which was agreed to by our director. After experiencing the effect of both, we went rambling in squads, *à discretion*, through the country. A few, indeed, thought proper to march to Neuve-Lire (an undertaking accompanied with great risk), and were repaid fully for their visit. On their entrance to this antique, quiet town, they were rushed upon by men not in uniform, but whose appearance proclaimed them to be gendarmes; those men our volunteers treated to as good a thumping as an Irishman can give those whom they believe to treat them badly. Explanation ensued, and when the gendarmes and people found their visitors to be of the Irish-Franco Ambulance, they tendered apologies *ad infinitum*, and entertained our men in the Cafe da Chien-noir to a startling *dejeuner*—startling, because there was no such entertainment ever witnessed before in that town, or rather village—so the neighbours said.

In other towns and villages about Conches, the same scenes were taking place with the like success for "our Irish," as the French say; and it was not until two o'clock in the afternoon of that day, that our men returned, fortunately *un bon heure*; for not alone was the dinner to be given them by the inhabitants of Conches, served up, but as future words will show, we only had time to do said dinner justice, when orders arrived for us to proceed back to Evreux by special train, and, by a forced march or otherwise, reach Pacy by eleven o'clock same night—pretty news for us! Of course, on this order being read, our hosts waived all ceremony, and, by condensing the words by which each of the townspeople, or rather their representatives in council, expressed their sentiments towards Ireland, the Irish, and their *corps de l'Ambulance*, the banquet was brought to an end. A few, not wishing to part without seeing the catacombs

of the old castle, hastened thither, and were rewarded by being nearly drowned in a well which exists in one of those underground compartments. Having achieved so much, they bid farewell to the catacombs, and hastened to the hotel to have their drenched uniforms dried; but they hadn't, for no time was to be lost. The "special" was at the station; the poor fellows, pity for them none; why did they get wet? But those victims to deception took another plan of drying themselves by getting wet again; for, as they marched to the station, they leaped into the Cafe du Chemin de Fer, and there purchased cognac, part of which they filled into their flasks for instant use, and kept the rest of the bottles in their haversacks for the "rainy day."

At forty minutes past three o'clock we entered the carriages, and were *en route* to Evreux directly. Passing Bonville, the good old *maitre d'ecole* had his people gathered on the platform, who cheered lustily as the train swept past. It was strange how the "learned man" came to hear of our movements; but stranger still the manner in which the old women of Bonville (who, as I remarked before, pay to him allegiance) opened their mouths, and shouted *Vive l'Irlande! Vive l'Ambulance!* At thirty minutes past five we alighted from the carriages at the Evreux station, and after getting our wagons from off the railway trucks, our horses unboxed, then having horsed our regular wagons and getting on the *tente de l'Ambulance* to a hired vehicle, we entered upon our march to Pacy. This march was attended with far more excitement than former ones to same place, for, owing to the strict silence enjoined, we thought our *directeur* anticipated danger, and were therefore in expectation of being set upon by Francs-Tireurs or Uhlans (as the case might be); however, we were armed, and feared nothing, only the ambush or superior numbers.

It was after eleven o'clock when the challenge of the first sentry rang out, to which we replied by giving the name of our Ambulance, and were then permitted to pass without further questioning:

On entering Pacy, there was no mistaking appearances; the streets were filled with armed men; officers rushed hither and thither, giving orders; but before we had time to

inquire into the cause of this commotion, we were joined by Franc-Tireur friends who immediately enlightened us. The Prussians were to attack in force ; their outposts already extended to the cemetery, where only a few days previous we attended at the obsequies of two victims to their cruelty. We remembered the oath then taken, and knew the men who took it, and were therefore prepared to witness dreadful carnage, with no quarter. None dreamt of sleep, for the "little repeater" acted as an alarum clock, while it tended *sans doute* to relieve some of the Prussians of outpost duty ; as the electric light would flash for an instant on the village and its occupants, signals such as these were enough to banish sleep, and place all *en vidette*. Vigilance was certainly necessary, particularly for an ambulance corps. The position now occupied by us was not alone the most dangerous, but the worst selected for enabling our men, or even surgeons, to do their duty. However, after short deliberation our wagons were ordered off to take up position on the Route de Rouen, near the Bureau de l'Octroi. Scarcely had the wagons disappeared round the corner of the Mairie than the electric lights flashed again, and in a second the shells from the Prussians' batteries came bursting all around. In the distance these ominous lights flashed incessantly. The boom of artillery, with the shells cleaving through mid-air on their destructive mission, tended to enhance the solemn grandeur of the scene ; and it was not until the dawn of the 26th that these midnight gunners ceased their labors, having done very little injury to the houses of the village, and none to the troops or the few people who remained in it. As morning grew apace, the *eclairreur* galloped in with information for their chief. Some said the enemy numbered 30,000, others 40,000, including six batteries of artillery. The Mocquarts, strengthened as they were by about 12,000 Moblots, did not muster half the number. What was the colonel going to do ? Would he venture an engagement ? Yes, of course he would—Mocquarts do not retreat before double numbers ! His ideas on the situation were to be known directly, for here he comes mounted on his favorite roan. On finding himself in the midst of his soldiers, he addressed them briefly, and in doing so he re-

verted to the oath, and the circumstances which caused that oath to be taken ; then, when the cries of *Vive Mocquart !* subsided, he gave orders for the redistribution of his faithful soldiers.

The town could not be defended ; but not so the high road to Evreux ; therefore, to the heights on either side of this road, and to the barricade on the road, his troops marched to take positions. The field department of our Ambulance was in the van, and our wagons dashed along in the rear ; these latter were being drawn up directly inside the barricade, while our men were scattered about wherever it was thought the contest would prove hottest. Mocquart, on seeing the senseless position which our drivers were placed in, sent one of his staff to inform them that the place chosen was the only dangerous place in the field, and if they had any regard for their health, to move further up the road. Timely information indeed, for no sooner were the wagons brought in the shelter afforded by the old chateau, than the sharp crack of the "rifled Spencer" showed the Prussians to be moving in the ravine, and in a moment the rather harsh boom of the Prussian guns confirmed it. The Mocquarts and Mobiles had splendid positions. The Germans proved to have treble numbers ; it only remained to be proved whether a few gallant, chivalrous men would be able to hold out against a horde of pillagers. Without doubt, the battle was commenced with the intention of being fought through, otherwise the German cavalry would retreat, but, instead, they galloped towards the barricade, and were on the point of passing through the embrasure (left open not without a purpose) when the *chevaux de frise* barred their entrance (*pro tem.*), and in a second, the dreadful *mitrailleuse* filled the gap, belched forth its fire, which instantly placed the cuirassiers and their horses of the foremost ranks *hors de combat*, as if to form another barricade. Again and again the cuirassiers charged and met with defeat. After a number of unsuccessful charges, they retreated under showers of lead, and the Prussian artillery and infantry were sent forward on trial.

The war of cannon and *mitrailleuse* grew louder, as also did the cries of the wounded and expiring yells of the dying.

The Germans of the infantry and artillery seemingly got into disorder, for they ran "pell mell" over the bodies of their fallen comrades, and their place was again taken up by cavalry, who tried in vain to force the barricade, and were rewarded by suffering dreadfully. At length a retreat was sounded, which was willingly obeyed by the German troopers. The Franc-Tireur and Mobiles dashed off in hot pursuit, their shouts of *Vive Mocquart! A bas les Prusse!* tending to make the Germans hasten their departure. In Pacy, the Germans were again rallied, and made good fighting; in fact the scales of fortune were on the point of turning in their favour, when reinforcements for the Mocquarts unexpectedly arrived on the scene. They were strange Mobiles. How they managed to come, much less to get in a position where they could cut off the Prussian line of retreat, was a mystery yet to be solved. But this was no time for indulging in curiosity; the strangers precipitated themselves on the Germans, whom they sent tumbling on all sides. In the meanwhile the Mocquarts *propre* were avenging their murdered comrades *à discretion*; street-fighting continued until noonday, when the Germans, by one desperate effort, cut their way through the strangers, and were in full retreat. *Apropos* I may mention that at this particular time and place, the Prussian ambulance joined in the strife, thereby breaking their word of honour, and treating the "red cross" with the greatest disrespect.

With the engagement finished the duties of our field department, or rather nearly finished, for nothing remained to be done, except to place in our regular wagons the wounded whom we picked up during the contest. Among the numerous *hors de combat* of the Germans were seven members of the Prussian ambulance. On their faces you could read the hate they bore towards the French, while in calm, measured sentences they cursed the Franc-Tireur and Mocquart, the Moblots and France. They seemed to think themselves better dead than live to witness the defeat of their veteran soldiers by a troop of plumed guerillas. Their anger carried them so far as to venture on abusing the Dundalk volunteers, on whom devolved the duty of removing them to the wagon set apart for their use; but the Dundalk men would

not bear with such, and told their abusers to cease scowling and scolding, or otherwise they would be done away with instantly. This hint was taken by the wounded men, who tried to assume a benignant countenance. One of them asked, "are you the Irish of the Ambulance?" and was answered in the affirmative. This answer had a surprising result; instead of insolence they reiterated the praises of our countrymen, and, notwithstanding their high lineage (the Prussian ambulance consisted of the nobles of Germany), they mimicked the manners of their itinerant bandsmen to perfection, as they begged protection from our Dundalk men.

As each wagon received its complement of the wounded, it was despatched, and it was not until 11-30 o'clock that night, that we were at liberty to return to Evreux. Early on the morning of the 27th (October, we reached that town exhausted—almost worn from the fatigue of the previous thirty-six hours; retiring to rest at five o'clock that morning, we were not disturbed during the day and night following.

CHAPTER VI.

“The heath this night must be my bed,
 The bracken curtains for my head,
 My lullaby the sentry’s tread ;
 To-morrow, we more stilly laid,
 My couch may be my crimsoned plaid.”

EARLY on the morning of the 28th, orders arrived from Colonel Mocquart—members must be on the road to Pacy by eight o’clock. On this being made known, our men dressed hurriedly, and making for the nearest cafe, entered in force, filled their flasks, and returned for parade to the Caserne du Cavalrie. It was not yet seven o’clock ; the horsemen were getting horses, harness, and wagons cleaned up ; the field men were packing up their cumbrous kits, and arranging other matters, such as their haversacks and dressing-cases ; while the doctors, with only six exceptions, were debating whether they would rise from their beds or sleep out the day. However, by the time appointed for parade, nearly twenty minutes to eight o’clock, all had assembled on the ground, and having been put through the usual drill, awaited the order to march. Before this order was given, one of our men favoured us with a verse, or rather the chorus to many verses composed by himself on the subject of our tiresome marches to Pacy, and to which he gave the name of “From Pacy to Evreux,” and the air of “Pat Murphy.” To give the reader an idea of the poetical licence which this composer enjoyed, I’ll give the chorus, as follows :—

“Then hurroo ! boys, hurroo !
 There’s nothing on earth so true,
 But it is a killing march
 From Pacy to Evreux.
 From Evreux to Pacy,
 From Pacy to Evreux,
 Oh ! ’pon my faith, my heart is broke
 ’Twixt Pacy and Evreux !”

He was joined by the whole company, and it is possible that we would find ourselves on the same parade-ground that evening, had not the Surgeon-in-Chief ordered us to proceed *en route*, for Molony's song had charms for us, which we only could appreciate. However, it was hushed, and immediately we were on the now familiar road to Pacy. The men marched with spirit, while the drivers sent their horses into a brisk trot, and, after a march of four hours, we entered the almost ruined village. We were proceeding to the town-hall, when an incident occurred which caused no small amount of amusement; it happened in the following manner:

As in all French towns where the inhabitants have no gas company to supply them with gas, they hang large oil-lamps to ropes which are drawn across the streets, and these ropes are on pulleys, by the means of which the lamp-lighter is enabled to lower the lamps and light them without having to mount a ladder. Pacy is one of those towns (unfortunately for Barney O'Neill); but the lamps and ropes are, perhaps, longer in the service of its inhabitants than they should be; and when O'Neill was driving his wagon under one in particular, the cord gave way, the lamp falling on his head. The bottom being glass, his head went through it, when it fell on to his shoulders, and from thence over his shoulders, encompassing his body. In trying to extricate himself from this lamp, he let the reins fall loose, and his Nancy, with the other horses, bounded onwards. O'Neill held on to the seat, and by so doing he saved himself from being dragged off, while he pulled all the lamps *publique* from their places, and sent them crashing below into the street. Mocquart was compelled to join in the general laugh. O'Neill, no doubt, extinguished the lamps; the lampmaker was delighted; the few ratepayers who remained in their homes were horrified.

Franc-Tireur and Mobiles were engaged chatting over Barney's adventure with the lamps, when firing was heard above the town, which brought everyone under arms; but, on making inquiries, it was found to be nothing more than a few of our men firing at rabbits in the neighbouring forest. The remainder of the evening passed over without any-

thing occurring that might disturb the existing tranquillity. However, as night advanced, the *eclaireur* rode in with information which brought all to a sense of duty; they reported the Germans in force, and advancing across the plain in our rear.

To the same heights, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Franc-Tireurs betook themselves, while the Mobiles took position in the shadow of the forest on our right. The night was bright, which enabled us to perceive, about two miles away over the plain, the Prussian columns; also that several squadrons of their uhlans, hussars, and cuirassiers detached themselves from the main body, and were galloping towards us; already they appeared to be inside our outposts, yet not a shot was fired. Separating again, they made for the high road in companies; on reaching the road they halted, and galloped forward; but no sooner had they entered the ravine, than bang goes the rifles of the Franc-Tireurs, and, in another moment, 200 horses were seen riderless. The remaining troops turned to retreat, but retreat for them there was none; there they rode, backwards and forwards, in the madness of despair; and, when they hoisted the white flag, only fifty were found to have escaped the withering fire of the Franc-Tireurs; over 300 of their number were among the killed or wounded; 200 horses, 400 rifles, 100 lances, numerous revolvers, sabres, and fifty prisoners remained in the hands of the Franc-Tireurs. Here, again, was work for our ambulance. The stretcher-men left their positions with the Franc-Tireurs, and hastened to the relief of any of the German wounded who required, or seemed to require, aid. After a run through the *hors de combat*, we found at least thirty of the Germans unhurt, merely lying among the slain to escape being made prisoners, or, perhaps, they threw themselves from their horses, during the melee, to escape getting wounded; these we surrendered to the care of the Franc-Tireurs, and then brought the stretchers into requisition. The day of the 29th of October dawned and found us still at work; but we had almost finished the preliminaries by eight o'clock. Then the surgeons entered on duty, and immediately after, our wagons

were conveying the sufferers (as they passed from out the surgeons' hands) to the nearest hospital or ambulance. At nine o'clock the duty of field-men was brought to an end (at least for the time), and, therefore, they set about preparing *dejeuner*. The mode of doing this was simple, yet to many difficult; in the first place, firewood was to be procured; well, this was easily done, for we had the forest on every side. Lighting it, we set our pots on the blazing wood, and warmed the *vin ordinaire* of which we had a plentiful supply. After partaking of this, we formed ourselves into foraging parties, and set out in search of provisions. Returning at one o'clock we were able to report our enterprise "attended with success," for we carried into our little camp loads of vegetables and fruit, fowl and rabbit, about four gallons of cognac, and, though last not least, a live hare, caught by one of our foragers. The hare, being knocked on the head, was given, with the other products of the "chase," to our cook *par excellence*, Mr. Horace Greely. At two o'clock the cook bawled out from his *à fresco* kitchen (in the base of the ruined tower of the old chateau), "that dinner was served up." "Well done, Horace. We'll make you happy yet." "Nothing like a good cook! "Vive la dîner!" "What! no potatoes, no bread!" "Bravo! Horace." These were the exclamations before dinner. We made a hearty meal, notwithstanding that pots were used as dishes, cutlasses or bowie knives for dinner knives; forks and plates were totally dispensed with; still we felt happy. Ours was a pleasant fate. When the cloth was removed, or I should have said the pots (for our table was minus a cover), we drank to the toast, "God save Ireland," proposed by the president of the mess. Numerous were the toasts that followed, and well they were received; everything went "as merry as a marriage bell," the rustic loveliness of the place and the charming afternoon adding considerably to make our stay agreeable; and when the adjutant informed us that our duty at Pacy was at an end, and that all must be on the road to Evreux within thirty minutes, not a few there were found loth to separate from the scene of their pleasures. However, before the dinner party was broken up, the com-

poser of "From Pacy to Evreux," favoured us with a verse which he composed specially for the occasion :—

" Oh ! what a happy dinner
 Beneath the old chateau ;
 And what a lot of lucky dogs
 T' escape last night's *battue*.
 But duty says we must be off ;
 If not obeyed, we'll rue
 The day that we refused to march
 From Pacy to Evreux."

The poet having ceased his song, seized on one of the pots, and carrying it to a wagon, placed it therein ; the other utensils of our limited culinary department were likewise carried off. In a few minutes later our men had evacuated the ruined chateau, and were assembled on the road preparatory to commencing the march. *En route* once more, it was quite evident that neither the fatigue or the melancholy scenes consequent on the combat, or rather the surprise, of the Germans that morning, took a bad effect on our men ; on the contrary, it had a beneficial effect, for, as Colonel Mocquart remarked, "they could not march better." At eight o'clock that evening we entered Evreux, when we found the Franc-Tireurs entered before us ; and if we did not pass a pleasant night, the fault was our own, for the Franc-Tireurs offered us all sorts of amusement, from the shooting of some unpopular Mobile to a simple game at dominoes.

The two last days of October were whiled away in Evreux. Nothing of importance occurred that could mar the existing tranquillity. Indeed, it was reported that Uhlands were seen about, but such report could not be relied on as true, for Franc-Tireurs were ubiquitous over twenty miles of the surrounding country. Four of the regular troops attached to the Mocquarts caused a little excitement by their attempts to burn the conciergerie in which they were confined. It seems that the four Lines-men imbibed absinthe *à leur plaisir*, which led to an attack of D.T., and the four "red-legged" infantry were placed in the conciergerie (a situation they by no means relished). In this con

ciergerie was straw, and with matches did the four lunatics light this straw. Immediately smoke was seen issuing through the broken window, while the yells and laughter of the prisoners would lead one to believe himself in the precincts of Pandemonium.

Colonel Mocquart being somewhere convenient, and hearing the uproar, made his way to the door, and opened it himself. The boys rushed out laughing, but on catching a sight of their illustrious warder, their mirth was turned into supplication, for they knew Mocquart, and feared him. Nothing would appease the anger of the *chef de guerilla*, so he ordered them to be dragged to the cemetery, and there shot. Arrived at the cemetery, the trench was dug, the shooting party singled out, the four culprits walked calmly to the place of execution, and as calmly stood beside their grave, with their faces towards the shooting party; the drums beat, the sentence was read, and all awaited the fatal moment. It came at last, the sharp crack of twelve rifles rang out. Two of the boys fell into the *fosse commune*, while the other two could not contain their laughter; they roared out oaths "that they were never born to be shot." Mocquart was looking on from a concealed position which he had taken up behind a clump of palm-trees, but, on seeing the two men fall, he rushed forward to know if they were really shot, and on looking into the trench, he found the "pair" chatting coolly to each other. The four play-boys were ordered back to prison, with orders to have them well searched before entering. The whole affair proved to be only a hoax, for the Franc-Tireur chief would be the last man in the world to give an order for the execution of any of his men, or even of a German prisoner.

This incident caused a good deal of mirth, and went far to satisfy the cravings for adventure inherent in the breasts both of the Franc-Tireurs and Ambulance-men. But before that day, the day of the 30th of October, had vanished, another incident occurred which caused no small share of amusement in civil and military circles. It occurred in this manner:—Barney O'Neill, thinking that his Nancy required exercise, went into the saddle, and proceeded on the *route de Paris*. When about four miles from Evreux, he perceived

cavalry to be advancing briskly, and believing them to be Germans, he turned his horse homewards, intent upon a retreat. No sooner had he done this, than the scarlet web rug band (which he was in the habit of wearing like a scarf), and the polished chains, including curbs, pole-chains, and traces (which he would wear suspended from a leather strap round his neck) attracted the attention of the mounted outposts; these latter firmly believed they had a Prussian general before them, and instantly gave chase. O'Neill, at this time, was halted; and, watching the movements of the cavalry, our hero permitted them to come within 400 yards of him, and then spurring his charger forward, he flew at a killing pace over the high road, leaving the cavalry far behind, who continued to urge their horses forward in the pursuit, thinking that the "General's" mad career would be stopped by Franc-Tireurs, and that themselves would be in at the arrest. The race continued unabated; the railway gates at the crossing were closed, but O'Neill brought his splendid Nancy to her work, when horse and rider went bounding over them. In another minute the pursued dashed over the pavements of Evreux at a wonderful pace, his cry of "Prooshans! Prooshans!" awakening up a thousand echoes (for the soldiers and civilians were led to believe, by O'Neill's wild demeanour, that the Germans practised a *ruse de guerre*, and were entering). He flew past everything, even past the great cathedral without lifting his kepi, and at last reined up his panting steed in the yard of the caserne. The *eclaireur* (for they were none others) entered town in like manner, casting inquiries about *à discretion* for the "Prussian general." The Franc-Tireurs did not see him, neither did the people. Where must the Prussian have gone to? After all, he might prove to be a ghost! All were occupied with the question "How did the general escape?" until the outposts came in, when they cleared up the mystery. M. le Chevalier O'Neill was the general, the *eclaireur*, the donkeys. The Franc-Tireur who was on duty at the railway crossing, and who witnessed the whole affair, related with a gusto the appearance of O'Neill and his pursuers. Need I say that the *eclaireur* were the sufferers, for they were doomed to listen to the jeers of the Franc-Tireurs and populace.

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of November, 1870, passed off quietly; the men of our Corps de l'Ambulance and the Franc-Tireur corps made holiday time of it, occupying themselves with revisiting Conches, Nargent, Pacy, Bonville, Villiers, and even Mantes. On the evening of the 3rd the Northern Light appeared; not a few said it was the reflection of burning Paris, others said that it presaged bloody fields, while others proclaimed it to be a sign of the cessation of hostilities; in fact,

“ Their notions fitted things so well,
That which was which, they could not tell.”

The morning of the 4th of November arrived, and with it the snow. Troops were grouping since dawn, for orders were issued to have a grand review of the Garde-Nationale, Garde-Mobile, Pompiers, Gensd'armes, and Franc-Tireurs of the departments of the Eure and Orne. At ten o'clock on that day the commanders arrived on the ground, a common called Le Champs de l'Eveque; the Pompiers with their polished helmets forming a striking contrast to the kepi-decked Mobiles; the Francs-Tireurs and members of Corps de l'Ambulance, in their romantic uniforms, rambled over the ground *à discretion*. The wagons of our Ambulance were drawn up in the background, and looked quite picturesque. *Sans doute* it was a goodly assembly.

As I have said before, commanders arrived on review ground at ten o'clock sharp, and at that moment O'Neill's troubles commenced. The bands struck up *Partant pour la Syrie*, and whether it was the spirit of the song or its sweet music that took effect on Nancy I know not; suffice it to say that she commenced to practise all her old manœuvres. The other horses yoked with her to the large wagon, and numbering eleven, learned her tricks, so that before the bands ceased to play *Partant pour la Syrie*, it became impossible to hold the animals. At length O'Neill shouted to the men at their heads to let go, and in an instant M. le Chevalier Barney, his horses and wagon, were off. He kept them in hand beautifully, letting them gallop round the field as fast as they could go, and after taking the rounds of the parade-ground six times they were brought to a stand

by the fearless driver, when it was found that the horses, Nancy not excepted, would listen to anything rather than repeat the same gallop. The review over, all turned to quarters, and the afternoon was passed in gaiety.

The days of the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th October were almost wholly devoted to drill. Seven o'clock each morning required our presence on parade-ground for military drill, noon-day for stretcher practice ; again at three o'clock in the afternoon military drill, and stretcher practice at six o'clock in the evening. It was no easy matter to study regular drill in the morning, and at noon to study the contrary ; however, after four days' practice we were able to display the effects of opposite drill. On the evening of the fourth we were ordered to march some miles into the country, when the order of step-marching was strictly adhered to, but on getting outside the town our men entered on the stretcher step, and it is believed that no two men of the corps kept the same step for over two miles of the road. On returning into Evreux about six o'clock that evening, we were informed that orders were received from the commander of the Army of the Loire, stating that it was necessary to report ourselves at the head-quarters of said army not later than the 12th instant. Incredible, unfounded information ! All doubts were cleared up by seven o'clock, for special parade was called, and, after answering to roll-call, the order was read out by Orderly-Sergeant Moore, who did not forget to bestow on us some of his own experience in a set speech, which I give as follows :—

“ Now, gentlemen, ye are going to travel by special train to the real seat of war, and I tell ye to take lots of bread and brandy with you, for I remember well that at one time, during my service in the Papal army, myself, and eighty others from the old land, were ordered to some place ever so far away. We were young, you know, and didn't understand a whit about a 'military special' in war times. At any rate we jumped into the carriages, and had to remain two days without eating or drinking a morsel. Experience teaches ; and, for myself, I'll take as much as I can carry with me, and I advise ye to do the same, or ye'll be sorry for it—' he is a bad horse won't carry his own oats.' Now I'll

be off to read the orders for the horsemen and wagonmen ; they'll have tight work to have everything ready—goodness knows they will.”

Following the orderly to the stables, we were in time to hear the accomplished greybeard “breaking it gently” to the men of the field transport. The order for them ran thus : “The drivers are to have their wagons at the railway station by eight o'clock this evening, to wash them then and there, and get them on to the trucks. Harness and stretchers are to be placed in covered railway wagons. Having done this, you will bring back the horses to stables, where they are to remain until eight o'clock to-morrow morning. At that hour you will lead them to the station, and get them comfortably boxed. Having done this, you will return to quarters and await further instructions.”

“What about the tent, Sergeant ?”

“Well, 'pon me conscience, I was forgetting the tent. It is to be left in Evreux, and I'm not sorry, for it's too big to be of any use.”

The drivers carried out their instructions to the letter.

The news spread rapidly that the Franco-Irish Ambulance Corps was to leave on the morrow. By nine o'clock that evening the good people of Evreux flocked into the caserne, and by ten o'clock, without exception, we were seated to farewell suppers within the homes of the people.

CHAPTER VII.

“And whether we shall meet again, I know not.”

EARLY on the morning of the 9th November, the *reveille* was heard sounding in the barrack-yard. Dressing hurriedly, the men turned out on parade-ground, when the general order was read out. The paragraph, as under, I subscribe as a means of bringing under notice the feeling of the citizen soldiers of France for our Irish organisation :

“Yielding to the wishes of Colonel Mocquart and General Bourbaki, myself and M. Picard (this day appointed our Director) have resolved on dividing the corps into two divisions : the division remaining here will be known under the name of the Northern Contingent of the Franco-Irish Ambulance, and will be under the orders of Dr. M'Guire. The division for the Loire will be known as Head-quarters of the Ambulance. Our men, at present in hospital, will remain there until convalescent, when they are to be sent on to Head-quarters. At eleven o'clock members can volunteer for service with the Northern Contingent or with Head-quarters ; and it is requested that all will have resolved on the course they will adopt before that hour, as we must be *en route* by twelve o'clock, noon.

“ (Signed,)

“ E. BAXTER,
“ E. PICARD.”

At eleven o'clock the men re-assembled on parade, and immediately a show of hands was called for from those favourable to remaining with the Northern Contingent. Those who were then found willing to remain with the Mocquarts were ordered to form on the right of parade-ground, and the men who cast their fortunes with Head-quarters proceeded to the railway station, amidst cheering from the military and civilians. Many were the out-spoken prayers of the multitude for our safe return, and we were

kept busily engaged returning the farewell greetings of those from whom we were parting—perhaps for ever—until the *special* started on the journey.

Reaching Bernay at twelve o'clock, midnight, we were agreeably surprised to find that the council of the town thought it proper to entertain us to a substantial supper and numberless speeches. However, such things, though interesting, could not prevail upon our *Chef de l'Ambulance* to postpone our departure for even three hours; for at two o'clock on the morning of the 10th, all were ordered to take their seats, and in five minutes after the train was rattling on towards Mezidon, which town we reached at half-past three o'clock same morning, where again we had to partake of refreshments, and listen to a lengthy address from the representatives of the people. At five o'clock we were again *en route* to Le Mans. Dawn found us—or, rather, the engine receiving a drink from its drivers—at the station of Alençon; and at noonday we arrived at Le Mans, where a sumptuous *dejeuner* was given in honour of our arrival within the lines of the army of the Loire. Here we first had the opportunity of inspecting the Gatling guns and Remingtons, the newest inventions for killing bodies; here also were we marched through the principal streets (like so many fathers of the republic) on to the Prefecture, where ever so many speeches were made by all parties present. *En passant*, I may state that when the Maire complimented us on the appearance of our horses and wagons, O'Neill could not refrain from saying something; and this something almost caused the ladies who were present to go into hysterics. There were no beasts in France could cope with his Nancy, his Patsy, his Michael Angelo—so called by O'Neill, because not long since he swore he saw the form, or rather the ghost of the great painter in his horse's eyes. No wagons could be compared with his Irish ones—no driver in France like himself. It is very probable that he would go so far as to proclaim no man to be an Irishman's equal, had not our chief ordered him to drive off to the station, and get his wagon placed on trucks, his horses boxed (for all the apparatus of our Ambulance were moved from the precincts of the great

junction station for the purpose of being shown through town, by the special request of the people). At two o'clock we returned to the station, escorted by the town-council and a guard of Moblots, where, after ten minutes leave-taking, we re-entered the carriages, and were borne away over the iron road amidst the plaudits of the people.

It was eight o'clock of the evening when we alighted from the carriages at Nogent-le-Rotrou; the rain poured down incessantly, the night was dark, and so was the town—all of which, I may add, helped in a great measure to damp our spirits. We had no particular wish to march up town, as the station would afford shelter for the night, yet the director ordered that all should proceed to the Hotel-de-Ville, there to report our arrival to the mayor. We obeyed, but on reaching the hotel we found that the mayor was in bed and would not disturb himself. Shall we go to the Chene d'Or? No; we will either get the mayor out of bed, or gain possession of the Mairié. This latter course was adopted, and before ten o'clock we were quite comfortable—quite at home at the Hotel-de-Ville.

CHAPTER VIII.

“They come, their kerchiefs green they wave,
And welcome with a kiss the brave.”

THE GIAOUR.

AT an early hour on the morning of the 11th November, M. Picard entered the Hotel-de-Ville, and informed us that we must be on the road to Chateaudun by eight o'clock, and that breakfast would be ready at the Hotel de l'Europe by seven o'clock. Having partaken of breakfast, we assembled on parade, and by eight o'clock sharp we were on the road to Chateaudun. Entering the town of Authon at eleven o'clock, we regaled ourselves with the thought that eleven miles of a muddy road were passed over, and, after a short halt, we resumed our march. Songs and stories were rare since our departure from Evreux, but now to the *corps d'esprit*, engendered by a fine afternoon, a lively march, cognac, *vin ordinaire*, and a consciousness of our close proximity to the rendezvous of the Army of the Loire, we marched onwards to our destination.

On entering Bazoche-Gonet, whither MM. Picard and Molony had preceded us, we met with a warm reception from the inhabitants, and an enthusiastic one from the Lancers, who were on the point of leaving that town when our Director and M. Molony entered; but on learning that the Irish were coming they delayed their departure, as they told us afterwards, for no other reason than to have the honour of being the first of the regular troops of the Army l'Loire who would meet us, and also to give us welcome. They did not leave La Bazoche that night, neither did our Corps de l'Ambulance; and though the inhabitants placed their homes at our disposal it was not until four o'clock on the morning of the 12th that we availed ourselves of their kindness, for we found that the people had more to say to us than could possibly be communicated in less time.

The Lancers did everything to contribute towards our comfort and even amusement.

I have said before, it was four o'clock of the morning when we retired, comrades together, for our respective diggings. As a rule the Lancers accompanied us to lodgings, and in one instance not without incident. The tourist through the department of the Eure et Loire must have paid a flying visit to La Bazoche, and perhaps went on by Montmirail to catch the midday train at La Ferte Bernard for Nogent le Rotron. If so, he must have seen "a mill of the olden times," about two miles outside La Bazoche, on the roadside. Well, the proprietor of this mill was kind enough to give three of our men an invitation to his house beside the mill, which was accepted with pleasure. Probably if the guests even dreamt of the distance, they would have declined with thanks, and they were on their way to enjoy the proffered hospitality, accompanied by one of the Lancers. They walked leisurely along until passing the "haunted house," when they caught sight of a glimmering light showing through the chinks of the old door. They knocked again and again, but received no answer. At length placing their shoulders to the door they were about bursting it in, when a voice from within shouted, "*Sprechen sic gilairifig Deutsch.*"

"*Ah ! Par D—u les Prusse là !*" cried the Lancer, dashing off in quest of his brothers-in-arms.

Our men in the meantime remained outside the door, and one of them ventured on demanding the name of the ghost or ghosts, or Prussians, but received no answer. However, in a few minutes later the Lancers returned in force, burst in the old door, when, to the surprise of all concerned, Byrne and Moore were found seated at a blazing log fire. In another moment fourteen of the Lancers recognized two former friends of the Papal service, viz., Byrne and Moore. Need I relate the scene that ensued ; more wine was warmed, and each man's cognac flask contributed its quantum of that genuine fluid. Moore did not like it—no, nothing like our "native" still ; he was a man that could not remain a mere spectator while others indulged in the juice of the vines of Cognac, so he did fill the goblet and emptied it again. Who would not be a true campaigner ? Imagine two of our men

disdaining to rest their weary limbs within the homes of men, and choosing "the haunted house;" even there meeting with friends, long lost friends. Yes, and having a thorough round of mirth until the hated reveille sounds parade. Who would or could see a folly in war?

It was after seven o'clock that morning before the inmates of "the ghost's abode" thought it necessary to respond to the bugle-calls. However, before they did evacuate the scene of their comfort, they extinguished the fire, built up the door, and left the house in a fit state for any ghost—aye, even that of the "Royal Dane" Hamlet's father, to inhabit.

On entering the Place d'Armée the principal body of the Lancers were seen to be already mounted. The wagons of our Ambulance were already horsed, and everything in readiness to resume our journey, only tarrying for the men who were intruding on the privacy of "spirits" during the night. These after some time joined their respective companies, and by nine o'clock we were *en route*.

CHAPTER IX.

“ Alas ! what links of love that morn
Has war's rude hand asunder torn !
For ne'er was field so sternly fought,
And ne'er was conquest dearer bought.
Here piled in common slaughter sleep
Those whom affection long shall weep.”

SCOTT.

WHEN about two miles from the town (La Bazoche) the snow cleared off, and in its stead came sunshine—sunshine too that brought with it no good result, for the road, over which travelled 20,000 men of the reserve, with their baggage, wagons, and artillery, the morning previous, was in a fair way of getting covered with the snow, but the sunshine brought on a thaw, which tended finally to change the road into a river of sludge. This was certainly annoying, but much more so on finding our boots and uniform torn and shattered, for we had to pull the wagons over about two miles of the road, the while being at least knee-deep in mud. *Pleine de gloire, sans doute*, must be our work, when men can be found to endure all this. Yet there were men found, and men who, not content to wear their medals in the shape of tattered uniforms, actually proposed “that boots and tunics should be buried in the mud, and that all should appear before the commander of the Loire army without them.”

At Courtalin, we were able to purchase shoes which suited admirably; there, also, refreshments were served out, and there we had two hours' rest, all of which were very much required. At three o'clock that evening we resumed the march; our next halt, and our last for that day, would be Chateaudun. Where the deuce is Chateaudun? Will our marching ever cease? Where are the troops? These questions were muttered, rather than spoken; all were really jaded. However, we were soon to

know where was Chateaudun, and where were the troops. As for the marching, it looked as if only commencing; the tramp of horses in our rear, and the camp fires in the valley, told but too plainly that we were among the troops. In another minute, the sentinel's challenge rang out, to which our Director replied, and we were permitted to pass on. Directly we found ourselves in the long straggling street of La Barriere, surrounded by the curious of the Garde Mobile and Nationale. On renewing our flasks, we were again *en route* to Chateaudun. Arriving there an hour before midnight on the 12th, we found ourselves in for duty. The last shell from Wittich's batteries burst in our midst, and in a few minutes we learned that the Francs-Tireurs had captured the Bavarian position and six guns. This *coup* of the Francs-Tireurs did not by any means cause the firing to cease; on the contrary, the boom of artillery grew louder, the rattle of small arms deafening; the Mobiles were forcing their way up the precipitous plateau, while Francs-Tireurs and cavalry drove the Germans from their positions in the Rue de Bastion, Rue de la Paix, and the Place de l'Eglise. During the time occupied by the French in gaining these positions, our men, horses, and wagons, were exposed to the Prussian fire, and could not move either forward or backward, for the *debris* blocked up the only street by which there was any possibility of making a retreat.

Our drivers, indeed, had an unenviable situation; their horses went mad with fright, and no wonder, for the Prussian artillery paid particular attention to the destruction of everything about. However, after an hour's dreadful suspense, the ringing cheers of the Moblots and Franc-Tireurs proclaimed their victory.

Our men could not be kept together longer, and they dashed off to join in the confusion. On entering the Place d'Armée, what a heartrending spectacle met their gaze—the exclamations of pain from the wounded, the glare from the burning streets; now and then one of the Germans would leap from a burning house, only to alight on the cutlass of the French, or to be torn to pieces by the maddened civilians; women and children strewn about, some of them

wounded, some severely burnt, others lying dead. In the midst of this scene were our men, their small wagons (which were by this time extricated from the *debris* in the Rue de la Paix) drawn up outside the Hotel-de-Ville, one of their large wagons firmly fixed in the ruins of the Rue de Gendarmerie, another in those of the Rue de Caserne, three of our doctors under arrest as German spies, and twenty of them quite miserable, roaming about the streets, now arrested, again at liberty, and again arrested. Such were the recurring scenes of the night, and it was not until two o'clock in the morning of the 13th of November, that a sense of security became prevalent, for only then were the Germans totally defeated. Directly M. Picard informed us that the chapel of St. John would be our rendezvous for the night; therefore, to the chapel we made our way; but, before entering, the sacred edifice, the Café de St. Jean presented itself, and as the night was bitter cold, our men thought it necessary to enter said café, on what intention the reader may guess. However, after partaking of some warm wine, they crossed over to the chapel, where they soon formed beds, by placing the chairs near each other; then taking off our great coats, which were too wet to keep on, we placed them on the chairs, and drawing our rugs round us, lay down to sleep. But sleep was denied us, for Peter Peters, who took his place on one of the Virgin's altars, swore a mighty oath that a ghost appeared to him. Need I say that Peter's bawling was enough to bring us to our feet; but whether the oath scared away the ghost I know not, for no ghost was to be seen except the redoubtable Peter, who looked one all over, as he sat upon the steps of the altar, staring wildly round him. After some time spent by him in soliloquising on the situation, he commenced to make himself happy. Taking out an old pipe which he made up his mind to carry, he filled it with tobacco, and fired it with a match. One of our men believing that he threw the match on the carpet, left his couch to see it extinguished, and happening to tread on his (Peter's) feet, caused the smoker to yell like a demon; nothing could conciliate him, and it was no wonder, for his feet were torn from the severe marching, while an attack of rheumatism

tended to add to his misfortune. Under these circumstances, we pardoned him the crime of being unruly in the house of God, and left him to enjoy his meditations, which I believe were not happy ones that night. Shortly after the persecuted Peter went to sleep, Barney O'Neill awoke, and for two long hours did he continue to recite the story of his troubles. O'Neill was brave, even to rashness ; he also possessed attributes of rustic simplicity and agreeableness, with a fair amount of "cheek," which led those who knew him best to believe him to be "more rogue than fool," and

" Though like the monkey who his tail
Had lost, you'll find him with a tale
Long as a sailor's ' long yarn ' spinning."

During the time, from our entering the chapel to that in which Peter met with the accident to his feet, O'Neill did a good deal to whet Peter's anger by the loud manner in which he (O'Neill) boasted of his exploits at Pacy, Evreux, Rouen, Havre, and Conches ; but Peter was fast asleep when O'Neill came to that portion of his story relative to Chateau-dun, or otherwise we might be compelled to witness a scene within the chapel ; for his style of drawing on his imagination would certainly prove too much for Peter's excitable temperament. To give the reader an idea of how Barney tormented Peter and pleased himself, I give O'Neill's rather exaggerated finish to an exaggerated story :

" Begorra, men, it's now four o'clock in the mornin', an' I'm thinkin' to myself that's a nice hole were stuck in. I don't mane the chapel, God forbid ; but I mane the whole town. 'Pon me conschince, the streets is like as if the people was ploughing them for the last twelve-month, an' that only the other day they put down a crop ov rocks fur the winther. I faith, it's all very fine to be rambling about Passy under heavy fire whilst we had good roads ; but to be here, it bates ould Nick himself, wud shells cracking about our heads every minit ; an' if yez want to step aside to let wan pass, you fall over a rock, an' goes near breakin' your necks. Now, isn't that the raal truth, an' see how meself can tell the truth, not like swarin' Pether.

“ Well now, if I didn't say me prayers this blessed mornin', where would I be now, an' where would yez be ; begorra thim same prayers saved every mother's sowl ov yez, an' the bléssin' of God saved meself, for there's no luck or grace near either the 'sloth' or swarin' Pether. D—l take me, if they wouldn't bring bad luck on a whole rigiment, an' I say agin it was me prayers that kept yez alive this blessed night. Arra sure there's Hopkins there saw a shell sittin' behind me on the sate ov the big wagon, wid d—l a stir out ov it, until meself tuk it un flung it into the ould house there, near where the wagons were stuck in the mud. Faix then yez might pepper (shure I know yez did). Och, 'mille murderers !' ye'd think it was 'hell open to Christians,' wid the 'shindy' it kicked up. Then another an' another come rowlin' down the street ; wan ov thim was goin' to burst, whin I lept down off the sate, an' pulled the fuse out ov it, an' I caught the other wan in me arms, an' flung it into an ould house on the other side. Ah ! in a minit”——

Here Barney was checked, for “swarin'” Pether roared out—“The Lord may take me sowl if you are not a damned liar, O'Neill. Let me sleep, you villanous scoundrel, or I'll kill you. By ——, if you don't hold your tongue, I'll fire at you—you low, mean ruffian, to be telling such falsehoods !”

“ Ah ! then, that the d—l may take ye, Pether, fur ye are givin' me more throuble an' unaisiness than the horses an' wagons an' shells put together ; an' if ye call me a liar agin, I'll put the 'quibosh' on ye. You'd be betther off in face ov a barrel ov cognac than in this holy place, an' I'll tell the parish priest, the very minit I'm intrhduced to him in the mornin', about your conduct—now, that I will, Pether. Now, let me finish me story, as it will be a great weight off me heart for yez to know it. More shells came towards me, an' I done the self-same thing wid thim, as they came up to me. Afther they quit comin', meself went down off the wagon, tuk out the animals, an' galloped down to the 'pub' across the road, where they are now as fresh as a daisy. Lots ov hay, a fine stable. Ould Germain is very kind, faix.

“ Who is Germain, Barney ? or how did you come to know him so soon ?”

F .

“Och, then, Mr. Cunningham, I’ll tell yez. It takes ‘an ould dog for a hard road.’ I wint in, an’ shook hands wid the man that looked like the masher ov the house, an’ then tould him, ‘Give us a bottle of the raal stuff.’ He gave me a bottle of cognac, an’ I handed him fifteen penny-pieces, an’ like a decent ould fellow, he handed me back eightpence. Then I asked fur another bottle, and paid him fur it, an’ I says to him, ‘Now, Monsieur, sit down like a lamb, an’ take a raal swig, fur ye look like a damn gay ould boy,’ sis I meself. ‘*Comprey pa—comprey pa,*’ sis he.

“‘Ah! *comprey-pa,* be danged,’ says meself; so I tuk a chair, an’ put him sittin’ down in it, then filt out two tumblers ov the ‘native,’ an’ says to him, ‘*Slanthe, Mr. Frinchman;*’ an’ he says, ‘*Avic, slanthe, Monsey,*’ an’ took a right swig. Meself finished the bowl, un filt up another. I filt in some too to the Frinchman. ‘*Avic, machree,* if he didn’t go near breakin’ his heart laughin’. How an’ iver, whin he quit, I says to him, ‘Well, sir;’ says I to him, ‘would you kindly tell us your name, if you please?’ ‘Och, thin, why not,’ sis he. So he takes a pin an’ ink an’ paper, an’ left the whole lot afore me. Meself thought he wanted me to write a letther to his wife, or some other distant relation, until he began to shout, ‘Nom, nom, nom, silver plate!’ Then the thought struck me that it was me name he wanted, so I wrote down—

‘MR. BARNEY O’NEILL ‘IRELAND.’

and tould him write his nom, nom. As I pushed over the pen an’ ink, meself saw him lookin’ at me mighty sharp. At last he ran for a big book, an’ sent missingers for all the neighbours. The neighbours come in while the ould man was lookin’ over the big book. An’ shure enough, whatever he read in that book, he tould over again to the newcomers, an’ thin all looked very queer at meself. The ould man signed his name under mine, just the same as ye see it in this bit of paper. Then the whole crew of them wrote down their names, an’ that’s the way I come to know the people. They all stood drinks a-piecé, and was nearly keep-

ing me intirely, but I stole away from thim, an' I'm here now in the chapel, to me grief, alongside ov swarin' Pether. Now there's the ind ov me story. But I think there's no luck near Pether, an' only that I'm in the chapel, d—l a wink would cross me eyes this blessed night."

MR. BARNEY O'NEILL,
IRELAND.

GERMAIN ROSSEAU,
L'AUBERGE DE STE. JEANE, CHATEAUDUN.

CHAPTER X.

“That livid cheek, that stony air
Of mixed defiance and despair.”

THE GIAOUR.

THE *reveille* was being sounded in the streets when we awoke that morning. The constant tramp of men, the rumbling of artillery carriages, the neighing of horses, told but too plainly that the troops were in motion. Directly the Surgeon-in-Chief and M. Picard entered the chapel, and informed us that “we should be on the road now.” Where no clothing is removed, there is not much time wasted in arranging the toilet; and where duty is required, no time is wasted in preparing breakfast. So, having renewed our flasks with cognac, and furnished our haversacks with a crust of bread and a bottle of *vin ordinaire*, we were in the position assigned us directly—viz., with the *van*. No sooner were we there, than the order to proceed was given—we were *en route à Orleans*. After eight miles of a quick march, a halt was called, when our men invested in the crust of bread and *vin ordinaire*, ridding their haversacks, for the time, of such a friendly burthen. Six miles further on, we entered Patay, where we learned that the troops and Ambulance were to return to Chateaudun. No cause given, except that the Bavarians were fifteen miles away, and would not give battle. Arriving in Chateaudun at about five o'clock that evening, we found that the burying of the dead was being carried out on an extensive scale. The railway bridge over the high road which leads from Vendome to Orleans was blown up the previous day, and into this vacuum were hurled the dead of the Saxons and Bavarians. Over each layer of bodies was sand, and so on, until the road was blocked up completely. At seven o'clock, the rails were again placed, and the train from Vendome passed over the sepulchre wherein were interred the remains

of 4,000 Germans ; and it is supposed 4,000 more perished in the ruin occasioned by their own bloodthirstiness and fanaticism.

“ What can ennoble knaves, or fools, or cowards ?
Alas ! not all the blood of all the Howards ! ”

The Saxons, especially, rushed to and fro with torch and oil-can, caring for nought save dark revenge, destroying everything within their reach. Had I the descriptive powers of Hegeffias, I could not describe the scenes enacted on that dreadful November's evening, nor could I describe the scenes resulting from the savage fury of the Saxon troops ! Days rolled on, and each day there was taken from the ruins the corpse of some well-known inhabitant. Orphans walked about in groups, until taken in by the good nuns, and in many instances by the townspeople. Members of our Ambulance gave them money to buy necessaries, and sometimes would lead a batch of the poor children into a café, where they would provide a dinner or *dejeuner*, as the case might be, for them.

During the evening, we rambled *à discretion* through the ruins, visited the Madeline and church of St. Joseph, the hospitals and courts of justice, and only received for our pains convincing proofs of the barbarous manner in which the Saxon regiments behaved themselves. In the old church near the cemetery, a woman was still suspended by a rope from one of the galleries. She was quite dead. Near her were two of the Saxon infantry lying dead also ; and on the gallery were the dead bodies of three more of that unholy race. Was she the heroine ? None could tell. Perhaps the men, or rather cowards, who strangled her, were now before their Judge, their bodies festering in the grave. If so, her name will remain unknown, but the circumstances in connection with her death prove that she fought and suffered at the hands of the Saxons. Her acts will be cherished in remembrance.

A march of twenty-eight miles, with such scenes as I have tried to describe presenting themselves continually, ought to suffice for any individual or number of individuals. No one said to the contrary, and by nine o'clock that evening, we were again trying to sleep on the chairs in St. John's

chapel. Early on the morning of the 14th, parade was called (seemingly without any particular object), and as soon dismissed; orders there were none, a circumstance which by no means brought forth a tear, for the morning was a miserable one. The appearance of the snow-clad plateau, and the ruins about, was quite enough to convince one that he was already frost-bitten; also, the probabilities were, that we would have this day for rest or amusement, as we might choose, for there was no stir visible among the troops, neither was a movement expected. Taking all these things into consideration, we thought it much better to remain within the chapel, at least until M. Picard made arrangements with the proprietor of some hotel, for supplying us with breakfast. And we did remain until eight o'clock, when the morning Mass was ended. M. Picard now joined us, and imparted the welcome intelligence that breakfast was ready in the Auberge de St. Jean. Directly the chapel was evacuated by our men, and Germain's auberge in their possession. It was noon-day before our men left Rosseau's, intent upon taking a general view of the town and its people. The first object which drew their attention, was the chateau, and towards it they rambled. The old woman at the gate had not the least hesitation in opening it, and allowing the visitors to enter. The castle itself possesses an eastern aspect, but the view is now intercepted by the buildings which form the modern portion of the town. Still from the turrets you can get a view of the plains extending towards Fontainebleau, Orleans, and Bourges; while to the west, you can see the outline of the round tower of Connoree, with the heights around it. The river Ozanne, flowing along towards its parent Loire, looks well in the background. The mills along the river are working up industry in the same manner as they did five days ago, before the scourge of war fell upon the town; everything resumes its wonted appearance except the blocked-up streets towards the railway station, the ancient street near the cavalry barracks, and the clock in the Hotel de Ville, of which the following story is told:

On the night that the Germans were driven from the town by the Francs-Tireurs and Garde Nationale, an enter-

prising German clockmaker, of the Prussian Landwehr, turned round as he reached the corner of the Café de la Place, and fired one of the explosive bullets (which the savage ingenuity of the Germans invented) right through the clock, leaving a gaping wound visible in the dial, which caused M. Lumiere, the mayor, to leave an order for a new clock with the jeweller next door. Such was the fate of the old clock, which I heard kept time for half-a-century.

The General Hospital and the school of the White Sisters were filled with the wounded and small-pox patients. Old Desbans, the pharmacien, is making a fortune in his snug little shop at the corner of the square, near the College Cummunal; while the old eccentric professor of learned languages (who lodges with M. Desbans) marches through town, throwing up his head and heels, the while launching fearful curses against the Francs-Tireurs for allowing one of the Germans to escape. The towns-folk run to and fro conveying their treasure, which was hidden on the approach of the enemy, to its former resting-place. A crowd is gathered round our men who are tugging away at the large wagon, which, as the reader may remember, was left in the debris of the Rue de Gendarmerie the night of our entry. They got it extricated at length, and Barney O'Neill volunteers to horse it, and drive it off to our temporary headquarters. There is no time wasted by O'Neill in putting the horses to, and having done so he mounts into the driver's seat, gets his horses into a trot, and almost drives them over the delicate frame of M. le Professor Bernott. The learned gentleman calls O'Neill a villain, and loudly complains of the treatment he is subjected to. Barney reins up his steeds, and calls the man of learning a *gander*. A regular round of abuse ensues, but Barney proves an over-match for his opponent, who is compelled to betake himself under the roof of the friendly *Æsculapius*, M. Desbans. Well might M. Bernott exclaim,

“How much a dunce that has been sent to roam,
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.”

Martellet and Rogers are pushing a large trade, the former in good rum and brandy, the latter in bad brandy and no

rum. The tobacconists thought it wise to close their shops, for the simple reason of no tobacco being in them and no prospect of procuring any, leaving the lovers of the "weed" to consume the grains of the coffee, which they must cook first. M. Lumiere, jun., has the roof of his cottage by the river floating down the stream, strange to say, without losing its entirety, though shells from a Prussian battery blew it from its proper place into the centre of the river. Indeed the worthy owner himself had a wonderful escape; his nose, with the embrasure underneath, and the "grinders" therein situate, were carried off; the handsome young man of former times has lost his "phiz," and with it, of course, his smiling countenance. "Still he is not happy," though he suffered for his country. The chapel near the cemetery, now years out of use, received rough treatment at the hands of the German artillery. This is the chapel on the front of which the inscription "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*" is still visible, and one which the Communists of former days dedicated to "Reason." Many dark deeds are said to be perpetrated within its walls during its occupation by the Atheists, and it is said that their ghosts appear at certain times during the year, making night hideous with their screams.

The convents and churches are numerous, and the *religieuse* affable, hospitable, and patriotic, notwithstanding the severe trials they have to undergo, for the convents are literally packed with the wounded and sick of the combatants on the Loire. The wooden bridge over the Ozanne river, near to the extensive mills of MM. Roland and Roche, still continues to burn. The railway bridge over the by-road, from the high road to Chartres to the village of Étéville, on the Route d'Orleans, has been blown up, and the great iron supports are scattered to a distance—a fact which shows clearly powder to be meted out without measure. On the south-western side of the town, towards Vendome, the fine elms that once lined the highway have disappeared, as also the gate-lodge at the railway-crossing on the road to Beaugency. From the forest, west of Chateaudun, smoke and flame soar up alternately; and, though last not least, the mounted marines, or rather Marine à Cheval, are hawling

up the ascent three guns which they had taken from the Germans somewhere near Bonneville.

As it would be a heavy task to enumerate everything taking place at this particular time and place, I will refrain from wearying the reader or myself with further narrative concerning the reminiscences of our first days in Chateaudun, knowing too well that this unfortunate town will offer subject *in abundantia* for future pages.

CHAPTER XI.

“ Now, in thy proud mute eloquence,
 The wide earth well may know
 The river of thy centuried thought,
 Its caravel of woe.
 But we who cling to thee, dear love,
 No tears our eyelids wet—
 We only swear, before high heaven.
 Thou art not conquered yet.”

LEO.

THE morning of the 15th November was ushered in with a terrible hail storm, which was sufficient in itself to put an army to flight—that is, if an army was unfortunate enough to be in the field. However, neither our Ambulance nor the troops with whom it was to serve were in unsheltered quarters. Our men were within the chapel, lying on the steps of the small altars, on chairs, or whatever else they believed might conduce to their comfort, where they would remain wrapped in their rugs and great-coats until the bell would remind them that six o'clock Mass was about being solemnized; when a few would rise from their *al fresco* beds, arrange their ready toilet, and take their seats in the sanctuary. By far the greater number would make a desperate effort to pull the scanty collars of extravagant great coats over their faces, and then lie down to sleep again, until the *generale* beats without—or probably within, if the drummers thought that those whom they were directed to summon on duty showed no signs of obeying.

On this particular morning the Holy Sacrifice was scarcely offered, when the *reveille* sounded within the chapel, while the drummers “laid on” with a vengeance without. What was the cause of these sounds? Why did French drummers and buglers pay such attention to their work, when they have orders to call the Franco-Irish Ambulance on duty?

These questions were easily answered. Either our corps was summoned to lead in the van, or otherwise the Prus-

sians were coming on in force. Only under such circumstances did the drummers and buglers referred to work hard at their instruments, for well they knew their commander was conferring no small honour on the Irish, when he gave them the place of honour in the "van." Such was the case on the morning of the 15th, for no sooner had the priest left the altar, than M. Picard, the Surgeon-in-Chief, and the General in command, entered, and imparted the latest, viz., "The men of the Franco-Irish Ambulance are to assemble inside the barricade on the Route d'Orleans, with horses, wagons, &c., and are to proceed in the 'van' to Patay."

Without delay the "favoured few" roll up their rugs, pull on their boots and great-coats, and away to Germain's to get their flasks renewed. At twenty minutes to seven o'clock, men, wagons, and horses are flying down the Route de Breu, over the Pont Yere, and up the rugged street called the Rue de la Chateau, by the Convent of the Sœur Noir, and into the square, where we get time to run into the Café de la Place, there to procure an extra bottle of cognac, for our men are determined to lead on at four and a-half miles an hour, and to keep up the march they deemed an odd "swig" of cognac indispensable. Out again into the square, and away to the place appointed—inside the barricade—there to await the order to march. At seven o'clock this order was given, and away went our horses in a trot, surgeons, field-men, and Frانس Tireurs next, and 30,000 Mobiles and line troops following; Near Etéville we were passed by the "horse-marines," mounted Frانس-Tireurs, and some companies of cuirassiers and lancers, who, on reaching the open country beyond that village, took the fields. On reaching the ascent, M. Molony, who was driving the advanced wagon, descried the uniforms of the Cuirassiers-Blanche, with those of the Brandenburgher Uhlans. Our mounted marines, Frانس-Tireurs, and regular cavalry continued to advance at a brisk pace, and everything signalled a skirmish in the front, for the marines and Frانس-Tireurs were very anxious to have a brush with the cavalry of the enemy. The march grew faster, and after eight miles more being left in

our rere, we gained the village of Miremont. Here the cavalry who flew past us at Etéville now repassed at a gallop. Still we continued to advance, the while being entertained by the Uhlans, who manœuvred over the road before us. Gaining the well-wooded valley of Pratlieux, the Francs-Tireurs, who for the last hour kept close behind our wagons, now entered the forest on either side of the road, merely to try and catch the wary Uhlans. The mounted Francs-Tireurs galloped past again, and were soon seen to reach the open ground at the eastern end of the valley, where they were seen to rein up. Directly they were joined by the men of our Ambulance and the Francs-Tireurs who had entered the forest; then all proceeded to Patay, now only one mile distant. Reaching that place at eleven o'clock of the forenoon, we learned that the enemy were in force at Orleans, and preparing to advance; therefore the battle for the supremacy of the Loire could not longer be delayed than two hours. Passing through Patay, we continued to push forward, until ordered to halt within a mile of Orleans. Captain Pelly then brought an order from his General, directing us to remain there until the troops filed past. This they were not long about. 17,000 of the Mobilised Guard marched past. The line troops defiled by the road to Meung, with the intention of carrying on the attack on the river side of the town. The youths who formed the Garde-Mobile were supported by six batteries of artillery and 5,000 cavalry; 300 Francs-Tireurs (de Pyrennese et l'Amérique) were sent among them to create confidence.

After they had marched to their positions—west, south, and north-west of Orleans, an officer brought an order to our Surgeon-in-Chief, the result of which was that we moved to within twelve yards of the lines, when the stretchers were taken from the wagons, medicine and surgical instrument, and chests, placed near to the surgeon's tent, where the members of our medical department were ready to carry on their operations. The field-men distributed themselves *à discretion*, and wherever our men were seen to group, there also would the wagon be driven. M. Molony brought his wagon towards the right of the line, and as if this was to be the signal for the combat to commence, the German artillery

began to play, while that of the French was only directed against the Germans who formed the first line of defence. The Mobiles advanced rapidly, led on by the Francs-Tireurs. The while our men were hard at work, which necessitated the nearer approach of our wagons. It was at this juncture that a shell hit the footboard of M. Molony's wagon, which caused such a concussion, that the driver was sent spinning through the air. When descending from his airy eminence, his fall was broken by the willing Mobiles, who pushed him against a horse before he touched *terra firma*. He lay unconscious for some minutes, but on regaining his senses, he resumed his seat—not his former one, but an extempore one, on the roof of his wagon—and taking the reins, with his usual *nonchalance*, kept the horses well in hand while the wounded were transferred from the stretchers to the wagons. Our men worked well that day, and though the wounded were few, considering the galling fire under which the troops advanced, it was arduous, dangerous work to carry these soldiers from the place where they fell, even to the wagons. Yet we did not “bemoan our fate, or sigh, or wish to get to bed.” The musketry fire now grew deafening, many of the infantry were compelled to fling away their heated rifles, and take up that of a fallen brother. Officers rushed to and fro, giving their orders; old colonels made faces, made speeches, cried, laughed—in fact, did everything. The honest Moblots were fighting well. At four o'clock that evening, we were in the streets of Orleans, or rather in one of them. Fortune smiled on the French arms so far. As yet the battle was neither lost nor won; troops rushed madly forward to death or victory; street-fighting now presented itself in all its blind fury to our men for the sixth time; the Francs-Tireurs were performing miracles round us. The constancy of the Germans was not proof against the youthful, chivalrous, patriotic Mobiles, and as if seized with panic, whole batches of them fell on their knees and craved for mercy; but the white flag was not hoisted by them—therefore they paid for their negligence. No mercy was shown them. Francs-Tireurs fought as regular troops now, and the few who fell into the hands of the Germans met with a cruel fate. This was the avenging hour, and Germany suffered.

The clock in the Hotel de Ville was striking six when our men entered the Place Joan d'Arc, in time to witness the last of the struggle; and though anxious to reach the square sooner, they could not pass; and even if they could, many of them would not, for who was he among us who would rush on to satisfy his curiosity while the *hors de combat* of those who fought so well lay about in all directions? None. Was it not more noble to assist those who fell, before their life's blood ebbed away, than to be in the square, where merely the re-guard of the retreating Germans was trying to check a pursuit? Undoubtedly it was. The great Archbishop said it was; and who could be a better judge than Monsigneur Dupanloup? In five minutes later the shout of victory arose—"Orleans is our own!" That evening there was a thanksgiving service in the cathedral, at which thousands attended, while tens of thousands could not gain admittance. The joy was universal—the thanksgiving sincere.

Our surgeons were kept busy until an advanced hour that night; but the duty of the field-men was over at eight o'clock that evening, at which hour they commenced to make themselves happy. In this there was no difficulty; for let them appear in any place through town, the people invariably pressed them to accept of that hospitality which they have always at hand for the Irish. They did accept, and, as a result, spent such a pleasant evening that they only wished to have the stay in Orleans a prolonged one. It was drawing near the midnight hour, when we were all assembled in one of the Christian Brothers' schools, according to appointment, and confident of being permitted to go to sleep; but our confidence was shaken for a time, for M. Picard and Dr. Baxter, with their indelible orderly sergeant came on the scene. The Director at once commenced to harangue our fellows, and said:—

"Nov vee shall have to be in readiness to depart from Orleans in dey mornin' of dey morrow à six heures for Chateaudun. Dey orderly-sergeant vill read to you dey orders; and I hope very mosh that you vill be in readiness, so that vee shall have no delay. The orderly vill now read for you dey instructions. I vant to mention to dey drivers

of the dey wagons that dey must be in de Place Joan d'Arc near to dey station à six heures."

When M. Picard delivered his little speech, Sergeant Moore stepped forward *à la mode de gendarme*; and having given his customary salute to the men, he commenced to read, and in a solemn voice too :

"The men of the corps are to be on parade at half-past five in the morning, with everything in readiness for a heavy march.

"Position will be taken up in the square, between the statue and the Hotel de Ville, from whence we will proceed to Chateaudun *via* Meung and Beaugency.

"The horsemen are to have horses and wagons drawn up opposite the cathedral at parade hour, viz., half-past five.

"The master of the horse is requested to see that this last order is strictly adhered to."

"These are the horders," continued Moore, "and devilish hard ones they are, bedad. I find from experience that the cognac in this town is very good, and I'm hanged sorry to be leaving so soon. However, it can't be helped; but I tell you again and again to bring plenty of it with you, for the same cognac is worth a dozen of dinners for men who are eternally marchin'. Bedad, it will help to do us all the good in the world. Meself is only taking a few bottles of claret with me; so, if I call on any honourable gentleman here for a mixture during the march, he'll highly compliment me by giving it freely. For all that, I mightn't call at all for it; but when he sees me saluting him, he can tip a naggin or so into my canteen."

I dare say he would have continued giving his useful hints, had he not, quite by accident, saluted one of our men, who, acting on the civil hint threw out during the learned sergeant's lecture, gave him a full bottle of cognac, which was seen lying empty in five minutes after. The thoughts of any sergeant being able to "polish off" a bottle of brandy in five minutes, acted like laudanum, and by the time the clock tolled the midnight hour, our men were in the beds provided for them.

At 5.30, sharp, on the morning of the 16th we were on

parade. The council of the town, accompanied by their illustrious Archbishop, were also on the ground ; the Mayor read the farewell address, to which the Surgeon-in-Chief responded on behalf of the Corps. The whole ceremony did not last longer than twelve minutes, after which our wagons were driven across the square to take up the position indicated. Everything being now in readiness, the order to proceed was given, and we parted under very favourably auspices. The snow lay thick upon the ground, without any sign of a thaw, which added considerably to increase our *corps d'esprit*, and the march was kept up with surprising ardour, though the pace was, to say the least, extremely quick.

Nothing occurred until reaching the town of Meung, where the people turned out *en masse* to accord us a welcome, and where we were entertained to a reasonable *dejeuner*. *Apropos*, I may mention that the fifteen wounded soldiers whom we had in our wagons were not forgotten, either by the townsfolk or our men. In one instance, extreme kindness nearly proved fatal, for O'Neill administered cognac *ad libitum* to one of the poor fellows, and had not our surgeons been present, it is possible that the man would have died before reaching Chateaudun. O'Neill received a severe reprimand from the Surgeon-in-Chief, which had, as a result, an apparent diminution in the distribution of O'Neill's well-meaning acts of kindness.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of that day, we re-entered Chateaudun, where we found the Francs-Tireurs on duty. There was a report that the Germans were coming on ; in fact, they could be seen from the plateau—so the good people of the town said. To the plateau, then, we made our way, but could only perceive that an unusual quiet reigned over the country within view. At length the sentinel on the plateau lends his telescope, when, sure enough, a hundred Uhlans are seen to cross the bridge over the river Ozanne, and advance along the Bonnevale road. Presently another company of them appear on the heights towards Fratreville, and advanced along the Route d'Orleans. By this time a goodly number of Francs-Tireurs joined us on the plateau, and having taken a survey of the situation, dis-

tributed themselves wherever their judgment dictated. Eight of the Francs-Tireurs, with three of our men, walked leisurely down the Route de Chartres, and then got on to the railroad, where the Francs-Tireurs lay flat in the snow. The trio of our Ambulance continued to walk along the line until hailed by the Uhlans. The latter advanced towards them, with the intention of procuring information, but at the moment their officer was about questioning our men, the sharp crack of the Spencer rang out; the Uhlans turned to retreat with surprising alacrity. However, they took time to fire off their pistols at our men, who as usual escaped unhurt. In the meantime the Uhlans who thought to enter by the Route d'Orleans were surprised in a similar manner. Those who made a *detour* by the northern banks of the Ozanne heard the firing, and of course retreated, keeping farmstead and forest at a respectable distance, lest the dreaded Francs-Tireurs might chance on them; thus were the Uhlans defeated, leaving fourteen dead and two wounded. So much for an adventure.

After the hard march from Orleans, and the excitement consequent on a "brush" with Uhlans, it was no wonder that both our men and those of the Franc-Tireur corps were tired; therefore they retired to rest at an early hour that evening, and thoroughly enjoyed an undisturbed sleep until five o'clock the following morning, at which hour one of the corps (formerly a member of the Papal brigade) sounded the *reveille*. All were on their feet mechanically, fully believing that the Germans had them surrounded; but our orderly-sergeant was not to be outdone—he understood the *ruse*. Going into his bed again, he was permitted to fall asleep, then taken head and heels and quietly brought into the cemetery, where he was left down on the snow. Some minutes elapsed before he became cognisant of his position; raising himself, he rushed over to the Auberge de St. Jean, and once there he commenced to consign the members of the Franco-Irish Ambulance to the keeping of the "evil one."

" But curses are like young chickens,
And still come home to roost."

No more sleep for those who were not proof against

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every variety of noise—tin-whistles, cornets, trumpets, and drums, the "Sloth's" immoderate laughter, Barney O'Neill's exclamations, Peter Phelps' curses, all tended to confusion. In the midst of this scene, the accomplished orderly re-entered—he forgot his canteen, and for it he reluctantly returned; fortunately he got it, and was almost departed in peace when our sergeant-major reminded him of the time when he fired off the ram-rod of his rifle at the Garibaldians outside Ancona.

"Well, you may thank your God that you weren't there, or I might fire you off for one, you thin, ill-fed donkey," was Moore's retort.

This last from Moore placed the sergeant-major *hors-de-combat*, but others came on to the attack; amongst them was one of his comrades in the Papal service, who, in the most friendly manner possible, rid the orderly of his cognac flask, and distributed the contents between a few others. The hasty owner of the emptied flask seized a cutlass and captured the flask in splendid style; having it again in his possession, he thought it proper to glut his ire, and accordingly he hacked the ill-fated flask into many pieces. This exhibition of temper caused no small amount of laughter, and this laughter caused Moore to fall into a mood bordering on insanity. This time he rushed forward, sending all in his way to the ground; among the first who fell victims to his anger was the corpulent Germain Rosseau, Mdle. Adélé Rosseau, and three old female servants. Of course, he was followed by a few of our men who wished to keep an eye on the "father of the regiment," and who were compelled to tumble over the prostrate forms of several people, whom the learned sergeant felled to the earth *à la mode de M. Germain et Mdlle. Rosseau*. He was seen to enter Madame Genliss's café, where his tormentors would not dare to follow, lest they might have to "brave the lion in his den."

Parade was called at six o'clock, but the orderly with his book was absent; however, by the time drill was over the sergeant put in an appearance, and having written out the orders, as dictated by the Director, he began to read:

“1st.—Gentlemen, you are expressly forbidden to push far into the country, unless when on duty with the Francs-Tireurs or troops; and, as a preventative, you will be required to assemble on parade ground thrice each day, unless when on such duty, under fine of three francs.

“2nd.—It is necessary that six members volunteer to remove the school furniture from the convent school of the Black Sisters to the gardens opposite, and six more are required to remove the iron bedsteads in the Caserne du Cavalrie to the College Communal.

“The Surgeon-in-Chief earnestly hopes that volunteers will offer for this duty.

“M. E. PICARD.”

There was no difficulty in procuring voluntary services—twelve men offered themselves, and after mess went on duty. By two o'clock that day the school-room of the Black Sisters was changed into an hospital-ward, which was to be under the immediate care of the Surgeon-in-Chief; similar steps were being taken to render the dormitories of the White Sisters' convent fit for the purposes of an hospital, which was to be under Dr. Ryan's charge.

The evening passed off quietly—nothing of incident occurring, except the fact of “Lash” knocking the heads of four Frenchmen together, merely because they called him a Prussian.

CHAPTER XII.

“ The soldier braves death for a fanciful wreath,
 In glory’s romantic career;
 But he raises the foe when in battle laid low,
 And bathes every wound with a tear.”

BYRON.

AT one o’clock on the morning of the 18th November, our reveries were disturbed by the sound of musketry proceeding from the direction of the sand quarries, near the brick-fields, on the Route de Brou; but we did not trouble ourselves even to inquire the cause, for we knew that the watchful Francs-Tireurs were looking to our safety, and we slept on again until the unwelcome *reveille* let us know that the hour of parade was nigh. Donning our boots and great coats, we sallied out into the frosty air, only to find that the Surgeon-in-Chief directed fines to be struck, on account of non-appearance on the ground at seven o’clock, though only two minutes had elapsed since the clock tolled that hour. However, owing to the circumstances in which we were then placed, he cancelled the fines, and substituted a salutary warning.

Parade was about being dismissed, when, to our surprise, we perceived a body of men, who seemed to be Zouaves, advancing under the banner of the “Red Cross.” They were fully armed with rifle, cutlass, &c. Who can they be? No one knew for the time, but as they drew nearer, a “knowing one” proclaimed them to be Charette’s Zouaves, and he was right, for the very moment they saw our men, they knew them to be the Irish, and leaped forward *sans ceremonie* to the grasp of friendship. In another moment they were within the Auberge de St. Jean, and even at that early hour, the full bumper passed through honest hands.

They entertained our men with stories relative to the

cause of last night's firing, and all felt happy that a company of Uhlans were detached from their quarters at Chartres, for the purpose of marching to the assistance, or probably to levy contributions, in the neighbourhood. However, they were well watched, and when they arrived at Sancheville, the *curé* of that village under the circumstances and intentions were, and so well, too, that he sent the Mayor of Brou, which ran thus:—"M. le Maire, au moment où les Uhlans sont en marche sur Lorgnon, ils ont l'intention de marcher sur Brou. Si vous savez de nos troupes qu'ils sont là, faites-leur savoir.—C. HENRY, *Curé*."

The Mayor of Brou received the telegram, and immediately he knew of the whereabouts of the Papal Zouaves, he sent another telegram stating the case. At the same time he sent one of his sons and three other officers, lest the telegram might be a Prussian contrivance, and the civil outposts brought in intelligence that the first of the Zouave telegrams to be genuine. The Zouaves immediately adopted means to intercept the marauding party, and were pushed forward to Lorgnon, where they arrived at the hour of midnight. The few peasantry that remained in the village, whom they thought them that the Germans were already in the village, were doing it; so, to make sure of their game, they went to the forest of Chantmesle, from which they advanced towards the village. The Uhlans, placing too much confidence on their outposts, were enjoying themselves in the village, at the expense of the inhabitants, when they were surprised into the houses, treating the Uhlans to a severe lesson of *discretion*. Two or three minutes sufficed to bring about a close to hand combat, after which the dead bodies of the Uhlans were carried from the houses where they were killed to a cemetery across the street, there to be buried, as usual, too.

Not one of the Zouaves received even a wound, but the two Francs-Tireurs who accompanied them were severely wounded, and for these a wagon, under the command of Ryan, was now dispatched.

No sooner had our wagon disappeared than the cry of "Pruesse! Pruesse!" resounded on all sides. On the bridge over the Ozanne, a

habitants gesticulated wildly, as much as to say, "Come on, come on!" The Zouaves got the order to advance to the plateau by the steps, which they did at a trot. Many of our men were there before them, but there was no need of telling the Zouaves what they saw. Bavarian cavalry were advancing in force along the Bonnevale road. In an instant the cutlass was detached from the rifle (a *rusé de guerre* in itself, for the German soldier is apt to detect the blade of an enemy even at a distance), while they ran from the plateau to take up position in the square. The Francs-Tireurs were distributed in every conceivable place that could afford an ambush. The members of our Ambulance were marching across the Place d'Armes, when six hussars galloped past. In a minute they were prisoners, without a shot being fired. The "van" was already drawn up about 500 yards below the Bureau de l'Octroi, on the Route de Chartres, awaiting the return of the men who were already prisoners. The Francs-Tireurs understood what the Germans tarried for, and one of them possessing himself of the horse and accoutrements of one of the prisoners, rode past the Bureau, and gave the signal to the Germans to advance. This they commenced to do, when the disguised "vulture plume" rode back into the square, threw off the German uniform, and rejoined his comrades. The "van" had passed the first ambush and the second without being fired on. A great number of the main body were already past the first ambush, when the report of small arms told them that their entry would be opposed. Never dreaming, poor souls, that their outposts were outdone, they continued to advance, but what was their surprise when they beheld the troops sent forward in their "van" rushing, *pêle mêle*, back on them. Oh! victims to deception, how you are to be pitied! Here they must remain until the squadrons in the rear retreat. Here they must remain listening to the sweet music of Chassepots, and Spencers, and Remingtons—listening to the groans of their dying and wounded, and, under showers of leaden bullets, they must be content. Poor victims to deception, why did you side with your royal humbug—your foolish sovereign. Write him a letter from home—that is, if you ever get there—to say you will fight

no longer for the creation of a Prussian despotism in Bavaria is far more comfortable for you than Chartres" of Chateaudun. Tell him so, all of you go home.

Whatever deviltry was carried on in their rear but this I know that for over an hour they were in the Rue de Chartres, and on the road to station, and could not move any side, the while a desperate fire poured in by skilled Francs-Tir Zouaves threw up barricades, from behind carried on the work of destruction. In fine, the connected with this rather unfortunate affair troops of Germany, which can be called surpris only six hundred of them were put *hors de co* only three individuals on the French side suffered.

By noon-day we had the Prussian wounded charge to Dr. Baxter, at the new hospital of Sisters—that is, the more serious cases, while wounded were either sent to the Hospital Dieu, of the Sœur de la Paix. The wounded of the Fra numbering three, we sent on to the hospital of Sisters, where Dr. Ryan was to give them his a his return from Lorgnon.

The time in which this wholesale distribution of wounded was carried out, was not more than twelve but I must confess, that had we not the help of and a number of Francs-Tireurs, it would take twenty-four hours to accomplish the same work.

At five o'clock that evening, the wagon sent on in the morning returned. Dr. Ryan, with the panying him, came in directly after. When they that they missed an unusual treat, their dissatisfaction apparent; in fact, one of the field-men was incon launched curses, threats, etc., against the ad brought them the order to proceed to the quiet Lorgnon; but their despair did, by no means, in the arrangements which Zouaves, Francs-Tireurs bers of our Ambulance had made for whiling away ing; on the contrary, it tended to prove that ev

transient—that each moment was not our own. However, to all intents and purposes we might consider this afternoon ours, and not knowing what untoward event might be incidental to the morrow, we resolved on making “a night of it,” and, therefore, arranged the preliminaries within the concert room in connection with Mdlle. Genliss’s Café d’Or. Having succeeded in obtaining a promise from the said Mdlle. Genliss, that she would provide a supper for the Corps de l’Ambulance, Zouaves, and a few Francs-Tireurs, all parties concerned took their seats round the blazing wood fires which Mdlle. Genliss ordered her servants to light, and awaited patiently the hour when supper would be served up. In time that hour came round, and passed off in tranquillity ; not so the hour following, for one of the Francs-Tireurs present—a sullen, silent individual—rose from his seat to propose a toast. He said : “Gentlemen, I have the honour of being here among you, of enjoying your hospitality, and partaking of your pleasures. You are Irish and French, I am Italian. Most of you fought against me in former days, perhaps conscientiously, and I say emphatically that that was wrong. You fought against men who were fighting for the liberties of their country—you made battle against them, and acted as hirelings to an unworthy master.”

Here the Italian was interrupted ; the Zouaves sprang to their feet—one of them was about strangling him, when he was prevailed upon to desist, and the Italian was allowed to proceed. He said : “Whether you have done this through your love of rapine, or, what is worse, subservience to your Romish priests, I will not question, but whatever your motives were they were of the darkest hue. Enough for my wrongs, and here is the toast, *Viva la Republique rouge ! à bas le Papé !*”

The Italian escaped once, but now he said a few words too many to escape a second time. A number rushed on the fanatical “Red,” and before outsiders could know of the occurrence his dead body was dragged into the garden.

“After a storm comes a calm.” Every one was silent for a few moments, until Bob Clinch of the *Francs-Tireurs de l’Amerique* rose to give his judgment. He said, “Gentle-

men, I have looked on calmly at the tragedy just been enacted. If I did not coincide with the acts of the Irish, and hold the sympathies of the majority present, I would be the first to avenge the death; as it is past, let it be thought of no more."

Bill Tallant, of the Americans, then stood up, and in a bold energetic speech, condemned the man who would permit any man holding the same opinions as the defunct Red, to breathe the same air as honest men, and solemnly declared that if he was appointed executioner, he would not accord to such as he (the deceased) a soldier's death—shooting, but would hack him to pieces.

After Bill Tallant resumed his seat, Louis Guern dit Duchenne, of the Zouaves, put an end to the speech-making by the manner in which he rendered *Partant pour la Syrie*; he was encored, and responded by giving a verse or two from *La Morté de Joan d'Arc*, after which he said: "Messieurs, our brave Charette is old; I am young. We fight under the banner of the Red Cross; so did our ancestors. I expect that our dear Colonel will drop in upon us directly—then how happy all will be! With me shall rest the duty of showing to him the corpse of the unjust, sent to his account by the hands of an Irishman, and one too who in days now passed over stood by me on Italian soil—one, too, who left his own dear land to be the champion of that religion which Irishmen love so well, and fight under the standard of Catholicity—to fight for Pius the Ninth; he shall have the premier introduction to brave Charette."

Young Duchenne was about continuing his speech, when the tramp of men and clang of arms arrested our attention. Could it be the old Colonel? No; for all the men that remained with him at Brou could not cause all this noise. Well, the sentries are our security, and we will not disturb ourselves now. They must be our troops!

Directly the well-known challenge was bawled out by some person in the streets. Duchenne knew the voice, and in a moment he leaped towards the door, opened it, and in walks the hero of the Red Cross. Charette was in our midst.

The youthful Zouave kept his promise, and introduced "the destroyer of Reds" to his colonel, and then each one present. A chair was placed for the Chef des Zouaves near to the stove, where he sat down and warmed himself; again rising he complimented all on the gallantry displayed the previous night and morning; he spoke in eulogistic terms of the Irish Ambulance Corps, not from previous experience, but from accounts rendered him by the troops and people with whom he had come in contact; he hoped before many days passed over him to see them in the field with his faithful Zouaves.

Duchenne here described to him the death of the Italian, and asked would he bring in his corpse to show it him.

"Leave his body where it is, Louis," he said, "it will attract the dogs, and, with them, his confederates in wickedness—the Germans. It is bitter cold," he added; "there is a frozen breeze without that would take the ears off a person. Have you got any warm claret, Louis?"

"I have, Colonel; some of the oldest I could procure in the Cavé Glacis. I have put some cloves into it to make it palatable. You have no objection, Colonel."

"Not the least, my boy! if you had put sugar on it."

"Well, let me assure you, Colonel, that if you offered a golden Napoleon for a grain of sugar, you could not procure it in Chateaudun."

"Well, such things will happen, but I am always fortunate. I brought as much sugar from Brou as will suffice to supply our Irish and ourselves for the next three days. *Vulture Plumes* must look out for it. You may tell the man at our wagon to bring in the sack of sugar, Louis."

Duchenne ran to obey the agreeable order, and in less time than I take to write it he returned carrying the sack on his own shoulders. It was drawing near five o'clock of the morning of the 19th, when breakfast was served up; and at six o'clock our spree was brought to a close. *Appropos*, I may mention that many songs of the crusaders of old were introduced after the brave Colonel taking the chair. Parade as usual at seven o'clock. No orders from M. le General Chanzy this morning, but we are as well

pleased, for though we cannot see the army of the Loire drawn up in line of battle, we can have better sport—a never ending round of adventure with the Zouaves and Fracs-Tireurs. We do not know the moment that orders would come in for Zouaves, Fracs-Tireurs, and Ambulance, but we are prepared.

The clock in the infantry barracks was striking eight when an *eclaireur* galloped in with information. A party of twenty Uhlans were making requisitions in the village of La Ferte-Villeneuve. Without delay, the Fracs-Tireurs requisitioned vehicles, and, attiring themselves in the blue blouse as worn by the peasantry, leaped into the *voitures* and were advancing cautiously on La Ferte. The Zouaves marched to the village of La Barriere, with the intention of cutting off the retreat of the Uhlans, and were accompanied thither by a number of our men. Five of ours preceded the Fracs-Tireurs to La Ferte, for the purpose of doing duty there, if their aid was required.

Shortly after the departure of the Fracs-Tireurs, a number of people mounted to the top of the round tower near the chateau, and there remained to witness the "surprise" or "skirmish," or whatever else might ensue on the Fracs-Tireurs entering La Ferte-Villeneuve. They could perceive that the Uhlans kept a look-out, for one of them would now and then appear on the heights above the great quarry, but all he could see were the five men of our Ambulance with six or seven of the disguised Fracs-Tireurs advancing with seeming carelessness; he could not see the men who advanced along the forest road, and who were already within the distance of a thousand yards of their prey. Neither could he discover a trace of the enemy, who were seen by the people in the town to enter the forest beyond Villerman. The enterprise looked prosperous—the encounter could not be delayed more than five minutes. The disguised Fracs-Tireurs and our men already reached the Christian Brothers' school, and were in the town. Even the wary Uhlan left his post to look on at the desolating work of his comrades.

At this moment the Fracs-Tireurs were seen to emerge from the forest, and, taking off the blue blouse, entered the

town, where, after a few volleys from the Spencers, the Uhlans surrendered after seeing six of their number *hors de combat*. The representatives of our Ambulance on that occasion made themselves useful in restoring the plunder which the Uhlans had gathered in the street, and also in taking the wounded into shelter. This they had no sooner accomplished, than Barney O'Neill, and his wagon drawn by twelve horses, turned into the street. At once the wounded were placed within the wagon, and Barney was ordered to proceed on to Chateaudun, there to give the wounded into the care of the Black Sisters. But he would not listen to orders ; bringing his horses to their work, he dashed down the street right through the narrow gateway, past the chapel, and away over the fields towards Fratreville, never halting until he reached the high road to Orleans, when he waved the banneret which floated from the roof of his wagon towards the men from whom he parted in such an unceremonious manner.

It was noonday before the Francs-Tireurs returned from La Ferte, or the Zouaves from La Barriere. Barney's wagon, the horses, the wounded, and the driver, were in the Place d'Armes. This latter individual was bringing to a *finale* a rather lengthy speech ; the expiring sentence was the only portion of it that was heard by the new-comers, but it gave them an idea of the subject with which the orator dealt. Barney was apparently in a bad state, for at the winding up of his harangue, he drew himself up to his full height and said :

“ Me experience taches me to ‘look afore I lep,’ an’ by me sowl, if I iver have such a dhrive agin, Ill dhrive over the whole lot of thim, an’ won’t be desavin’ the Dundalk people.”

The hero of the “big wagon” drove down to the convent of the Sœur Noir, where he was to leave the wounded Germans, and while they were being carried from the wagon into the hospital, Barney, who stood looking on, would “spout” a tirade against their nationality, against the poor fellows themselves, and against everything that partook of Germany. One of them, who got his jaw bones broken in

happening to look at Barney, this very humane aduat broke into a refrain: "Orach! look at the villian! Look at the ghost of a German! 'Pon me conshinse I saw that very 'coon' playin' 'Willie we have missed you' one time in owld Dundalk. Nice work indeed to be givin' thim boys money; but wait a bit, I'll bet a goolden guinea, that d—l saze the one o' thim will be iver seen agin in owld Ireland!"

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Here desolation holds her dreary court;
What satellites declare her dismal reign—
Shrieking their dirge, ill-omened birds resort,
To flit their vigils on the hoary fane.”

BYRON.

AT an early hour on the morning of the 20th November, an order arrived from the head-quarters of the Army of the Loire, directed to the Surgeon-in-Chief, the result of which was, that we were directed to be in readiness to proceed to Patay at seven o'clock. The Zouaves received a similar order, while the Francs-Tireurs were directed to remain, to watch the movements of the prowling Uhlans.

At the hour appointed, we were *en route*, accompanied by the Zouaves. Passing through the villages of Etéville and Fratreville, the people displayed their enthusiasm in rather a substantial manner. Old men, old women, and very young children rushed from their houses, carrying bottles of wine and brandy, packages of bread and cheese, and, though last not least, beads and crucifixes. All these good things they pressed upon us. We did accept of their presents, and went our way rejoicing.

At eleven o'clock of the forenoon, we entered Patay, where we learned that head-quarters were pushed forward to Arlenay. To Arlenay then we proceeded, and reaching that town at noon, we found that head-quarters were again moved on to Pithiviers. However, we deemed it proper to have dinner at Arlenay (for if the head-quarters of the *Armée de le Loir* continued to move at this rate, we might expect to find ourselves somewhere between the royal palace of Fontainebleau and that of Versailles before sunset), and we had one, that only men who are after a march of twenty-one miles could manage. The halt proved otherwise agreeable, for we met some friends whom we had not seen since the re-taking of Orleans. We had fifteen miles of road still before us. The quick move-

ments of the new army we were not prepared for, or we would have requisitioned vehicles in Chateaudun ; but here, in Arlenay, we could get none to requisition ; therefore the prospect of a long march was by no means pleasing, particularly when we were told that it was the commander's intention to proceed to the forest of Fontainebleau, there to await the result of Ducrot's intended sortie from Paris. We resumed our march ; proceeding by Neuville and Chilleurs, we crossed the river Essane, and entered Pithiviers at half-past nine o'clock same evening. Having reported our arrival at head-quarters, we were shown to lodgings, where we soon got into pretty comfortable beds ; sleep took possession of us, and we totally forgot the incidents which occurred during the march of thirty-five miles.

At five o'clock on the morning of the 21st of November, we were roused from our beds by the violent beating of the drums. The new commander of the new army was not content with this general summons, and he sent trumpeters to the different places where we were billeted. Such was his anxiety for our safety. We were in the streets directly, and on making inquiries regarding the cause of this early move, we were told that the Prussians, under Prince Frederick Charles, were advancing from Melun, while the Germans, under Von der Tann and Manteufel, were reported at Montargis. No time was to be lost, and at six o'clock we re-crossed the Essane with the "van." At Loury and Rebrechieu, shots were exchanged between our *eclaireur* and the German skirmishers. At Ste. Jean, again, there was a slight skirmish between the Brunswickers and mounted marines. Shots were exchanged continually between the *avant gardes* of either army along the route until ten o'clock, at which hour we entered Orleans. From the plateau we could see the dark Bavarian columns advancing over the plain, while some 20,000 men of the Loire army escheloned to the left above Ste. Jean, with the intention of offering battle near Montargis ; but the wily Germans retreated to await the advent of Prince Frederick. The troops then returned to Orleans, there to await the onset of the united Germans.

We made ourselves tolerably happy during the day, and it was not until five in the afternoon that anything occurred

which might draw our attention to duty. At that hour heavy firing was heard in the direction of Olivet, and immediately after the bang of the chassepots at Ste. Jean told but too plainly that the *avant postes* were being driven in. A few of our men rambled along the river so far as Chateau-neuf, where they met with Francs-Tireurs, and where (it is asserted only by Prussians) our men are said to have fired on the Germans while they displayed the Red Cross on their breasts, but this is false. Later in the evening the Francs-Tireurs and our men were driven in, and *eclaireur* sent out to replace them. At seven o'clock an order from head-quarters was handed Dr. Baxter. It ran as follows :—

“ Ste. Jean, 21st Novembre, 1870 (No. 673).

“ *'A M. le Chef de l'Ambulance Franco-Irlandaise à Orleans.'*”

[TRANSLATION.]

“ Be kind enough to retire on Bucy. The distribution of your men lies with yourself, but I would advise you to make Bucy head-quarters *pro tem.*, as it is possible I will be compelled to retire on that village before night. You may, in the meantime, despatch as many of the medical staff and volunteers as you deem proper to Patay, as there the struggle will certainly be,

“ *Pres le Commandant,*

“ B. S. PERSIGNY.”

Acting on this order, we were *en route* to Bucy by eight o'clock ; the rain came down in torrents, rendering pedestrianism anything but agreeable ; however, after two hours' hard march along a desolate, dreary road, we entered the village. Time was given us to try what effect would cognac produce, and when we had partaken of copious draughts, and renewed our flasks, we were compelled to answer roll-call. Having done so, volunteers were asked to do duty at Patay, when, notwithstanding the inclemency of the night, the greater number of the corps offered themselves. Only a few were accepted, and those went on their journey without fur-

ther delay. Arriving in Patay about the hour of midnight, they entered the chapel, where, wrapping their rugs round them, they lay down to rest.

The rising sun had only proclaimed another day, when that hated *rappel* disturbs repose. Rising to appear on parade, and before we leave our billets, we learn that a "little shooting" has been going on at Chateau-neuf, and that the Germans "paid the piper," for the Francs-Tireurs sent one hundred of them to render an account of their doings. The Francs-Tireurs fought like lions. Still only five of their number were placed *hors de combat*, but the wounds were not serious. Whether this affair incensed the Germans or not, I cannot say, but surely they commenced a move earlier than usual. Yet they were some distance off, and the men of our corps thought they would avail themselves of the interval before battle in the preparation of breakfast. They did avail themselves of the hour, and were enjoying the result of their labour, when the boom of cannon and the roll of musketry broke on their ears. "Has the battle commenced?" was the question. "*Je ne sais pas*," was the answer. However, we were not long left in doubt. The boom of the guns became incessant, the roll of musketry spread along the lines, and clearly proved that

"All our yesterdays have but lighted fools
The way to dusty death."

The artillery of the Prussian left opened a galling fire on a naturally entrenched position which the Zouaves were ordered to defend, and from which they preyed upon the German cavalry. Four of our men were on duty here, the remainder scattered along the lines, and working *à discretion*.

The battle raged until evening, when the French claimed the victory—and could claim it, for not alone did they occupy the positions from which they thought it proper to retreat that morning, or rather the previous evening, but they inflicted terrible losses on the enemy. Without doubt, fortune smiled on the Loire Army that day—the 22nd of November.

At seven o'clock in the evening, orders were distributed among the men, directing them to take every vehicle which

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they could lay hands on, place the wounded in them, and send them off to Chateaudun. This order was complied with, so that by eleven o'clock over 300 wounded were on the road to Chateaudun, while hundreds more were distributed through the neighbouring villages. At a late hour the duties attached to our field department ceased, while at Bucy, Patay, Arlenay, and Olivet, our medical department was still engaged.

It was five o'clock on the morning of the 23rd, when our regular wagons, with those which were requisitioned the previous evening for the purpose of conveying the wounded to Chateaudun, returned to Patay. The drivers were about unhorsing them, when an order arrived, directing the Patay contingent to proceed at once to Meung, where they must report themselves before ten o'clock. Accordingly, they proceeded *en route* to Meung, where they arrived at nine o'clock, an hour before the time appointed. This was probably owing to their having ridden in the wagons, a privilege accorded them on account of the snow-storm which raged.

Here everything was in readiness for a march. Already some thousand troops had crossed the Loire, as also the head-quarters of our corps; therefore no time was to be lost by the newly arrived contingent, and they followed in the route taken by the men of head-quarters over the iron bridge above Meung, through the villages of N. D. de Clery, Jargeau, Tigny, Bouzy, and into the town called Montereau, where they came up with their head-quarters. Here troops were *en vidette*. There was no mistaking appearances—a battle was imminent. The right of the rather extended French line rested on the heights above the river Puisieux, their skirmishers held the plain towards Chatillon-sur-Larny. Looking along the railroad, we could see the advancing squadrons of the dark cavalry of the enemy, while their infantry literally covered the plain towards Monteresson and Chambeuil. At noonday, heavy skirmishing commenced at Nagent, to which place two of our regular wagons were despatched, driven by Barney O'Neill and Hopkins; the former individual, intent upon carrying out the threat used by him on his return from La Ferte-Villeneuve to Chateau-

dun, went his way rejoicing, and, as is related of him, he occupied himself during the drive in arranging the reins, catching his whip tighter, and in working himself into the proper rage, and all this for bringing his awful project to a success. However, when he arrived within five hundred yards of the village of Nagent, he used his whip *à discretion*, which resulted in his horses bounding forward at a gallop. In a few minutes he dashed into the streets of the village, and continued his headlong course for a mile beyond it, where, perceiving Uhlans in his advance, he brought his steeds to a stand, turned them on the road, and made the return journey, at least back to Nagent, with as much speed as he did the forward one. The result of his drive did not prove at all satisfactory to him, for, instead of driving over Germans, he brought the wheels of his wagon over a member of the Ambulance de la Presse, almost severing the arm from the body. When Barney heard of what he had done, he rushed towards the house where the injured man was being treated by Surgeon Ryan, and tendered innumerable apologies; indeed his sympathies carried him so far as to request the skilled surgeon to permit *himself* to perform an operation on the victim to his impetuosity; but, of course, this was denied Barney. He then knelt beside the sick-bed, and was in the act of offering a prayer for the speedy recovery of the injured gentleman of the Press Ambulance, when firing commenced in the street without. Rushing out, he leaped on to the seat of his wagon, and moved his horses from the spot. It was in time he did so, for, in another second, a leaden shower swept over the place, under which both Barney, his horses, and wagon, would certainly suffer, had he not retreated in time. Now Barney had a very good opportunity afforded him of carrying out his intentions towards the Germans, for the Uhlans lay dead and dying in dozens. But "he wasn't so bad as he said he was;" his better nature prevailed, and he let the wounded live or die as they wished.

No Franks-Tireurs were to be seen; yet the sharp report of the rifled Chassepot, or the sharper one of the Spencer-repeater, told but too plainly that they were Franks-Tireurs

who caused thirty Uhlans to lie *hors de combat* in the Rue Grand of Nagent.

While this little act was being gone through at Nagent, affairs at Montereau looked formidable; the Bavarians attacked in force—and though they had to storm natural redouts, they came on unflinchingly to the task, while batteries of Mitrailleuse and Gatling guns poured in showers of bullets on them, creating desperate havoc among their ranks. At three o'clock in the afternoon the battle became general along the line. The continuous roar of cannon on our left proved that Prince Frederick had attacked that wing of the Loire Army. As the evening advanced the combat grew desperate in the extreme; the combatants advanced towards each other, and carried on the contest at the point of the bayonet. It was then the old French *elan* proved itself—the Germans were actually lifted from their feet on the point of the cutlass, and pitched on to their rear. At six the French bugles sounded victory. The remnant of the Germans were in retreat, leaving their numerous dead and wounded on the field.

During the time taken by the troops to attain this signal victory, the men of our Ambulance, with those of the French Press Ambulance, worked hard at the stretchers; and though snow fell heavily they could not think of putting on their great coats; for the stretcher practice was so severe that the men engaged in it felt by far too warm; and it was not until the battle ceased, that they got time to rest their weary limbs. But their toil was not yet to end; the wounded, whom they had carried during the contest to the tents of the surgeons, were again to be transferred to the wagons and sent on to Beaugency, Blois, and even to Chateaudun; only the more desperate cases were to be sent into Orleans, as the hospitals of the Ambulance de la Presse there were almost full with both German and French wounded. To work again; when vehicle after vehicle received its burthen, and was despatched; at twelve o'clock, midnight, the last batch of the poor sufferers was sent off, and only then were our labours at an end—at least, for that day. Our regular wagons we kept on the ground, while the wounded were sent on in vehicles requisitioned for the purpose.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Only a long,
A lasting, high, and happy memory
They should, without being satisfied, pursue ;
Contempt of fame begets contempt of virtue.”

SEGANUS.

It was an awful night—a fitting partner for its day. The lightning's lurid glare flashed on everything—the thunder rolled, as if to awaken the few who slumbered to a sense of their insecurity—rain, hail, and snow, seemed to fall together, while a violent storm sent *tentes d'arbri* flying through the air or along the ground, and deprived many of their *kepis*. The morning of the 24th day of November may be classed with the night, for the elements were still waging war; the storm raged with unabated fury, so much so that one would not be surprised to see the few who ventured out of doors taken up into the air, or knocked about like to a life-boat in an angry sea. It was no surprise when we learned that one of our drivers, who had taken refuge within his wagon, was blown clear out of it, or that the porch outside the Café de Ste. Jean, in Montereau, was to be found about a mile distant on the road to Orleans. Nothing was surprising. Perhaps the Germans were blown across the frontier ; if so our campaigning is over, at least on French soil, for our army will follow up the victory achieved by the wind. However, for the present we will hope for the best, until the outposts come in ; and as we are in the café we will try the effect of breakfast. Accordingly, *dejeuner* is ordered, and at length we were agreeably surprised, for Mdme. Lannes set before our astonished eyes a joint of beef—roast, bread, and wines in abundance. Who would not be happy in Montereau? No such place on the Loire. “ It's an ill wind that blows nobody good ;” and old Dame Lannes has proved a heroine. Such were the ejaculations—

the expressed thoughts of many—the secrets of a few knowing ones. At nine o'clock the rain ceased its downpour for a short time, and in the interval parade was sounded. Assembled on the ground, the men were put through the usual drill, after which they marched to St. Mary's chapel, where a *Requiem* was offered up for the souls of those who perished in the combat. At noonday the ceremony was over, and only then did the great congregation separate to resume their temporal duties. Our men marched back to the house of the friendly Mdme. Lannes, and had only entered it when a peasant presented a letter from the Curé of Timory ; it commenced and ended as follows :—

“ Lorie, 24th November, '70.

“ MA CHERE IRLANDAISE—Come in all haste, or otherwise two honest soldiers die.

“ Your devoted friend,

“ PATRICE RANOLD.”

The messenger informed us that two wounded men, one a Franc-Tireur, the other a Mobile, were dying in the village. He also said they crawled, rather than walked, from Timory (three miles) that desolate morning. On the receipt of this intelligence, the members of the corps present volunteered their services with one exception, viz., the “ Sloth ;” but it was he who was called upon, merely to punish him (there were two, and only two, attached to our corps who were, on all occasions, exceptions to the enthusiasm, or the sense of honorable duty, which others enjoyed ; one of them was the “ Sloth,” a driver, the other was the “ Brewery-man,” so called because he was billeted in a brewery, and would never leave it while the Francs-Tireurs or troops were about)—and sent off. The Surgeon-in-Chief accompanied him, so that if the wounded men required aid it would be at hand. At two o'clock the wagon returned with the sufferers. Their wounds were deep, yet not dangerous ; and by the time the surgeon had arranged the wounds, the poor fellows were able to give an interesting account of the skirmish in which they were placed *hors de combat* ; they also brought in information that the Ger-

mans retired on Montargis. *Sans doute*, the disturbed elements achieved a victory for the French. The Germans were forced to flee for shelter to a far greater distance than our troops would venture on pursuing them, even supposing that the weather was ever so favourable.

The day of the 25th November passed over without us even catching a glimpse of a German uniform, but this was probably owing to another storm which was expected, for the heavens assumed anything but a tranquil appearance. However, towards the evening of that day, a change came for the better; and the night turned out fine. Another day dawned upon a sleeping camp; but darkness had not quite surrendered to refreshing morning, when the drums beat to arms. On rushing into the square, we found that the long-looked-for *Pompiers* arrived; their organization was complete. We also learned that the Germans were advancing in force, and that a distribution of troops was about taking place.

At six o'clock we received our orders; they were significant of heavy and dangerous work, dictated by the adjutant—a right, thorough-going fellow; they displayed the tact and ability of the man to fill that position. Sixteen volunteers, four doctors, with two wagons, were to accompany the *Francs-Tireurs* and *Pompiers* to St. Benoist; the remainder of the corps were to do duty along the lines. The required number of the medical and field departments having volunteered for duty with the *Pompiers* and *Francs-Tireurs*, he addressed them thus:—"Gentlemen, as the place of honour has been assigned to the three services—namely, *les Pompiers*, *les Francs-Tireurs*, and our Ambulance, it is expected that you will act nobly, excell all others in duty; in fine, that you will be first in the front, and last in the field. Let no apparent danger betray you into cowardice; wherever you see the combat rage, there let your painful duties be carried on. As the work will probably be heavy, you better take the light stretchers, and, above all, have a sharp look out for shells. Take them coolly, and if your neighbour is in danger, shove him out of the way quickly."

At seven o'clock, the men destined for duty at St. Benoist were *en route*; at eight o'clock they entered Chatillon-sur-Larny, only sixteen miles distant from Auxerre (which town

was in possession of the Germans. St. Benoist lay eight miles forward on the road to Auxerre, and to the former town they determined to make their way, if all the Germans in France were opposed to them. The Uhlans prowled about the line of march, retiring as our troops advanced. At the Chateau de Chevreuse, some regiments of lancers and cuirassiers joined them; further on, six batteries of artillery, with marines and Francs-Tireurs, came up with the "van," and by the time St. Benoist was entered, viz., nine o'clock of the morning, a goodly number of armed men were congregated; and in an hour afterwards the *avant garde* of the Mobiles was seen advancing over the heights above Chambeuil, while the Germans poured on to the plain towards Toucy and Fontenay, Aillant, and Senan. They advanced over the road to Auxerre in myriads, and literally swarmed on the heights west of Chevannes.

The French continued to advance their extended lines until within 1,000 yards of the enemy, when a halt was called. After the reading of the commander's address, and when the skirmishers were drawn in, their artillery commenced to speak in gentle accents, and so did that of the Germans; but the music of their guns was not near so sweet, at least to the ears of the members of our Ambulance, for the result of the first discharge from their guns, entailed an amount of work which was anything but pleasant. However, the whistle of mitrailleuse and rattle of musketry (chassepotry if you wish) told plainly that they were paying back the foe the deep debt so long due. The Pompiers and Francs-Tireurs handled their rifles with an ease, a steadiness, that tended to create havoc among the ranks of the enemy; and notwithstanding that the cuirassiers seemed to devote their attention to destroying them, they repelled each successive charge, invariably sending numbers of this Prussian regiment, *par excellence*, to earth, and in all cases repulsing them. Not so with the Moblots at Chambeuil; they, and they only, were driven back. Of the troops engaged south of Chambeuil, I say, without fear of contradiction, that nothing could be better than their fighting. The Pompiers and Francs-Tireurs engaged outside St. Benoist suffered only a trifling loss; the Francs-Tireurs escaped unhurt,

to the surprise of every one ; and the members of our Ambulance who volunteered duty with them came off safe as usual, though, without doubt, they acted rashly during the contest, for they brought the wounded from the front of the lines, at the same time being under a heavy fire, both musketry and artillery.

At six o'clock that evening, the Germans were forced to retreat, leaving their *hors de combat* on the field, but, strange to say, were not pursued ; on the contrary, orders were issued directing a retrograde movement on Orleans. At seven o'clock our corps, accompanied by the Franc-Tireur corps, re-entered St. Benoist, where refreshments were partaken of, and then went *en route* to Bouzy, which hamlet they reached about midnight. Leaving the wounded in the wagons, they entered the ruined chapel, there to pass the night.

CHAPTER XV.

“Therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed, wash every mote out of his conscience, and, dying so, death is to him advantage; or, not dying, the time was blessedly lost wherein such preparation was gained; and in him that escapes, it were not sin to think that, making God so free an offer, He let him outlive that day to see His greatness, and to teach others how they should prepare.”—HENRY V.

THE night of the 26th, or rather the morning of the 27th, we passed in what was once the church of Bouzy—a cold and dreary night. No roof but the firmament, for the ruthless German, after plundering its tabernacle of the sacred vessels, stripped it of its roof. Loud pealed the thunder, while flashes of lightning lighted up the place, as if to bring more vividly before us the dreariness of our situation. The rain poured down in torrents, and, to add to the general misery, we were minus our rugs, for we surrendered them to the wounded in the wagons the previous evening, on leaving St. Benoist. At an early hour we attended Mass, and not a few confessed themselves. When the sacred ceremony was over, we went in search of breakfast, but could not find one, and therefore resolved to leave Bouzy as quickly as possible. Having renewed our flasks we resumed the journey. Entering Chateau-neuf at eight o'clock, we were gratified to learn that an old dame round the corner of the post-office had some bread and cheese to dispose of, and to the indicated spot we made our way, where we procured the above eatables and felt thankful, though the old “witch” charged twenty pence for each quarter-pound of cheese, and tenpence for the same compliment of bread. However, this exorbitant charge did not by any means delay our departure, and we entered Orleans at about noonday, having accomplished a march of twenty-one miles that morning. At Orleans we again met Les Charettes, who complained bitterly of their commissariat, and who were willing to join

in any enterprise which would promise provisions ; therefore, it was proposed and carried, that our members, the Francs-Tireurs, and the Zouaves, would form themselves into foraging companies, and then proceed in search of all things necessary to ensure the comfort of the afternoon ; they did so, and returned at two o'clock, having in some measure succeeded. The men who deprived the owner of the ferry-boat of his boat, for the purpose of trying their luck on the river, brought in a fair supply of fish ; those who wandered in search of flesh-meat brought in a few pounds of pork and some ribs of horse ; and all others succeeded in procuring a little salt and 4lbs. of bread. The bags of the foragers having been given in charge to our cook, M. Greely, we awaited patiently the hour when he would pronounce dinner to be ready. However, before he was prepared to announce such, the drums beat outside the Café de St. Jean, and then a gendarme proclaimed bread to have arrived from Blois. Need I say that it was bought up eagerly, and eaten greedily.

In due time M. Greely announced dinner, to the delight of all present ; a very happy evening was passed, and it is significant that not an angry word was used which might disturb the existing tranquillity or mar the pleasure of the reunion. It was midnight before our party broke up, and they strolled to the lodgings placed at their disposal, where they were made as comfortable as they could desire.

The morning of the 28th had not yet dawned when the tramp of men and the noisy *generale* were heard in the streets. The Zouaves, the Francs-Tireurs, and members of our Ambulance instantly arose from their beds, dressed themselves, and were in the streets in a surprisingly short space of time, when they learned that the *avant-garde* of the Loire army had already passed through the town, and that the main body of the troops who served with us at St. Benoist was passing on the river road. Down to that favourite promenade of the Orleanaise, the voluntary corps, viz., Francs-Tireurs, Ambulance, and Les Charettes, marched, where, without doubt, they witnessed their troops defiling past at a quick pace. Urban, a favourite, demanded of a very useless-looking Mobile officer what was the cause of this march past Orleans. " *Ah ! mon ami*, our troops are

in full retreat; our hateful enemies are advancing in overwhelming numbers."

Strange that the volunteers received not a word of warning, except that afforded by the beating of drums. Stranger still that no orders had been received; but, as will be seen, orders came in in their own good time. The General in command had an eye to business, though jealousy accused him of negligence, for, at six o'clock an order was brought in, directing our Ambulance, the Zouaves, and Francs-Tireurs, to proceed to Patay without delay, as there it was thought Prince Frederick would again come on to the attack.

This order received attention, but not near so soon as the reader might expect, for we had breakfast, and afterwards delayed departure merely to watch the movements of the Uhlans, who appeared on the roads to Vrigny and Beaumont, Nibileo and Belligarde, and not until seven o'clock did we assemble on parade, preparatory to starting on our journey. At twenty minutes past that hour we were *en route*. Entering Boulet (which place was deserted by military and civilians), there appeared every likelihood of a stop being put to our forward movement—as, without doubt, there would, had we not the Francs-Tireurs and Zouaves accompanying us, for about fifty Uhlans were advancing on the deserted village. The Francs-Tireurs rushed into ambush, while the Zouaves made a "detour" west of the town, so as to take them in the Place d'Armes, leaving our men, wagons, horses, drivers, and doctors in the square. In a short time after we had arranged a programme for their reception, the Uhlans dashed into the village, and rode directly to the spot where our corps had taken position. Their officer was in the act of letting us know that we should remain within the German lines. M. Picard was in the act of telling him we should not, when the Zouaves put in an appearance, and the would-be captor was shot dead before he could leave the place. The troops under his orders followed his example, and met with the same fate. The affair resulted in the deaths of the Germans to the number of fifty; or, in other words, all of them who entered the village met their end there. Only eighteen of their horses escaped the dreadful shower of lead which was hurled against their riders; and these, with the helmets of the defunct

Germans, we presented ourselves with, and having done so resumed our journey: Entering Patay at eleven o'clock of the forenoon, we found the extreme left of the French to have taken positions between Patay and Longni, and the German hosts advancing over the high road to Chartres; those latter had by noonday come within range of our guns, which now commenced to play with fatal precision; the rifled pieces of the Prussian batteries reply. Beyond doubt, the battle was begun, and with it the work of our Ambulance. The wounded Mobiles are carried on stretchers to the place where our surgeons are prepared for work, or otherwise to the wagons, which are in readiness to convey the poor sufferers to the nearest farmstead or hamlet, returning again to be burthened anew.

Barney O'Neill is *en vidette*. No wounded German dare be carried near his wagon, or to the pain of his wound be added that attended on a good whipping, for Barney had a formidable looking whip, made expressly for the infliction of punishment on the Germans, or on the renegade Irishman who would lend them aid. However, on this latter point he might feel calm, for the most humane of our members did not yet dream of venturing to the succour of the fallen Germans, neither did the Germans possess their sympathies; and then why did O'Neill prepare the "lash?" Himself did not know—neither did we, except he did so for the special use of the unfortunate Germans who might fall into his hands.

Cavalry charges, the rattle of musketry, the boom of artillery, the execrations of the combatants, and howls of the wounded, were incidental to the day until four o'clock, when the youthful Mobiles received the order to advance. They carried the German positions at the point of the bayonet, and sent Prince Frederick's veterans into a retreat; they were unable to rally again that day. The victory was decisive, it belonged to the "Provençals," who followed in pursuit, until night closed in and found the "young army" at Autray.

Our Ambulance, accompanied by the Francs-Tireurs, proceeded to Angerville, where they were fortunate in finding a railway station in its entirety, and also a number of

cushions which suited admirably as beds, and on which they laid their weary bodies to repose.

At five o'clock on the morning of the 29th, sleep was driven from every eye-lid by the shrill sounding of the bugle. All were "out" directly and looking for information regarding the call. None knew the cause, but we were not long so, for we ascertained that a Franc-Tireur outpost, thinking he might as well come in as remain staring through darkness for things invisible, did come in, and on nearing the railway station sounded the *reveille* referred to with all his might. For so doing he was severely reprimanded by the old captain, and sent to resume duty on the roadside.

The hail-storm still continued its riot, and did not by any means seem tired or disposed to leave off. It helped in a good measure to make ourselves and the Francs Tireurs miserably miserable, while, no doubt, it tended to damp the *corps d'esprit* of our troops under canvas in and about Autray. At about noonday the storm subsided, and the afternoon turned out tolerably fine. Seeing this, a few of our corps, with some members of the Francs Tireurs, rambled along the "iron way" to Etampes; from inquiries made of the peasantry they learned that there were no Prussians in the town, and therefore they entered. The Irish of the Ambulance and the Americans of the Francs-Tireurs were individuals often read about by the people of that Germanised town, but never seen—neither did they expect to see them, at least until the war was over; therefore, their surprise at seeing our men and Francs-Tireurs in their midst was, to say the least, intense. The heads of the latter were advertised for by the Germans; and as for the former, the good people of that town believed that they would be put to torture if caught, for it was said they violated international law by taking part with Francs-Tireurs on different occasions. But this, our premier visit to Etampes, beat out all; the daring entry of thirty men into what may now be considered a Prussian town, that many of the inhabitants laboured under the belief that we were more than ordinary mortals; to satisfy their curiosity, in shaking hands,

" They delayed their hold,
To feel whether blood ran warm or cold."

Being satisfied that we were none others than real live mortals, they became anxious for the safety of their famous visitors. Some mounted into the tower of the Cathedral, and with telescope left not an acre of the surrounding country unexplored. In the distance towards Chartres they could perceive Uhlans, while large bodies of Prussian cavalry scampered round the forests of Fontainebleau. However, on seeing there was no immediate danger, they descended to give a *cead mille failthe* to the adventurers. The latter were enjoying themselves *ad libitum* within the Café de l'Europe, with about 2,000 of the inhabitants grouped outside; for the more influential of the people would only be admitted, and if a stranger entered town he would be filled with the idea that the house commonly called "l'Europe" was transferred from its original use into a wild beast show, and one, too, to which plebeians would not be admitted. Probably he would drive to the Hotel Chien d'Or, tug on his dress-coat (if he had one), and prepare to join with aristocrats, plutocrats, and nobility, in inspecting the wild animals within. So much for first impressions. The Mayor that "used to be"—that is, before the Germans appointed a commandant—exercised his authority when the Prussian was absent, as was the case at this particular time and place. This Mayor, then, thought it necessary to have sentries posted, and therefore asked for volunteers; a number presented themselves, and were sent directly on outpost duty, with instructions to rush into town the very moment they could catch sight of Uhlans or others, as long as they were Prussians, and sent a man of trust to keep a look out from the tower of the church. Having done this, himself and all his friends in the council feasted us, and everything went "as merry as a marriage bell" until eight o'clock, when a watchful sentinel came in with information that the Germans were returning.

Bob Clinch demanded of the civic sentry how many of them were coming.

"Eighteen of them will be in town directly," he responded.

"Well then," said Bob, "we can easily take down eighteen of them, and return in work what we've gained in kindness."

There being no dissenter, our men and the Francs-Tireurs went into a commanding ambush—not a moment too soon either, for the Uhlans dashed into the square, and across it to the Mairié. Leaping from their saddles, one of them was applying the key to the lock, but before he could open it he was shot dead; the others being out of their saddles had no chance of escape left, and they shared the same fate. Mounting the captive horses, the strange visitors bade adieu to their friends, and were rattling over the high road to Angerville, where they arrived at half-past nine o'clock that night. There they related the story of Etampes to their comrades who preferred a rest to adventure, and corroborated what they said by showing them the captured cattle. Need I say that the men who remained at "home" were anything but pleased at the fate which prevented them from being actors in the adventure.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ From rank showers of blood,
 And the red light of blazing roofs, you build
 The rainbow glory, and to shuddering nature
 Cry—Lo ! the bridge to Heaven !”

RICHÉLIEU.

THE last day of the November of 1870 dawned on a number of individuals who were really sick of war. Every one you met with, dreamt that it was the last day of January, '71, and nothing could convince a few that it was not St. Patrick's day of the last-mentioned year ; and this difference of opinion as to the month and the day was not surprising, for, to say truth, every day seemed a week. This probably might be owing to the continual movements of troops, varied scenes, an unlimited amount of fun and hardship, adventure *à discretion*, enthusiasm, and a fair amount of excitement. Be this as it may, the author, with his comrades engaged in field duty, and the members of Franc-Tireur corps, with whom we were daily brought in contact, thought the time we had been on the Loire so many years, and yearned for the day that the pious King would withdraw from the contest. However, on this morning, we heard nothing of peace, and only hoped for a truce—at least while we partook of *dejeuner*. This was not bad ; though we had no *café-noir et cognac*, we made ourselves happy with *vin ordinaire, chaud*, and a few loaves of bread, or rather “ shillelaghs,” for the length and breadth of each roll, colour of the crust, and formation of the said loaves, resembled one of these celebrated “ sticks” which are said to be peculiar to the “ Tip.”

On that morning, we were quietly enjoying the above-named delicacies, when a messenger entered, and handed a letter to the most responsible-looking of our corps. He acted similarly to the Franc-Tireur. On the letters being opened, they were found to contain a request from the people of Etampes to supply the names of the men who were

present the previous evening at the *affaire de guerre* which then and there occurred. The reasons assigned were, firstly, the names are required as *souvenirs* of the men who surprised the Germans, and, lastly, to prevent the Prussian authorities from making reprisals, as they (the latter) would certainly do, if proof positive was not forthcoming that the people of the town did not fire on their Uhlans. The request was complied with, and having treated the messenger as kindly as circumstances would permit, we despatched him on his return journey. However, he was not well gone, when the "look-out," who thought the signal-post at the station a fitting place to keep guard, sang out from his eminence that a regiment of Prussian cavalry, with artillery, was advancing on Angerville. This information caused no little stir, and immediately our men got on horseback; wagons, &c., turned out, and away to Autray with the Germans at our heels. Arrived there, we were safe of course, and thanked God for saving us from an awful death at the hands of the Germans.

On having recovered from the excitement occasioned by the chase, or rather the race for life, we found that it sharpened rather than mollified our appetite; but for the time, we saw nothing in the line of food. True, a Turco would stroll across the *Place d'Armes* with a brace of rat or cat, and sit down opposite his wood fire to see the said animals cooked. Bestowing a little time in the casting of sundry glances at the *proces* of cooking, we saw that a number of "Moblots" and line troops were following his example, until at length we wondered where all the rats were coming from. We were soon enlightened; in a little river called the Juin, a tributary of the Seine, which flows by the town, are rats in abundance. Formerly—that is, before the war—the rats would desert the sewers of Paris, and spend the summer months dodging about this locality, but in consequence of the investment of Paris by the pious King's troops, these same rats held a council, and resolved on spending the winter in the country, even at some sacrifice to their comfort. Well, what was the result? This King sent down a friend of his to beat a youth called the Army of the Loire, and this youth, *un provençal*, beat his Royal Highness instead. Well, one very stormy evening, this youth, accompanied by 35,000

other youths, and about 2,000 sensible men, bowled into Autray quite intent upon paying a visit to the pious King. Their *commissariat* was, to say the best of it, miserable in the extreme, and the French peasantry, always quick at devising means for making money, thought they might as well go netting rats. This they did *à discretion*, and sold the produce of their labour at 25 centimes each, which paid very well, even computing half the number of men to have invested 2½ each in procuring dinner material. This is the cause of rats being so abundant at Autray at that time, but I believe the greater number of them perished, when necessity compelled the villagers to make a descent upon their colony.

The Irish, the Americans, or the Zouaves, had not the slightest notion of partaking of the ill-looking viands, and forming themselves into foraging companies, they pushed into the country. That division which rambled to Moutier en Beauce succeeded to a degree. Not alone did they bring home a quantity of horse-flesh, but even a few pounds of tobacco. Having delivered to our cook the products of their search, they felt happy in the consciousness of having procured, not only for themselves but for all old "pals," a tolerable dinner. Before dinner, the tobacco was distributed among the lovers of "the weed," and those having placed a portion of it in the heels of their pipes, awaited the after-dinner hour to enjoy a constitutional "blast."

The evening passed off quietly, notwithstanding that troops were in a very bad humour. However, at an early hour they went to sleep over it, and so did ourselves, never dreaming that December morning would be proclaimed by the roar of artillery.

Long before the morning of that memorable day dawned, the *rappell* was beating. Rushing on to know the latest, we were almost trampled by some squadrons of our cavalry, which swept down the street at a break-neck pace, but we escaped uninjured. Presently a few shells burst in the street, and we ran for the open ground near the railway station, a position which the German artillery again made untenable, and we had to hook it. Reaching Neury, we met the *Pompier*s, and in twenty minutes after we were

engaged with them in the field. The battle assumed a terrific aspect. Now, German artillery sweeping the lines—their numerous and splendid cavalry sweeping down; again, their infantry firing with fatal aim. And whom were those who withstood all this? They were the raw levies of Gambetta—the citizen soldiers of France. And though they suffered, their cause was holy—their acts were noble; as a holocaust, they offered themselves on the altars of their common country; and in future days—not long, I hope—regenerated France, blessed with religion and its results, will pay due honour to her sons who fell on that bleak December day. They fought well and nobly; and if the numerous phalanx of the enemy, led on as they were by able generals, conquered, the fault did not lie with the honest, true Mobile of the provinces, whom, while doomed to live under imperial laws, were deprived of the liberty to carry arms, and therefore knew very little about them. This was not the case with the German enemy; each was the paid trooper of pauper kings, princes, and grand dukes—all were hirelings. Still they knew how to fight, and that was all their “pious” Emperor-king required of them. Not all, for his piety dictated an order to his foolish allies that convent, church, nor man, were to be spared, and his troops were willing instruments for the carrying out of his unholy instructions.

It was three o'clock of the afternoon, and the battle still raged. Men fell in hundreds; and so arduous was the work of our Ambulance, that fears were entertained for the field-men, lest their strength would fail them, for they laboured too hard during the earlier part of the day. However, no matter where you cast your gaze along the lines, you could see them still engaged in the cause of humanity. Desperate were the efforts to work on to the end; and their perseverance conquered, for at four o'clock the French were driven to retreat, and by that time none but the dead remained on the field. Beyond doubt, the Irish proved their great endurance, and in such a manner, too, that the Prussians, when referring to the day, would say—“Either the dangerous Irish are giants, or the Mobiles did not suffer from our fire.” Well might the victors doubt, for their well-directed,

steady fire insured death to their enemy ; and seeing not the sufferers, whom our men had carried off to shelter, and unbelieving that the tremendous work which must have devolved upon the few members of our corps could possibly be performed by them, they could, in truth, exclaim—where are the wounded Moblots ?

Darkness found us at Bonneville, where we gave refreshments to the wounded ; and having then and there renewed our flasks, we proceeded to Chateaudun, there to deliver to our medical department the poor sufferers whom we rescued, if not from death, at least from the rude tauntings of a fanatical enemy.

At twelve o'clock, midnight, we entered Chateaudun, and having assisted in the transfer of the wounded from the wagons (requisitioned or otherwise) to the different hospitals, we retired to rest.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Ah ! but to die, and go, we know not where—
To lie in cold obstruction.”

SHAKESPEARE.

AT an early hour on the morning of the 2nd December, parade was called, when we learned that the troops of our left wing marched during the night, leaving 300 of the sick and footsore, who were unable to proceed, after them.

Those would be made prisoners by the Germans, who were advancing, if something was not done towards aiding their escape. As our members happened to be in the town, they volunteered to bring the poor fellows off, and in a very summary manner made their preparations for entering upon this rather dangerous enterprise. Having received permission from M. Lumiere to seize on all horses and vehicles which they could lay hands upon, and bring them to our head-quarters at the College, wherein were the troops; they separated for performing this duty, and succeeded in seizing upon seventy vehicles, with horses, which they brought into the College grounds, and in which were placed the victims to long-wearrying marches. At seven o'clock, the cortege left town by the lower road to Bonneville, over which they proceeded until reaching the village of St. Denis, where they turned westward, and came up with the troops who passed through Chateaudun the previous night, and were now under canvas outside the hamlet of Villeneuve. Here also were a number of the suspicious Garde Nationale of Meyenne, whom our fellows never encountered until that night, and hoped never to meet again. Nothing could convince them but our men were Prussians. The civil “garde” placed them under arrest, and brought them from one tent to the other, until that of headquarters was reached, when they sent in word that not one but a number of Ger-

man spies were in their hands, and required orders regarding their disposal.

The General in command directed that the prisoners be brought in," which order was complied with. The General, on seeing our men, welcomed them to his quarters, and, without ceremony or explanation, dismissed the over-officious members of the Garde Nationale, who, by this time, would much rather that they left the *German spies* at liberty to ramble through camp *à discretion*.

During their absence, the Bavarians entered Chateaudun, and, having heard of the acts of which our Ambulance was guilty, placed it under arrest, and when the volunteers, who were the real offenders, returned, they were placed under arrest also.

At six o'clock that evening the Bavarians were on parade in the Place d'Armes awaiting orders. Their sentries, who were posted on the bridge over the river, on the Route de Brou, perceived the advance of Francs-Tireurs, and immediately rushed into the square to give the alarm. Instantly the Bavarians took to their heels, and were far away on the road to Chartres before the Francs-Tireurs came in. They, seeing that there was nothing to be gained in following up the retreating foe, changed the pursuit into pleasure, and felt happy at again meeting with our men; who, in their turn, thoroughly enjoyed the unexpected advent of the Francs-Tireurs, which brought with it liberty and joy. The night passed pleasantly, and it was not until morning that all retired to regulation beds, on the cold damp floor of an unoccupied stable, or rather school-room, though on yesterday it was tenanted by horses.

At the hour of noon-day on the 4th December, we were enlightened on a subject which, to say the least, was unlooked for, and which caused a certain melancholy to hang over the town and its people, that even the continued exactions of the Germans failed to draw out. The following order proved the respect, or rather reverence, in which the good superiority of the *Sœur Noir* was held by all who had the happiness even to hear the oft-repeated stories of her profound charity, her humility, her piety, her sacrifices in the cause of her country, her heroism, and, though last not

least, the love which she bore towards our oppressed green Island of the West :—

“ GENERAL ORDER. .

“ The members of our Ambulance, with the Francs-Tireurs who are presently in town, are to march in order to the Convent of the Black Sisters, there to take up position in the garden, and await on the leaving of the funeral procession, which they are to follow to St. Joseph’s Chapel, and remain there until the ceremony is over, when they will march to the cemetery, and having attended to the end will return in order to the College for further orders.

“ (Signed) E. PICARD.”

This order was attended to, and well pleased were the men to whom it referred. There were Americans, Irish, Austrians, Spaniards, and even a few Greek aristocrats who rendered aid to a democratic republic by attaching themselves to Corps de l’Ambulance or Francs-Tireurs, as circumstances suggested. There were the inhabitants present *en masse*, while young and old flocked in from the country to join in paying this last tribute of respect to all that was mortal of a holy woman, who devoted her life to the service of her Master.

Having returned from performing this sad duty, we were devising means for whiling away the day, when the Franc-Tireur outposts came in with intelligence that the German Uhlans were advancing on all sides. The old Capitaine, elected to the command of the Francs-Tireurs, quietly mounted into the round tower of the castle, and from this elevation he, having taken a synopsis of the enemy, their number, and the probable routes they intended to enter by, descended, and without delay or confusion issued his orders for the disposal of the “ vulture plumes ”—orders which resulted in twelve remaining in the Place d’Armes, twenty on the Plateau, fifteen in ambush on the Route de Chartres, four at the barricade on the Route d’Orleans, the remainder on the Route de Brou and Route de Vendome. These positions were taken up, and only taken up when the German cavalry entered. Those who came by the lower road were the first to advance at a gallop. Soon they crossed the river, and

were in the "place" directly, where they met with a disagreeable surprise. The Francs-Tireurs des Pyrenees were there, who delivered a well-directed fire. The few Uhlans who escaped made quick their retreat over the route on which they advanced, but on reaching the bridge they found it barricaded, while a withering fire stopped their forward mad career. Again turning to fly by the road beneath the Chateau, they were permitted to advance as far as the Cavé Glacis, where all of them met their fate. Of fifty-six who entered by that route, only three escaped with wounds, the remaining fifty-three were already cold in death. A minute passed, and some of our men, who happened to be walking quietly along, rendered aid to the three unfortunate troopers who required it. So much for this adventure. But there yet remained sixty Uhlans, who were advancing rapidly over the Bonneville route, to be treated with. There was no time to be lost on the part of the Francs-Tireurs, for the Prussians were already on the new road, within two kilometres of the town. A short time, and they were past the first ambush; but on reaching M. Malson's *rure in urbis villa*, a regular shower of bullets brought them to a sense of their position. In an instant they were in retreat, but the cross-fire from the first ambush proved fatal to many of them, and all that escaped numbered eleven. At the barricade on the Route d'Orleans, where fifteen Uhlans presented themselves, two were killed and ten made prisoners; the remaining three went scot-free, and were seen to rejoin seven rather cautious friends of theirs, who wisely regarded "prudence the better part of valour," and preferred looking on at a distance than acting a part.

Without doubt the Francs-Tireurs proved their worth, and in such a manner, too, that they richly deserved the thanks, not alone of the people, but of our corps, whom they saved the trouble of carrying a number of wounded to hospitals; and so delighted were all at this splendid *coup*, that the mourning, which the death of the Lady Superioress of the Black Sisters suggested, was forgotten for a time, only a short time. At a good hour all were invariably under their rugs, but sleep there was none, for Balfe, who met the Uhlans face to face, and had a very narrow escape, disturbed

the night with loud soliloquising, leading every one to believe that ghosts must have appeared to him in numbers, for he called by name each of the defunct Uhlans, and addressed them in such a manner as his imagination dictated. In one instance he leaped from his adamantine couch, and dealt blows about *à discretion* ; but his future gesticulations were suddenly brought to a finale by a bucket of water being thrown over him. This brought round a lasting peace, and the imaginative gentleman saw neither ghost nor mortal until he resumed his senses next morning.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“The serried bay’nets glittering stood,
 Like icicles on hills of blood,
 An aerial stream, a silver wood,
 Reel’d in the flick’ring canopy.”

THE BATTLE OF BUSACO.

It was five o’clock of the 5th morning of December, 1870, when orders arrived from valiant Chanzy, directed to the Chief of our Ambulance, instructing him as follows:—“As it is probable the attack will be carried on here (Conan), it is requested that you despatch as many members of your field department and medical department as you can spare, and observe that your horses and wagons are to proceed by road to Onques, while the men of the above-named departments will march to Cloye, where I have directed a special train to be in readiness to take them to Vendome, from whence they are to march hither (Conan). I will be *en vidette* for their arrival at eleven o’clock of the forenoon.”

Agreeable to the above orders, we commenced our march to Cloye at six o’clock, and arrived there at eight o’clock, where we found a substantial *dejeuner* awaiting us, thanks to the good people of that really good town; and having partaken of which, and having returned the farewell salutations of the assembled people, we entered the carriages and were borne away over the iron road to Vendome. Passing Fretevale, the old Chateau attracted only a passing notice, never dreaming at the time that within the same quaint old structure we would have to seek for shelter. Next the spire of the White Church of Dezou appeared, and then the glistening bayonets of the troops of the left wing, who were already in position with a view to opposing Alvensleben and Schwerin, who, with their splendid corps, were reported not far distant. The train did not stop at Dezou, but rather

increased its speed, and at half-past nine o'clock we leaped from the carriages on to the platform of Vendome's railway station, where young and old, military and civilians, turned out to greet our arrival for the first time in historic Vendome. Without delay we set out to accomplish the march of seven miles to Conan, and reported our arrival at the General's quarters by eleven o'clock sharp, the hour mentioned in despatches.

Having achieved so much, and receiving no extra orders, we went for a stroll along the lines, with the object of finding out Charette's small let chivalrous company; and, taking the direction of Ouques we, proceeded leisurely along, now admiring the Mobilised guard of Indre et Loire, then finding fault with the Garde de Ille et Vilaine, again chatting with Francs-Tireurs, whom we came up with, and going on the same errand as ourselves, or joining with them in playing pranks upon the Turcos, whom we found in an humorous mood—in this manner we occupied our time, and did not feel either time or distance passing until reaching the village of Bellefons, which reminded us that we had left nine miles of road between us and head-quarters. Here were the Garibaldians drawn up on parade, and we learned that Les Charettes left the village the moment the red-shirted villians entered, as the Zouave colonel would not permit his fiery troops to be seen in the same town with the scum of Italy. This was an example that we followed, and soon we were on the road to Ouques, where our wagons and horses should have arrived by this time, and where we had some hopes of meeting with our favourite Zouaves.

On entering this latter village, our hopes were gratified; there we met the Zouaves. Their anger was unbounded—not without cause, too, for an international cut-throat like Garibaldi should not be retained in the service of savages, much less in that of Catholic France, and to have such as defenders of the same cause proved too much for the Zouaves, who there and then proclaimed that France would be beaten, again betrayed.

However, when they had in some measure regained their peace of mind, a few of our members prevailed upon them to think no more on Garibaldi or his followers, and proposed

that all should go in search of adventure as far as Villermain. This was agreed to, and in less time than I take to write it we were *en route* to that village. Arrived there, without even catching a sight of Uhlans, we entered a café, where having replenished our flasks, we left on our return journey. Entering the forest, we proceeded by a bye-path, and were walking leisurely along, listening to strange stories, when a volley of musketry was discharged in close proximity to us. For a moment we thought of the German Landstrum, and made to cover, where, having put in fresh cartridge in the rifles, we awaited patiently another discharge which might expose the ambush. However, instead of another volley we heard our names repeated, and in another moment we had the Francs-Tireurs de Savoie in our midst. They knew our names, but did not know the individuals to whom such names belonged. One of them (the Francs-Tireurs de Savoie) explained, in the following story, the manner in which they learned our names and whereabouts:—"Our company having been formed only last week at Chambery, we could not proceed to the seat of war until a few days ago, when we received orders to attach ourselves to the troops under M. Le General Bourbaki at Bourges. Through mistake, we came on by rail to La Ferte Sennelere, which town was threatened by the Germans—in fact, we were told that the Uhlans were about entering; and hearing the accounts of Franc-Tireur daring we were not going to run away—on the contrary, we determined to remain. We did remain, and no sooner had we reported our arrival to the Mayor than six Uhlans dashed into the town, and though they were the first whom it was our fate to meet, we shot each and every one of them. Mounting the captured horses we made across country, and after many narrow escapes reached a place called Chateaudun, where we met some members of your corps, who were kind enough to tell us your names. Only this morning we have left that ruined town, and were near Villermain when we saw you enter that village. Seeing you leaving it by the forest road we entered the wood intent upon giving you a surprise, and here is the result. We only hope that one-half your fame, which is at present resonant through *la Belle France*, will be earned and accorded to us on our return

to Chamberry. In fine, we hope to act like men throughout, and earn the true friendship of your corps, Zouaves, and Franc-Tireur brethren."

To the recital of the above we listened with attention, and rather liking the style of our new friends, we admitted them into our circle. We never had cause to complain afterwards, though the proximity of their homes to the land of Garibaldi, Victor Emmanuel, and treachery, suggested anything but honest chivalry to be their inheritance. At six o'clock of the evening we reached our lines. At Ouques everything assumed an unusual quiet, but down the lines, towards Conan, there was a general hum of preparation. Whether a night attack was apprehended by commanders or not, I cannot say, but there was something astir which invented work for our corps; for on our appearance at head-quarters, we were directed to proceed to Suvre in the van of the Bretons. Without delay we were *en route*, and entered this latter town some minutes before the troops, when lodgings were placed at our disposal by the people, and before eight o'clock that evening we were reposing in comfortable beds. Under the influence of sound sleep we forgot the past, present, and future, and did not even dream of the events which were to characterize the morrow.

The 6th day of December arrived. Ushered in as it was in thunder, lightning, and storm, it foreboded anything but a day of peace; for since the formation of the Loire army invariably such signs preceded the hour of contest—at least, on the Loir. The Bretons displayed an air of confidence that day, which we could never discern hitherto, though, strange to say, each one of them you conferred with told a mournful tale, and would conclude by assuring you that they believed the Prussians would drive them back; yet they were determined to fight steadily, and felt confident that if the Germans gained a victory, it would be paid for in German blood.

With this resolve they formed their columns and awaited the attack of the Germans, who were already seen to advance. Blucher's regiments of artillery, infantry, and dragoons, who advanced over the high road to Mer, formed in order of battle. The numerous host which was advan-

cing from Bucy, and even now from Villermain, was seen to follow the example set it by the regiments named after the renowned Blucher. They did not take long to form their "crescent," which, having done, they advanced rapidly. They numbered now about 30,000, while the Bretons could only boast of 4,000; it would be madness to offer resistance, so the Mobiles wisely retired on their lines *propre*. Intent on proving bravest of the brave, they formed in front of the Pompiers and awaited the onset of the Germans, who displayed no tardiness in their advance. Once within range, and the willing Mobiles, with rifle and cannon, play upon them. German cavalry advance to the charge *en masse*, but they are made to stagger, to reel, to retreat; their artillery opens fire, but does little or no harm; their infantry columns are pushed forward, but all their ingenuity fails to make even an indenture in the lines of youths—of patriots.

Our men, whose ambition it was to have the wounded taken off as they fell, were working hard and fast to attain this end, and they succeeded; for when the victorious Moblots advanced, none of their wounded lay on the snow.

The engagement lasted during three hours, and resulted in the total rout of the Germans. Their dead numbered something enormous—far exceeding their wounded, a recorded fact, which proves the spirit, the ardour, which the Mobiles put into their work. *En passant*, I may here state that the Prussian ambulance displayed cruelty *à discretion*; wherever they met with one of their troops whose wounds were mortal, they shot him through the head, sending the unfortunate man before his Judge probably unprepared—unfit to die. In fine, the awful *sang froid* with which they laboured would, at least, astonish a barbarian, if it would not make him detest civilisation. It was while they (the Prussian ambulance) laboured thus, that the Francs-Tireurs de Savoie came on the scene. At first they were tempted to fire on the savage ambulance; but on consulting the health of their Franco-Irish friends of the Red-cross, they refrained from attempting anything so rash, and which, doubtless, would incite the Germans to terrible retribution. Having remained to witness the *finalé* of the tragedy

enacted by these "pious" followers of a "pious king"—these converts to new religions—we returned to the farmsteads to look after our wounded, and were so engaged when despatches were handed to our Director, containing orders for the transfer of the wounded to our hospitals at Chateaudun. These orders we attended to, and were soon *en route*, the Francs-Tireurs following. It was past noon-day when we arrived in Dezou. There the sorrowing widows, mothers, fathers, and sisters, were in tears. A few would break into audible lamentations, which proved too much for Barney O'Neill's feelings, and he was compelled, as himself said, to give them a bit of his mind. This he did after his own fashion :

"Well, begorra, yez are the queerist lot of polthoons meself ivir came acrass in me life ; but be all the goats in Killarney, if I could only spare a minit, meself is the boy that would make yez howld yer long tongues, and not let thim be tar-mintin' poor sodghers that narely fell for their native land. In war-times like these, cryin' women should be trated like St. Kevin trated the woman down at Glendalough, because they're always disturbin' our pace ov mind wid the way they whillabulloo, an' squeak, an' roar. 'Pon me conshinse, they're like a lot of crows that have a rookery nare Mr. Kelly's house, nare ould Dundalk. D—l a look yez can look at thim but they begin to howl ; but I'm the boy will make thim stop their 'lubber.' Shure they're always doin' harm, but I'll make thim know somethin' betther ; begorra, meself is the boy that will do it."

O'Neill having delivered himself as above, threw off his great coat, and attached the reins to the flag-staff of his wagon. The women to whom he referred, seeing our hero preparing to descend fled on all sides ; for though they did not understand a word of English, they knew well from Barney's gesture that his words were directed against them, and accordingly fled to escape the chastisement which the renowned Barney would certainly have inflicted, if he could lay hands on one of his tormentors. However, not finding one, he entered the railway tavern, to try what effect a "swig" of cognac would have on him, and emerged from said tavern with such a pleasing countenance, that had the

“criers” ventured to look at him again, they would probably emerge from their hiding-places, and renew their lamentations in the open air. O’Neill having frightened the villagers, and satisfied his appetite in a tavern, resumed his seat and went his way along the high road. Reaching Chateaudun at seven o’clock that evening, we were gratified to learn that the Germans, whom we believed to hold that town, evacuated it; and after surrendering our suffering charges to the care of our surgeons we separated, each to report his arrival to welcoming friends.

CHAPTER XIX:

“ A troop came next, who crowns and armour wore,
 And proud defiance in their looks they bore ;
 For thee, they cried, amidst alarms and strife,
 We sail'd in tempests down the stream of life ;
 For thee whole nations fill'd with flames and blood,
 And swam to empire through the purple blood.”

POPE.

THE night before the 7th passed pleasantly, the while we entertained our kind hosts with stories relating to our successes in the sister department of the Loire et Cher ; and it is possible we would have remained to breakfast with our friends, had not Uhlans the audacity to bring us an order from General Von der Tann, requesting us to repair to his head-quarters at Bucy.

M. Picard having glanced over this impertinent despatch, returned it to the Uhlan officer, and told him to tell his master that the Franco-Irish Ambulance on the Loire does not recognise an order dictated by any other than the Commander-in-Chief of the New Army—therefore they cannot comply with his request.

The Uhlans galloped off to deliver this message to their gruff old general, and immediately after a few Francs-Tireurs “ bowled ” into the Place d'Armes—their prey had escaped. Seeing there remained no duty to be performed, we broke up into small parties, and amused ourselves with whatever offered. One company preferring to walk along the river, rambled as far as the village of Counte, where they were told that Uhlans were stationed on the other side of the bridge. This vague information tempted our “strollers” to give their informant a ducking in the river ; but he understood their very thoughts, and added, “There are five Uhlans.” Without a moment's hesitation the Francs-Tireurs advanced cautiously along the river, while our men got on to the road, and walked leisurely into the village.

The entry of a few members of a foreign ambulance into a village where probably they were never heard of, attracted the admiration of the Uhlans so much that they left their post beyond the bridge and advanced to meet our men, with the object of reminding them of the danger attendant on entering a village or town of an invaded country; indeed one of the Uhlans had given so much information to our dare-devil members, when the Francs-Tireurs fired on the friendly Germans, placing three of their number *hors de combat*; two escaped. Ours having carried the wounded men into a house, left them on a bed and came out again to join the Francs-Tireurs, who already were mounted on the three horses of the *hors de combat*. Our men mounted also; but this arrangement—three men on one horse, and two on each of the other horses—was so ludicrous, that they found it difficult to keep their seats, so immoderate was their laughter; they in a manner resembled so many Don Quixotes. Their triumphal entry into Chateaudun caused no small amount of merriment, making even those who suffered most burst out into laughter. What a pity that the beautiful Niobe was not present, for her weeping would, without doubt, be changed for hysterics, and she would spare her fourteen children, if only to let them join in the universal mirth.

• At two o'clock two Francs-Tireurs came in with tidings that two complete corps and two infantry divisions of the Prussians, under Manteuffel and Von der Tann, were advancing. Now it was high time for the Francs-Tireurs to make themselves scarce, and so, having requisitioned vehicles and horses, they went *en route* to Courtalin, and were accompanied as far as La Barriere by a few members of our corps. We returned their adieux until the high wall surrounding the grounds attached to the convent of the White Sisters shut out from view their retreat.

Here we must remain to meet Von der Tann, and bear the brunt of his anger, for we have no doubt but the grog-blossoms (which abound principally about his nose) changed colour when he received our answer to his summons. We have not long to wait, for his advent is nigh. Already his cavalry are entering by the upper cemetery, while his artillery are being placed in position on the high ground near

Etéville, and his columns of infantry move slowly along the valley of l'Ozanne. But he might spare his cohorts all this trouble, for no impediment offers itself except the ruined streets, which the troops of his neighbour Schwerin burnt, and which will without doubt cause an amount of trouble to his troops before they can enter the square.

The incidents consequent on his (Von der Tann's) entry are fully given in a letter written home by an *attaché* of our corps, and of which I subscribe the copy ; it is as follows :—

“ Chateaudun, December 10th, 1872.

“ DEAR MAC—

“ According to promise, I now write you, though I doubt if this scribble will ever reach you, for I have to entrust it to the German field-post. However, as it contains nothing contrary to truth, I have some hopes that you will receive it. As it only conveys, or rather is intended to convey, an idea of our situation (no enviable one I assure you), I abstain from mentioning matters relating to myself, and, therefore, will only annoy you with a short history of our trials since my note to you on the 6th instant. So now for a commencement.

“ It was six o'clock of the afternoon when that portion of Tann's army, which made a *detour* with the object of entering the town by the Route de Brou, entered Chateaudun. For fully an hour did they march past. The troops appeared in excellent condition, though after performing a painful march.

“ On their arrival they soon proceeded to make themselves as comfortable as they possibly could, and that in a manner which would shock the savage sense of the “crows” of the backwoods. Being told off in companies, and a certain number of houses allotted to each company, they commenced to break up doors, shutters, bedsteads, and, in fact, everything that might suit as firewood. Having broken up as many of the above as would prove sufficient for the night's fuel, they made their fires, and having done so went for a promenade. Soon all places of public resort were filled with the burly customers. In the Café de Chartres an incident occurred, from which we gleaned that the Bavarians were

not such demons as fancy painted them. The proprietor of this café had passed from life to death only an hour before the entry of the Germans, and now the house was in the possession of the latter. The disconsolate widow requested two of our members to remain in the house for her protection. They acceded to her request, and as a result they compelled the Germans to pay for what they (the Germans) consumed, and when the hour for closing the café came round, our members, referred to, directed them to retire to rest. They obeyed willingly, and it was a sight to witness how the few energetic Irishmen controlled eighty warriors.

“Excesses were committed, but wherever our members could prevent such, they did it fearlessly, and in many cases with great success. M. Picard was indefatigable in his efforts to protect the people; he restored much valuable property, incurring great risk and danger to himself.

“Having heard nothing from the General of Bavarians that would tend to make us uneasy, we adjourned to the college. At the gate were Prussian guards, while inside were two of our men likewise on guard. The German guard would permit any person who wished to enter the college to pass into the Rue de la Plateau, but once within that street, or that called Le Rue de College, they were not permitted to re-pass the sentries. Some members of our corps, who were enjoying themselves through town, advanced to the corner of College-street, with the object of passing down that street and entering their quarters; but on seeing the sentries at the gate, they guessed at their duty there, and retraced their steps; however, on finding that they would not be permitted to pass down the Rue de la Paix, they were glad to make again towards the college, which at length they found to be the safest quarters.

“Early on the morning of the 8th, a Prussian surgeon entered the college, he was accompanied by a number of staff officers, who seemed to act as guards for the surgeon. This latter individual, an old man, addressed M. Picard, and said, ‘There are a number of our troops suffering from wounds, and I am directed by General Tann to hand them over to the charge of your medical department. You have no objections, I hope?’

“ ‘I have a great objection,’ replied M. Picard. ‘Only on yesterday our Chef de l’Ambulance received an order from your commander ; I sent a reply. Again, this morning, he has sent you to make a similar demand, and now I refuse an entrance to even one of your sick or wounded. Already we have too many of your countrymen in our charge, and I am instructed to tell you this as a definite answer to your commander’s unjust request.’

“ The Prussians were about evacuating our quarters and returning to Von der Tann’s, with information regarding what they had seen and heard, when that worthy General popped his scarlet nose through the wicket of the great gate. Directly he was told by his cringing surgeon the answer given to his order, and then he decided that our corps should be placed under arrest, while the hospitals in charge of our medical department would be at his disposal.

“ Addressing M. Picard, he told him to consider the Irish Ambulance Corps under arrest, and intimated that we would be sent prisoners to Chartres.

“ ‘Well, if it must be so, let it,’ replied M. Picard ; ‘for rather than overcrowd our hospitals, by affording protection to the enemies of those whom we have volunteered to serve, we are willing to suffer slavery if necessary. Still, I would ask you to pause before you commit such an unjust act, an outrage on the cause represented under the flag of the Red Cross, an outrage that will draw down upon your arms the just censure of nations, while it will consign your name to obloquy, and leave an indelible mark on the pages of history, which will demonstrate the occult fanaticism pervading the commanders under a very pious king.’

“ Whether Picard’s reasoning or Tann’s interests prevailed I know not, but we were not expelled the town ; neither were we interfered with, though being virtually prisoners.

“ The Prussians requisitioned horses and vehicles *à discretion*, and into them put their sick and wounded, who were to be sent to some place unknown to us ; and while engaged thus, parade was called for our members. The adjutant then and there informed them that four men must volunteer to accompany the Germans ; in doing so, he said, ‘It is not to render them aid ; it is as hostages for our neutrality, our

honour, you go—our very liberty is at stake. If none volunteer, we will be kept within the German lines until the war is over; therefore, leaving it optional with yourselves to decide whether you will remain prisoners, or, by sacrificing four, enjoy liberty—I await your answer.’

“Four gentlemen offered themselves, whose names I append, and were immediately introduced to the bug-bear Tann, who directed them to set out in charge of the guard which accompanied the ailing Germans. Now, dear Mac, being at liberty once again to ramble at will over the country, I will not weary you or myself with longer narrative, but promise to write you on the ‘life and times of our four volunteers, or their doings inside the German lines.’ Remember me to all old ‘coons’ at home, and tell them I am happy.

“With kind regards to your own dear self, believe me sincerely yours,

“_____.”

Leaving the Germans in Chateaudun, I shall now legitimately call myself a comrade of three friends, or, if you wish, one of the four, and venture to describe the scenes, hardships, and adventures referred to in the above letter, which we met with *en route*, and ultimately our escape from captivity. We left Chateaudun with the Germans on the morning of the 8th December, 1870, *sans* breakfast, *sans* great coats, and, proceeding at a fair pace, we reached Bonneval at ten o'clock the same morning. Here the camp of the Southern Army was breaking up, and we had to remain on the roadside until their immense army service corps passed. Then we made a forward move, but had not gone far when their artillery blocked our way again. Here the members of the cruel Prussian Ambulance were engaged scolding the unhappy officers of the army service corps for allowing their men to mass in the road. At four o'clock that evening we were able to proceed by making a *detour* of four miles, and reached Chancheville at about seven o'clock that evening, where we remained that night. *En passant*, I may here state that the officers in command of the guard surrendered to us their beds,

and made us quite comfortable. Early in the morning of the 9th we resumed the journey, and entered Chartres at nine o'clock, where a large number of the sick and wounded were set down. The few who were to be conveyed to some other place were distributed through the vehicles evacuated by the sufferers who were left there, and we were *en route* for Rambouillet, which town we entered at noon-day. Though the Germans were served with refreshments, we could get none for love or money, and had to leave again on our journey. Our route lay through the splendid country which extended towards Versailles, and, at seven o'clock, we entered Versailles, where we had some short delay, and again went *en route* to some place then not known to us. However, near midnight, we entered St. Germain en Laye. By this time we felt extremely hungry, and seeing that our guard (which scattered through the town) kept no particular look-out for us, we commenced to look out for a café wherein we might purchase refreshments. After a run through the streets, we crossed the river, and entered the saloon of the rail-station (where the Germans were rather scarce); there we ordered supper, which was served up quickly, and were enjoying it when Prussian hussars entered. Without ceremony they arrested, and, worst of all, dragged us from a much-required meal, and brought us captive before the commandant of the town. They stated their reasons for our arrest, but the commandant, on finding out who we were, the cause of us being in St. Germain en Laye, and the manner in which we were arrested in the railway saloon, dismissed our captors, and afterwards entertained us hospitably. At two o'clock next morning, or rather on the morning of the 10th, we bade adieu to the friendly Prussian, and left his "diggings" intent upon nothing particular, but, happening to meet with the requisitioned horses and vehicles on which we travelled from Chateaudun, we resolved on the happy thought—escape. We thought on Socrates, and his words gave us courage:—*"βουλεύου—μεν βριδέως ἐπιτέλει δὲ ταχέως τὰ δόξαντα,"*—and Sallust—" *Nam et prius, quam incipias consulto; et, ubi consulueris, mature factu opus est.* Tying the reins of each horse to the back of the other vehicles, each of us volunteered to drive as many as possible, and leaping into the premier

vehicle of each of the four divisions into which we formed the cavalcade, we were soon on the high road to Dreux. At dawn of day we entered that city; merely halting to give our jaded horses a drink, we pushed forward again on our journey. Passing through Pont-gouinn, H'liers, and Lorgron, we entered Chateaudun at dead of night, at which hour we roused M. Lumiere from his sleep, and presented to him the horses which we had taken from the Germans. Having formally thanked us, he said that fighting had been going on about Fretvale for the last few days, and that our corps was on duty there. To Fretvale we went, and, on arriving there, we learned that our Ambulance had left for Conan the previous evening, with orders to be in readiness to proceed with the Pompiers and Francs-Tireurs to Le Plesis, Chateau-Regnault, or Blois, as circumstances might require. Therefore to Conan we made our way, and there we again learned that our men had already departed for Suevre. Making a fresh requisition of horse and carriage, we proceeded to Suevre, where we found our friends of the Ambulance, the Zouaves, and Francs-Tireurs, labouring under difficulties. They were in quest of food, but, to all appearance, they did not succeed in procuring any. However, they seemed to forget their wants in their delight at seeing us among them once again. Their best hopes were gratified; so, instead of resuming the search after provisions, we all entered the Café de Mairé, there to drink to our success

CHAPTER XX.

“The loud war trumpet woke the morn,
The quivering drum, the pealing horn,
From rank to rank the cry is borne,
‘Arouse for death or victory!’”

BATTLE OF BUSACO.

THE 11th day of December dawned, and with it came signs, inauspicious signs, vaticinating a bloody day. The thunder rolled, peals on peals redoubled seemed to rend the poles; the lightning's flash lit up the dim dawn, and the rain poured down in torrents. However, by eight o'clock the elements relaxed their fury, and next came a gentle fall of snow. That morning was merely the prelude or introduction to the day—that memorable day, which will be ever foremost in the minds of the men of our Ambulance on the Loire.

The trumpeters sounded the *reveille*, the *generale* was beaten, and the troops evacuated their *tentes* to assemble on parade-ground. There they were addressed by their generals, and marched off to take up position in the order of battle. This they had accomplished, and only accomplished, when bang goes the Prussian cannon, and is replied to by that of our troops. Could it be a philanthropic arrangement between commanders on either side to let each other know that they are still neighbours? If such an arrangement existed, they now carry it out with a vengeance, for a terrible artillery duel was being fought. Nothing occurred to interrupt this duel for some time, until at length the German cavalry poured down on our lines. Wherever they saw a weak point, there they swarmed, but were oftentimes deceived, for their lines were formed intentionally with the object of attracting their attack to a position where the dreadful mitrailleuse batteries were masked. In several

instances they charged down on the youthful Mobiles, when at the moment the lines of the latter would open, and the embrasure thus formed, would instantly be blocked up again with batteries of this dreaded instrument of modern warfare. Too late for a retreat—the shrill whistle of the mitrailleuse is heard above all other sounds, and these splendid cavalry regiments which advanced are now combined in one confused mass. Charge follows charge in quick succession, but the Prussian horsemen meet with the same fate as their co-freres of their “van.” Then infantry, cavalry, and artillery joined in a desperate effort to drive back our troops ; but, instead, themselves were forced backwards, while our artillery continued to send shells among their flying columns *à discretion*. However, the Germans rallied again, and came on to the attack under the protection of their artillery, which resulted in our mitrailleuse batteries being dragged off to another quarter of the field, there to continue the dispensation of death from positions deemed as good, and certainly far safer than that which they had evacuated. The sounds of discord grew louder, the cries and imprecations of the wounded terrifying—*sans doute*, the battle attained its climax ; three hundred German cannon played upon the lines of our Mobiles for some time, which was succeeded by a cavalry charge ; 20,000 troopers charged down on the heroic sons of France. The carnage was awful in the extreme ; 500 Turcos are sent to the rescue, and are soon engaged. With glaring eyes and distended nostrils they kneel to receive the charge of the enemy, and no sooner had they checked the advance of the cavalry sent directly against them, than they rose to their feet, and deliberately leaped between the horses, where they fought with such desperation (the while seeming to be invulnerable) that soon they put their enemies to flight, and then returned to the relief of the hard-pressed Mobiles. These latter fought like trained troops, receiving and repulsing charges with a *sang froid* surprising in itself ; and their perseverance was rewarded, for the Germans, who advanced confident on victory, were driven back defeated, foiled—at least for this time. They must remain content with their occupation of Orleans and the surrounding country, and only hope that on some future day they will be

able to hew a passage to Le Mans and Tours, through the ranks of the youths who must have offered so much opposition to their advance.

Along the river our troops were alike successful, driving back the enemy beyond Beaugency, and inflicting fearful losses on them.

The efforts of our corps were, without exaggeration, praiseworthy; there were our men, worn out by fatigue, toiling at oppressive stretcher-work, in a manner, too, that would lead one to believe them enjoying rest for some days. During that eventful day, it was nothing unusual to see them piercing through the lines and returning with the wounded who fell in the "van." This they performed without receiving a wound, notwithstanding that a storm of iron swept past them, and oftentimes were trodden over by the cavalry of the enemy. In one instance the escape of six of our men was, in truth, miraculous. They were engaged in the carrying of three wounded Mobiles to the wagons, and had only proceeded half-way on their journey, when the French Lancers, who were drawn up in their advance, received the orders to charge. In a moment they were down on our men, passed them, and, to the joy of all who witnessed the affair, our men rose from the ground, on which they threw themselves, and, lifting the stretchers, advanced towards O'Neill's wagon, with their suffering burdens, in which they placed them. Their escape was the theme of conversation during the evening, and the loquacious M. O'Neill could not refrain from favouring his fellow-countrymen, the Francs-Tireurs, and a number of officers of mixed grades, with what he proclaimed to be "a thrue history of the fix our men was in." He said: "Meself that's always lookin' over the field, sees everything that passes afore me eyes, an' can gie you a right thrue sthory. Faix, I'm always lookin' on like a Giniril, an' that's no lie, fur I seen our six boys comin' along. I knew d—n well that the Frinch horsemen wor goin' to gallop over thim, but d—l in the least I pitted thim, for I was orderin' thim wud me two hands to keep out ov the way, but they wouldn't lishen to a word I'd say. Any way, they got as far as the strame down there, an' instud ov comin' along faster beyond, they lift

down the stritchers to rest themselves. Well, this was enough to kill the patience ov any Giniril in the woorld, an' be the purty Poll Carty the Giniril ov the Lanchers tould thim charge. Aff they went helther-skelther, over apple trees an' drains, our six min, an' about sixty-six Mobs, an' down on the Prooshans ; meself thought that the whole pack ov thim was kilt out and out, but hang the stir I could stir from the horses, so I left the poor fellows to die as well as they could, but 'pon me conshinse, whin I seen our own six coons gettin' up, afther the horsemin passin' over thim, I said to meself that God was protectin' the Irish, an I tuk the pledge in me own mind nivir to taste another sup of cognac if the weather was rainin' thundher-bolts or wild-fire.

“ They brought the poor sodghers that war hurt up to me wagon, an' put thim in a 'hang sight' nisher than I iver saw thim doin' afore. Ov coorse, meself axed thim war they hurt, an' they said they wurn't ; so I tould thim to kneel down on the snow an' offer up a prayer for their happy delivery. They did kneel down an' said a prayer or two, an' thin ran back to the lines as quick as March hares. You'd think that all the devils in hell war playin' skip-schab for a hapinny down at the same lines, wid the way the fightin' was goin' on. Anyway, the chaps came back safe wid a load of wounded ; an' while they war puttin' thim into the wagons, meself says to Cunninham : ' Begorra, me Connaught ranger, if iver you go down to their lines agin' you'll pay the piper ; divil a out ov it you'll iver come,' sis meself. He tould me to sthoph me botheration, an' mind me own business, an' away himself an' his comrades wint on what people call ' humane duty ; ' but afore they got quarter the way, six or seven ould pots hopped about thim an' thin burst into ' smithereens.' Faix, you'd think it was a rookery of crows or a company ov ' horneys' that wint flyin' through the skhy. Anyway, least any ov thim would get kilt, I drove down nearer. Ah, but, *accushla machree*, before I was rightly halted meself was surrounded by sodgers, an' thim blazin' away at each other as hard as ivir they could fire. I says to meself, ' Barney, you'll get your head smashed in this place ; ' an' was turnin' me horses to retreat, whin me bould Kavanagh steps up to me an' says : ' Barney, if you lave

this we'll all be disgraced, an' niver can show our face agin amongst the Frinch.' Well, shure, meself niver thought ov the manin' Kavanagh put on me until that minit. God knows, it's the last thing I'd think ov to disgrace ould Dundalk, or any part ov our ould country. So I bowldly turned round the horses agin, an' waited there as quietly as I could, concernin' that ould pots an' iviry other divilment flew round me. Whin the battle was over a stout ould officer shuk hands wid me an' says: 'Well, Mr. O'Neill, if it washn't for you the battle wouldn't be over for the nixt two hours.'

" 'I'm d—n glad to hear it, sir,' sis I; 'an' besides, you'll have time enough to get kilt to-morrow, if God spares you so long.'

" 'I think ye'r right, Mr. O'Neill,' sis he; 'an' now we better be movin', for here's the Prooshan Ambulance comin' down, an' yez might get into a row atween yourselves; so come on now, Mr. O'Neill, if you plase,' sis he.

" 'Well, I drew up the boreen abit; an' God knows the thought struck me that the Prooshans would think it was afeered of themselves I was, so I turned about to fly down on thim, but bad luck to me if the Surgeon-in-Chief didn't see me an' made me sthop; thin he sis to me: 'What the d—l are you about, Mr. O'Neill? don't you know dang well that duty is waitin' on you there above, an' why the deuce don't you go an' do it? That heap of wounded left lyin' on the field through your negligence, must now be removed to the chateau yonder. So now, Mr. O'Neill, have no more of your nonsense, but go an' do your work. Now off wid you, or I'll ordher you down off the wagon.'

" 'Meself wint up the field wud the sirgeon, an' I sis to him, 'Now, docther, that's no way to thank a man that put an ind to a great battle, besides upheld the honour of his country wud his bravery, an' everything consarnin' it.'

" 'Oh! I havn't the least doubt in the world about your bravery, Mr. O'Neill,' sis he, 'but it's really too bad to be neglectin' the poor wounded sodgers. I'm afeered, Mr. O'Neill,' sis he, 'that you'll be the cause of their death, an' if they die the whole blame will be left on your shoulders, and then look to yourself. Begorra,' sis he, 'p'hraps it's

death by the rope you'll get, fur it's a hard case to say that a man from ould Dundalk could be guilty of neglectin' his friends.'

“ ‘Och! doether, dear,’ sis I, ‘don’t kill me out-an-out, for ye’ll make me believe that I havn’t the nature of an Irishman. God only knows that I wint near gettin’ my neck broke a thousand times this blessed day for thim very same wounded; an’ afeered you might say that Mr. O’Neill was tired, I’ll now be off an’ haul away the wounded in a giffey. Wud that, *accushla machree*, I druv away like ould Nick himself, an’ brought the wounded min to the castle. You’d think the poor fellows war betther afther the nice drive I gave thim from this side ov that ugly little village over there. Now, there’s the whole story for yez, about how thim six play-boys escaped, an’ the rows they got meself into; an’, be me sowl, if I was to live for another hundred years, I’ll nivir do another day’s work like that, nather will I put me neck in a rope to save another, so I wont. I’m now beginnin’ to get vexed, but I have no one to bate. Garibaldi’s *thraneens* are gone to the divil: I suppose it’s well for thim any ways, for I’m in the humour of thrashing a baker’s dozen ov thim.”

This story of O’Neill’s, with several others, engaged our attention for some hours, and it was not until the hour of midnight that we retired to rest. The night passed over tranquilly, the Uhlans neither venturing to or firing into camp, and it was not until seven o’clock on the morning of the 12th, that our rest was disturbed. At that hour orders were received (orders too that should be obeyed)—150 wounded soldiers were to be conveyed to Chateaudun.

At seven o’clock we were *en route via* Cloye, which town we entered at nine o’clock, and where we refreshed ourselves *ad libitum*, as also the wounded. At ten o’clock we resumed our journey, but had not proceeded many miles when we were joined by Francs-Tireurs, who hurriedly asked us did we meet with the Uhlans. Having replied in the negative, they requested us to halt to witness the amusement which they promised presently, as the Uhlans were in some place about, and it was their intention to have a crack at them. Directly their sharp ears detected a sound as that of a pistol

shot. A farm-house lay about 100 yards off the road, and from this the sound proceeded. The hail (which fell incessantly during the day) prevented one from being able to discern even an enemy in advance; so they proceeded cautiously towards the house. They had not yet passed over 100 yards of the well-kept avenue when they espied the Uhlans—a discovery which resulted in the Francs-Tireurs delivering a volley from their precious “Spencers.” Our men saw the Uhlans fall, and immediately rushed to render aid. They found five Uhlans *hors de combat* (three mortally and two slightly wounded); the former they carried to the farm-house, there to spin out the few hours which were still left them to prepare; the latter were carried to our wagons, and placed therein, among the French sufferers whom we were conveying from Tretvale.

The Mobiles displayed an amount of chivalry. Not alone did they demonstrate their sorrow at the fate of the two wounded men, but proved beyond doubt that their sorrow was genuine, for they rendered to the Germans all the kindness that it was in their power to bestow.

Accompanied by the Francs-Tireurs, we pushed on to our destination proper—Chateaudun, where (as the Francs-Tireurs informed us) there were no Prussians seen for the last few days. At one o'clock of the afternoon we entered Chateaudun, where we found General Fiereck in undisturbed possession of that town. General Cambriels (who unwillingly has to tolerate three companies of Garibaldians to serve under him) was expected, while General Polhes' corps was reported at Villermain. Taking into consideration the number of troops in town, with a still greater number expected, we acted on the rather selfish resolution of foraging a dinner, down to the Auberge de St. Jean, where old Germain Rosseau welcomed us. He having requested us to enter a private room, we did so, and were gratified with a rare, a very rare sight. Presently two turkeys were placed on the table; they were in a corner of the room. He displayed (as a result of his handiwork) the corpse of a German, whom he had killed that morning. Whether his pride at killing the Prussian, or his joy at meeting us once more, prompted him to act the host, I know not, but he took the chair

and carved the fowls with a nicety becoming more peaceful times. His old grand-aunt—who, by-the-bye, seems old enough to remember the confusion of things consequent on the Deluge—brought in the wine and spirits, and we were happy. At midnight we were joined by the American *Francs-Tireurs*, a circumstance which brought about an unlimited number of toasts, songs, and, of course, speeches, and which tended to prolong our revels until the grey dawn of morning signalled duty.

Having paid special attention to the replenishing of our flasks, we wrapt ourselves in great coats, and strolled leisurely along towards head-quarters. Gaining the plateau, we found that the artillery corps had placed their guns already. What! did the Bretons intend to defend the town, and subject all that remained of it to another bombardment? Yes, they did, if only the Germans who swarmed on the roads leading to Chartres and Orleans would come on to the attack. *Apropos*, the "red-shirted" pigmies were confined in the Caserne du Cavalerie, lest their appearance in the town would shock the feelings of the people; but Fiereck, Polhes, and accomplished Cambriels, with the honest Moblots under their orders, were in town, and intended giving battle to the Germans. While orders were being distributed through the troops, our corps, with that of the Americans, were called on parade, and there we received orders regulating our duties during the bombardment, which was believed imminent. On reaching the plateau again, we could see that the Germans were placing their guns; their cavalry and infantry were at a standstill, as if awaiting orders to advance. But what was our surprise when we saw those renowned troops taking to their heels, the carriages of their commanders in the "van" of their retreat. There, was certain victory snatched from the hands of our troops. Wary Wittich would not attack until reinforced, when, with superior numbers, he would again march on Chateaudun—that town which, though not holding out so long as Belfort or Strasburg, has offered more opposition to the advance of the invaders of the Loire departments, has inflicted greater losses on them than even the imperial army (now prisoners) or the republican army under Bourbaki or Faidherbé. And

what is the cause ? I will answer. The inhabitants, blessed with their attachment to our Catholic religion, without which there is neither peace nor patriotism, threw themselves heart and soul into that noble cause—defence of one's country—and went into the field with the army of the Loire. Not content with this offering, their unbounded patriotism led them to visit the town daily, when, as is well known, they often succeeded in sending hundreds of the enemy before their Judge, and almost, in every instance, ridding the town of its spoilers *in toto*. Our men and Franc-Tireurs, who were stationed wherever it was thought the contest would prove hottest, returned to the favourite Auberge de St. Jean, and there made every preparation for spending a pleasant day. Dinner came round, and we enjoyed it thoroughly ; supper also. But, as our evening grew into the hours of night, an untoward circumstance occurred, which tended to a little disturbance. It was eleven o'clock, and our Franc-Tireurs and men were about entering on a new source of amusement, viz., billiards, when the Garibaldians and a few Moblots entered ; the latter individuals had an air of recklessness about them which was becoming in men associating with the "red shirts," but they suffered for their company, as the sequel will show. Our unwelcome visitors were not long in the room, when they commenced to fidget about uneasily. One of them taking a "cue," made a "cannon," and this irritated the proper player to a degree which caused him to wrest the "cue" from the ignorant Moblot. The Garibaldians, who kept silent up to this, now stood forward, and said, "We must get the table." This was refused, when one of them rushed on a Franc-Tireur of the American corps, and attempted to wrest the "cue" from him. The Franc-Tireur pushed off his assailant with commendable coolness and grace. This was the signal *de la guerre*. Revolver and cutlass were requisitioned, bullets whizzed through the room, and in a moment the whole scene partook of pandemonium. A Garibaldian was in the act of firing at one of our men, when the would-be murderer was shot dead by a Franc-Tireur. At this juncture, Fennessy happened to remark "that the dead dog should be flung out of the way," and he was about lifting the dead man from the floor,

with the object of leaving his corpse aside, when two infuriated Moblots rushed on him with revolver and cutlass. These he placed *hors de combat*. Having disarmed them, he carried out his humane intention of removing the dead man; and it is said that, on returning, he not only punished the communist "Mobs," with their Garibaldian comrades, *à discretion*, but even cut the ears off the cowards who attacked him. In fine, our list of casualties amounted to one Franc-Tireur and two of our men being slightly wounded; while on the side of the enemy, two Garibaldians were killed, and ten wounded.

This so-called skirmish compensated in a good measure for the disappointment consequent on the retreat of the Germans; for the Garibaldians were as much detested by true Frenchmen as were the Germans; and, in proof, I give the toasts drunk to by generals and their staffs the night following: "*Le peuple de l'Irlande, et les Francs-Tireurs de l'Amérique*;" and so delighted were they at the treatment accorded to the "red shirts," that they loudly proclaimed that it would be well for France and the world if Garibaldi and his followers were interned in some *donjon*, where they could only commune with each other in secret. After the broil, we strolled towards the college, firm in the conviction that Garibaldi would be safer in his home at Caprera than serving the wily Bismarck in pretending to serve France.

CHAPTER XXI.

“The orb of day, in crimson dye,
 Began to mount the morning sky;
 Then, what a scene for warrior’s eye
 Hung on the bold declivity.”

BATTLE OF BUSACO.

’TWAS not yet dawn when the *generale* was beaten without our quarters. Dressing hastily, we rushed into the streets with the object of ascertaining the cause of drums beating to arms at such an early hour. Gaining the plateau, we found that the Breton Artillery Corps were uncovering their guns, and placing them in position, while divisions of their infantry were pushed forward to form in position outside the town, and every preparation made to repel an attack. *Sans doute* the Prussians were advancing, for, as darkness gave place to morning’s light, we could easily perceive from our elevated position on the plateau the spikey helmets. Prince Frederick’s army, having joined Wittich’s corps, now advanced in their strength. The objects Wittich had in view when he directed a retreat on the 12th were now fully explained. He did not consider his 30,000 troops a match for 18,000 French, and retired beyond Bonneval, there to await the advent of some thousands of Bavarians from Chartres, and Prussians from Orleans. These latter came to his aid on receipt of his order, and as a result they now appeared *en masse* about four miles from the town. They halted *à la mode de heür*, and sent on the Uhlans (who volunteered to attempt an entrance) with the object of finding out whether our troops intended to defend the town, or whether their entrance would be unobstructed. Polhes, who was watching their movements intently, directed the Francs-Tireurs to proceed to the vineyard on the Route de Chartres, there to lie in ambush with the *entente cordiale* that if the Uhlans escaped from

the town they would cut off their retreat. Six members of our field department were directed to proceed to the ambush of the Francs-Tireurs, and in ten minutes after receiving this order, the six of ours who volunteered duty with Francs-Tireurs were with the "vulture plumes." The Uhlans—none others than the Black Brunswickers—advanced at a gallop. They passed the first ambuscade and entered the town, where they were made prisoners without a shot being fired; an hour passes, and the main body of the Germans, who awaited the return of their Uhlans, detached another company on the same duty. They advanced much in the same manner as their friends who were now prisoners; but, having seen a few uniforms of the French troops of the line, they turned to retreat, when the concealed Francs-Tireurs opened on them a galling fire, placing thirty of their number *hors de combat*, leaving the others to bring to their chiefs information that the town would be defended. It was ten o'clock of the forenoon when the Germans were seen to advance. Their cavalry came on with all the speed for which their splendid horses are celebrated, and their infantry advanced briskly, while their guns were being placed in commanding positions. For a time—a short time—their advance was left unobstructed, but once their columns had closed in upon the town, and, when within range, our mitrailleuse batteries poured in upon them a death-dealing shower of lead. Of that battery which protected the old and new road to Bonneval I will now write. This battery, to which was attached the greatest importance, not only defended the entrance by the upper and lower roads, but also the level ground which lay between the railroad and the upper road. Over those roads the Germans advanced in force, but their columns had not reached the limekiln on the upper road, nor the mill on the lower road, when this well-managed battery began to play. The cavalry in the "van" of the invaders were thrown into confusion, their well-trained infantry were staggered; for once the obedient Germans refused to advance, and so filled were they with consternation, surprise, and alarm, that for some minutes they remained motionless under the terrible fire of our revolving runs. Not in hundreds, but in thousands, did they suffer

themselves to be mowed down before they decided on carrying out the attack, and when they advanced they only came on to the slaughter; fast and hot was that death-dealing shower—that leaden shower poured down upon them; terrible was their situation, destruction was their lot. Another effort—a desperate effort—wherein they concentrated all their strength—all their strategy proved unavailing, and a retreat was sounded. Chateaudun (that town of heroes—I might say martyrs, for not only were her sons fighting in the sacred cause of country, but in that more sacred one of religion—the Germans desecrated their altars, imprisoned their priests) proved itself; an hour of vengeance offered itself, and well was it availed of. Victory was theirs indisputably, and proud might they be of their success. Theirs was no mean subterfuge, no *ruse de guerre* to the achievement of it. It was the bold, upright stand of right against might, for the Germans had broken their plighted truth in waging a war against a people which they proclaimed to wage only against an empire, and for their base lies they suffered.

When firing ceased, what an awful spectacle presented itself. There was the upper road to Chartres, over which the Germans advanced with all the confidence that previous victories engendered, now resembling a purple stream wherein were plunged the corpses of a nation. The best blood of Germany was spilled that day, and now flowed lazily along to the river, there to mingle with the waters of the Loire. Our corps having performed the small portion of duty (thanks to the Germans) left them inside the barricade, now voluntarily went to the aid of the German *hors de combat*. Wading through that purple stream, they entered on that dreary duty, “fishing out” those who still retained a spark of life; but their work was not to say heavy. Our gunners relieved us, for the mitrailleuse, in experienced hands, leaves nothing undone. The mangled bodies of its victims lay about in every conceivable position, their glaring eye-balls demonstrating the fierce passions of the excited soldier, their distended mouth invariably filled with their blood, their bespattered uniforms and their general appearance shocking in the extreme. There was a Hessian (who, strange to say,

had his splendid uniform still free from blood stains) gesticulating wildly; his execrations were frightful, his blasphemy awful. There he lay on the network formed by the torn-up shrubbery, convulsed in agony. The priests and "angels of mercy" were there to render him the consolations of the Church, but their aid availed him nothing—the man died mad. . . . Many scenes such as this were common; many such deaths—such awful deaths—presented themselves. Then, on the contrary, we witnessed the resigned, the peaceful, tranquil sleep of the penitent—that true soldier who heeded the voice of his chaplain, who, during this calamitous war, observed the mandates of his Church, and therefore had taken no part in the spoliation enacted by his German brethren—had not broken open God's tabernacle and extracted therefrom the sacred vessels, nor danced with fanatical glee upon the altars of our religion. *He* passed onwards to judgment, let us hope, to gain the crown of the righteous.

There our men find a German, only wounded, yet in imminent danger of being drowned in a pool of blood into which he fell. They raise him on to the stretcher, and carry him to the station-house. While they are engaged thus, the wounded German gasped a few words—inarticulate words—and then sternly demanded, "Are you the Irish?" Being answered in the affirmative, he continued, "Well, bring me to a priest then, for I saw friends among you." His request was joyfully complied with, and when he received the sacrament he was carried off to the hospital of the *Sœur Blanche* for medical treatment.

His manner was gentle, and a certain melancholy which hung over him, made at first sight, a favourable impression. He wished to speak, but seemed to fret, lest his words would cause trouble. However, when the evening wore away, and when our skilled surgeons had exhausted all their remedies to his restoration, they were rewarded for their pains; the interesting German seemed to have recovered all his faculties. Beckoning Dr. Ryan to come over to his bedside, he imparted to him the cause of his uneasiness.

"I fear," he said, "to ask for a friend—an old friend—lest his recognition by a German would lead to bad results."

"Do not trouble yourself about any secrets you may confide to me," responded the Doctor.

"Well, only for a dear friend's sake, not for my own, that I hesitate," continued the wounded man.

"No more of this child's play. Give me your secret, and not alone shall I keep it inviolate, but will comply with your desires, if you have any," replied the Doctor.

"Well, in former days I served in the Papal army, and there I met your countrymen first. I was their favourite then, and had it not been for this accursed war, I might lay claim to their friendship now. To-day, only a moment before I fell, I saw, or rather dreamt I saw, one or two of my former friends of the Papal Brigade. They wore the cross, and yet I thought that they did fire on us. My lands near Augsburg, and all that I possessed, I would have freely dispensed with, if I could only then join them behind that barricade; but I fell bleeding to the ground, and, as if Providence ordained it, I fell into your hands—yours, whom no battle is fought without—you, whose renown, even now, whilst labouring under the red-cross banner, has reached the peasant homes of Germany, has even gained the admiration of your bitter enemies, the Prussians. Of you I claim a great favour, that you restore me to health, and gain permission for me to serve in the cause of France, even as a private soldier of the République; and the next greatest favour I have to ask is, that you bring Byrne and Moore to me, for they exist here, or otherwise it was a vision of them that appeared behind that dreadful barricade, as if to threaten me with condign punishment for having become a deserter from that Catholic cause which I know them to hold so dear, to share in building up empire for the Northern people, who I know will one day turn on their allies, and entail great sufferings on our priesthood."

Surgeon Ryan (whose interest in the wounded man grew with his story) went in search of Moore and Byrne, and, finding them, led them to the hospital where the wounded soldier lay, ushered them into the sick ward. . . . Byrne recognised the associate of his youthful days, which were whiled away in Italy, and so did our white-haired orderly sergeant recognise an old friend. Knock's recognition was simultaneous, and the three friends were happy. They talked

over their sports at Ancona, and their hardships in the field; reminiscences of former days crowded thick on their minds, and midnight still found them chatting over their lives of adventure, of the past and present. During that night neither of the three parted company even for an instant; in truth, they were three honest soldiers.

And who would think that Barney O'Neill was heedless of the interest which every member of our corps attached to this German; he was not only one of the most interested, but proved, in a very spirited manner, the esteem he felt for the wounded man. On visiting the hospital, he managed to conceal a bottle of cognac in the lining of his great coat, and on his being presented as a member of our corps to the German, he presented him with a bottle of brandy, having done which he evacuated the hospital, and repaired to headquarters, where he rid himself of what may be called a "yarn," an unlimited exaggeration.

He said:—"That same Prooshan that's a friend of Jack Byrne's, was shoutin' at me all through the row. I could hear him as plain as A B C. I druv down the road abit to see what he wanted of me, when begorra the whole lot of them pelted away at meself an' me horses as if we were the Frinch army. Divil a much I cared about thim, if they kept shootin' at me till morning, but anyway I turned me horses, an' druv away like the divil himself, afeered ov gettin' any ov me nice head of hair shaved off. Ov coorse, *accushla machree*, I wasn't rightly inside the barricade whin thim damn mither-alhews narely tuk meself an' me horses ov our feet. Faix, it was like as if the day ov judgment was nigh hand, an' that unstud ov blowin' the trumpet, the archangel began to whistle like a crew ov mather eels. Now thim wor the very thoughts that struck me, an' I washn't far out nathur, for wud the way the Prooshans come on ye'd think that all the woorld was agatherin'. Anyway, meself began work agin—wan ov the Dick Turpins was narely kilt outside the double ditch. I was narely alongside of him only that meself was inside sittin' on the wagon, an' the feathery boy was outside. Shure the very minit I saw him tumbled, for all the woorld like as if he got a hand-an'-foot, meself lept off the wagon, an' jumped ould ditch an' all. In another

minit I had him in the gripe inside, becuse meself an' himself was knocked down ov the top ov the ditch wud un ould pot that the Prooshans fired at us. God only knows how I cursed the whole crew ov thim, fur they blazed away at me whilst I was doin' what thimselves wouldn't do if it was their father was in the same hobble as the Dick Turpin. Now I'll leave that to yerselves to say whither I was right or the Prooshans wrong. No matter how the verdict goes, the poor fellow down in the nuns' hospital is a dacent crature, an' I think I'll bring him some soup to convert him to be a Franc-Tireur, for I heard it was wud soup the Protestants thought to convert the poor people down in Connemara; but if it takes the same coorse as that soup, I'm afeard he'll nivir be converted. I know right well, so I do, that thim dacent cratures wouldn't drink it only that they wor starvin', an' shure the woorld knows that the very minit they got somethin' to ate elsewhere, they gave up drinkin' soup, an' the Scripture-readers wor sint to London to report thimselves at head-quarters. Me blessin' be upon thim good people. Shure they wor good before Luther was heard ov, an' they'll be good whin there'll be no hearin' ov that boy. Begorra, whin I think that meself was nare soupin' the dacent German, me blood runs cold, for I know it wor a mane thought, but now I'll go down agin an' bring him another pint of spirits to set him to sleep."

Having delivered himself in the foregoing fashion he left the college, and went *en route* to the convent of Sœur Blanche, there to help the friendly German to a drop of his own favourite cognac. Directly after Barney's departure our men went to sleep, not to be disturbed till morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ Where mounted squadrons shake the echoing mead,
Lacks not artillery, breathing flame and night ;
Nor the fleet ordnance whirl'd by rapid steed,
That rivals lightning's flash in ruin and in speed.”

WALTER SCOTT.

THE usual dawn signal, the *generale*, roused us from sound slumber ; though our dormitory in the college was in the dead-house, where were placed the bodies of those who died in hospital during the previous evening, I say we slept well. While arranging our limited toilet, one of our corps asserted emphatically that the tenanted coffin on which he lay creaked violently at a certain hour, and moved of its own accord, turned upside down, flinging him to the ground. There were two witnesses to this marvellous re-animation of the corpse, whose tale placed the accuracy of the narrator beyond doubt ; and to satisfy our curiosity the lid was raised from off the coffin, when, without a doubt, its tenant proved to be the body of a Brandenburgher who died on the evening of the 13th in great agony, and who would neither acknowledge the efficacy of priest or doctor. . . . This discovery brought round a ghost story bearing on the present case. Told with all the candour which “ old D'Arcy of Dundalk ” is known to possess, it ran as follows : “ Well, I recollect meself the time that one of a ‘ German band ’ died suddenly in Dundalk. The police wanted to have an inquest, and for this purpose the dead man was brought round on a shutter to Pat ——’s stable-house, and laid out on a big table until the inquest would be held. At anyrate, he wasn’t long on the table when it began to move, and, at last, he crept off it and fell on the ground. Of course, the police put him up again, but he was not more than five minutes easy when Mrs. —— came in, just to have to say that she saw a German dead.

Well, me young friends, the poor old lady no sooner came inside the stable-door than she fainted away; even the priest and doctor gave her up, and all the people thought she was stone-dead. She recovered anyway; and she can tell you up to this day, that she saw the 'cloven-foot' pressed against the dead man's throat. The devil was in that stable. . . . And mightn't it be the same way here? For I hard that that same German didn't die like a Christian. As for meself I never believed in ghosts, but I'm certain that the devil had some hand removin' that same coffin last night."

It is probable that old D'Arcy would favour us with ghost stories innumerable, had not a staff-officer entered with despatches. The officer preached urgency, and accordingly was shown to the quarters of our Chef de l'Ambulance, to whom he delivered his papers.

In a short time we were made acquainted with the orders contained in the despatches, viz., that the troops were to march immediately, and that our corps was to proceed in their "van." Having prepared for a march (at least as well as circumstances permitted), we marched into the square, where we took position at the head of Jauréguiberry's corps. A short delay in the Place d'Armes, and the order to march was given to march to Bonneval, where the Germans were in force, and where skirmishing was anticipated. Arrived in Bonneval, we found that the hated enemy retreated on Chartres, leaving marks—indelible marks—of their ruthless advance—of their merciless occupation. Burned homes, churches rifled of precious relics, of sacred vessels, shattered frame-work, and the general misery depicted on the countenance of each inhabitant, told but too plainly that the scum of Germany, the infatuated Berliners, the mercenary Hessians, were in occupation until lately. Notwithstanding all their sufferings, the people—the hospitable people—gave to our corps a hearty *cead mille failthe*. Rushing into the streets, they offered to us the "little" that escaped the ravagers (the low, besotted wretches who plundered the town, and then sacked the house of God); but we had no time to waste in ceremony—no halt was called. Soon we gained the high ground east of Bonneval,

where a halt was ordered, to the great satisfaction of our men and those of Jauréguiberry's *avant garde*, whose pace over fourteen miles of a torn-up road was killing. After a limited rest we resumed the march, and at half-past one o'clock of the afternoon we entered the village of Longni; here we learned that the Prussian garrison evacuated the village about an hour before our entrance, retreating over the Route d'Arlenay, where also were more Prussians. We expected to have some hours rest in Longni, but even this was denied us, for our Chef received despatches—secret despatches—which resulted in his issuing orders for the renewal of marching. Directed to follow in the route taken by MM. Picard and Molony, to observe strict silence, and to prevent either soldier or citizen from passing us on the road, we went *en route*, and observed strictly the secrecy, or rather silence, imposed on us. At three o'clock we entered Arlenay, only to find ourselves in the midst of Prussians; the troops, whom we thought were following us, did not put in an appearance. This rather strange departure from out the French lines (by orders of our authorities) caused us no small amount of apprehension; certainly, there was something mysterious in the whole affair, but the mystery was, in its own good time, cleared up—the *ruse de guerre* exploded. The cause of our destination being kept a secret, was to prevent spies from gleaning the least information of our whereabouts, and the non-appearance of our troops at Arlenay (directly on our entering), was owing to some of them being despatched to intercept the Prussians who might fly over the iron road to Etampes; others of them were making a *detour* so as to gain Chevilly, while Francs-Tireurs and cavalry were sent in all haste to Chilleurs, thereby surrounding Arlenay—surrounding the Prussian garrison. During the time occupied by our troops in making the above dispositions, our men were being tortured by the Prussians, who, threateningly, thought to extract from them a confession relative to the strength and positions of Jauréguiberry's corps; but they proved equal to the emergency, not by inventing falsehoods, but by telling the open, honest truth. "We shall not give you any information—we of the Red Cross are not to be questioned," did they reply to

the urgent, anxious questioning of the hussars of Prussia—who, by the way, are the meanest cowards upon earth.

At five o'clock that evening, the well-uniformed men of the division under Polhes appeared; they were advancing briskly. From Longni, from Chilleurs, and Bazoches, another division could be seen advancing. This was a sight that the Germans garrisoning Arlenay would fain have dispensed with; and lest their curiosity would lead them to wait an interview with the advancing armed peasantry, they resolved on "hookin' it;" and, accordingly, they entered the carriages (once belonging to the Central Rail Co.) and were carried over the iron road towards Orleans.

The train was not parted from the railway station more than four minutes, when the boom of artillery rang out. We knew that our corps was used as a magnet, sent to attract the attention of the confident German garrisoning Arlenay from his imminent danger. We knew that the Bretons were sent forward to cut off a retreat, for now they were at work. Mechanically, and without order, our field-men mounted their wagons (at least the wagons of our corps), and dashed away with all the speed for which our splendid horses were prized, to the place from which the sound of cannon seemed to proceed.

After a short drive we were in the midst of our fortunate Bretons, whom we found doing our duty; but we could not help that, as we received no orders to leave the town, much less to do duty two miles outside. The Bretons made 80 prisoners, placed 210 *hors de combat*, and, as they informed us, 100 escaped—a very reasonable reckoning—a well-managed, well-contrived *coup*. Their list comprised 2 killed, and 23 wounded—very reasonable, considering that the Germans opened a galling musketry-fire, at point-blank range, upon the unprotected troops who swarmed on each side of the line.

Having placed the wounded in our wagons, we retraced our steps to Arlenay, where we found all the troops whom we left at Longni that morning massed, while orders were distributed among them for retiring on Patay. We likewise received orders to proceed to Chateaudun with the wounded, and return to meet the troops at La Ferte Villeneuve the

following morning. Accordingly, at six o'clock of the evening, we were *en route* to Chateaudun. Arriving there at midnight, we surrendered our suffering charge to the care of that portion of our medical department then in charge of our hospitals, and were about retiring to our virtuous beds on the cold ground of the dead-house, or on the coffins, as the case might suggest, when we met with the Zouaves of the Red Cross. These light-hearted, amiable, religious men, secured for us an innocent pastime; and instead of devoting ourselves to sleep, much required sleep (though even among the dead men), we whiled it away in innocent pleasures; and it is possible we would have remained the following day in Chateaudun, had not the orders received the previous evening at Arlenay interfered—impelled us to duty at La Ferte Villeneuve.

At an early hour on the morning of the 15th, we reached La Ferte. The dawn had not quite given place to the light of day; still we could perceive that troops were moving on all sides of us. The Zouaves who accompanied us proclaimed the troops moving over the plain in the direction of Beaugency to be Prussians; while those whose serried bayonets glittered in the morning's light were our own Mobiles—our ill-fed, ill-led, and ill-clad Mobiles. Friends and enemies were equally distant from our present position. Both were advancing rapidly, and if the Germans should gain the town first, what effect would that have on us? Without doubt, they would try on again what they failed in doing before—make us prisoners. However, we resolved upon remaining in the village, at least until the Germans would advance nearer; and then, if the French seemed to lose ground—to halt—we were to evacuate the town and join them. From the turrets or towers of the ancient walls, we anxiously scanned the movements of either army. Polhes could be seen advancing on Chateaudun from the west, as if he made a *detour via* Lorgron and Clove; while the spiked and bushy helmets of Prussians and Bavarians alternately appeared, as their owners emerged from the forest roads towards Coulmiers and Gemigny, Charsonville and Ouzouer, and steadily advanced over the white expanse—over the snow-covered plain, on Binas and Ecomian, as if they in-

tended cutting off our troops (who were now close to La Ferte) from our main body, whose left rested on Fretvale, an undertaking fraught with danger to the Germans who attempted it, and it proved so afterwards.

In less than an hour after witnessing the movements referred to, the battle commenced. The artillery of either army belched forth fire and death for at least thirty minutes before cavalry or infantry engaged in the conflict. The greater number of our men, with four of our wagons, were detached from field head-quarters to do duty with the Pompier corps, which advanced firmly to receive the charge of the Prussian cavalry; the while the Germans continued to send showers of shells not only into the Pompiers, but into that division of our corps which was advancing in the cause of humanity to the aid of the wounded, and did not desist until their cavalry rushed on to the charge—a charge which was repelled manfully by the Pompiers. Incessant were the charges of the German cavalry, each and all of which were repulsed by the Pompiers and Mobiles. But at length the Germans pressed forward in force, driving our troops into the village. Why are our men who remained at field head-quarters inactive on the heights above the quarry? Why did they not come to the aid of that division which was on duty, arduous duty, with the Pompiers? These questions were soon solved, for no sooner had the pursuing Germans reached the village cemetery than those very men were seen to scatter, and in their place appeared the “pea-green guns”—the Gatling mitrailleuse. . . . Our men on the heights now descended into the streets, where they joined in duty with those who came in with the Pompiers. In the meantime, the guns placed in position on the heights they evacuated opened a terrible fire on the infantry of the enemy, throwing them into confusion, helpless confusion. Their cavalry proved useless, for in pressing forward to gain the streets, they impeded the movements of the useful infantry, and finally the cavalry partook of the general consternation. There were hussars, dragoons, cuirassiers, uhlands, and several infantry regiments combined in one confused mass, under the terrible fire of our Gatling guns, under the desperate musketry-fire of our Mobiles, looking on at entire

companies being swept away, while they knew that they fought, advanced, in vain. Certain defeat, if not death, awaited them, and what could they gain? Nothing! To add to their consternation, their Uhlans came in with information that our cavalry was advancing rapidly; and to escape being hemmed in—taken prisoners—they retreated *pêle mêle* over the ground on which they advanced, closely pursued by our troops; even the cavalry (who were reported advancing) were in time to join in the pursuit; and the Germans who attacked were scattered wounded, and prisoners. But by far the strangest, most unaccountable incident of that engagement was, that an hour passed over without even one of our troops being wounded, though it was the hour that the Germans called their own—it was the hour wherein our troops retreated on the village under showers of lead and shrapnel—wherein the Germans were allowed to come on to meet their fate—death, defeat.

During the time occupied by our troops in defeating the enemy at La Ferte Villeneuve, General Rosseau's division, with the battalion of the Francs-Tireurs d'Orleans, had, through some great strategy, succeeded in closing in on Chateaudun, thereby surrounding the Germans who advanced by the Route de Chartres, and now occupied that town. To General Rosseau's aid were summoned his victorious countrymen, as also our corps (which, even before the battle of Le Ferte was over, had finished its field duties); and when our troops returned from the pursuit of the fleeing Germans, we all pushed forward to Chateaudun. Gaining the high-road to Vendome, we were surprised to see the Prussians swarming in the streets of the lower town; indeed their battery on the plateau (in the rear of the hospital of the Sœur Noir) already commenced to send showers of shrapnel into our *avant garde*, which had reached the boundary-wall of the Caserne du Cavalrie, while their guns on the Grand Plateau were directed against our main body higher up on the road. Up to this time we could not perceive the uniforms of the Francs-Tireurs d'Orleans, nor those of the line-troops under General Rosseau. Still it could not be a fictitious despatch that we received; signed by General Rosseau, and delivered into Rear-Admiral Jauréguiberry's

hands by a well-known officer, there could be no mistake in complying with the request contained in it. Accordingly, our artillery received an order to fire one volley at random (not into the town); they did so, and, as if by magic, our troops were joined by the Francs-Tireurs' battalion, while the regular troops, under Rosseau, were seen to advance on the town from all sides. The Germans knowing that no other alternative was left them than to seek safety in flight dashed down the Route d'Orleans *en masse*; but no sooner had their rearguard passed through the embrasure in the barricade below the town, than the Francs-Tireurs were in possession of it; while, towards Etéville, the thin lines of our Mobiles, who were advancing, were seen to thicken; *Pompiers*, line-troops, and *Chasseurs à Cheval*, were seen to swarm in their rear; the Gatling guns were being placed, and a *cheveau de frise* threw up directly in their front. In many places wet mud walls were thrown up, and everything done that could possibly protect our troops and impede the retreat of the enemy.

They had every preparation made, and only made, when the battalions which the Germans pushed forward in their "van" came within range. For a moment, the men in charge of the Gatling battery were busy at their guns; the next moment they were "limbering up." The victory was decisive; the Germans of the "van" were placed *hors de combat*; they were surrounded, disarmed. Their more fortunate countrymen of the main-body thought it proper (if not necessary) to hoist the white flag—to surrender; and in fifteen minutes later they were prisoners, prisoners in Chateaudun.

Our corps, having aided the Francs-Tireurs in bringing in the German wounded, and having left them in charge of our doctors at their different hospitals, proceeded to the favorite Auberge de St. Jean, where the Bretons had everything in readiness to celebrate the victory (a victory, though easily won, nevertheless it deprived the Germans of 3,000 troops and 1,200 horses). On reaching the auberge, the men of the Francs-Tireurs corps, and of our corps, learned that all should be present in St. John's chapel at six o'clock, there to join in the evening service—there to offer their prayers to God for attaining an important victory at so cheap a

price (for, strange to say, not one man connected with the French arms received even a wound during the "brush" with the Germans on the Orleans road). It was near the hour six o'clock; troops and people were thronging the streets leading to the chapel, but we had time to survey the preparations (which Germain Rosseau was superintending) making for our comfort; and, indeed, had the audacity to partake of some refreshment which the kind-hearted Germain ordered to be served up in honour of the day of the victory. In due time we crossed over to the chapel, where the ceremony was to take place (all the other churches of the town were despoiled by the Germans), and were just in time to hear Pere — commencing his discourse—one, too, that sent a thrill of fear through the people assembled. He told them plainly that their past sins, unatoned-for sins, called down the just indignation of the Almighty, and now was their day of suffering. That novel and atheistical religions and opinions have brought down indelible signs of God's anger, and depraved the lives of "modern" Frenchmen; in fine, he predicted everything that has taken place since that memorable evening, and with an exactness, too, which, I am sure, cannot fail in rescuing from infidelity the many Communists whom I have known to be present on that occasion. By nine o'clock the ceremonies were brought to a close, and the vast congregation separated. For our part we spent a quiet night with the Francs-Tireurs and Bretons, and though quiet, it was joyful. How much more so would it be if we had Charette's Zouaves, the soldiers of the Red Cross, the defenders of religion, of right, among us.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“No! Free be our aid, independent our might,
 Proud honour our guerdon alone;
 Unbought be the hand that we raise in the fight,
 And the sword that we brandish our own.”

R. HEBER.

EMERGING from Rosseau's hospitable home on that bleak, chill winter's morning, the 16th dawn of December, 1870, we hastened to the Place d'Armée. The bugles were sounding a retreat at least for thirty minutes before we ventured from under our rugs, but on entering the Place we found that the disciplined Pompiers and line-troops did not follow our example in that respect—they were on parade. The bugles and drums continued their riot, like as if they could frighten away the faithful canvas which protected the Mobiles from the tempestuous hail-storm which swept over the town, or wake up the faithful Mobiles (who rushed to arms in defence of their beautiful country, though conscious that their cause was hopeless since the defeat of their regular army at Sedan). For fully an hour did the drums beat before the desired result was obtained, the troops were assembled, and the general orders read.

Near the fountain Rear-Admiral Jauréguiberry took up a position (mounted on horseback, he looked, or rather bore, a strong resemblance to a monkey), and addressed his troops. He said, “Soldiers—citizen soldiers—the General the Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh is advancing. Reinforced by the Brandenburgher corps (3rd), the 10th corps under Alvenslebin, with the 8th and 48th regiments of Prussian infantry, as he is, it would be madness on our part to offer him resistance, for not only would *we* be defeated, but heroic Chateaudun would again suffer; not a house would be left entire. Therefore, our council has decided on a retreat. At Courtalin we shall wait upon the enemy, there offer him battle with success. It is with sorrow, true sorrow, that I am compelled

to address you thus ; still, how deeply would we mourn the destruction of Chateaudun, this town that has offered far more opposition to the advance of the invader than many of our fortified towns ; in truth, our victory would be dearly bought. Chateaudun would be too great a sacrifice. Let none grumble. Let all hope.

“ We shall now take this opportunity of tendering our thanks to the gentlemen of the Franco-Irish Ambulance. We dare not now ask them to follow us, and it is with feelings of regret we have to part from them and Chateaudun. We will meet again. In the meantime, remember that Breton prayers will ascend to the Almighty for your safety. Again I thank you, not alone for your services in the field with the troops under my command, but for being present here, reviving the memories of the past, when French and Irish fought side by side in the cause of Catholicity and true freedom.”

The vice-admiral was visibly affected during the recital of the address, and when he had finished, he bade adieu to the few members of our corps who happened to be present, and disappeared among the throng of armed men. At nine o'clock we were alone—alone, because the Bretons and Francs-Tireurs were gone ; the people were in mourning, and only one company of lancers remained to act as *videttes*. However, we reconciled ourselves with the thought that at least a military pageant on a grand scale would present itself.

At noonday, the “ van ” of the Grand Duke’s army entered ; with bands playing and colors waving, did they march into the Place d’Armée, and as the troops of the main body marched past, each invariably saluted a few of our men who were looking on from the balcony of the gendarmerie. At two o'clock of the afternoon, the Grand Duke and a brilliant staff entered, and they also followed the example of the troops who had preceded them—they saluted our men. *En passant*, I may here state that the Grand Duke’s staff-officers were by no means to be compared with those of Prince Frederick’s. In the first place, they seemed to be low in flesh and high in muscle ; to possess glittering uniforms and affable manners—in fine, they seemed to be soldiers, true soldiers.

The contrary was the rule in the royal Prince's camp—heavy, slovenly, stupid looking fellows, with uniforms and manners similar to those that the warders in Mount-Misery, Dublin, could boast of, with anything but a soldierly appearance—in fine, they were of the class called British officers, who, if you call them “soldier,” tell you, “I am no soldier—I am an officer,” and swagger off, muttering, “What an impertinent ignorant fellow! Does not know an officer! 'Pon my honor, he took *me* to be a soldier—*me*! What confounded impudence!” And when the “impertinent fellow” cannot hear, the “officer” proclaims, “I should have taken off his head; 'pon my honour, I should.” But this latter description only applies to Prince Frederick's pampered favourites, as all of his “soldiers” whom we met with up to this, could be tolerated—in fact, were kind, polite, and even friendly—all, except his hussars, his staff-officers. During the evening, we met with nothing less than extreme civility from the soldiers comprising the Grand Duke's army; still there was an exception—the Berliners, from whom nothing good could be expected, nor was there. We had a fair opportunity of obtaining an insight into the opinions of the Germans—the greater number were tired, would wish to get home to the bosom of their families, would now forsake the Prussian standard. Many of them spoke loudly in favour of republicanism, were not afraid to speak sarcastically of the “pious William,” of his ambition. A few went so far as to say he should be dethroned, while others proclaimed him to be a king *par excellence*. On this latter subject there was a row—an old woman's row. The Germans engaged waged war with open hands; the monarchical party were not ashamed to almost scalp the republican, neither was the republican anyway shy in catching the fair, bushy hair of his adversary, and pulling it with a vengeance. As a result, the barber who lived in No. 8 in the Place, managed to gather as much fair hair as could be woven into several plaits, either for decorating his female customers or his show window, as circumstances might suggest; and the *maitre de café* (if he was enterprising enough) could manage to teem up as much blood as would colour a thousand sausages; but he was not, and our men who were looking on at this exhibition of

temper, were as well pleased—in fact, better; for if the owner of the *café* displayed his inclination to transform the dull, black blood of Germans into gold dust, “they,” certainly, would never eat another morsel of food in Chateau-dun; probably they would drink no more *vin ordinaire*, and, surely, they would never taste the “red wine.”

At eight o'clock that evening, the Germans retired to rest, and in their lodgings conducted themselves in a very orderly manner; possibly, this was owing to there being no resistance offered them. Notwithstanding that imperative orders were issued to members of our Ambulance to be within headquarters at sunset, many of them remained away, and though fines were struck, they were not levied, for on the following morning, many of the more influential of the towns-people came into the college to tender their thanks to our corps for the manner in which our men, who were marked absent the previous evening, protected them. The men who paid due attention to the order were doomed to sleep in the wagons, which were drawn up in the college yard; but every rule has an exception, and so had this, for Barney O'Neill chose a stable as his bed-chamber. This stable was a splendid schoolroom about four months since, but through the kindness of the authorities, it was placed at the disposal of our corps, and on the night of the 16th, it was converted into a stable for our horses, owing to the German cavalry having possessed themselves of every available “nook,” wherein their over-worked horses might obtain shelter. Well, in this stable was an elaborate square piano-forte, and to the pedal did M. Barney O'Neill tie his favourite Nancy, while himself lay down to sleep on the top or cover of the piano. During the night, this giddy animal wrenched off the pedal, and when O'Neill was asked, “Why did you not tie your steed to one of the feet?” he replied, “I like to have everything square; divil a hap'orth I undherstand about yer left wings or right wings, so I tied the baste in the centre, an' meself laid down on the top of the mahogany, just to show there was no coolness.”

During the night, all was still as death within the college notwithstanding that the good nuns laboured in the hospitals. Without, the night was only disturbed by the heavy

tread of the Prussian sentinels, or the occasional challenge of our guard at the gate, as our doctors on night duty might come and go to visit the several hospitals in their charge, to see how such-and-such a patient was progressing.

Early on the morning of the 17th, despatches were brought in, the contents of which were soon made known. Our entire corps was to proceed in all haste to Epuize. The bearer—none other than the good patriotic priest, Father Le Reuche—also informed us that the Germans were expected to occupy Cloye directly after his departure, and that, to save trouble, it would be safer for us to proceed *via* Droue and Montdoubleau to Epuize. We thanked him, and resolved upon acting according to his wish. M. Lumiere, on hearing of our intention to leave town, entered the college, where he delivered himself in a manner which was unlooked-for by us. Using his authority as mayor of the town, he placed every horse and vehicle (of course, belonging to his townsmen) at our disposal. Instantly our men were off in search of horses and vehicles—a search which exceeded our best expectations; for, on their re-appearance at head-quarters, they could show thirty vehicles well horsed; indeed, they could boast of taking the Duke of Mecklenburgh's carriage, and travelling in it, had not the slothful "Sloth" displayed his usual easy motions, for it was the Sloth who took it, horsed it, and was driving it leisurely into the square, when a few Mecklenburghers recognized their commander's carriage, and called on our lazy driver to halt; this he did, and was *sans ceremonie* deprived of his charge. The captured was re-captured, the Sloth was permitted to walk across the Place d'Armée to the college, where he joined our corps, thankful that he escaped so easily from the Germans—thankful that his attempt to deprive the Grand Duke of his carriage did not lead to damaging results.

At seven o'clock we were *en route*, and driving at a brisk pace over the snow-clad road to Droue. Nothing of interest occurred until nearing Epuize, when we could hear the occasional crack of the "Spencer," and see the powder-cloud flourishing for an instant, and again vanishing. Another kilometre passed, and we were entering the village, where,

having reported ourselves at General's quarters, we received orders to push on to Fretvale, whither 20,000 men had preceded us. At noonday, we reached Fretvale; the troops were formed in order of battle; even the guns were uncovered, though, at that hour, nothing could be seen of the enemy, except a few of the Uhlans, who capered over the plain in our front. Not so in an hour later; the forests along the Loir presented a very animated appearance, for while cavalry poured in on the open ground from the forest roads, infantry leaped from out the trees in myriads, and advanced like locusts; the ground seemed to be pregnant with spiky helmets. For a short time we were allowed to look on this grand spectacle (in truth, it was a sight worth looking at), when Captain Pelly galloped towards us, delivered a despatch, and, giving the usual salute, returned with as much speed as he advanced. The result of the orders contained in the despatch was, that we were directed to proceed to Dezou. We did so, but were not quite within the boundary of the village when the shells from the German batteries commenced to "hop" among us. However, we pushed through the principal street, and took up position with the troops on the south-east side of the town, just in time to be in for duty; for no sooner had we put in an appearance directly in rear of the Mobiles of Loiret, than the Germans, infantry and artillery, plied hard and fast at their instruments of destruction. An incessant shower of lead and shrapnel was poured in on our troops, in on our field-men too; yet all did their duty. The Mobiles delivered a well-directed fire in reply, which we could see brought the German Ambulance to their work. That corps showed in front of their troops many times, and did their duty nobly, I must confess; and well they paid for it, for I am told that, before that day's battle was ended, one hundred men of that ambulance were either wounded or killed.

It was one of the afternoon, and reinforcements were still coming on to the aid of the Germans. We certainly believed that nothing could save the Mobiles, except retreat, yet we did not show signs of alarm, but worked away at the stretchers. The carnage by this time assumed awful proportions. The Mobiles were suffering beyond a doubt, and

still they fought, holding the ground steadfastly, if not gaining some. They continued their opposition, but the foe (whose strength was concentrated on the attack at this particular place, and who, to all appearances, numbered five to one), by one dashing *coup*, forced the Mobiles back. Rear-Admiral Jauréigiberry, or the "great Horse-Marine," as many called him, seeing this danger, gathered the cavalry of the 16th corps into one dense mass, and precipitated them on the Germans. Here was a battle lost and won. The Germans were thrown into disorder (I would say consternation seized on them); the charge of the cavalry of our 16th corps was so sudden, so impetuous, so little expected, that the Germans had no time to form reception columns, or, if they had, they let it "slip," to their great detriment. "One good trick is worth a million of bad ones." Here the proverb proved true, for not only were the Germans defeated, but 3,000 infantry, 500 cavalry, and five guns fell into the hands of our troops. The remainder of that great division, which advanced confident on victory, were now flying under the dreadful fire of the Gatling mitrailleuse batteries. The men of our Ambulance worked with a will that day—so much so, that when the bugles sounded for grouping, not more than one hundred of the wounded remained on the field. They were exhausted from the fatigue attendant on the combat, and, not feeling it incumbent on themselves to renew their labours in rendering aid to the fallen Germans, they very wisely made for the village, where the proprietor of the Café du Chemin de Fer made them as comfortable as possible; in fact, they dreamt that their day's duty was over, that they might call the evening their own. But their day's work was not yet ended, for, at six o'clock, M. Picard informed them that they must be *en route* to Vendome by seven o'clock, whither they must also take eighty of the wounded. Glad tidings! There was some talk about an expected battle at Vendome on the morrow. Who would miss such a treat? Of course, the Germans will be defeated. Who would not be present? Their *penchant* for duty in the field was not altogether the cause of their wish to go to Vendome; there was some other attraction—Les Charettes, or Messieurs Les Francs-Tireurs de l'Amerique must be there, or otherwise

they must have gone down to Bordeaux, to shoot a few "Reds" who are trying to hand the country over to the German enemy. In any case, to Vendome all are anxious to go; and when the hour of departure came round, everyone was ready for the road. The wounded, whom our surgeons had operated upon, were gently lifted from the beds on which they were laid, and transferred to our wagons; in five minutes later we commenced our journey, and at nine o'clock we reached Vendome. Having given the wounded in charge to the authorities of the General Hospital there, we went in search of the Zouaves and Francs-Tireurs, while our drivers were being shown to the stables wherein they were to stable their horses. In the meantime, the Zouaves, to whom our arrival was made known (probably by the Mobiles, who marched past us while waiting outside the hospital, on our entry), came in to the town in search of us, but signally failing in obtaining the slightest idea of our whereabouts, they were on the point of giving up the search as hopeless, of returning to camp without the town, when we re-entered the Place—met them. Now we were at least happy—happy in the consciousness that even now we were with the true friends of our race, our religion—in fine, with the true sons of France—the true soldiers of our Holy Father the Pope. Need I say that the night, or in other words "the evening," was whiled away in the enjoyment of real pleasure. Indeed, it was near the midnight hour before we thought of retiring; and, possibly, we might have continued to indulge in speaking, singing, and story-telling, to the small-hours of morning, had not the good Christian Brothers kindly asked us to their retreat. In their dormitory we slept a sound dreamless sleep, and in their dormitory we awoke only to find orders awaiting us.

On that morning, the morning of the 18th, the troops, who were under arms since five o'clock, commenced a forward movement, and our corps was directed to form in with the *avante garde* of the 16th corps. Ouques was our destination, and along the muddy road—the ruddy, desolate road, we plodded. The march was brisk, and the spirit of the men was excellent. In fact, the march would be one of pleasure, had not an immense army service corps rendered

the roads almost impassable, for only the previous evening 500 vehicles were drawn over it *en route* to Villeneuve. At seven o'clock we reached Ouques, where a halt was called, and where dispositions for breakfasting were made; fresh pork and cognac were served out *ab libitum*, and in a surprisingly short space of time the cooking was begun and ended. The result was indeed acceptable; a very tolerable breakfast went far to conciliate those who had no particular wish to resume marching, while it tended to complete the temporal happiness of the majority whose ambition it was to excel in endurance—in undergoing hardship; that is, as long as their most severe trials were attended with good results. If their presence at such a place, at such a time, would only renew the fading ardour, the drooping courage of the ill-used Mobiles, they would willingly march day and night to attain this end, for, *sans doute*, the presence of our corps in the field used to have a wonderful effect on the raw levies of the Republic; and it is a well known fact, that on different occasions during the last three months, our appearance among them, even on the very eve of defeat, caused them to rally and rush to victory. At eight o'clock the drums beat, and, by nine o'clock, the "van" (with which was our corps) was three miles forward on the road to Beaugency. At Marchenoir we saw signs of the enemy for the first time that day; along the road skirting the forest we could see their cavalry advancing. Dispositions were at once made for their reception; let the troops enter the forest; let our wagons be driven back to wait on the main body. These orders were carried out with alacrity, and only in time, for in a few minutes a numerous host of Prussian horse flew, as it were, over the ground just evacuated, to their doom. . . . About a mile forwards on the road to Ouques, they could distinctly see our wagons and the cavalry which accompanied them. They felt confident that the troops whom their *videttes* reported as advancing were gone, had melted away before their breath. Little they thought that they were inside their enemy's lines, that a thousand chassépots were already levelled at them. In time they were aware of their danger, or rather were made aware of it, for the sound of the chassépot rung

out on the morning air. The yells of pain, the execrations, the groans of the dying rang back a response. The surprise was worth a battle; 200 men and 500 horses fell into our hands. The remainder, some 100 horses and men, were either killed or mortally wounded. The very few Prussians among the wounded who were thought likely to recover, were carried off to the village school until our wagons would take them to Beaugency for hospital treatment. Having accomplished so much with such little trouble, we awaited the nearer approach of our troops, and then marched onwards *en route* to Beaugency, at which town we arrived early in the afternoon. There we merely had time to take a rest, when the outposts came in with information that the Germans were advancing. Without delay, our troops were pushed forward *en masse*. . . . The encounter that ensued was short, sharp, and decisive. To the French belonged the victory, and honourably it was won. In one instance, where a squadron of cavalry (Prussian) were forced into the river, the Mobiles ran to the rescue, and succeeded in saving many of the riders, the while the Germans continued to send shot and shell among them, though they (the Germans) knew the humane work in which the very men whom they fired on were engaged in yet they could not be routed without leaving the mark of their base, cruel, malicious doings behind them, for five of the noble fellows who went to the aid of the drowning men, were killed, and about twenty wounded.

A few of our men who were present at this place had very narrow escapes; still they were undaunted. When they had removed the wounded men referred to above, they took up position with the troops, and fired on the perfidious Germans who were not ashamed to fire on them. At two o'clock that afternoon, everything assumed its wonted appearance. The dead were buried directly after the battle, and the wounded were being carried away by the members of our corps, the greater number of them being sent on to Blois for hospital treatment. At a later hour it was made known to us that the council of the town resolved on entertaining us. Accordingly, on completing a hasty toilet, we repaired to the Hotel de Ville, where were the *elite* of the

town and neighbourhood had already assembled. The welcome was enthusiastic, *cordiale*—the dinner *recherché*; the toasting “severe.” “The Irish and their Ambulance” was drunk to in overflowing measures, as also “France and the French.” We were enjoying the hospitality thus afforded us, when a few of our men who went fishing down the river returned, and, of course, joined their more fortunate companions who remained in the town. You could read dissatisfaction on their countenances. They missed a substantial dinner (a rarity just then), and caught no fish.

Barney O’Neill, who was always aware of current events, happening to meet them on their return into the town, interrogated them as to their success on their fishing tour.

“Well, min, did ye ketch much fishes down the river?”

“Not one, Barney,” replied Cavanagh.

“I knew that damn well,” cried Barney, “for any place such a pack of Irishmin goes, bedad, the fishes aself trots away from thim. It’s a great loss we worn’t an army, fur begorra if we wor, we’d hunt the Prooshans like the fishes. Anyway, if yez hurry up to the hotel, ye’ll find the townsmen are givin’ a great inthertaimint to the corpse. I left it, afeered I’d get dhrunk, fur there’s a big barrel ov spirits up in a corner ov the room, an’ every kind of wine the woorld iver phroduced is handed round be the sarvants. Hurry up, I tell yez agin, for the mayor’s ould wife is as fidgetty as an eel. I’m damn shure she won’t stop much longer, an’ when she goes shure the fun is over. Meself is goin’ to put the saddle on wan ov the bastes down here. Faix, I think Dochter Baxter is goin’ to make a Uhlán ov me, ’an begorra, if he does, I’m the boy can find out where the Prooshans are hidin’, so I can, an’ that without throuble, for me mother (the Lord have mercy on her sowl) tould me wan day when she was mad vexed—‘Barney,’ sis she, ‘you’re born to be hanged.’ Well, ye know, if there’s any truth in that, I can’t be shot nor dhrowned, an’ it looks like the thruth, for if aither wan or t’other was to cross me, I’d be kilt long ago. Begorra, it’s meself has more lives nor a cat. Hurry up now, an’ don’t lose all the sport at the hotel, ’an above all, nivir spind an hour wantin’ to ketch fish agin down here, fur I think divil a fish will visit this river for the nixt cintury.’

Having said so much he strode off towards the stables, leaving the excursionists to go to the hotel or not, as they pleased. They followed Barney's advice, and were in time at least for a good portion of the sport. Previous to the mayor leaving the chair, he, in a bold speech, condemned Garibaldi, and the men of the National Assembly who participated in his lawless opinions, and went so far as to say that the troops of the Republic would be victorious on every occasion had not their rulers employed Garibaldi, whose hands are dyed in sacrilege, and, as a consequence, brought the curse which follows him upon their country and themselves.

At this stage of our proceedings, Mr. M'Grane handed in the translation of a few verses which appeared in *Zozimus*, and which, strange to say, he only received on the evening of the 17th. They were very appropriate. The mayor could not contain his delight of them; and when he had read them for his French guests, they, too, felt delighted. In fine, they all promised to subscribe to our "Dublin comic." The following lines were the cause:—

"But Zoz cheers you on in your sunrising track,
With a hope at his heart that you'll never come back;
Poor gawk of a pirate, now dull as an ass,
The soul of a toad—a complexion of brass;
So alien to God that you know not of sect—
Sham Ishmael; 'got up' for lime-light effect;
Foul newt made to herd with sandpipers and stoats,
Go home and get drunk in your Island of Goats.

"Your story is painted in blood-spotted chrome,
From Mexican wilds to the bastions of Rome;
Wherever your flag streamed to sun or to moon,
Devastation, and carnage, and shame followed soon.
Fold up the foul rag—its worst mission is o'er;
'Tis a sham, 'tis a horror—a nuisance, a bore!"

"*Bravissimo!*" shouted the patriotic mayor. "Why have we not poets to write out the horrible Italian?—one whose crimes are written in the blood of Catholics. O poor France! O unhappy country! has the chivalry of your sons departed?—that chivalry which our ancestors bequeathed

as a birthright. It is a national shame, a scandal, to have employed the veriest ruffian upon earth, in command of hiring cutthroats—red-shirted villains—to serve in our cause; and worse, when they are permitted to serve in the same field with the noble-hearted men of Ireland, of Austria, of America. They dare not approach our faithful Turcos, and why should they be permitted to roam at large through innocent Mobiles—youthful soldiers of their country—diffusing their murderous principles. It shocks all sense of morality, even to think that our representatives sitting in Bordeaux, on whose action the fate of France depends, would for a moment allow such robbers entrance under a French standard—men, who to-morrow, if they had the least prospect of success, would devastate the land from end to end, would ravage that land which they now pretend to love, to defend. But mark my words, France will suffer a terrible retribution, if only for this last act of irreverence to God, his ministers, and his house. Before I conclude, let me impress upon the men of this honourable corps to accept the assurance of an aged, true Frenchman, of the respect, the love, which all true men must entertain for yourselves and your countrymen. They have held their religion in spite of the enemy, and shown to the world that at least there is an Island which must gain admiration, respect. In course of time you will gain freedom, and it is the wish nearest to my heart, that even then you will be as faithful as you have proved to be in bondage.”

Another bumper to Ireland and France, and there was an end to as true, as friendly a meeting as ever took place.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Would I had ten thousand soldiers’ heads,
Their skulls set all in silver, to drink healths
To his confusion who first invented war.”

EARLY on the morning of the 19th, that bleak, chill, December’s morning, orders arrived. For whom? Of course for the Ambulance. To Chateaudun we must go; and, to make matters worse, a *detour via* Ouques, Fretvale, and Cloye, was proposed; the only reason assigned being, to take off the wounded who were quartered on the people of these towns, convey them to Chateaudun, and there distribute them through the various hospitals under the charge of our medical department.

Such orders, on such a morning, were anything but welcome. The meditations, the soliloquys, which followed, proved them to be out of place—in fine, to give general dissatisfaction, to suggest morning prayers quite contrary to what the Church teaches, and to what holiness dictates. Even the amiable Barney O’Neill cursed the fate that led him to Beaugency, and devoutly wished that departure would be delayed until noonday, for he had some belief in the proverb, “rough forenoon, fine afternoon.” The Sloth went lazily to work at stables; Lash swore he would cut the tongue out of the persecuted orderly sergeant if he ever again attempted to read such orders under such circumstances. Invariably our other men said something, and that something by no means complimentary to the Directory. However, this dissatisfaction took another form. It was proposed that Barney, Lash, Sloth and Moore, should be tried by court-martial; and, accordingly, the members to compose such court were chosen. A small house near the chapel was the place selected for the administration of justice, and towards it we made our way, entered *sans ceremonie*. The prisoners being placed at the bar (the fireplace), their judges took their seats on the bench (a press

bed). The orderly sergeant was first arraigned for having traitorously acted towards his fellow-men in reading uncharitable orders, dictated by an oppressive Directory. The case was proved *in toto*, and there being no necessity for sending it before a jury, the members of the court delivered judgment—"To be shot dead." He was then removed, in charge of the officers of the court, to dungeon (under the blankets of the bed on the side of which the judges were sitting). The remaining three culprits were then put forward on the charge of insubordination—were convicted, and doomed to suffer the same fate as the unlucky orderly. During the time occupied in dispensing justice, a crowd gathered in the street without, all anxious to hear the result of the trials; some time elapsed before their curiosity was satisfied, and this was owing to the prisoner who was placed under the blankets having fell into sound slumber, and when the other three were ready to march to the place of execution, they were detained until the sleeper would wake up. He did wake up after some short time, and the quartet were then marched off to the cemetery, there to suffer the extreme penalty of military law. Arrived at the cemetery, the prisoners were placed with their backs to four new-made graves; their offences were recapitulated by the president, the shooting-party chosen, and everything in readiness to carry out the dreaded sentence of the court.

The morning was by far too cold to be favourable to laughing, but not to crying, for the civilians, both men and women, who turned out *en masse* to witness the execution of our men, were all tears; some of them bawling, a few crying moderately, the remainder sobbing. As I have said, the morning was too cold for laughing, or otherwise this joke *par excellence* would "split." We looked as solemn, as sorrowful as men could possibly look. The decisive moment had now arrived. The order "fire!" was given, and instantly the report of twelve chassepots rang out. The Frenchwomen cried their best, the men wrung their hands in despair. How could they bear to think that four Irishmen were shot in their midst? How could they convince themselves that men serving under the Red Cross could be so cruel, so savage, as to countenance the death of

their comrades? Ours could not be the Franco-Irish Ambulance.

But the surprise, the agreeable surprise of the people can be better imagined than described, when they beheld the four would-be victims bounding away over monuments, sepulchres, etc. One of them (O'Neill) leaped on to the top of a pillar, and from his eminence surveyed the astonished Frenchmen. Of course, the whole affair was a hoax; it originated with Molony, and was carried out under his directions—in a manner, too, by no means discreditable; but on the contrary, for it caused the people of Beaugency no small amount of excitement at the time, while it will form a subject of conversation for them in future days, when the storm to which they were then exposed will have passed away. When peace and plenty will smile on their town, they will not fail to remember the work of our Ambulance on the 18th, and the sport of our men on the dreary morning of the 19th December, 1870. At eight o'clock, we were *en route* to Chateaudun, once a city, now a ruin, "where half-starved spiders live on half-starved flies." Nothing of incident occurred until nearing Ouques, where we perceived the "red-shirts" in our advance. We then resolved on holding no converse with them whatsoever, and by the time we had come up with them, we determined to treat them with contempt. They saluted us, but we did not, or could not return it, and so passed onwards on our journey. At Ouques, we took up a few wounded Chasseurs d'Afrique, and again, at Fretvale, received a few more. From that village, until we entered Cloye, we were treated to a regular round of stretcher work. Every hamlet along the road sent us wounded for conveyance to our renowned hospitals at Chateaudun. And what was our pay?—the blessings of a thankful people—the love of the soldiery! At Cloye, and during only an hour's halt, we experienced unexampled kindness, unprecedented respect. From the priest, at the head of faithful parishioners, to the youngest of his flock, all poured forth their honest voices in giving us a true welcome; and in a more substantial manner proved their attachment, by giving us a banquet (if I might call a good dinner such) which one of these useless beings called kings

might envy. When the bugle sounded "parade," we answered it by turning into the Place, and having bade adieu to the good people of the town (a last adieu, as we thought, for we never dreamt that the troops, whose intention it was to march on Paris, would be driven back over the same ground), pushed forward to our destination, Chateaudun. Arriving there at six o'clock of the evening, we were just in time to see the gallant Zouaves and vulture-plumed Franks-Tireurs marching out of town by the Route d'Orleans.

Having transferred the wounded, whom we had picked up on the march, to the hospitals, we went in search of the "latest." None knew what caused the Zouaves and Franks-Tireurs to leave. None knew whether the line troops would make a forward movement, or not. Commanders were keeping their intentions secret; even junior officers were kept in ignorance of the next "move." After many futile attempts to find out what might be the intention of commanders, we strolled down the well-known road to Germain Rosseau's, and were there enjoying all the happiness that men on campaign can expect, when M. Picard entered. He informed us that "by eight o'clock," our corps must be *en route* to Patay, or to Baccon, with the "van" of the troops in town. Anything was preferable to remaining in Chateaudun, and so we took this new order in good part, notwithstanding that fourteen miles of torn-up road had to be traversed before we could reach either of the villages mentioned by M. Picard. Accordingly, we were prepared at the hour appointed; flasks, having received that attention which a bitter cold night suggested, were in tolerable condition, and haversacks (portable larders) also; true friends, possessing a fair share of any good humour and sense that could reasonably be expected to exist at the time, were among us; therefore, what fears for a march in the dark? None! On the contrary, we should feel thankful that we were able to march—not like the poor fellows whom it was our melancholy duty to lift from the ground on which they fought and fell. At midnight we reached Patay, and having aided our horsemen in detaching their horses from the vehicles, and stabling them in what was, not a month since, a drapery establishment, settled to rest on the counters ourselves, and soon forgot in sound slumber all the scenes of the past day.

CHAPTER XXV.

“Star of the brave, whose beam hath shed
Such glory o'er the quick and dead,
Thou radiant and adored deceit,
Which millions rushed in arms to greet—
Wild meteor of immortal birth,
Why rise in heaven to set on earth?”

ON THE STAR OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR.

LONG before the dawn of December's twentieth day, long before the drums beat to arms, we were roused from slumber by the continual tramp of armed men, as they passed down the street without our cheerless house. Rushing to the door, we found them to be the Mobilised Guard of Maine and Anjou.

“*Où allez vous?*”

“*'A Arlenay à Paris J' espere,*” responded a rustic-looking old officer.

Good news! We only hoped his hopes had some foundation, and returned to our adamantine couches, where, notwithstanding the ceaseless tread of the troops, we renewed our sleep, which was not again disturbed until that *generale* was beaten directly outside the door that led into the house of horse and man. Arranging a very limited toilet, we evacuated our “diggings,” and ran off in all haste to the parade-ground. There, we were informed that a battle was imminent at Arlenay, to which place were to precede the men of our field department who would volunteer duty there, while the others were to remain at Patay, as, in case of a defeat at Arlenay, our Mobiles would retire on Patay, there to decide the contest.

At seven o'clock the men who volunteered to march to Arlenay were *en route*, and were gone only about twenty minutes when skirmishing parties of Prussian cavalry appeared on the crest of the hill west of Huètre. No sooner had they descended to the plain below, than their troops swarmed on the hill and over the plain towards Briey and St. Peravy. It was a sight worth witnessing. Here were the citizen-

soldiers of the French republic awaiting the onset of this victorious host, with nothing to cheer them on except the dearly-bought victories of the previous few days, their courage, and their patriotism.

In a very short time after their appearance on the high ground, they had all poured in on the plain ; and as there were no obstacles to their advance, they came on briskly to the attack. Within range, and the sharp rattle of musketry, with the boom of the guns, told but too plainly that the work of destruction and desolation had begun. The German fire was, in truth, severe, and our Mobiles were suffering heavily ; yet they stood their ground manfully, in every instance repelling the incessant charges of the renowned German cavalry. In fine, they denied favouring us with an opportunity of gaining even an idea how that "gallant" Colonel Booker, and his "pets" of "The Queen's Own," skedaddled, once upon a time, from a field in Canada, where it was thought, their hatred to Ireland and the Irish sufficient to win a "brilliant" and cruel victory.

Our Ambulance was the only one on the field that day, and well it did its work ; wherever the leaden showers fell heaviest, there were our men toiling in the cause of humanity, as represented under the "Red Cross." For eight long wearying hours did they continue to take off the wounded to our wagons, the while being, in a manner, more exposed to the fire of the enemy than the troops. Our surgeons experienced many miraculous escapes, and, with great difficulty, carried on their operations in *tentes* which were "pitched" immediately in rear of the lines. At four o'clock of the afternoon, the exterminating fire dwindled down to the exchange of farewell shots, for our troops retired *à discretion* behind Patay, while the Prussians retreated *pêle môle* over the ground on which they advanced. In the forest we formed our little camp, having for companions the Francs-Tireurs, who happened to be present at the battle, and having completed arrangements for preparing dinner, we set the horse-steaks to broil on the wood fires. In the meantime, "a merry *vivandiere*" appeared on the scene, and from the tasty cognac barrel which she carried, served out that much-required stimulant *ad libitum*. Everything looked prosperous—

a good dinner in prospectus, twenty gallons of pure claret in the act of being tapped (sent to us, with "compliments" written on a label), and a few loaves of bread (fresh, too—rather luxurious just then)—who would not be happy? There was one exception—"Yanks." A very hungry-looking dog was seen to loiter about our rural retreat, even from our taking possession of it, and what was the result? Yanks was deprived of his broiled horse-steak, which caused him no small amount of vexation—not for the loss of the best part of his dinner, but for permitting himself to be outdone by what might be a Prussian dog—for permitting himself to be a cause of laughter to his friends, his many friends. He was a favourite.

The dawn of the 21st introduced itself, and even at that early hour signs of trouble presented themselves. Eclairer galloped in from all sides, and no sooner had they delivered their messages at head-quarters, than the drums beat to arms; but such a course at such an hour proved unnecessary, for it was not until nine o'clock that the Germans appeared to be moving on to the renewal of yesterday's battle. Our troops held splendid position (the only hope left them of success, for the Germans came on in such overpowering numbers, that each of us felt they would have an open country to ravage for their Christmas dinner); but we knew that no natural barricade could withstand the almost innumerable host, the united Germans who came forward to the contest. An hour of suspense, of anxious expectation elapsed, and the guns commenced their riot; battalions were pushed forward to the slaughter, and the report of small-arms became deafening. The blood of the combatants (who fell in hundreds) already trickled down to the stream, and mingled with its waters. That quiet valley, called Le Connte, no longer partook of its former tranquil appearance, for in it men fought like demons, while the air was filled with their shouts of exultation and dreadful imprecations, yells of pain, and the expiring groans of those who were sent, perhaps unprepared, before their Creator. No words of mine could convey an adequate idea of the scene in which our men were, even then, engaged; for hours they continued to work at the stretchers, and not until sheer exhaustion forced

them to lie down on the trampled snow, did they cease to labour in that humane cause—the relief of wounded soldiers. It was one o'clock of the afternoon when the French were driven to retreat, which they carried out in remarkably good order, notwithstanding that clouds of Prussian cavalry bore down on their columns, sometimes inflicting losses, sometimes meeting with fatal checks. In this manner we continued our march, until Etéville was reached, when the Germans gave up the pursuit, permitting us to enter Chateaudun in peace, where, notwithstanding the general gloom, we managed to drive away melancholy, and, being joined by the Zouaves and Francs-Tireurs, passed a far more agreeable evening than circumstances led us to hope for.

It was noon-day of the 22nd when the men referred to evacuated Germain Rosseau's *rure in urbis* residence, and from thence proceeded to the upper town, entered the Place d'Armée. The troops were lolling leisurely, and for the time there seemed to be no immediate prospect of a move; but appearances oftentimes mislead, for even before our company reached the gate of the Collège Cummunal, the sound of horses' hoofs rang on the new-swept pavements of the square, and in a moment the drums beat to arms. Trumpeters passed down each street, summoning stragglers to join their regiments.

The cause of this sudden tumult was evident; the Germans, having received reinforcements, were coming on to the capture of Chateaudun. Walk down the Route d'Orleans, or on to the Plateau, you could see and judge for yourself; the dark lines of the advancing Germans seemed to extend even to the horizon, while the intervening distance literally swarmed with their cavalry. Under these circumstances, and particularly to spare heroic Chateaudun, the generals in command wisely resolved on a retreat, and accordingly issued orders to that effect. As a result, the troops marched off over the high road to Vendome, and the van of the Grand Duke's army entered. . . . Their procureur having made the necessary dispositions for the comfort of 75,000 Germans (the remainder were to spend the night in the outlying villages), the main body were signalled to enter; and as each regiment came in it was

ordered off to that portion of the town assigned to it. In this manner did 75,000 men enter Chateaudun that day, and installed themselves in comfortable billets, without a sign of confusion being perceptible. Having received imperative orders to keep within our quarters, from once darkness would set in, we obeyed them, and consequently we passed the night in ease, in tranquillity within the college. M. Byrne, formerly of the Papal service, entertained us with an interesting recital of his life in Italy, and in doing so counted up some acts in the life of our present amiable orderly sergeant, who also lays claim to the honour of doing service in the exalted cause of the Church; one in particular, which caused an amount of laughter to every one except the hero, was his firing off the ramrod of the old rifle with which he was equipped into the ranks of the Italian enemy, and shouting, "I have killed a Tartar! Give me a score of ramrods." He is now white-haired, probably owing to hardship in the field; but his ardour in the cause of religion and justice is unimpaired, his spirit unbroken, and we would much rather that the recital of his love for firing ramrods was postponed, for it set the gay old man crazy, and, indeed, pained those who admired his style of showing sympathy, viz., entering the field of contest, there to fight, and die if necessary, for the friends of his country and his creed.

When our orderly's ruffled temper calmed down, M. Byrne continued:—"It was on November's day, 18—that the Brigade was ordered to be shut up in the barracks, situate on the mole which juts out into the Adriatic. The Austrians were ordered to Libretto, . . . and what was the cause? Neither Irish nor Austrians could agree with the Italians; and General Lamoriciere, believing that an encounter was imminent, directed both brigades to be shut up in the barracks I have named. Accordingly, we were marched down to the fort, and, when we entered, the drawbridges were raised. . . . Only then our hearts failed us; strolling across the grounds, we mounted the ramparts, and were just in time to wave a farewell to the Austrians (who were by this time turning an angle of the strand road to Libretto); and when they disappeared from our view we remained looking over the Adriatic, contemplating its beauty, ruminating

over Italian politics, and trying in vain to catch a glimpse of the coast scenery of Roumalia. But what mean the bugle calls? Let us go and find out. Hurrying into the barrack-square, we saw Gallagher standing erect on an empty wine cask, and exerting all his powers of gesticulation in trying to draw our attention; he succeeded, and having collected his comrades, addressed them thus:—

“Fellow-Countrymen, you will agree with me, when I say that the day we left Ireland we never thought that we would be prisoners within a fort belonging to our friends. Now such a thing has come to pass, and it only becomes us to invent some means of escape. Therefore, I would suggest that you consider the plans which I purpose leaving before you. Either of them will, even if unsuccessful, prove a source of amusement, of adventure.

“The first is a “ruse” which must be practised before we regain our liberty, and which you will agree or disagree with as you think proper. We will suppose that Jack will forge a letter of invitation, supposed to be sent to our chaplain and officers by the mayor and commissioners of the town; if they accept it, as of course they will, a few men will be required to accompany them, and, with one of these men, I propose to send another forged letter from our officers to the mayor and council of Ancona. This arrangement, if attended with success, will compel the bridges to be lowered four times—namely, when our officers are leaving and when returning disappointed, and when Ancona’s councillors are entering and retiring disappointed: then overpower the guard and gain the mainland. Let each man be well armed, so that we may frighten the faint-hearted Italians, and rule the town in triumph. So much for one plan, and now for the other, which will not be minus either fun or adventure, even to those who cannot join in it. It is, that all good swimmers assemble on the gun stages after dark, and when the gondolas skim lightly over the waters of the bay, we shall plunge in, give chase, take possession of the little boats, and, returning under the stages of the gun embrasures, embark the non-swimming portion of our company, and also our uniforms. Accomplish this, and we can join our Austrian friends at Libretto within six hours.

It now remains for you to say whether we shall attempt the former plan or carry out the latter. For my part, I would much rather have the night adventure, as it promises to be successful. Silence, men, silence ! here comes Father Mac ; consider what I have said.'

" 'Well, Gallagher, what nonsense are you instilling into the minds of my soldiers now ?

" 'Nothing of nonsense, I assure your Reverence. I was merely speaking on the subject of the union of Ireland and England, and comparing the tyranny exercised by the low-minded English over our country with that which "Red Italians" try to exercise over the "true." I'm sorry that your Reverence was not present to listen to the discourse,' responded Gallagher.

" 'The subject is not a bad one, and I am indeed sorry that I was not one of your audience ; however, some other time perhaps I shall have an opportunity of hearing you speak,' replied Father Mac.

"The rev. gentleman then walked away fully satisfied that the strategist said nothing contrary to law or order. This latter individual looked solemnity itself in the presence of the priest, but once his Reverence disappeared behind the Armoury-house, he (the strategist—the aquatic) burst into laughter, occasioned not so much by his well-composed *canard*, as by the air of satisfaction and confidence displayed by Father Mac when making his exit from parade-ground. At two o'clock the bugles sounded pleasantly. It was dinner hour, and for the time nothing more could be expected, reasonably expected, than men made hungry by the bracing air of their marine residence would hasten to the call. Indeed, the orator leaped down off the empty wine cask, and led on in the 'van' of his military brethren. Directly they were seated to dinner, Father Mac was in the chair, and he having said grace, his men were at liberty to dine. This duty they performed *sans ceremonie*, for their projects could not brook delay, and, having partaken of a sound substantial repast, hurried off to complete their designs. The worthy commandant (the orator of the hour previous) set himself to work. He selected his officers, and instructed them in all that was necessary for the carrying out of the orders which

he would confide to them. He particularly requested that his troops would maintain the order in which their officers directed them to proceed; and, having chosen the best swimmers, gave to some the name of guerillas and to others skirmishers, enjoining on them the necessity of exerting their utmost endeavour in the capture of gondolas, gondaliers, &c., which might attempt to fly from their advance.

“The clock in the turret of the military chapel was tolling the hour (seven o'clock), and we were already on the gun stages, looking towards San Marino. It was past sunset, and the moon took up the place of her rival. Not a ripple was observable on the waters, except where the gondolier touched it with the oar to send his light skiff a-head. The scene was in truth charming. The commandant's order was only to be given, and sixty of his troops were ready to obey—one, clothes off! two, prepare! three, plunge! The last number was heard, uttered by the well-known voice of the commandant, and instantly all plunged into the clear waters of that lovely bay, . . . and no sooner did they emerge again to the surface, than two gondolas, with four frightened fair ones, fell into the hands of the invader. In a manner, one and all beat out Leander of Abydos. Their swimming was excellent, and their style of capturing gondolas superb.

“Where is our commandant? Where is our chief? Alas! he is not to be found. He is not with his troops! Oh! what a fate. How unfortunate! A better fellow never breathed! No, he can't be the victim to our pleasures! He must not!

“Well, we all thought that Gallagher was drowned, and as we mounted the rope ladders, which we attached to our guns, we felt as if we would return to the water, there to search for his body.

“We had our uniforms on, and only on, when we were placed under arrest by the Swiss guard, and hauled off to the black-hole. Entering, we were welcomed by our great chief, who, through some means then unknown to us

managed to be the first Irish occupant of that dingy dungeon. Twelve months' incarceration would be welcome only to have the dare-devil of the brigade with us; and how much more so was it then when we found he had escaped the death which, only a few minutes before, we thought him to have suffered. We were then happy!

"This victim to military order described his arrest and the cause of his non-appearance in the water. He said: 'Father Mac had me by the neck the very minute I shouted, "Three!" gave me in charge to twelve of the Swiss Guard, who introduced me to the four bare walls of this inhospitable prison; and I heard him ordering the full guard to the gunholes to place you under arrest. Of course, I knew it was all "up the spout," but I took it, aye, for luck; and here we are again, as jolly and true a lot of garçons as any government could ever boast of imprisoning.'"

Ere this story was brought to a close, Barney O'Neill rushed in and cried, "I saw a ghost!" "Where, Barney?" "Oh, thin, *avic machree*, on the dark lobby over Don Pedro's dwellin', an' as meself was comin' down, shure he pointed two loaded revolvers at me, an' said, 'Now, Barney, gie back me leg.' Begorra, meself thought it was the fellow that the sirgeon-in-chief cut the leg off, an' shure he gave me the same leg to bury it; but shure that boy got betther, an' is now hoppin' about on t'other one, so it couldn't be that fellow's ghost. Begorra, it might be Jim O'Farrell's, fur he lost his leg in the Crimea, an' meself was the very boy that buried it dacently; but shure he may's well be axin' poor Barney for a thousand pounds as axin' him to gie back his ould leg. 'Pon me conshinse, me heart is broke atween dead men an' live men. Bedad, if I ever get back to ould Dundalk I'll sthop in it, if the whole world was at war wud wan another. Bedad, meself will, and niver think of lavin it aither." Having said so much, he favoured us with a lively description of Jim O'Farrell the sodger, and his newest friend—he who lost his leg out near Baccon; then with a thrilling narrative of an encounter he had with a ghost at one time on the road from Dundalk to Castleblaney, and finished up by passing an eulogy on six bonhams, which, he said, were at home and thriving.

Under the circumstances in which we were placed that evening, the foregoing stories were quite acceptable; and when the hour for retiring to rest came round, each lay down on his pallet of straw, fully impressed with the idea that a corps without such as Gallagher and Moore, Barney O'Neill and his former comrade, Jim O'Farrell, would be *sans'esprit plein d'ennuye*, and become finally tired of service in the field.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ Happy the man who his whole life doth bound
 Within the enclosure of his little ground :
 Happy the man whom the same humble place
 (The hereditary cottage of his race)
 From his first rising infancy has known ;
 And, by degrees, sees gently bending down,
 With natural propension to that earth .
 Which both preserved his life and gave him birth.
 Him no false distant lights, by fortune set,
 Could ever into foolish wanderings get.”

CLAUDIAN.

“ Prepare for duty—you need not await orders !”

“ Why ?”

“ Do you not hear the hail-storm raging without.”

“ And pray what has that to do with the orders ?”

“ You must be well aware that since the 6th of last November, terrible hailstorms have proved the precursors of heavy duty for our corps.”

“ You are right, my boy. Hello ! orderly, what news ?”

“ Rum news, indeed, Mr. D’Arcy ; we must be on the road to Vendome by seven o’clock. Here comes M. Picard.”

“ Good mornin’ to you, gentlemen. De orderly told you de orders, has he not ?”

“ Indeed he has,” replied the senior of the volunteers.

“ Vell, let the vagon men have de horses an’ vagon in de Place in thirty minutes, for really ve must go in all haste to Vendome. I shall go before you with M. Molony. Ve shall prepare all things for you in the towns *en route*.”

There was no grumbling. Our men never objected to be sent on duty on a stormy day ; but these exhausting marches should have never been imposed upon us, or the troops with whom we were then serving. If they had any good result—if they ended in victory for the French—we would feel happy, content, and willingly march day and night, until the goal of a victorious general was reached. General

Chanzy was certainly performing miracles with the raw material he possessed ; but at the same time we thought that if he kept his Mobiles more compact, within a certain limit, his plans would be attended with greater success. "Unity is strength ;" therefore, if he advanced his entire force towards Orleans and Chevilly, it is possible that the defeat, the retreat of yesterday would never have to be recorded, for the great mass of the German army, which advanced on Patay on the 21st, would never attempt it if the French formed in force, and our divisions, which were pushed forward to Arlenay, would not have their line of retreat left open to the enemy.

At seven o'clock, the hour appointed, we were *en route*, and at nine entered Cloye, where our appetites, sharpened by a march of nine miles, were satiated, thanks to MM. Picard and Molony, who requisitioned the town for breakfast. Resuming our journey, we took the high road to Vendome for our route, and arrived there at four o'clock of the evening. The town was filled with armed men, awaiting patiently the onset of the united arms of the Grand Duke and Prince Frederick ; and knowing that this was neither the time nor place to go hunting after comfort, we remained in the square until officially informed as to our disposal. . . . At nine, the surgeon-in-chief (who was at general's quarters) joined us, and informed us that volunteers were required for duty at St. Arnoulf and Auton, Chateau Regnault and Villechauve. These having offered themselves, were at once despatched to the places indicated, and the wise men who, having received billets, were shown to the homes of the people with whom they were to pass the night. The clock was tolling the hour ten, and our men (at Vendome) were indulging in a sound sleep ; the troops were under canvas, and were it not that the sentries, posted within the town, entoned *Le Chant du Depart* or *Partant pour la Syrie*, the place would have partaken of the appearance of a deserted town ; solitude reigned supreme in the once gay town :

"Night wanes ; the vapours, round the mountains curled,
Melt into morn, and light awakes the world.
Man has another day to swell the past,
And lead him near to little."

At five o'clock the *generale* was beaten, the *reveille* sounded, the tramp of men, the hum of voices, made known at once that the 23rd day of December brought with it its troubles. The few who lay rolling lazily in bed until the drums ceased their clamour, now rushed out to join their more alert companions, and were in time to obtain their complement of the bread and lard which was being served out to officers and men. Having partaken of this breakfast, they fell in with their companies, and all were marched off to the positions assigned them outside the town. Our Chef de l'Ambulance received orders also to establish his field-quarters outside the village of Scorbe, so that men could be moved along the lines to any place where the tide of battle would roll fiercest, to where the Ambulance was most required, where its duty must be done unflinchingly. Further down the lines, our men planted the Red Cross on the Chateau-Regnault, and were alike in readiness for the carrying out of their melancholy duties. It was still early morning—a cold, dreary morning; and the Prussians commenced to show themselves, each minute disclosing to our view some other regiment advancing to join in the coming contest. But when their cuirassiers appeared, followed by several regiments with strange colours and stranger uniforms, and which were unknown to the greater number of the troops of the Armée de la Loire, the latter became panic-stricken, for they knew that these strange regiments were reinforcements, probably the second part of Prince Frederick's army from Metz. Then their Landwehr and dark Bavarian columns showed in the back-ground, and on the heights in their rear the steel guns looked awfully picturesque. Still the scene was not complete; the rush of the thousands to combat, the clash of arms, the roar of guns were wanting. And where will the battle begin? No sooner asked than answered. The sounds of battle are borne on the breeze; the 15th corps is engaged outside Le Plesis. An interval of five minutes, and that artillery on the heights, directly in our front, poured in on our Mobiles showers of shrapnel; the Bavarian Lancers came down to the charge, and so did the other regiments. The Mobiles were driven back behind Scorbe. And where were the men of our corps? They were work-

ing hard and fast ; and, as a result, when the Prussians entered on the ground, so lately held by our troops, they had only the dead to trample—the wounded were carried off.

That evening at four o'clock the Germans held Vendome, and our troops were scattered over the country between Epuize, Crotelle, and Les Roches. At this latter place the men of our corps, who did their duty at Vendome, met those who, as the reader may remember, were sent on duty to Chateau-Regnault and other places on the right of our lines, and all proceeded to Le Mans with the wounded. We were instructed to return to St. Calais same night, so that we would be fresh for the morrow's work, the first part of which was then and there arranged, viz., the removal of 200 wounded from St. Calais to Chateaudun. At the hour of midnight we reached Le Mans, and having given the wounded into the charge of the French surgeons, departed on our journey to St. Calais. At four o'clock on the morning of the 24th, we entered this latter place, where, having partaken of some refreshments, we retired to rest ; and, after a sleep of only four hours duration, were summoned on duty. Having got the Mobiles to transfer the wounded from the houses where they passed the night, to our regular wagons, and having replenished our flasks, we were "ready for the road." Nothing now remained for us only to trudge along the muddy roads to Chateaudun ; therefore, we commenced the journey ; passing outside Cloye, and again gaining the high road above the railroad crossing, we pushed onwards at a brisk pace, and reached Chateaudun about noon-day. The town looked far more cheerful than we anticipated ; we saw a prospect of spending a happy Christmas. Transferring the wounded to the surgeons in charge of our hospitals, we hastened down to Rosseau's auberge as the most likely place to meet with pleasure, but even there everything looked "glum." Dinner was ordered, but old Germain assured us that he should beg for one himself. There was plenty of bread and wine in town, but such would prove but meagre fare for a Christmas dinner ; therefore, we resolved to leave town on a foraging expedition. Before this resolution was acted upon, we took care to provide ourselves with necessaries ; and, while doing so,

the irrepressible Barney entertained us with a soliloquy, which finally merged into a dialogue between the Sloth and himself.

“Begorra, if I stoit in Dundalk, this misfortune wouldn't crass me, for I'd be afther atin' a turkey ur a gandher ur a piece av bacon an' cabbage, by this time av day. God be wuth this-day-twelvemonths, but it was meself had the dinner! How an' iver, it may be all for luck. Begorra, I won't sell the bonhams undher four pounds a-piece. If they were here, I'd get twenty pounds for wan av them.”

“Oh, thin, Barney, you wouldn't get ten shillin's for wan av thim, if they wur here this minnit; an' instud av bein' atin' a turkey, as you say yerself, iv you wur at home, you'd be dhrinkin' 'half-wans' the whole blessed day,” broke in Farrell.

“Well, Dan, shure I wouldn't take thim 'silent wans' like a chap called the Sloth takes. As poor as I am, I'd ax a frind to share a glass wud me, an' that's more than you do!”

The Sloth was put *hors de combat*. Barney's appropriate and sarcastic response proved too much for him, and what would provoke a *casus belli* was quashed, for the Sloth, conscious of the charge, could not say a word in self-defence.

At three o'clock of the afternoon, our men who volunteered for the foraging expedition left town, and returned at seven o'clock with every requisite for a substantial dinner. Mdme. L——ze did the hostess, and her servants served up the dinner in a very good style. When the cloth was removed, and all settled down to enjoy an agreeable evening, the whole scene presented the appearance of a truly happy family. Toasts were proposed, drank, and responded to; and to give the reader an idea of the nature of the toasts, and a clearer insight into the manner in which they whiled away the eve of the great feast of “Noël,” I will now take the liberty of giving a detailed version of the words made use of on that occasion.

M. P. Kelly, of the field department, being unanimously elected to the chair, at the commencement, opened the after-dinner proceedings. He said: “Gentlemen, we are here assembled, on the eve of the great feast of Christmas, to

carry out the custom which is common to-night in all Christian lands. We are here to do it honor, and in such a manner, too, as will reflect credit on ourselves, and under circumstances too well known to require comment. As the representatives of Ireland, we are here unfettered. As the representatives of Ireland, we are here at liberty to speak at discretion. Yet we will show that even in the enjoyment of liberty in its full sense, we can use moderation in our words and actions. As Irishmen—true Irishmen, as we claim to be—it is our duty to pay due honour to our country and our church—that church and country which the blind descendants of heretical Germans, aided by all the powers of darkness, failed to reduce to dumb submission—failed to coerce from the service of the true church. Therefore, I now give you the premier toast of the evening: ‘Our Holy Father Pope Pius IX.,’ and while we drink it with the profound respect which is its due, let us resolve that, when he requires willing, faithful volunteers, we shall not be seen at home—we must be in the field!”

This pledge excited all to great enthusiasm—so much so, that not a few dropped tears of joy. And, indeed, the Frenchmen present were deeply affected, occasioned by the subject which the chairman took in hands. On rising to propose the next toast in importance, he said: “Gentlemen, the next toast on the list is one which is alike acceptable to Irish and French throughout the world. It is one which awakens the memories of glorious deeds accomplished under French and Irish standards. It is one which calls to mind the glories of Fontenoy and Magenta—the labours of St Patrick. In fine, it brings before our memory, in letters of gold, the greatness of Irish and French—in the church, the tribune, and the field! It has a particular interest with regard to ourselves, and well we can appreciate it. Who amongst us does not feel a manly pride in representing our dear old land, and thanks that fate which has destined him to be a soldier under the Red Cross? None, I know it. There are none within this room who do not feel proud of their service. Not worldly pride—God forbid! but such pride as men can feel when they are in the service of their country—of their God! I do not by any means refer to

foul traitors, who exist in every organisation—who, while professing unbounded patriotism, unbounded love for anything with which the sympathies of their future victims are bound up, would afterwards prove the means of giving up to slaughter the very men who innocently confided to them their deepest secrets. Such men have I seen since our connexion with the army of the Loire ; and, mark my words, that even before the hostile German is banished from the fertile plains of France, you will witness such men as I have described, dealing destruction on all sides, murdering your priests, despoiling God's tabernacle. You will hear that they are themselves, though called Frenchmen, the worst enemies, excelling the ruthless German in debauchery and all other crimes. Beware of such seducers. Let Irish and French keep aloof from such, cherish that religion which has been cherished by your noble-hearted ancestors, and, in future ages, when we are no more, when the memory of all engaged in this dreadful war will have passed away, 'Long live France and Ireland !' will be drunk to then as now."

Rapturous applause, mingled with the jingling of goblets and the echoing of the toast, followed. For a time, the worst fears of the temperate chairman looked as if about to be realised, for bumpers were filled and emptied with surprising ease and rapidity. However, it was no easy "job" to set men "screwed," whose life, for the past few months, limited their diet to vin ordinaire and cognac, principally ; and, when silence was demanded, the boys sat down, looking the very picture of such gay fellows as could empty bumpers by the dozen to a score of such toasts, without betraying the slightest emotion.

Another toast was about being offered, when a gentle tap was heard on the window-shutters. Who could it be ? Perhaps M—— ; he has recovered from small-pox, and might wish to join us. Anyway, here goes—" *Qui va la ?*" "*Les soldats Francaise.*" Instantly the door was unbarred, and to our agreeable surprise, six old friends of the cuirassiers entered. Their story was strange ; they were, without doubt, in a "fix." In making a *reconnaissance* towards Cloye, they discovered that retreat for them was cut off, and seeing none of the German cavalry in their advance, they bounded

away over the fields, and, trusting to fortune, entered Chateaudun, where they were fortunate enough in falling in with the members of our corps.

They did not seem uneasy, though they were twelve miles within the Prussian lines, and accordingly we asked them to join us. They did, but could only spare an hour, at the expiration of which, one of the townsmen rushed in to report the advance of a Prussian cavalry regiment. Without a minute's delay, the cuirassiers mounted into their saddles, and taking to the fields, were soon beyond reach of immediate danger. The Prussian cavalry (none other than the Green Dragoons) galloped into town, and made straight for the house where we were making holiday-time. Knowing that they would search every house for the cuirassiers, we suggested to Mdme. L——ze that every door in the house should be left ajar—a suggestion, too, that was acted upon, or otherwise the dragoons would take a very summary method of opening them. The dragoons were at the door already, and, pitching themselves from their horses, made a rush towards the front door (which was merely left unbolted, and not a little open, as we thought it was); but, horror of horrors! their rush was so impetuous, that the men in front fell in on their face and hands; their revolvers went off, mortally wounding two of the unfortunate men. Then the others savagely demanded—"Where are the cuirassiers?" "They left here two hours ago by the Route d'Orleans," was the untrue answer. Away went the dragoons over the road to Orleans; but they had not quite left town when we received a nocturnal visit from the Francs-Tireurs. As a result, our proceedings were not brought to a close until we received an order to turn out on parade at eight o'clock on Christmas morning. From the orders we learned that all were to reassemble on the ground at ten o'clock, march to the Madeleine to hear Mass, and at three o'clock to have everything in readiness to proceed back to Epuize, in charge of the convalescent soldiers at present idle in our hospitals, restore them to the service of their country, and return to Chateaudun on the 26th. This was rather a hazardous undertaking. Certain death awaited us. We escaped once before from suffering the penalty which waits

on members of an ambulance aiding in the escape of prisoners, and this time, if caught in the act, the Germans would, without doubt, exercise their law *à discretion*; yet none of us were adverse to the adventure. There were no Germans in town to discover the *ruse* which was about being practised; and when we emerged from the church of the Madeleine, we found that a goodly number of the convalescent were out on the grounds of the Hospital Dieu, ready and willing to place themselves under our protection. Through the indefatigable exertions of MM. Picard and Lumiere, Surgeon Ryan, and our Chef. de l'Ambulance, who had collected about 400 vehicles, well horsed, the supposed sufferers were, without delay, placed in them, and we went *en route*. Along the road we had some good snow-ball battles, and it was during one of these engagements that a company of Uhlans dashed past, never seeming to pay the least heed to our enourmous ambulancetrain; yet they looked like fellows who would prefer to be in any other place than where they were. They must have known that the "vulture plumes" were with us. During the remainder of the journey we were quite fortunate in not meeting with large bodies of the enemy, and to our joy re-entered the French lines beyond Cloye in safety, completed our journey in security, and having reported the arrival of the convalescent, were shown to comfortable quarters for the night. There we, in a manner, partook of the mourning—the gloom of that Christmas night of 1870. *Paterfamilias* used all his endeavours to cheer up his wife and children, but signally failed. The defeat of their armies was the cause of their grief; but when our men had made themselves more at home, "the scene was changed," and Christmas was made as merry as could be within many of the homes of Epuize.

At a quite uncomfortable hour on the morning of the 26th, we were informed that the return journey to Chateaudun must be commenced by eight o'clock, and accordingly "rigged" ourselves for the march. At the time appointed, the order to proceed was given and obeyed. In a short time we reached Cloye, which town we found, to our great surprise, to be in the hands of Marines and Francs-Tireurs'

Ho there, Jack! How the deuce have you come here?

"*Ah, Messieurs!* we have sent the Grand Duke to look for his 'Christmas hamper' at Orleans; and also sent on 30,000 boys to Chateaudun, merely to catch him glutting it—in truth, we have, without much noise."

On entering Chateaudun that afternoon, the assertions of the seaman were proved to demonstration. The town was filled with troops of all arms. From the bastion of the tower, over the water, and extending to the vineyards of MM. St. Hiliare and Martin, were infantry of the 16th corps; while the Lancers showed on the plain beyond the brick-factory, looking like so many giants, and capering over the snow-covered expanse; their numbers seemed magnified into grand proportions, yet friends and enemies on the Loire knew the 16th corps and their fourteen hundred streamerless lances. To magnify their force is a *ruse de guerre*, well known to the enemy, and very seldom leads to good results. But this appearance of the Lancers was purely accidental, and only caused by the monotony of the surrounding scenery.

At four o'clock that evening, our corps was drawn off from the contemplation of that scene, which I have so inadequately described, for duty in the "van," and directly joined the Francs-Tireurs at Etéville, an outlying hamlet. Presently Uhlans were seen to be advancing—the Francs-Tireurs were in ambush; the former advanced with seeming caution, until they gained the outskirts of the village, when they "set" spurs and dashed into the street. Their doom was then and there sealed. The fourteen who entered were lying in their gore, the greater number dead, the remainder dying. In such a manner was the first hostile act of the day played. With what ease are soldiers sent before their Judge! And how easy is it to satisfy a soldier's conscience during war! The few Uhlans who still retained a spark of life, were taken in charge by our men, and conveyed to Chateaudun; but all the skill, for which our medical department was celebrated, failed to show effect on the sufferers. They died peacefully. . . . In truth, our surgeons tried every remedy towards the recovery of the men alluded to—so much so, that the wounded French soldiers in the college hospital were jealous, many of them muttering their

discontent with such cool audacity, that one of our surgeons was compelled to treat a few of them to a "dose" of lectures, which brought them to a correct sense of the respect, if not submission, which is due to any member of an ambulance who serves legitimately under the banner of the "Red Cross." With what pain did the rational, true Frenchmen, who were present, listen to the "outpourings" of men claiming to be their compatriots against members of an "Irish corps." With what pain did they witness those wounded "black sheep" of their army abusing our surgeons. And why? Merely because the abused were chivalrous! Because they extended aid to fallen enemies, who could no longer serve the foe. In fine, because they were Irish! The wounded revilers were Communists, were atheists, knowing no religion—minus every sympathy that could adorn the human heart. And, worst of all, fearing no God! But Irish are Irish; they have suffered abuse for over two hundred years, and, though often turning on the power which abused, and still abuses them, were always defeated, and abuses were multiplied. Yet they live, and their attachment to the faith planted by St. Patrick is acknowledged "grand" by their enemies, who can be none others than brethren of the men called "the black sheep" of the French army.

At five o'clock that evening, a battle seemed imminent, as the Prussians appeared in force in our front; but they eventually retired, and our troops, having received no order to follow them, retired on Chateaudun, where they passed the night in security and ease; for, owing to the extreme severity of the weather, the townspeople placed their homes at the disposal of our troops, and, therefore, they experienced true comfort, for the first time since their connexion with the army of the Loire. The troops went to rest early; but it was long past midnight when members of our Ambulance and American Franc-Tireur corps thought of leaving the hotel, where they were celebrating St. Stephen's day. A comedy, "Boxing-night at the Royal," was introduced with great success; as also, "The Wren Boys," by a member, and written for the occasion. I doubt if, even in Dublin, such real fun was to be found; and only regretted that our catalogue of amusements was not being gone through in some

concert-room in Berlin, or even in Augsburg. The morning of the 27th was ushered in in lightning, thunder, and rain—unpropitious signs ; for, as I have hitherto remarked, such signs are indicative of defeat to the arms of the Republic, and we heartily wished that neither troops, nor Ambulance, nor Francs-Tireurs, nor Marines, would be compelled to act on the offensive or defensive during the day. But at noon-day our wishes were in peril, as officers tumbled over officers, giving orders à *plaisir*, notwithstanding that the rain poured down incessantly and unrelentingly. Their orders were, fortunately, looked on with contempt ; not one of the troops dreamt of obeying them, at least until senior officers would inform them more fully, or until outposts would come in with information that the Germans were advancing. This affair convinced us that, even in the republican army of the Loire, there were officers formed after the fashion of English officers, whose ambition lay in giving orders à *discretion*, and with or without the sanction of their seniors—disgusting alike to sympathising outsiders, as they certainly are to the troops themselves ; oftentimes bringing military discipline into disrepute, and tending, in a good measure, to loss of confidence, the loss of which is irreparable, and, as a rule, attended with loss of victory, even supposing them to be in the hands of superior generals. It is a scandal that, in this age of progress, the inexperienced, and in many cases the uneducated sons of plutocrats, aristocrats, and nobility, are pitched into positions for which they are totally unqualified, unfit—to the detriment of the experienced, of the courageous. *Sans doute*, the army of the Loire would be an “army,” if these youthful officers, who can make themselves so obnoxious, were sent home to favour their fathers’ servants with their orders.

It was past noon-day, and the sun shone out in all its pristine splendour, the rain ceased its downpour, and nothing existed which might in any way retard the meeting of the rival armies. The Germans were reported advancing ; and, most agreeable of all, was the information that the officious officers of the morning were officers no more ; they were at liberty to retire into private life—to go home.

The troops were marched to positions, as directed by true

soldiers, and anxiously awaited a nearer approach of the invader ; but at the very moment the latter were thought to rush on to the attack, they were seen to halt. So far, and no farther. Their motto—"look before you leap," was acted on, and, finding the town defended, they awaited reinforcements. At three o'clock, the dark columns of the Bavarians were observed to gain the heights west of Le Ferte Villeneuve, and descend to the plain, over which they advanced towards us. At Breuil and St. Cloud, masses of Prussian infantry showed ; while near Etéville, their Uhlans showed in considerable numbers. No doubt existed now as to the cause of the Mecklenburghers halting ; it was quite evident that divisions of the troops under Prince Frederick were pushed forward to the relief of the Grand Duke ; for, after a short time, an innumerable host of the enemy was seen to advance on Chateaudun, from the north, south, and east ; it looked as if the German camp at St. Sigismand was raised, and that its whole force was sent on to the aid of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh. It was now high time for our troops to evacuate the town. If once surrounded, there were no means of retreating, for the country over which their retreat would lie offered greater natural advantages to the besiegers than Chateaudun offered to the besieged. They would also be cut off from communication with head-quarters at Fretvale ; therefore, the only alternative left the General in command was, to order a retreat, which was carried out in order over the road to Courtalin. Our corps was not required to leave, so we had an opportunity of witnessing the entry of the greater army of United Germany. The whole business of the day seemed to be a repetition of former dispositions made in and about Chateaudun, so much so, that a few of our men fully believed Christmas to be still in advance. Among them was O'Neill, who could not convince himself that the hardships of Christmas day, nor the pleasures of Christmas eve, were realities ; his reasoning on this subject is worthy of note, therefore I give his address, as delivered to a friend of his particularly, and to the other members, as they wished to listen to him.

"'Pon me conshince! min, if I'm not like a fellow dhramin', an' shure it's no wondher. Frinch an' Prooshans round us

ivery blessed hour we rise, is enough to make any man dhrame. Begorra, I couldn't tell yez the day ov the week it is, sinse meself came into this locality ; but it bates me out an' out to say that ere-yestherday was Christmas day. Be me sowl, I'll nivir believe a word ov it, so I won't—no nor d—I a bit ov me. There must be a quare sickness over me, whin yer able to hunbug me this way ; but dang the know I know whithir yer right or wrong. Begad, it's a quare thing to see a million of min doin' the same thing to-day as I dhreamt they done three weeks ago. *Acushla marchree*, this is a sthrange hole intirely ; an' I wouldn't wonder a whit, if I saw Mrs. Barney O'Neill biddin' yez all welcome to Mr. O'Neill's castle to-morrow or afther. Dang the know I know what'll come to pass nixt. Faix, maybe the Prooshins would ordher a special thrain to take me home to Dundalk, an' I'd heartily thank thim if they wor so kind, fur I'm tired right an' left here ; an' afeerd ov mockin's catchin' me, I'll go over to the Monarch for a pint ov spirits. Come, Hopkins, 'ould crow,' we'll dhrink a glass or two to the ould land, begorra we will."

This invitation was accepted, and the pair parted from the College, intent upon carrying out the good intentions of the host. The other members of the corps retired to sleep on the beds procured for them by the Christian Brothers, delighted that they were relieved from listening to the loquacious Bernard.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"This is the patent age of new inventions
For killing bodies and for saving souls,
All propagated with the best intentions."

THE morning of the 28th was at hand, and though the dawn had only surrendered to the clear light of day, our men were tugging on their great coats. This early move was not imposed upon us by either discipline or newly-arrived orders; it was made merely to outdo the Germans, to search for a breakfast, and pay for it; and if this *ruse de l'Ambulance*, as I might call it, was not practised, what would be the consequence? The omnivorous German would have deprived us and the inhabitants of the necessaries wherewithal to satisfy the appetite; they would have even found out the "crock" of salt butter which, up to that time, was hid under the earth of Mdme. H——n's garden, and which she was kind enough to bestow, to present to our men on the morning referred to; Mardellet would have his stores ransacked, and again we would be deprived of the coffee, brandy, rum, and molasses, which the young *proprietaire* used always have in stock for members of our corps. Therefore, the idea of rising early—"The early bird catches the early worm," and instead of returning empty-handed, the *procurateur* was in a position to announce "that reasonable breakfast material was going through the cooking 'process.'" Finally, and before the Germans thought of rising from the comfortable beds which they on all occasions possess themselves of, the fortunate men of the "Irish corps" were partaking of the pleasures afforded by a substantial *dejeuner*.

It was after breakfast duty, during hours of idleness within the Prussian lines, to ramble through the town or village, wherever chance would have our corps, merely to note whose house was burnt, the number of doors and window sashes broken up for firewood, or through malice;

and, though last not least, to try and comfort the families whom the rude German had evicted from their lawful dwelling. During one of such rambles, which was not forgotten that morning, three of our men resolved on extending their walk to Lorgron, a village distant only ten miles, and accordingly made the necessary dispositions. Flasks were replenished, a revolver or bowie knife concealed in the folds of the tunic, and away goes the trio to Lorgron, bent upon adventure of some sort. The morning, though frosty, was by no means cold, and the men referred to marched onwards to Lorgron in high spirits. Kilometre stones were passed, to the number of ten, and this number ten was placed about twenty yards from the fosse which surrounds the newly-planted grounds outside the old forest of Chantmesle. Arrived at the commencement of the forest, they were seriously thinking whether would they attack the fruitful sloe-bushes or wait until their return from the village. They resolved upon waiting, and were off on their ramble.

"But what is that noise? Did you not hear the bolt of the chassepot pushed after the cartridge, Tom?"

"Ah! hold your tongue; this is no place to be listening, where nothing can be heard except the wind rustling the leaves of the evergreens; but, hold, there are friends or enemies about—listen!"

"You are right, Mac; either the needle-gun or chassepot is being handled somewhere convenient, either in the hands of Brandenburgers just here, and we are lost. Let us enter the forest and take chance."

"*Halte! à la—qui va la? mes amis.*" The next moment they were in the midst of Francs-Tireurs; a few anxious questions regarding the movements of the Prussian cavalry, and our rangers (two of them Connaught-rangers, but never in the English service) were quite at home within the forest, surrounded by leal friends—the men of the American guerilla corps. Here were masked batteries of the Gatling mitrailleuse, and small brass cannon peculiar to their service, ready to shower destruction on the Germans if they, the latter, would only advance. The rifles of latest inventors, such as Remingtons, Spencers, and Chassepots, were in good trim for the carrying out of the good intentions for

which they were destined ; and, though last not least, were the mines beneath the high road ready to be sprung the instant circumstances dictated such a course. Further still within the forest, and parked on one of the broad avenues, was a battery of six guns, heavy field-pieces, ready unlimbered, and commanding the high road over which our men trudged, through an open in the trees. In fine, everything that American *Francs-Tireurs* could accomplish towards having their efforts attended with success, with victory, was being done, every disposition made ; and so they only awaited the advent of the Germans to bring to the proof their tactics, their strategy. There being not the least sign of Germans advancing, our men proceeded towards the chateau, and, on entering the open space in front, were not a little surprised to find that a line of barricades were raised outside the several doors and windows on the ground floor. Again, fallen trees were placed, so as to form a formidable *cheveux de frise* ; and so well did the house resemble an uninhabited fortress, that our men walked past, never thinking at the time that within the castle were people whose delight lay in meeting people from our Emerald Isle, in tendering to them hospitality. As I have said, our three wanderers walked past the castle, and, taking the lower avenue for their route, were soon hid from view, not so much by the tall leafless trees of the forest as by the thick underwood with which it abounds. In time they emerged into the open country northwards, and eventually came in sight of their destination, Lorgron. Entering that village, they were welcomed as Prussians by the children, who were just dismissed from the village school. Even they called out, assassin, robber ; but it was otherwise with their master and their parents, all of whom knew "ours" thoroughly, and tendered the customary salute as they passed down the straggling, yet clean street of the village.

The sun-dial affixed to the eastern wall of the school-house proclaimed the hour to be noon-day, and our men were engaged offering up their morning prayers in the little church of the cemetery. Afterwards, when they thought they had sufficiently attended to their spiritual duties, they evacuated the church and proceeded to the inspection of the

monuments in the burial-ground without. But why could they not see all that could be seen in that tasty little cemetery in a shorter time? No! because their idea was to find out the most expensive memorial stone, the name of the family—in fine, to find out who were the most respected members of the congregation attending the little church. Could Paul Pry hit upon a better method? M. Louis Leon's family tomb was superb. He lived in the village, too. His family are well off, no doubt. His house must be tolerably respectable looking. Object to an introduction? By no means. Then let us find out M. Leon's house—it is probable he is at home; and, if not, of course we will.

Accordingly the three Ambulance men went in search of the house of the man whom they resolved on honoring with a visit, and without any trouble found it out, entered, and were ushered into a room remarkably well furnished.

"Strange girl that, Mac; why the deuce has she run off so quick?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. Probably she's gone to tell 'old hoss' that visitors have arrived; or may-be she imagines that there's danger a-head, and ran off to tell her 'pa' that Prussians are waiting on him. In the meantime let us beat home; here are glasses, and, by Jove! a jug of claret. Soho, three bottles of cognac and absinthe. Here is the health of our host—*Santé à M. Leon. Encore, Madame et jeune Demoiselles!*"

"But who in the name of goodness can be laughing so heartily? *Qui va la? Halt!*"

For a moment the laughter subsided, and a gay, robust-looking old gentleman stepped into the room.

"Pardon, messieurs, but we really had to laugh at your style of entertainment. I'm really delighted to see you in the house of M. Leon." "M. Leon, gentlemen. MM Tom, Mick, and Mac, de l'Ambulance," responded Tom, and the introduction was complete.

"Messieurs Tom, Mick, et Mac, Mme. Leon; *mes enfants, messieurs.*"

"Bravo, M. Leon your 'kids' are surprisingly numerous; all very handsome children, I assure you," continued Tom.

"*O merci, M. Tom,*" replied the *proprietaire*, bowing profoundly to the compliment.

The foregoing scene was merely the introduction to a pleasant afternoon; and so well pleased were our men, that at three o'clock, the hour appointed for being out on their homeward march, they found it very difficult to bid farewell to the host, and more so, to the hostess. However, they plucked up courage to say a sad farewell, and were in the street immediately.

"*Hola! messieurs,*" shouted the driver of a carriage, which just appeared leaving the village as "ours" gained the principal entrance to the chateau. What could he mean? Perhaps M. Leon wishes to fill the cup of kindness by sending us home in his carriage. We shall walk—none of us are delicacies. They were thus reasoning when the carriage was brought to a halt, near to the place where they were awaiting the message which they thought was entrusted to the driver; but they were agreeably surprised when M. le Marquis — leaped out, and *sans ceremonie* requested them to enter his carriage and drive to the castle, there to spend the remaining days of Christmas time.

What was to be done—decline or accept the invitation? Accept it, and not appear at head-quarters, was a serious affair; but how could we decline? Impossible; the donor was too pressing, his manner proved too earnest to be treated to a refusal. Therefore, to leap into the chaise was the only alternative, and accordingly they did so; the driver urged his superb pair over the well-kept avenue, and soon brought them to a stand before the castle.

Entering, the Marquis led them into one of his splendid salons, and with "*Pardon, messieurs,*" evaporated. During his absence our tourists were contemplating their muddy boots, soiled uniforms, and appearance in general, contrasting such with the magnificent drapery and furniture of the room. Feeling ill at ease, and hoping that any further introduction might be postponed until better "*rigged*" for drawing-room appearances, they awaited the return of their host. In time he re-appeared, and told them a little story of the pride which campaigners should possess, of the glory attached to soiled uniforms and even muddy boots in war, and

many other things which I could never believe himself to glory in; and concluded his discourse by leading his audience into the presence of the ladies of the castle. The ceremony of introduction was gone through with the greatest ease on the part of our men, and naturally so by the members of the family; and as the evening grew into the night, everyone within that castle were, to all appearances, truly happy. At a good hour they retired to rest, and were not roused up until seven o'clock on the morning of the 29th, with the object of attending eight o'clock Mass in the chapel attached to the chateau. Arranging a very limited toilet, they descended to the reception-room, where presently they were joined by the members of the family, and all marched off to the chapel. The good Father Douay let them go as soon as the sacred ceremony was ended, and they returned to *dejeuner*. It was during the time occupied by the ladies and gentlemen in doing justice to the good things prepared by a rather eccentric cook, that a gentle tap was heard on the door, and before the usual "come in" was heard, the cook herself entered. She had on the full regimentals of the 107th regiment of the line, and looked the very picture of ugliness; even the handsome uniform of the 107th did not change her appearance, but, on the contrary, made her look still more horribly grotesque. Tears coursed down her emaciated cheeks, while she stood motionless as a statue. At length, wiping them away, she unsheathed the cutlass, placed it on the rifle, and went through drill in a manner that might throw instructors into shade. However, after she had gone through the usual parade-ground exercises, her style of "doting on the military" took another turn, and the woman who, a moment before, was quite calm, became a tigress. In a moment the wild heroine seemed to have assumed all the wilder passions of the brute beast. "*Caput la Pruesse! Vive la Republique!*" then a flourish of the cutlass, and a march round the room in very heavy marching order. "*Halt à la!*" and she stood upright; a glance round, and she whipped the heads of so many decanters. "*Caput la Pruesse! encore—encore—encore!* *La! silence au camp!*" the strong-minded woman was singing to the air of the "*Chant du Depart*" some lines of her own composition:

“A la guerre ! à la guerre !
Marchons à la guerre !
Et la République.
Unité, fraternité, égalité. Vive la France !
Caput les Prusses ! Sacre !”

Look at her, and you would certainly be rewarded with a cutlass wound. No one dared to pacify her, and accordingly her excitement was rising to a fearful pitch. At length this rather strange cook shook hands with the members of her master's family, gave to the members of our Ambulance a military salute, and rushing towards one the windows, threw up the sash, leaped out, and eventually disappeared among the trees. It was in time the wild heroine departed, for twelve Prussian hussars appeared outside the window by which she made her exit, and, entering by it, introduced themselves *sans ceremonie*. They ordered breakfast, and it was served up ; their officer directed madame to have the keys of every chamber and nook in the castle handed him instantly, and they were handed him. This consummate impudence was shocking in the extreme ; but where was the alternative ? Refuse ! we sack the chateau. Well, as I have told the reader, nothing demanded by these foul marauders was refused them ; and when they had partaken plentifully of the breakfast, they made dispositions for conducting their future procedure, which resulted in four of them going towards the farmyard, one remaining with the horses, and the remaining seven to rid the chateau of valuables, and the cellar of the wines.

No, it cannot be possible that our Franc-Tireur friends have evacuated their position of yesterday—*sans doute*, they must be about. And so they were about, for no sooner were the Germans engaged in the work of plunder, than the plumed hats of the Francs-Tireurs could be seen amidst the trees ; and the next moment the man in charge of the horses was gagged, himself and his horses brought into cover, and the rifles of the “vulture plumes” *au reste* for his comrades. Our men, of course, went forth to join the Francs-Tireurs—on duty if required, otherwise to be mere spectators, and were only among them when the four Germans pillaging the farmyard emerged

through the gateway, and, without exchange of shots, were made prisoners. Not so the unfortunate men who were gorging themselves with the booty of the chateau. When they came to the open, and when they had banged the lower gate of the turret after them, and while they looked in vain for their horses, the Francs-Tireurs poured in on them a shower of lead, which sent them to their account; the seven hussars were dead; and I venture to say that any witness of their cool, deliberate villany, no matter how much inclined to sympathize with perfidy, would say they deserved the punishment.

It was now the turn for Francs-Tireurs to have a comfortable breakfast, and they had one which amply repaid them for any trouble they might have gone through in discomfiting the black hussars. Bill Latreille of the Americans told the story of how the Germans advanced, and how they, the Americans, entrapped them.

“This morning at seven we espied the hussars advancing along the lower forest road. It was not probable we were going to show; so the two Gatlings on the avenue were brought into ambush, and the German passed by unsuspectingly. Bob and I kept close to him all through, until near the glade, where he was near seeing us. However, we ‘ducked,’ and kept advancing on all-fours, until reaching the lawn, where we had to halt for survey, and await the advance of men to our aid: they came in good time, and, separating, we stole round to the rear, where we saw the Germans leaving by that window. We intended to shoot the whole of them, but the man at the horses was the means of changing our intention. It would be murder to shoot him; and, sparing him, we resolved only to shoot those whom we found in the act of plundering. You have witnessed the manner in which we have treated the latter; and I’m only sorry that the twelve of them were not actually engaged in the plunder, for we’ll have some trouble in sending the five prisoners to Courtalin. We really cannot manage them here, as we have to return to the ambuscade. Who will suggest?”

This difficulty was soon overcome; our three adventurers volunteered to escort the prisoners to Courtalin.

Accordingly, they received the five Germans into charge, and went *en route* directly. Arrived at Courtaulin, our men brought the prisoners to head-quarters, gave them in charge to the guard, and then returned on their home journey; but what was their surprise when they beheld the cook, (late of the castle) astride a mule, and addressing a number of Mobiles, who in their turn addressed her; but one of them happening to say something against her principles, drew down on himself retribution, which she managed to inflict in a very summary way. She charged the youth in a Quixotic fashion; and when he fell she made her wicked mule kick and bite him, until the unlucky Mobile bawled, "Pardon! pardon! madame." This was all that was required to insure a cessation of hostilities, and the strange woman made her exit from the scene, while our men hid in the garden of the Chateau de Montmorency until she passed; and when she disappeared behind the church, they continued their march to C—t—e, at which place they arrived early in the afternoon. Another evening at the castle—a pleasant ramble to the ambuscade, and a jolly night, together with the incidents of the morning—"ours" still retain in never-fading remembrance, and hope that at no distant day, when liberty dawns on Ireland, they, at least, will be afforded the opportunity of meeting, of welcoming the Lorgon contingent of the French aid.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“Too oft is a smile but the hypocrite’s wile
 To mark detestation or fear ;
 Give me the soft sigh, while the soul-telling eye
 Is dimm’d for a time with a tear.”

BYRON

It was from a short yet refreshing sleep that the three men alluded to in the last chapter were roused up on the morning of the 30th ; and when they had completed that very easy task—the arrangement of a campaigner’s toilet—they descended to the breakfast-room. There, the members of the family were waiting breakfast, and the apologies tendered by one of our men being accepted, all sat down to table, and entered on that familiar morning duty—devouring *dejeuner*. While so engaged, an individual who lay on the sofa, which was drawn over opposite the fire, snored heavily, and in such an unusual manner, too, that the breakfast party were forced to break into hearty laughter. The sleeper began to grunt, and the listeners were forced to laugh louder and louder. “Who can it be, Mac?” demanded Tom. “I shouldn’t wonder if he proves to be Barney O’Neill, for I heard him grunt and groan in much the same manner the night we slept in the forest near Bucy. Do you remember?” responded Mac. “You are right ; let me see !” and accordingly the first speaker rose from his seat with the *intente cordiale* of giving this comical sleeper a snuff of cayenne pepper, and with, “*Pardon, Messieurs et Mesdames,*” emptied about a quarter-ounce of the hot cayenne from the castor into the palm of his hand, and applied it to the nose of his dormant victim with wonderful effect. Terrible sneezing, intermittent growls of vengeance, and the leaping of a man with a “head and pluck,” as red as scarlet, followed. *Sans doute*, Barney (for it was none other) suffered in his sleep, and on his waking. After some time, his sufferings subsided, and he was able to recognise the “situation ;” and when the

effects of the cayenne disappeared, and when it was thought that the usually amiable Barney would (not without just cause) wreak vengeance on all, his forbearance became puzzling, for not only did he join the breakfast party, but startled them with his good-humoured sayings, and more so with the vastness of his appetite. After doing justice to the good things, he made known the object of his visit. "Yez are nice boys, an' ye'll suffir sorely fur havin' meself an' me horses tearin' through the counthry after yez the last three days. Get out now as quick as ye like, an' go home to Chatterdun, ur if yez don't, begorra I'll ordher a rigimint of sodgers to haul yez home. Faix, to be shure! Nice quarters, to be sure! I suppose yez wor goin' to live here intirely, if some man like meself didn't find yez out—an' if yez did (*sotto voce*), divil a nicer place yez could have. Anyway, pelt it away home now. Leg it too, fur dang the toe ye'll put on me wagon as long as me name's Barney; an' if yer not in Chatterdun at five o'clock, ye may's well go home, fur I heerd the Chief sayin' that dang the minnit ye'll ivir spind with the corpse unless yez report at quarthers this evenin'. Picard is puttin' bad things in the Chief's head aginst yez; so, if yez don't take me advice, yez can do the other thing. I'll be aff now, so good-bye an' a happy new year to yez." Having delivered the message, he bade farewell to the men he was in search of, tendered his thanks to the family at the castle, and left the room. They followed him at a respectable distance, and when next they saw him, he had the nose-bags for feeding his horses bundled up, and was mounting into the seat of his wagon. Having rolled his rug round him, he took the reins in his hand, and touching his steeds lightly with the whip, they went bounding away down the avenue, and long after he disappeared from view, his shouts could be heard. "Hurroo for Dundalk! Gee up, Nancy!" and a number of other exclamations peculiar to himself. Only when the sounds of his voice died away in distance, did our men think of the message he had brought them. They knew the consequences attendant on not treating orders with attention, and consequently made every preparation for renewing their connection with head-quarters by the time specified.

To return to Lorgron on a farewell visit to M. Leon and family, to the villagers, and, though last not least, to the good patriotic priests, was a duty not to be neglected; therefore, a walk down to the village, and, accompanied by their host and hostess, they rambled from one house to the other, until their cup of courtesy was filled; when, in turn, the villagers turned out *en masse*; and as our men passed out of the village by the long avenue to the chateau, ringing cheers resounded on all sides, and the younger portion of the population even followed their visitors as far as the gate entrance, many of them rushing forward to the grasp of friendship—to what might prove a last farewell. It was noonday when they returned to the castle, and again went for a stroll to the Francs-Tireurs' ambush in the forest. Returning to luncheon at one o'clock, they found everything in readiness for their departure. Flasks and haversacks were tolerably well furnished, a wagonette and superb "pair" were being got into "trim" for the drive; and as the time for departure rolled round, what was all pleasure before the unexpected, unwelcome visit of Misther O'Neill, had partaken of a certain melancholy, quite foreign to the noble mansion and its inmates; even the domestics shed honest tears. Not merely assumed for the occasion was this sorrow; it was the honest outpouring of sympathetic love, not alone for the Irish of a few days' acquaintance, but for the country and the cause which they represented.

One of the three was so puzzled at having no other *souvenir* to leave along with that called "remembrance," already implanted, that he repented the days of past battles, for not having plundered either a live or dead German of the iron cross, or even of the leathern jackets which many of them wore inside the uniforms, to leave as a *memento* of their visit, and of the true friendship which they experienced. However, his presence of mind did not forsake him, for he took off the cross of "the order of St. Sylvester," which he wore legitimately, pinned it to the breast of the young marquis, and, having inscribed the following lines in the "scrap," beckoned to his comrades to fly:

"Ye friends of my heart, ere from you I depart,
This hope to my breast is most near—
If again we shall meet in this rural retreat,
May we meet, as we part, with a tear!"

In a moment later, they bade a final adieu, and were being driven fast away from the castle. Gaining the high road, they caught a glimpse of the spire of Lorigron's chapel, but it was only a glimpse, for the fiery steeds carried them away rapidly from the scenes of their happiness and ease, to that dreary town wherein fate placed our head-quarters. In a short time, the ambush of the Francs-Tireurs was passed; and directly the forest was left behind, the open treeless country towards Chateaudun was in front to be traversed; but the intervening distance of eight miles was merely an exercising drive for the pampered horses, and at four o'clock (an hour before the time mentioned by the accomplished courier to the castle) our missing members reported themselves at head-quarters' office in the college.

At Chateaudun nothing of incident occurred during the absence of the three men referred to in this and previous chapter. The Germans garrisoning the town were making holiday, not even deeming it necessary to send out a *reconnaissance*. The men of our field department were also taking vacation; but not so with the over-worked members of our medical staff, for they, in truth, laboured night and day in the different hospitals under their care. No orders were in, and probably none would arrive until the Germans would renew their march westward. Knowing this, it was by no means probable that our men would surrender the small supply of pleasure which Chateaudun could then afford; and neither did they, for invariably they were to be found, during "hours of idleness," sipping *café noir et cognac* in some favourite café, the while entertaining one another with stories and songs. The evening of the 30th was no exception to this rule; but, on the contrary, surpassed its predecessors in variety of incident, of mirth, and real fun. There was one, and only one, who had reason to complain, and he was the hero of the "big wagon," the M. Bernard O'Neill of the inhabitants. His love for *café et cognac* was, in truth, ardent; that for refined sugar, intense; but at this time sugar could not be procured in Chateaudun *pour l'amour du l'argent*, and Barney felt the want. However, his usual perspicuousness led him into the Café de la Place, as the most likely nook wherein his wants might be supplied—

where, by-the-by, the proprietors always keep the oldest vintages of cognac, and, as was said, would treat their customers (*bona fide* customers only) to a few cracks of sugar with each "round." Well, as I have said, the excellent Barney entered the café in high spirits, only to find that even an Irishman in France, if unacquainted with the language and manners of the people, has no smooth road to travel, has many obstacles to contend against, and as the following story from the life of Dundalk's O'Neill will show, is the object of laughter to the people, while to himself often comes anger, and a sense of never being "at home."

It was after dark, when our hero entered the Café de la Place, and was well pleased to see three rather good-looking *jeune demoiselles* moving behind a barricade composed of bottles, decanters, glasses, and all the paraphernalia of a French café; no less was his delight when, on peeping into the inner room, he beheld four of our men seated before a lively wood fire, and all looking as cheerful as possible—in fact, it was "love at first sight" with him, it was exactly the style of place for which he searched, for which he yearned. To while away the night in it was his intention, and accordingly he possessed himself of a chair (that uncomfortable chair peculiar to the place), and was as soon seated. He looked into the pleasant fire, and for a moment seemed to consider what might prove the most beneficial drink; or whether would he demand a bowl of coffee, with brandy and sugar. Directly he leaned over on the chair, as if to give the order, but the chair being minus a back, Barney, chair, and all capsized, and as he lay prostrate on the ground, cried, "May bad luck fall on yez, fur 'sperrits!' So help me Jemmy Johnston, but I'm kilt outright. The divil a quarer chair meself ivir came across. Dang me, but I'll nivir agin sit down on one ov thim, fur this is the thirty-furst time the same mishap tuk place. Here, Madum, gie us a jorum ov coffee an' cognac, to cool the timpast ov me heart, fur the toss made me as thursty as a *lepraghan* in a dead-house. Put a bit ov sugar in it Ma'am, if ye plase, an' you'll obleege Barney O'Neill."

"*Est il café noir et cognac, M. Bernard?*" demanded M'selle.
 ("It bates the divil the way they glibber"—*sotto voce.*) "Oh,

begorra Miss, yez could talk that way till mornin' an' hang the word Barney wud know, only café an' cognac; anyway give us a bowl ov coffee an' cognac, an' a weeshy crack ov sugar av ye plase."

"*Ne comprend pas, M. Bernard. Voulez vous, café noir avec sucré et cognac, Monsieur ?*"

"Arrah, fire away to ould Nick if you like. Shure a man would starve while yez are goin' about axin' questions. Mither Kelly, will ye tell hur what I want, iv ye plase, ur she'll set me crazy. Och, thin, botherashun to ye, Madum-o'shil, but yer a dam sight wildher than Nancy ovur there in the stable, an' it will be a long time agin until I spind the second last night ov the year nare ye."

Here Mr. Kelly rose to solve the difficulty, and having told the proprietress what M. Bernard required, she ran off in search, and ultimately returned with a few grains of that sugar which our epicure doated on.

"*Pour votre café, M. Bernard ?*"

"*Oui, M'selle.*"

Accordingly she put the little grain of sugar into the coffee, and waited for M. Bernard's approbation. But he, on tasting it, shook his head, and called for more sugar.

"*Toute suite, toute suite, M. Bernard,*" and away she goes in search of more.

"Come here! Come here, I tell ye!" bawled Barney, "Only taste it, it's not sweet at all, at all; instud ov bein' too sweet. 'Pon me conshins it's a nice way I'm humbugged about. A wild heffer tells me to me teeth that the coffee is too sweet, an' runs away like if the ould boy himself wus at hur heels. I faix! an' this place is gettin' wurser an' wurser iviry day. Begorra, wudn't I like to be back in ould Dundalk fur New Year's Day, ur even Twelfth Day. No doubt I'd be at home, wid plinty ov ivirything that's natherul. Be damn but, here she's back!"

The agreeable proprietress returned with a supply of sugar, which she placed at O'Neill's disposal. This latter individual was so delighted, that he loudly proclaimed his intention of "standing a round." And when he had demanded of his countrymen present—"What's the tip?" they very good-naturedly replied—"Rum," and he "stood like a brick," five bottles of rum. Immediately they formed themselves still closer

round the fire, and as the hero of the big wagon began to recognise the comfort of the situation, he thought on all the hardships suffered on the Patay or Fontainebleau roads—of the cold, dreary nights spent in the forest of Bucy, and in the shattered railway stations at Arlenay and Chevilly. Indeed he did, and what was better, he was able to sing his hardships, and he did so, to the tune of “Johnny, I hardly knew ye.” With a few preliminary remarks as to his hoarseness and want of practice in the art of singing, he commenced—

“On the road to Fontaineblew,
Hurroo! Hurroo!
On the road to Fontaineblew,
Hurroo! Hurroo!
On the road to Fontaineblew,
We wur in a h—ll ov a stew,
The d—l a knew we knew what to do,
Shure all the Prooshans knew ye.
Wud me rum an’ crumb,
An’ crumb an’ rum,
Shure all the boyos knew ye;
So Barney, come,
Take off yer rum,
No matter iv they slew ye.”

“Oh, begorra I’m not able to sing another ‘twist,’ so I’ll call upon Misther Kelly for a ‘lilt.’ Misther Ke’ly’s song, iv ye plaze, gentlemen.”

“Well, Barney, I really cannot sing, and I assure you, if I could, I would not, until you finish your song; it’s first class.”

“Oh, marcy, marcy, marcy! an’ as it’s so good I’ll finish another varse, no matter how the cock whistles.

“Meself wus—

“Begorra I furet the air I set it to. All right—I have it—

“Meself wus in a fix I knew,
Hurroo! Hurroo!
Meself wus in a fix I knew,
Hurroo! Hurroo!
Meself wus in fix I knew,
Though I whishtled like a cockatoo,
The Marshallays and Donnell-a-boo—
Lord, iv the villains slew me!

“Chorus!”

The chorus was partially gone through, when about a dozen of German troopers entered, and the moment they had taken seats, he had it finished; and rather than be seen in a café with Germans, he rose from his seat, left the house, and retired to his stable, there to have his customary sleep with his steeds. In a short time after, the four men of our field department, who were fortunate in having the gamey Barney with them for an evening, retired to their quarters, and by the hour of eleven o'clock everything was still as death within the college. But this quiet was to be disturbed in a most unexpected manner; for when the clock tolled the hour of midnight, our guards on night duty were heard to challenge some intruder, who, on hearing the challenge vanished. Then heavy knocking on the postern which leads into the grounds again drew their attention, and this time their challenge was answered—“*Qui va la ?*” “*Les Francs-Tireurs de l’Amerique.*” In another moment, ten Francs-Tireurs were in our midst—in safety, if we could help them. The sharp ears of the Prussian sentinels in the Rue du College detected the challenge, but not the reply. One of them, coming outside the well-barred gate of the college, demanded, “Who entered?” and on being told, “Mind your own business,” continued to pace up and down from the gate to the corner of the Rue de la Paix, without even passing his number to the guard. With the suspicions of the Prussian sentinel aroused, we feared the result, and even at that hour commenced to frame plans for the escape of our refugees, in case that the Germans would invade our quarters.

CHAPTER XXIX

“ He paused a moment, till his hastening men
 Passed the first winding downward to the glen ;
 Strange tidings ! many a peril have I past,
 Nor know I why this next appears the last ;
 Yet so my heart forebodes, but must not fear
 Nor shall my followers find me falter here ”.

THE CORSAIR.

In hail, rain, and snow, was the last morning of December ushered in ; of all our mornings, of all our days, never can we remember one so severe, so terrible in its results ; in truth, the elements did their worst. The elegant banner of “ The Red Cross,” which floated over head-quarters, was torn to shreds ; and the flag presented to the corps by the people of Dundalk, and which floated from the tower of the Church of St. John, was taken, staff and all its belongings, from its eminence, and carried by the furies to the distance of a thousand yards ; yet, strange to say, it was not torn, and whatever soils were on it were eradicated under the supervision and by the direction of its foster-parent, M. D’Arcy. The portions of the ruined houses in the Rue de Chartres Rue d’Orleans, and Caserne, which were left standing up to that morning were all levelled, not this time by the glutting German, but by the storm. The lightning ravaged the eastern portion of the town, for near to the railway station was a house on fire—an uninhabited house, while along the lower road huge trees were torn up, others left branchless, and all bearing the indelible mark of the lightning burn. *Sans doute*, Chateaudun suffered, and why is more than I can state.

It was eight o’clock, and the storm raged with unabating fury ; none were abroad, at least we thought so, and we heartily wished that none would be abroad until the gale would subside ; but our wishes were set at nought, for before

the clock tolled nine we had to receive unwelcome visitors, in the shape of generals, surgeons, and staff-officers of the tenth corps (Prussians), while outside in the street their troops appeared *en masse*. Our suspicions were aroused; could it be that a general would stoop so low as to become a detective? Of course a German will do anything, let it be ever so menial. Well! let us be on our guard—the Francs-Tireurs must be saved at any risk, at any cost.

The visitors rambled through the wards of the college hospital, and as they did one of our surgeons, who was entirely ignorant of the real cause of their visit, noted that they paid marked attention to the several patients. They next hinted a wish to see our field-men on parade, and, through courtesy rather than respect, parade was ordered. The general and officers joined in the usual ceremony, fine, healthy, disciplined men; and parade was dismissed with exchange of salutes. Then our dishonourable visitors scattered, and walked in twos and threes through the yard with seeming carelessness, yet each fully intent on becoming an informer, if they could catch sight of a Franc-Tireur uniform. Meanwhile, the general, his surgeon-in-chief, and our Chef de l'Ambulance, were engaged discussing the nature of wounds, and all other matters relating to surgery, when the Prussian surgeon asked, in a very pleasing manner, "Would you favor me with a look at your Irish horses." Of course Dr. Baxter complied, and the master of the horse was sent for; a Prussian officer acted as messenger. M. Burgess could not be made aware of what was going to happen; the Francs-Tireurs were in the stable, and the Prussians outside. What was to be done?

In a short time the principal of our veterinary department arrived on the scene, and showed to the surgeon the horses; but the attention of this accomplished *medicin* had other attractions; he thought he saw men lying together in a far off corner; he shivered and grew pale. By this time our *Chef* was made aware of the mischief which was brewing, and took instant steps to remedy it. With wonderful presence of mind he hit upon the proper means of outdoing the wily German—to delay his departure. Accordingly, there were numerous surgical instruments up stairs, with several

other things—an improvement on the “Nelaton” included—which our *Chef* would wish the Prussian surgeon to see ; and this latter personage, though he had the game in view, never dreaming that our surgeons knew of it, accepted the invitation ; and the staff, general, surgeon, and all, renewed their visit to the hospital, where Dr. Baxter showed and explained the uses of many instruments with which the Prussian was totally unacquainted ; and so delighted was he at gaining so much knowledge, that he would willingly remain another hour, had not pressing business imposed on him the necessity of leaving. Blind fool that he was ! Did he not know that the volunteers whom he parted from were ingenious Irishmen ? He did—but never for a moment thought that the escape of the *Francs-Tireurs* could be accomplished, for he was aware that the college was surrounded by the troops of the 1st corps.

During the time occupied by our *Chef de l’Ambulance* in explanation as to the nature of the wounds which he operated upon, and the uses of the new surgical instruments which were supplied our hospitals, what were our volunteers engaged in ? The sequel will show. The Prussians, led on by Dr. Baxter, had only disappeared inside the college, or rather inside that portion of it set apart for hospital purposes, when ten of our men were seen to rush into the stable wherein were the *Francs-Tireurs*, and soon after the *Francs-Tireurs* walked out habited in the uniform of our corps, strolled across the yard, passed in through the postern to the gardens, and, bidding what might prove a last farewell to our men, who accompanied them so far (who, apropos, told them how to escape from out the garden, as also the route which they should pursue), scaled the high wall behind the tower, and precipitating themselves into the deep ravine on the other side, were lost to view ; and by the time the discoverer of their night’s resting-place descended from the hospital wards, the *Francs* were probably in ambush, in safety. Without doubt the morning was favorable to the enterprise, for the driving sleet prevented the sentinels from seeing many yards on any side of them, and, for aught we knew, the *Francs-Tireurs* might be miles away from the source of immediate danger—that is, if they chanced upon an unguarded stable, upon unguarded horses of the enemy.

In less than an hour after the men of the American Franc-Tireur corps escaped, four hundred Prussian infantry forcibly entered the college yard ; their officer (one of the "clever ones" who accompanied the medical detective at an earlier hour) made directly to the stable, where the "Vultures" were supposed to exist, and loudly called on them to surrender. Our horsemen were in the stable at the time, but, on hearing this harsh summons, walked out with surprising *sang froid*. Leaving the Prussian officer uninformed as to whether opposition would be offered to his entrance or not, they passed through the Prussian line and joined the volunteers, who were awaiting the moment when the cup of disappointment would be filled—when the German would discover that his would-be victims were flown. They had not long to wait ; for the second challenge of the officer being received in silence, he ordered his "four hundred" to enter, with imperative instructions to massacre every man found within the stable. The order was obeyed ; but his troops met with no opposition, saw not even a single man. They searched every apartment of the college, and lest the "vulture plumes" would have taken to the chimneys, they got on to the roof and fired down into them, but all their efforts to secure the prize were unsuccessful, and, being so, they left the college only to be laughed at, not alone by the people, but by their *co-frères*.

It was reported that the officious Surgeon-in-Chief was severely reprimanded by his superiors ; but we could hear nothing more of the issue of an investigation, which beyond a doubt was held, into the amount of credit which might be attached to his statement.

It was noon-day, and the Landwehr attached to the 9th corps had assembled in the Place d'Armes ; there they were soon joined by the Brandenburgers of the 20th and 35th regiments, when all received the order to proceed. Their "van" had already left by the Vendome road, and over the same "route" the main body now marched, the Saxons and Bavarians followed the example set them by the Landwehr ; and at "three" of the afternoon the town was minus its "Christmas visitors," and in possession of ourselves and the Francs-Tireurs, who appeared suddenly among us, at the

moment the "rear" of the Germans passed into the "Rue de la Fontaine." They did not seek security in flight, as we thought, but remained ensconced under an overhanging ledge of rock, protected alike from the storm and the German. Directly after the Francs-Tireurs joined us, parade was sounded, and in a short space of time the majority of our members were on the ground; orders were then and there read out, directing volunteers to proceed to Droué in all haste. All the men available for field duty, the wagons, and some members of our medical department turned out, volunteered; and their services being accepted, they made the necessary preparations for commencing a march, which might prove dangerous, as it certainly promised to be tiresome. Having made these preparations, they again assembled on the ground, and before the clock tolled the hour "four," all were *en route via Courtalin*. Nothing of moment occurred that might vary the monotonous march, until crossing the Loir between Courtalin and Cloye, when firing was heard in our advance, and in a second the summit of Le Pompadour was crowned by Prussian cavalry. Without halting, they dashed down on us, but before they swept past, a shower of bullets from the Gatlings, which in turn crowned the hill, sent numbers of them to the earth, and before they crossed the river many more of the fugitives were dead and dying. The huge bullets of the Gatling mitrailleuse did their work quick and well. Our position at the time was, to say the least, uncomfortable, for though we kept close behind our wagons, the large, fearful bullets of the guns in use flew thick over our heads, and in several instances right through our wagons. We felt thankful for our escape—in truth, it was a fitting time and place to thank Providence, and invoke the future favors of the Virgin, who protected her children of Ireland in the moment of extreme peril.

It was when our aid was tendered to the very few of the German *hors de combat*, who showed some signs of lingering out a life for another day, that we resumed our journey, and soon after gained the summit of the hill, when we were rewarded by having such a gorgeous spectacle presented to our view, that for the time we forgot the hardships and dangers of the campaign, and seemed to think that even an

age of suffering would be forgotten in the contemplation of such a delightful landscape. Away towards Le Mans, and northwards towards Alençon, the spires of the village churches stood out in bold relief, and in strange contrast with the armed men who literally swarmed over the surrounding country. Beneath us was a regiment of the Chasseurs d'Afrique advancing briskly, the cuirassiers formed on our right, while dragoons, hussars, and lancers were in position further on; twenty-five thousand infantry were being manoeuvred on the plain, and despatched to that place which the judgment of commandants suggested; the artillery dragged lazily along the roads; but the attraction, *par excellence*, was the "Gatling mitrailleuse"—the "pea-green gun." Some six or seven batteries of this destructive weapon were "parked" at no great distance from the position we held on the hill; and, as if in compliment or recognition of our arrival at La Pompadour, a diminutive green flag floated from each, and in the centre was hoisted the Irish standard; but how it came there, and through what means, were things unknown to us for the time, though after the lapse of some days the riddle was solved; for we learned that it was worked by Turcos, placed by Turcos—in fine, it was an *intente cordiale*, for even the Algerians knew the wants of the Irish. We had time, and only time, to survey the scene when we were ordered to descend into the valley, and remain there *en vidette* for future orders. Our original destination lay six miles distant, St. Calais eleven; and as there was every prospect of a battle, we came to the conclusion that hospitable Cloye, or the limited forest on our left, would prove to be our *rendezvous* for the night—that is, if the Germans, who were reported advancing in force, were driven back behind Cloye. For all we knew at the hour I write about, we might be back in Chateaudun before midnight; and as it was evidently the intention of our generals to lead on the attack with numbers, there was no knowing the result. If once successful, probably we would spend the second night of the new year within the gilded "salons" of Fontainebleau's palace; or, better still, fall in for king William's "Christmas hamper" up at Versailles. Well,

acting as the then circumstances suggested, we resolved to remain with the troops in victory or defeat; and to do this with as much ease as possible, we rambled towards the forest, entered, and as soon had pleasant wood-fires lighted. From the cask of *vin ordinaire* (which, by-the-by, we happily chanced to procure for money *en route*) was served out each man's supply, and this was set on the fires with surprising alacrity. Molasses (no mean substitute for sugar) was introduced into the wine-tins, and in a few minutes all were indulging in copious draughts of that refreshing beverage.

Irishmen can be gay, can be happy, in any place and under any circumstances except in their own misgoverned land, where money is squandered *ad libitum* by a "fostering" government, as long as it goes into the hands of wolves in sheep's clothing, who put a large portion of it in their pockets, and with the remainder pay hireling cut-throats for scattering the seeds of discord, of strife, between man and man.

The evening of the last day of 1870 was in truth no evening for out-door amusement—neither was our woody retreat. Still all were happy; toasts were proposed and responded to—fit accompaniments were not wanting, for vocalists and instrumentalists were present. "Sir Roger" and "*Les Lanciers*" were gone through to the music of a violoncello; a solo on the tin-whistle by M. Byrne; the death of "Owen Roe O'Neill," delivered with professional precision and becoming "pathos" by the hard-working carriage smith attached to our "corps," M. Dillon; several other acts, quite foreign to the place, tended to make our evening one to be envied by "wise" men who remain in bed at home, and I doubt if such a pleasant one will ever again be whiled away within that forest, or at least until the great elm under which our chairman sat is crumbled away with time and age.

The reported advance of the Germans was "bouted," merely to keep the Garde Mobile *en vidette*, for the Germans did not show, nor did the sentinels' warning "fire" proclaim danger; therefore, we prepared for bed, and having

added sufficient wood to our log fires, and having placed our blankets and "surtouts" to the best advantage, lay down to rest, and were permitted to enjoy a sound, undisturbed sleep, until the trumpeters sounded duty—proclaimed New Year's Day to have dawned.

CHAPTER XXX.

“ Yes, I loved thee and thine, though thou art not my land;
I have known noble hearts and great souls in thy sons,
And I wept with the world o'er the patriot band
Who are gone !”

THE premier day of 1871 was ushered in in sunshine, which, alas! was destined to shine on the glittering uniforms of opposing armies, and, later in the day, on a bloody field. At an early hour on that memorable morning, the *rappel* was beaten throughout the camp; troops packed up their *tentes d'arbrî*, and rushed to the colours of their regiments; officers darted along the lines imparting words of hope, as also their orders, to the young and old soldiers; everything savoured of earnest preparation for the anticipated conflict. The Prussian bugles could be heard beyond the hill, while now and then our *eclaireur* would appear on the crest of the hill, and as soon disappear. A moment's carelessness on their part might give the hill to the enemy; but such might not be feared, for they were *en vidette*. Our “foresters” did not pay much attention to the beating of drums or to the movements of the troops, but set to the preparation of breakfast within the forest. The fires, which were almost extinguished overnight, now blazed anew, and the unpalatable *sausage noir*—an article suited rather for greasing the wheels of gun carriages, or other vehicles, than for human food—was being cooked “with a vengeance;” ultimately we breakfasted agreeably off it, and said it was the soldier's lot. We were on the point of evacuating our *rendezvous*, when firing was heard on our right, and directly shells were heard whizzing above us; it was time to run for the open ground where we could see and avoid these messengers of destruction. Accordingly, we made ourselves “scarce;” and, as we emerged from the forest into the fields, we heard and saw what was going on—the battle was commenced. From an officer of the Mayence Guard, we learned that the 16th

corps had attacked the Germans along the Loir. We wondered why no orders were given us ; but instantly we were satisfied, for, with the troops encamped along the borders of the forest, we were ordered to take up position !! With them we were to push forward to the hill. In ten minutes after, our services were requisitioned, for the line of battle extended itself—the number of its victims also.

The Germans showed to the best advantage, and, for a time, we certainly believed victory to be within their grasp ; but, as the fighting grew more desperate, they seemed to lose ground. It was at this juncture that the troops, with whom the majority of our corps were present, precipitated themselves upon the yielding Germans, driving them across the river. Nor here did the chase end ; for both infantry and cavalry dashed off in hot pursuit, and by noon we might call the country west of Chateaudun again our own ; the invader was driven back defeated, and never for a moment rallied until nightfall favoured him—until the pursuit ceased. Later in the evening, we received orders to push forward to Chateaudun, and, accompanied by Francs-Tireurs, we obeyed. Nothing of importance occurred until reaching the village commonly called "The Three Crosses," and lying at an equal distance from Cloye and Chateaudun. There, on the high road, seven Uhlans fell under the Francs-Tireurs' fire, while four escaped, scampered off with information for their commanders. But the Francs-Tireurs, seeing that the safety of themselves, our corps, and the success of an enterprise which, I may add, was in some measure concocted by a few of our members, was in peril if the *videttes* were allowed to scan our movements closer, they (the Francs-Tireurs) used all their tactics for the capture of the four Prussians, and succeeded beyond their best hopes. They surrounded the "quartette," and, without a shot being fired, made them prisoners, sent them in charge to the rear, and continued their march in safety—at least safe from the snares which would have undoubtedly been set for them, had the captured Germans communicated their advance to the Prussian authorities. It was nine o'clock when we reached the Beaugency "crossing," on the heights overlooking the town—a

place, too, where we at least expected the gruff German challenge to ring out for an answer ; but not receiving such, we came to the conclusion that the sentinels, recognising the Francs-Tireurs' uniforms, retired by order to an ambuscade ; and, to prevent the danger which in such a case is always nigh, we lighted the wagon lamps, and having done so, descended into the streets of the lower town. The Francs-Tireurs, at the same time, crawled on " all-fours " through the snow, and when we made sure that none of the enemy were to be seen, a party of our men returned to a given place of meeting, and led the " terrors " into their quarters, where, in the enjoyment of true pleasure, New Year's Day was lengthened, as it were, into the small hours of the second morning. It was six o'clock then, and the chime in the church of the Madeleine was summoning the people to early Mass ; our party strolled down the Rue de la Paix, crossed over the Rue de l'Eglise into the Place de Justice, and finally entered the splendid church, where, even at that early hour, a *requiem* was being chanted. The ceremony was very impressive, so was the sermon ; and for two hours did we remain " caged " up in the midst of a great and varied congregation. Varied, because numerous regiments entered the town during the night, and invariably showed in the church, because the Germans captured in the battle of the previous day were present, as also commanders with their staff-officers, and other foreign officers attached to the new army. When the sacred ceremony was ended, the vast congregation dispersed ; and members of our corps, together with those of the Franc-Tireur corps, went in search of comfort ; finally found that " valuable " in a plutocrat's house down town, and, possessing themselves of the beds, were soon indulging in sound sleep, which, in truth, was well earned and much required.

It was noonday before they rose from the plutocratic " feathers." Nothing seemed to be astir without, except the snow, which fell fast and heavy, and, not seeing the necessity of going out on unnecessary duty, nor exposing themselves to hardship when such was not required, they wisely resolved to bring the festivities of the new year to a close within that house which wealth had provided with every

requisite to insure comfort. The *propriétaire* was all kindness, and exerted himself in a degree to make the intruders, his guests, happy; he even arranged an entertaining programme which was quite in accord with the style of his visitors. A tolerable dinner having received due attention, it was succeeded by toasts and speeches common to such assemblies with which our corps was in any way connected since its appearance with the new army on the Loire—since its appearance in France. Singing was introduced, in the first instance, by M. Bernard O'Neill, who favoured his countrymen, the Francs-Tireurs, and the host, with his favourite song, "On the road to Fontainblew," a composition never intended for the drawing-room, yet it suited admirably on that occasion; and, as I am describing "an evening," I shall take the liberty of giving the composition in its entirety, not merely to show the poetical licence which O'Neill enjoyed, but to give the reader an idea of the poetry which flourished in the Loire districts during the memorable campaign of 1870-71. Barney, after rubbing his hands violently, and when he had "polished off" a few "big ones" of his favourite "sperrits," commenced to hum the air, "Johnny, I hardly knew ye," which air, it would seem, he could adapt even to Mozart's compositions, and ultimately commenced to sing—

"On the road to Fontainblew,
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 On the road to Fontainblew,
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 On the road to Fontainblew,
 I was in a h—ll of a stew,
 D—l a knew I knew what to do,
 Lord! if the Prooshans slew me.

"Meself was in a fix, I knew,
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 Meself was in a fix, I knew,
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 Meself was in a fix, I knew,
 Though I whistled like a cockatoo,
 The Marshalays an' Donnell Abu,
 Lord! if the boyo's slew me.

“ An’ if they did, what could I do?
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 An’ if they did, what could, I do?
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 An’ if they did, what could I do?
 Begorra, I’d bate them black an’ blue,
 Or kick them off to Timbucktoo,
 Oh! how the robbers knew me.

“ They kipt a distance far away,
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 They kipt a distance far away,
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 They kipt a distance far away,
 An’, be the holy Mosey, I can say,
 That dang the wan appeared that day,
 Sure, all the beggers flew me.

“ Faix, I’m afeard I’m doin’ wrong,
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 Faix, I’m afeard I’m doin’ wrong,
 Hurroo! Hurroo!
 I’m greatly afeard I’m doin’ wrong,
 Quittin’ the dhrink fur this curs’d ould song;
 Begorra! it’s finished—it wasn’t long,
 So here’s to all that knew me.”

A few words of explanation, which went to prove that the toast with which he concluded his song was never intended for the Germans who had the pleasure of knowing him, brought O'Neill's performance to a *finalé*, and though our host called loudly, “*Encore—encore!*” Barney would not respond, but as loudly cursed “the ould song,” for in his endeavours to do it justice he almost lost his breath—so much so, that when he drank to the toast, “So here’s to all that knew me,” he fell heavily on a lounge, and would have fainted away had not restoratives been applied. Numerous were the songs that followed, and loud the music; indeed, the pianist worked hard at the splendid “grand,” and had as a recompense the pleasure of seeing M.—’s pianoforte in a fit condition to require aid from the tuner.

It was during the time occupied by the members of Ambulance and Franc-Tireur corps in making merry, that a “chosen few” of each service were seen to make their exit from this new-found home, and those men I purpose to follow. As I have said, they made their exit in a

manner which at a glance told of their enterprise; they were wrapped in their coats, and, without an attempt at concealment, they carried the Minnie or the Spencer on their shoulders; their broad-brimmed hats were pulled closely over the forehead, while they invariably buckled sword and cartouche belt outside the great coat (a thing not usual in the ranks of "vulture plumes"). *Sans doute*, they had game in sight. . . . They left Chateaudun by the Route d'Orleans, and strolled leisurely along that road until reaching Etéville, where they espied Uhlans in their advance; the Germans numbered only eight, and our Franc-Tireur friends made the necessary dispositions for their capture—dispositions which, I may add, were attended with success, for the Uhlans were made prisoners without exchange of shots, without exchange of even a word. The captives having been unburthened of their sabres, lances, and pistols, were instantly sent into Chateaudun, where, according to reports, they were made tolerably happy.

Knowing that none others of the enemy would present themselves on that road, they pushed on to the high road to Beaugency; but finding that road to be clear, and no immediate prospect of the Germans advancing, they pushed onwards to the Route de Vendome, which likewise proved minus game; ultimately they retraced their steps past Etéville, and over the fields towards the Route de Chartres, for there were surely the Uhlans—*avant postes* of the enemy.

Along this road, and on either side, hill and dale abounded; therefore, our adventurers had no difficulty in the selection of an ambush, as the place afforded such natural advantages to our guerilla warriors, that even they, in all their artifice, could not improve on the position which they held at the moment when the uniform of the enemy was first seen. Excitement ran high amongst this limited company, for to fire on the Uhlans would attract a host of Germans, who were known to be encamped at no great distance, who might intercept a retreat; yet "game" was in sight—nay, almost within range, that is, if our "vulture plumes" would hazard aim at 800 yards; but they wisely awaited the nearer approach of the German horsemen, and their prudence was rewarded, for in a short time the Germans appeared

within the forbidden circle, and, as if fate ordained it, they halted not quite 300 yards from the ambuscade. . . . Then the sharp crack of the Spencer rang out on the night air; . . . twenty horses were seen to trot off riderless, and over the route taken by thirty more, whose saddles were still tenanted; however, before these latter passed out of range, the well-directed fire of our *Francs-Tireurs* had done its work, only six were seen to go free, to escape their *co-frères'* fate.

The enterprise, for the accomplishment of which our adventurers surrendered their pleasures in the house of the rich man, being attended with such signal success, they deemed it high time to retreat, for the steel armour of the white cuirassiers glittered in many places. Accordingly they "hooked it" with all possible speed—and only in time too, for no sooner had they started from their ambush than the cuirassiers gained the hillock, and, failing to find even a clue to the whereabouts of their dangerous enemy, galloped round to scour the neighbourhood. Twelve of them followed directly in the route taken by our friends, and would eventually have "hailed" them, had not a fortunate circumstance occurred which blasted any hopes they might have entertained of annihilating the little party. It seems that after the Uhlans on the Orleans road were made prisoners, were reported as missing, the Germans threw out a *reconnaissance* in force over the same route, which so alarmed the Mobile outpost, that he passed the alarm into camp, from whence were despatched a number of Mobiles, with cavalry and artillery, to repel their advance. At the moment I write of, this force appeared on the road about 400 yards from the ground on which the *Francs-Tireurs* stood (for they were compelled to stand as the cuirassiers were close upon them) awaiting the onset of the twelve steel-clad horsemen; but suddenly the pursuing cavalry wheeled and retreated in haste—they saw our troops on the road. . . . They had almost disappeared when the pieces which were taken out with the troops went bang, and five of their number were seen to fall. Immediately our men, who, as the reader may remember, accompanied the *Francs-Tireurs*, were on the ground, and, contrary to the wish of our other members

who came out with the troops, rendered aid ; but their aid was not required, as the unhorsed cuirassiers were not wounded—they merely flung themselves from their horses to escape the shells from our guns ; therefore they were handed over to the Francs-Tireurs as prisoners, and all returned to Chateaudun an hour after midnight.

Early next morning (3rd of January), the *rappel* was beaten within our quarters, and when members had formed on parade-ground, they were directed to hold themselves in readiness for a march. Both time and destination being excluded from the order, we were kept in happy ignorance as to our probable *rendezvous* for the following night ; but ultimately we learned the intentions of commanders. That forward movement commenced under favorable auspices on the morning of New Year's Day was at an end, and a retreat on Courtalin was necessary, for the Germans advanced in all their power, and as on previous occasions, the French retreated only to save the remnant of heroic Chateaudun. At eight o'clock the "van" left town immediately after our corps, then the body of the troops following, and by noon-day all were massed round Courtalin. There the troops were disposed to the best advantage ; the Bretons were despatched to take up position north of the Chateau de Montmorency, with the object of giving battle to the Germans, who were reported advancing by Brou. The guards of the Loire districts took up a position looking eastward, and commanding the valley ; while line troops, with their artillery and cavalry, were posted at the several passes where the rush of the invader—the disciplined invader—might prove too much for the raw levies of the *Republique*. When these dispositions were made, the Francs-Tireurs and Ambulances were moved down to the different positions, where the aid of either service would be requisitioned ; and, as if this last arrangement was to be the signal of battle it was so ; the roar of artillery rang out. Evidently Prince Frederick attacked our centre near Vendome, to which place a division of our corps was directed to proceed. The required number having volunteered, they were despatched, and as the occasion preached urgency, they were permitted to ride on four of our regular wagons. Happy men ! Fortunate fellows ! They escaped desperate work ; and, better still, they were

not compelled to walk away from it, but were driven in our splendid wagons to a place where, fortunately, they had easy times. Not so with the men who chose to remain with field head-quarters, for the contingent ordered to Vendome had not parted on its journey thither more than thirty minutes, when heavy skirmishing took place in our front, and ultimately, extending itself into battle, caused our men such labour that they would willingly volunteer duty at any other place if an opportunity offered. Their strength and patience were brought to task; and so arduous was the work that the Francs-Tireurs had to lend their aid. Our horses were admirably handled throughout, and notwithstanding that our few cumbrous wagons (solely intended for-roads,) were being pulled through the fields, not an accident occurred to them nor to the fly wagons, though they showed oftentimes in the midst of shot and shell.

At six o'clock that afternoon firing subsided, and by seven ceased. The engagement resulted in the Germans being beaten back at all points between Courtalin and Cloye; but accounts from Vendome were not reassuring, for it was said that Prince Frederick had burst our right centre, and had an open road to Le Mans. If such was the case, we might return on our home journey, and only remember our last service at Courtalin, "where the handful beat the million"—only forget the defeat at Vendome, where treachery gave the field to the foe. At nine o'clock, officers dashed into camp to contradict statements which gained some credit from the troops of the right wing. They, too, heard that the victory was the Germans', that the centre was driven back; but the joy at learning the contrary was intense and universal. Prince Frederick it was who was checked; the report was "bouted" by traitors to their country traitors to God, merely to break down the spirit of the Mobiles, to create panic, to give the invader victory; but the damning lies which form the groundwork of the "Pious William" and his "Masonic Bismarck" took no effect in the present instance; on the contrary, they served the Mobiles in a manner, for now troops knew that traitors were in camp—they learned the way to treat the foul Communist, to guard against him, and the lying productions of his intoxicated brain.

The French encamped on the field of contest for the night ; but volunteers of independent corps flocked into Courtalin, and made themselves tolerably comfortable in the picture-gallery of the Chateau de Montmorency. The men who were on duty at Vendome were, contrary to expectation, hard pressed, and, worse, did not find a house, much less a chateau, to give them shelter for the night ; yet they felt content—honours they searched for, and honours they received.

CHAPTER XXXI.

" 'Tis rash to meet, but surer death to wait,
 'Till here they hunt us to undoubted fate;
 And if my plan but hold, and fortune smile,
 We'll furnish mourners for our funeral pile.
 Ay—let them slumber—peaceful be their dreams."

BYRON.

MEN are apt to appreciate comfort, but none can value it so highly as the man doomed to spend his life, or even part thereof, in the "field" during war. And if chance places in his way an hospitable roof, it is a most unlooked-for event to be dragged from out his temporary home in the midst of night, and sent on duty to some distant hamlet or town, as commanders think fit to direct. Members of our corps and of every other corps think so—they have experienced such; and even on the very morning of the 4th of January, they had to undergo the hardship of being routed from the picture-gallery, as mentioned in the previous chapter, and ordered to proceed to Dezou—a breakfast by no means digestible. Everyone received the order in good part, for only hirelings grumble, and by two o'clock our corps was *en route via* Droué to Dezou, where heavy fighting was expected to commence the moment night would lift her mantle. Nothing of incident occurred until reaching the railway arch outside Dezou, where a citizen-soldier challenged us; the men who marched in rear of the wagons did not hear the challenge, nor hear the reasons which the officious, youthful Bordeaux "Red" assigned for not giving way. However, it was well they did not, or otherwise the young Communist would have paid a dreadful penalty; as it was, he was deprived of his rifle and bayonet, then well "drubbed." And who did it? Of course, the driver "ov the big wagon." He could not understand the impertinence of the sentinel, and punished him in the very summary manner as described. Our future movements were not interfered with, and in a

half-hour after we entered the village—our destination, and halted in front of the village council-hall. It was then six o'clock of the morning, and rather than demand lodgings, we remained rambling through the camp without the village, or trying in vain to rouse up the proprietor of the "Golden Lion." However, as the clock tolled nine, we succeeded, and a clumsy, sleepy-looking individual bid us welcome to his *auberge*. Shortly after, we were joined by a number of our men and *Francs-Tireurs*—the same who were sent down to Vendome from Courtalin the previous morning, and who were out during the night on the double duty—foraging for provisions wherewithal to breakfast, and for Prussians, if they would offer. To our joy, they were successful, for they brought with them a Prussian wagon, heavily laden with bread, horseflesh, and cheese, seal caps, Prussian helmets, lances, sabres, revolvers, and great coats, while on the top rested the corpse of a White Cuirassier, still wrapt in his uniform as he fell. Having given the horseflesh to the cook for preparation, they rifled the wagon of the bread and cheese, and afterwards brought in the *souvenirs* of the night; neither did they forget the Hessian, but with awful irreverence propped up the dead body in a sitting posture near the stove, and left it there, to be scanned as the trophy of the night's adventure.

By ten o'clock, *dejeuner* was served up, and we found that the *maitre de café* was not the cumbrous, sleepy individual he looked to be, for he supplied choice wines, and numerous delicacies à plaisir. For his kindness he was offered 240 francs, but totally refused taking them; remarking, at the same time, that he would expend the last franc in his possession, if such a course could oblige the Americans or Irish, his guests. In return, he was presented with the trappings of the fallen Cuirassier, with the lances and helmets of the Uhlans, and the seal-skin caps of their officers, all of which he promised to retain as a lasting *souvenir* of our visit.

At noonday, the snow, which fell heavily during the night and morning, cleared off, and in its stead came on a chilling gale. The beating of the *rappel* in the street without, and the rush of cavalry over the pavement, signalled duty, and, rushing out, the cause was explained. The Germans were

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coming on to the attack. Our outposts were driven in, and brigades were pushed forward: the Francs-Tireurs ran for positions from whence their fire would prove effectual, and in twenty minutes later "they" commenced the battle—one hundred thousand men were engaged within a radius of three miles. The work of our Ambulance became oppressive as the slaughter grew more desperate, and, in many instances, our men were compelled, through sheer exhaustion, to leave down their stretchers and remain idle spectators of the scene, until they would recover strength enough to enable them to carry out their humane labours to the end. Our surgeons, with a host of *medicins*, were also hard pressed. Subjects for amputation were being constantly placed before them, and it was surprising to witness with what skilled ease the former carried out most difficult operations. During the day, and until five o'clock, the battle raged with unwonted fury, but, as darkness came on, the firing dwindled down to a few farewell shots, and, by seven o'clock, the Germans disappeared—our day's duty was over. The Francs-Tireurs, from whom we were separated during the contest, now joined us, and the night was whiled away in much the same manner as other nights with which the reader must be acquainted—with this one exception, that in Dezou we had a plentiful supply of provisions and a homely "doss."

Early on the morning of the 5th January we received orders to hasten our departure for Chateaudun, and, directly after, the bearer of the despatches, none other than a general of the new army, appeared among us, and made known the duty which required the presence of our corps in Chateaudun. The Mobiles and line troops who were recovered from the wounds or disease which confined them to hospital, and who were then in the convalescent wards, were to be restored to their army through the means of our corps.

Addressing the Francs-Tireurs, he said, "You who seem so attached to the fortunes of this honorable corps de l'Ambulance, to the members of which I have given an insight into the despatches which I have left with their Director, I now will take the liberty of giving you instructions, which I know you will not hesitate in carrying out. You can fully comprehend the nature of this perilous duty, which is re-

quired of our Irish volunteers, for if once the suspicions of the Germans were aroused, they would guard our Irish ; and if they caught them in the act of aiding in the escape of prisoners, they surely would suffer a horrible death at the hands of our mutual enemy—the enemy of our race and religion. To prevent such a catastrophe, it is necessary that you accompany the men who are ready and willing to risk their lives for our good, to accompany the leal men of the Franco-Irish Ambulance. Your own instinct will lead you on ; and, above all, let it be said that the Francs-Tireurs on the Loire are equal to their *co-frères*, the Moccarts. *Dieu vous garde.*'

The rough old general's speech was applauded, and he then bade farewell as he mounted his charger, and parted. In an hour afterwards our corps, with that of the Franc-Tireur, were *en route*, via Fretvale and Cloye, and entered this latter town at one o'clock of the afternoon. Here they learned that a French *reconnaissance* was pushed out on the Chateaudun road ; and that we had an open road, at least until we would meet our cavalry. This intelligence was indeed welcome, for we could keep the "vulture-plumes" in company for some time longer, and not part with them at Cloye, as was expected—as was at first agreed upon, for we thought that the French lines extended only to Cloye, and once without our lines, the Francs-Tireurs should take to the fields or forest, and avoid the high road.

Resuming the march, we soon gained the plateau east of the town, and had the level, curveless military road before us. About two miles away in our advance appeared a troop of lancers, but whether they were friends or enemies, we, for a time, could not discover ; ultimately a field-glass was brought into requisition, when all doubts as to their identity were cleared ; their uniforms and streamers were those of the Brandenburger Uhlans. The Francs-Tireurs ran for the forest which lay close by, while our corps pushed forward *en route*, none of its members displaying for a moment the anxiety or wish to look back which was troubling them, lest their uneasiness might give a clue to the wary German that danger was before them. In time the Uhlans dashed past ; and in a second the report of the Francs-Tireurs' rifles

proved them to be *en vidette* ; fourteen saddles were vacated, fourteen Berliners lay dead and dying, and by the time we returned to render aid to the wounded, we found that six of them were already dead, seven thinking of following their example, and one holding out well against the torture of a fractured limb. The remainder of the company, sixteen (for their entire number was thirty), escaped for the present only, as they pressed their steeds onwards towards Cloye, and would have to encounter our *reconnaissance*, as also the *Francs-Tireurs*, who did them so much mischief.

The wounded men we placed in our wagons for conveyance to hospital at Chateaudun ; but before we reached head-quarters, four of them expired, and as they did their bodies were lifted out and carried some distance into the fields. Time did not permit us to bury them. At three o'clock we reached Chateaudun ; and having reported our arrival, and the objects of our mission, rambled about in quest of "civil fun," until the authorities would let us know that the men for whom we came were ready. Mdme. T—et, a widow, with a tolerably good-looking "phiz," possessing an amount of wit, agreeable manners, and a heavy purse, was a person deserving of a visit. Why not see her, then ? Ah ! come, let none be shy in the presence of a handsome young widow.

They entered madam's *rure in urbis villa*, and were in time for dinner—lucky fellows ! they had partaken of some "giblets," supposed to be portions of madam's pet dog—fortunate fellows ! numbers there were in Chateaudun who had nothing to eat, and who would be glad to join madam's dinner-party ; but they were not asked—unfortunate fellows ! Our men, or rather the few of them who wisely visited Mdme. T—et's house, were all that could procure food *pour l'amour où l'argent*, and when four o'clock was tolled all were required on duty, *bon gre, mal gre*. We were strolling leisurely down the Rue du Pont Yere when numbers of people appeared on the bridge ; they gesticulated wildly, and shouted, "*Depechez vous, Messieurs. Les Pruesse. Prussein à Fratreville !*" This excitement would make anyone hasten to the scene ; but their cries boded ill for the enterprise we had in hands, and as despatch was necessary to

outdo the German, we hastened our steps towards the Hospital Dieu. With the Germans at Fratreville, and, for ought we knew, at La Ferte Villeneuve and La Crossée, our position was anything but enviable; yet as we volunteered this duty we would carry it out, no matter what might be the result.

Entering the Place de la Justice (outside the church of the Madeleine, and opposite the General Hospital), we found that the modest number of five-hundred Mobiles were ready to place themselves under our protection, and without further ceremony they leaped into the vehicles which were to convey them within their lines, and by the time the "van" of the Germans reached the first barricade on the Route d'Orleans, the cavalcade in our charge had descended into the valley of La Crossée; and then taking the river road, proceeded unmolested until its safety was guaranteed within the French lines. Near Cloye we met with the Francs-Tireurs, who remained outside Chateaudun during the time occupied by us in seeing to the disposal of the Mobiles in our wagons, and who kept in close proximity to us on the home journey. At five o'clock we entered Cloye, to the great delight of the inhabitants, who, *apropos*, turned out *en masse* to accord us a true welcome, and congratulate us on the success of the dangerous, if not desperate duty we volunteered to perform. It was eleven o'clock that night before we resumed the journey, and at midnight we reached Fretvale, where, in the chateau, we whiled away the night—a pleasant night—in the society of true friends.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“How vast the concourse ; not in number more
The waves that break on the surrounding shore
The leaves that tremble in the shady grove,
The lamps that gild the spangled vaults above,
Those overwhelming armies, whose command
Said to one empire, fall ; another, stand ;
Whose rear lay wrapt in night, while breaking dawn
Roused the broad front, and called the battle on.”

SCARCELY had the 6th day of January dawned, when the well-known boom of the Prussian guns disturbed the morning ; and as devastation was being loudly proclaimed without, a juvenile officer of the 16th corps entered the chateau with despatches for our corps, which resulted in the majority of our field men being sent on duty with the Bretons, and some hundreds of Pompiers who were already engaged against fearful odds. Our men marched down to the lines, and as they reached them their duty commenced, for even then the *hors de combat* were numerous. They carried on their humane duties under a terrific fire ; and as they parted from the lines, carrying the wounded to our wagons, they were exposed to showers of shrapnel, even more dangerous than the leaden bullets which were launched against our French columns. For two hours did the men of our corps carry on their work, careless of the deadly lead which fell fast and hot around them, unsolicitous for their own safety, mindful only of their honor, and of the wounded whom they were pledged to save, if such was within their power ; and their efforts were crowned with success, for by the time the French were driven back, none of the wounded remained on the field—they were safe within the adjoining chateau of Fretvale.

The French were giving way rapidly, and, as they did, the Germans crowded in over the ground, and continued to push forward at a trot ; but on reaching the open ground

south of the hâteau, they halted ; they were again attacked, the Algerians were upon them. A sharp action ensued, but owing to dire mismanagement, the Algerians were left to the slaughter, and the Germans again advanced—this time to defeat, for on nearing Epuize the Mobiles were rallied, and regular troops were sent to their aid, who in turn advanced to meet the Germans—met them, and, after a stubborn contest, drove them back on their previous night's camping ground.

It was late that night when the members of our field department brought their day's duties to a close ; and entering the chateau which was already tenanted by our surgeons, the wounded who fell in the forenoon contest, and the officers of our successful soldiery ; and having stabled our horses in the grand hall, we made ourselves tolerably comfortable in the still furnished reception room. A sparkling wood fire blazed in the grate, and taking advantage of it, we set the coffee on to boil ; in the meantime made other dispositions for a repast, and by midnight were seated to breakfast, for only then had we time to partake of refreshment, having eaten nothing since the same hour the previous night. It was when each had devoured his sparing rations, and when all were seriously thinking of "dosing off," that M. Bernard O'Neill came to the rescue ; he had a story to tell—an exciting ghost story—himself was the hero—an old soldier the victim

Well, all agreed to keep eyes and ears open another hour, and Barney commenced :—

"It was a snowy mornin', nigh twelve years since, that meself skhript off to the fair ov Kingscoort, fur to see some fun ; an' d—l curse the wan was on the road that mornin' could bate Barney at marchin' (ov coorse ye know I larned marchin' in the Rooshan war). Anyways, I bowled afore ivery mother's sowl on the road, an' was nigh the fair-green afore there was a pig on it. Well, begorra ! sis I to meself, Barney, you're an early bird ; an' as the words lept off me tongue, an' ould gintleman met me clane in the face—I'm shure he lept out ov the ground, fur d—l saze the sight ov him I seen till I looked at him. 'Good mornin' to ye, sir,' sis I. Dang the woord he said but shook his ould grey

nut ; an' meself, thinkin' he was sick, wint up to ask him to taste a dhrop of the native (fur I had a half-pint with me) ; but, *acushla machree*, if he didn't go down through the road straight furninst me. Well, begorra ! sis I to meself, Barney, that's a fairy wantin' to see you, and I began to get very sorry fur lettin' him hook it so aisy ; but there was no help for spilt milk, so meself marched away an' bowled into Kingscoort. I washn't long in, *acushla*, whin I found the half-pint was gone ; so up I wint to a 'pub.' an' got the canteen filt with a pint ov the raal stuff ; for wheriver I gev in the same canteen, it was always filt with the native, because every man in the county Louth or Cavin knew the both ov us ; an' while they'd be fillin' it, they'd say : 'Well, Misther O'Neill, d'ye think ye'll ever bring this canteen again to the wars?' or some other thing like that, just to pass away the dangerous minit, fur the polis had noses like needles—they'd smell poteen iver so far away, an' to put them off the scint, we used to talk about something or other ; but they niver interfared in the laist where your humble sarvant was consarned. Anyway, this mornin' I spake about, I got raal good stuff in a shop up near the market-house, an' it done me good sarvice too, for though I didn't care a fig about the fairies, faix the ould chap on the road made me uneasy, fur I began to think it was ould Nick himself-wus in it. Anyways, whin I took a swig ov the pure stuff I forgot all about ould Nick, an' wint out to the fair to be *en vidette*, as the Frinch say, fur purty girls and funny boys. Shure enough I met thim, an' if we didn't spind a right day, me name is not Barney O'Neill. In the evenin' we parted company, an' shure meself got invitations from ivery wan ov thim, an' I promised to call the next time I'd be passin', fur thim all lived about Moy-nalty or Nobber, an' away I skirted on the Dundalk road ; but, *acushla machree*, I washn't two miles outside the town, whin the same ould gintleman came up with me, an' walked a good piece ov the road without iver openin' his mouth. At lasht I sis to him, 'Good night, Misthir Nick.' 'Och, thin, good night t'ye, Misthir O'Neill,' sis he. 'I met ye this mornin' sir, but I hadn't time to spake to ye ; now I've plinty, so I'll state me business ov ye plase.' Ah, thin, *avic*

machree, if he didn't frekin me: he towld me about meself an' the Crimea; an' begorra, he sid, 'Afore ye kick the bucket, Misthir O'Neill, ye'll see strange times. In France,' sis he, 'ye'll be glad to eat bits of dogs or cats; an' afther ye'll be in Italy with a great many of your countrymin, in the face of plinty, fur all the bad min will be hunted out ov it.' At lasht he sis, 'Now, Misthir O'Neill,' sis he, 'I want ye to give me quite lodgings some place near Dundalk, fur at present I have no place ov rest, nor can I until some ould friend billets me.' 'Och, thin, here's at you, ould Nick,' sis meself, so I sint him down to the castle ov Malahide, an' tould him to behave himself well. 'Thank ye, Mither O'Neill,' sis he; 'that ye may have a long life, an' a wife in yer ould age.' With that, my dears, he disappeared, an' from that day till this I nivir came across him by night nor day.

"Begorra! it's now I think most ov him. Ov coorse, the biggest part ov his prophecy came to pass, to me grief, fur the cats an' dogs he promised I couldn't get half enough ov. The nixt war, ov coorse, will be in Italy, an' the wan afther that with the wife he promised me in me ould age; but I have wan consolation lift me, an' that is, I'll nivir be hard-up fur sperits. So now I've finished the story, an' here's to the memory ov me great namesake, Owen Roe O'Neill."

The toast which Barney blended with his story was received with the respect due to it; and when he was complimented on the manner in which he treated his unhappy friend, the ghost, and on the genuine *finale* of his "yarn," every one, with the exception of our accomplished horse-man, poet, and story-teller, closed their eyes in sleep. Barney was in possession of the fire, and, as he kept throwing on the logs, would sing:

"The besht ov all ways to lengthin our days,
Is to stale six hours ov the night, me dear—
Is to stale six hours of the night, me dear."

Even when the morning *rappel* summoned all on duty, he was still singing or lilting; in truth, he was the hero of the "Young May Moon." No one slept less, or talked more;

and before orders were given to turn out on parade, this "Taillefer" of our corps favoured us with a few stanzas of his own making, the last of which I give as a sample :

"It's not our fault, I know it's not,
To let the furriners rule,
Fur lately 'tis our common lot,
To be trated rough an' cruel.
But, begorra ! if we act like min,
Faix, soon we'll see the hour,
Whin an uncrowned harp an' emerald flag
Will demonstrate our power."

Barney had only finished his ditty, when the orderly-sergeant introduced himself with officious impudence ; and, without ceremony, read out the "general orders :

"Fretvale, 7th January, '71.

"The corps is to be divided into three divisions—one for duty with the Francs-Tireurs round Chateaudun ; one for duty at Courtalain ; while the men with head-quarters are to share the fortunes of the troops round Fretvale ; and as the contingents for duty at Chateaudun and Courtalain are required to depart within an hour, it is necessary that volunteers for the places indicated enroll themselves without delay."

The order was strictly attended to, and, at eight o'clock, the volunteers for duty at Courtalain and Chateaudun bade adieu to their brethren at head-quarters, and went *en route*. Taking the military road, they travelled in company to Cloye, where they in turn bade farewell, one division going northwards to Courtalain, the other eastwards to Chateaudun.

At head-quarters matters looked threatening, and, at nine o'clock, assumed definite forms. The Germans were close upon us, and pushed forward, in crescent form, until within three hundred metres, when the artillery of either army launched fire and death, and in a moment the battle was taken up by the thousands—the conflict raged. . . .

With varying fortunes the battle was carried on until nightfall, and only then were the French troops forced to retreat. They fought gallantly and well but their courage,

their indomitable energy, was set at nought, in the face of overwhelming numbers, of powerful artillery; the victory of the Germans was dearly bought—their losses were enormous. Well might their “pious king” say, “Victory is not cheap on the Loire.” A dense fog now set in, which impeded the movements of the enemy, and our overworked troops were at liberty to encamp not two miles distant from the battle-field. The members of our corps who did duty round Fretvale during the contest were also at liberty to choose their rendezvous, and, choosing, they requisitioned our smaller wagons, and travelled on them to La Bazoche, where they were fortunate in meeting with the Courtalin contingent, and falling into comfortable quarters in the Chateau de Montmorency.

On the morning of the 8th January, orders arrived from Epuize, directing a forced march on Montdoubleau, where the renewal of fighting was anticipated. Acting on these orders, our corps was moved forward, and after a dreary march of twelve miles, arrived at its destination in time to lend its aid; for the French “advance” was attacked by a superior force of Germans, and driven back. Ultimately the action became general, and in turn the Germans were repulsed with heavy losses. Fortune smiled on the Mobiles and their Ambulance that day, as the former suffered such trifling losses that the latter had little or no duty to perform, having only six wagons of wounded to bring off the field.

During the night the troops remained under arms, as the Germans were expected to resort to a night attack; but such did not take place, nor until noonday on the 9th did they show in our front. At that hour, the Germans poured in on the plain, and, as they advanced, our brigades were pushed forward to the encounter. A battle ensued, and raged with unprecedented violence: for the time, the combatants lost the nobler attributes of soldiers, and imbibed, as it were, the nature of savages. Desperate hand-to-hand conflicts were common along the lines, as each man went for his own bayonet. The carnage was frightful—the scene revolting. Yet, in the midst of this confusion, our men toiled untiringly in the cause of humanity; and it is a fact inci-

dental to the day, that four Turcos and one Mobile lost their lives in defending a few of them who were set upon by a number of Brandenburgers, and who would have certainly paid for their daring with their lives, had not the noble Algerians offered themselves as the sacrifice.

Towards the third hour of the afternoon the battle was carried on in regular form, and the scales of fortune, which were turned in favour of the Germans up to that hour, were reversed. Our troops recaptured the ground from which they were driven during the earlier parts of the contest, and finally put the Germans "to rout." During the night the Fracs-Tireurs played with the German outposts, and it is said our men helped them out in this *intente cordiale*; and, even if they did, they were fully justified in retaliating the treatment which the Brandenburgers were anxious to give them. The result of their nocturnal wanderings was, that twenty of the White Cuirassiers were sent to their last account, as also six sentinels of the enemy. One of our men, who had accompanied the Fracs-Tireurs, received a wound in the leg, and foolishly walked back to Montdoubleau, notwithstanding the entreaties of his comrades to permit himself to be carried. He yearned to say, "Alone I did it," and his yearnings were satisfied, but the consequences were serious; and it is possible that, had he not been carefully treated by our skilled surgeons, he would have lost his leg—perhaps, his life, and all merely to satisfy his ambition—to carve a name.

It was midnight before the troops spread their canvas, and even then they laid down to rest with anything but a sense of security; for, as on the previous night, our outposts brought in information which told the Prussians to be actively engaged in the preparation of some scheme. Even from our camp we could see lamps carried hither and thither through that of the enemy, while now and then the ominous electric light would flash on our positions; in fine, we had reason to fear a night attack; but as the night grew into the small hours of morning, all hostile signs disappeared—not even the sentinel's challenge was heard. So the men who previously watched, were now indulging in refreshing sleep, and well they earned repose.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

GRAY.

EARLY on the morning of the 10th we were awakened by the loud roar of cannon, and instantly brought to a sense of danger by the shells which flitted through the camp, and burst in the immediate vicinity of a farm house close by. The troops were at once up and doing; a minute sufficed to roll up their *tente*, and in another they were under the colours of their regiments, and marching to positions. Simultaneously the sounds of conflict were wafted over from Le Theil and Bellême, from St. Calais and Epuizé, proving clearly that the Germans were as early at work along the lines as they were here at head-quarters. The French batteries were moved forward, and began to play on the German positions; then the “language of cannon” drowned all other sounds, and continued so, without any other movement being perceptible, until eight o'clock, when dense masses of Prussian and Bavarian infantry moved down to the attack. Then the artillery duel slackened, and to the boom of cannon succeeded the incessant rattle of musketry. As far as the eye could reach, nothing was to be seen but uniformed men engaged in the work of destruction. On one side hired soldiers, as it were; on the other, true soldiers who were willing to shed their blood in defence of their country.

Where the battle raged in all its fierceness, where men fell in hundreds—there was to be seen our corps; even our medical department was represented on the ground; for the surgeons carried on their operations directly in rear of our French columns, and in dangerous proximity to the rifles of the enemy. Near to their tables were rolls of lint and

bandage, poultice, sponge, and compress, with all the other terribly-suggestive apparatus of the ambulance ; there, also, were numbers of the wounded lying about in all directions, and awaiting patiently the moment when the surgeons would deprive them of a shattered limb, or pronounce them fit to travel in our wagons to the nearest hospital for treatment.

Our duty with the troops in the vicinity of Montdoubleau continued until noonday, when orders were received to push forward in haste to Le Theil. Without delay, our men, who were working in the order of the morning, were gathered together, and went at once *en route* ; their line of march was parallel with the line of battle, and so they were enabled to witness the varying fortunes of either army—to survey a scene of carnage—of unholy war, without being exposed to danger. It was a sight worth witnessing. There were the untrained *jeune soldats* of the Republic repelling each successive onset of the invaders, each one of whom was skilled in his craft.

In view of the battle-field and its occupants, our men marched on to their destination ; but before they reached it their advance was blocked by the retreating Mobiles ; while on the crest of the hill, in their front, the regular troops, covering the retreat, battled gallantly against fearful odds. To the relief of the regulars, then, we pushed our way, and after a sharp run gained their positions. We were in the midst of a remnant of that unfortunate imperial army which chanced on escape from the east, gained Orleans in safety, and there joined its fortune to the new army—the Army de l'Loire. There they stood, firm as a fortress, against an overpowering enemy, covering the retreat of the raw levies of the Republic. There they fought and suffered ; but their proud consciousness of having done their duty soothed them in the hour of trial, and, not like the boy-soldier, permitted themselves to be carried off the field without the grumbings or mutterings of pain peculiar to the wounded of the Garde Mobile.

Towards evening the line troops were forced to yield, and they consequently retired behind Bonnetable, closely pursued by the Germans. At six o'clock they rallied, and

acted on the defensive for some time ; but at length all their positions were carried, and themselves made prisoners, as also the members of our Ambulance on duty with them. Notwithstanding the illegality of our arrest or our remonstrances against being detained as prisoners of war, we were ordered off to Nogent le Rotrou, there to remain until further orders regarding our disposal. During the time occupied by M. O'Loughlin in reasoning matters with the Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh, a few incidents occurred which tended in a good measure to remove the unpleasantness of our situation. It seems that the former was mounted on a spirited pony, and the latter on a spirited charger ; well, since the pony fell into the hands of our men outside Vendome, he showed himself desperately inclined to fun, and proved utterly worthless unless he happened to be brought into the field of contest, when he would obey his rider. It so happened, in this instance, that firing ceased before we were brought before the Grand Duke, who was *apropos* in the saddle. The pony knew this, so he commenced his usual antics, and with surprising ease leaped clear across his Excellency's horse, and alighted on the body of an unlucky staff officer, who only that moment dismounted to tighten his saddle-girths, and probably to take " a pull " from his cognac flask. O'Neill, who surveyed the form of the prostrate Prussian, with evident satisfaction, from his seat on a " diligence," which he requisitioned and was driving, cried out, " I say, Grand Duke, yez ought to look after yer gintlemin, an' not have thim griggin us with cognac. Ould Nick there, that Charley lept upon, wus takin' silent ones behind yer back—an' h—ll skewer to him, fur he desarved to be crushed ; he'd nather axe yerself ur meself to share a dhrop of it ; an' faix, if he did aself, it washint his own, but what he ' billicked ' from the halfway house on the Courtalin road."

Here O'Neill's address to the Grand Duke was cut short by six Bavarians. Running towards the loquacious Barney, they bewildered him by the manner in which they shook his hands, and inquired after several people whose names were familiar to the hero of the big wagon. The six Bavarians proved to be six Irishmen serving under the Bavarian

standard ; and when O'Neill demanded of them, "Are you Irishmen?" Captain Comerford replied in the affirmative.

"Then, begorra! if yez are, it's dang queer wans, wearin' thim ould hornys' helmets, instead of a decent kepi. Anyways, I'm right glad to see yez here, fur ourshelvs that's in a h—ll ov a hobble this blessid minit."

By this time the Grand Duke must have believed Barney to be one of the great O'Neills, as he heard the name uttered by every one of his staff; and, if he did, he was not mistaken; for the driver of the "big wagon" is a shoot of that illustrious family, and of a branch which, through years of persecution, has existed—has remained rooted, as it were, in the country of its progenitors, now toiling in the service of some "new drummer," whose rapacity gained for him a title at the hands of an inimical government; now cultivating a little patch of ground, for which is paid an exorbitant rent, and, when opportunity offers, volunteer their services to some foreign country, let it be France, Italy, America, or Austria—any place except perfidious England. Of such a stock was Barney, and, humble as he was, he could be the compeer of the Grand Duke, if name and race were the only requirements; but now, money makes the man; a wealthy parson even can be crowned with the robbed title—can be granted the confiscated lands of the O'Neills, while themselves are doomed to wander under alien skies, or work in their own country for a miserable pittance.

We could not but admire those Irishmen of the Bavarian service; their manly bearing, open, honest faces, and their words of love and hope for the dear old land of their forefathers, went far to dispel the *degout* which we at the time entertained towards the Germans and their aids. The troops whom they quitted on seeing our banners, were now a good distance off; and though they would feign remain with us, duty, discipline, compelled them to hasten their departure, and so they bade a fond adieu. They were off in the direction taken by their men, leaving us to dwell on the thoughts of our arrest, and its probable consequences. An hour after these occurrences, we were politely informed that a guard of the Cuirassiers would accompany us to Nogent. In a short time, the guides

forced on us appeared on the ground; their officer asked us to proceed—we obeyed, and the journey was begun. Our route lay over the mutilated bodies of men and horses: here and there a wounded soldier would raise himself from the trampled snow, only to fall down again and die; for the Prussian Ambulance Corps passed forward with their “van,” and the captive contingent of our Ambulance could not offer any aid whatsoever, as the cuirassiers told its members not to interfere—compelled them to quicken their pace, and hasten from the sad scene. Accordingly we pushed forward, and paid no further attention to the sufferers. In the meantime, and while these untoward events were taking place round Bonnetable, our men with field headquarters were being driven in to St. Mars le Brugere with the troops of the centre, and by Prince Frederick’s troops, too, whom we believed to be on the road to Paris at the time, for it was reported that his intention was to leave the Duke of Mecklenburgh, to deal with the Army of the Loire; but it was merely a *ruse de guerre* to throw French commanders off their guard. Prince Frederick Charles remained, and was the means of that day’s defeat to the French arms, a defeat from which they never recovered, and which left the road to Le Mans in the possession of the Germans.

Arriving at Nogent le Rotrou that evening, our guards introduced us to the Prussian commandant of the town, and he, having heard the causes which led to our arrest, directed all his efforts towards rendering that arrest as agreeable as possible. The Hotel du Chene d’Or he placed at our disposal, and sent down to us tobacco, meat, and bread; the only articles of consumption at his disposal, and which, I may add, were quite sufficient to satisfy us at the time; for men who have eaten nothing for twenty-four hours are apt to appreciate anything in the line of food, even when they pay dear for it; how much more so can it be appreciated, when it is given *pour rien* by the hands of one from whom not even the permission to partake of such was expected. Suffice it to say, that we felt thankful to the friendly Prussian. Even *le maitre d’hotel*

a pompous old gentleman, could not refrain from praising *bon commandant* for our sakes; and, indeed, he was so delighted at the manner in which we were treated by our mutual enemy, that he also bestirred himself in making our stay agreeable.

Louis, Patrice, Jerome, he sent off in quest of cognac, and directly his servants returned; they fortunately succeeded in extracting some spirits from M. Legrange's cellars (solely in possession of the Saxons on that evening). With his own dear hands he filled the liquor into decanters, and then, with all the ceremony he could muster, installed himself chairman—*apropos*, in a chair once fit for any chairman, but now *minus* its back and upholstery (the former used up as fire-wood, the latter adorning portions of the Brandenburgers' worn-out uniforms). After a very short time, the eatables had disappeared, and the pompous chairman rose to the address. He played with the subject, France and Ireland, at the commencement, but, finally, his splendid easy chair ruined, the antique lobby clock stripped of all its frame-work, the uncarpeted floor, which once was covered, but now the carpets are cut into rugs and saddle-cloths by the Prussians; and, though last not least, the once wainscoted walls left bare, preyed upon his mind, and, consequently, became his theme. After proving unmis-takeably that the Prussians were brutes, he gave the toast, "*Vive l'Irlande et France.*" As the evening advanced, they began to feel that they were far more comfortable in captivity at Nogent, than they could possibly be at St. Mars or Le Mans; yet they would forego this comfort to be again within the French lines—to be again at the post of duty; in fine, to be with that army in its imminent defeat, as they were with it in its hour of victory. That night, when Prussian military law required the townspeople to be a-bed, it required us also, and we retired to rest with heavy hearts. Our thoughts were with our comrades at Chateaudun and round Le Mans, and gladly would we take advantage of any opportunity which might restore us to our service—to our friends; yet the Germans make everything fair in war, and care not about the consequences of insulting the Red

Cross, nor the nations which are bound to protect it. The defenders of everything noble have fallen under the feet of unprincipled invaders.

The morning of the 11th dawned, and with it came more troubles. The commandant was informed that the men of the Irish Ambulance Corps were nothing more nor less than *Francs-Tireurs*, assuming or casting off the uniform of the Irish corps *à discretion*. A search was instituted, and unfortunately resulted in the finding of Spencers, Remingtons, revolvers, cutlass, and ammunition, in one of our requisitioned *voitures*. We were at once placed under strict surveillance; and at ten o'clock an inquiry was held, under the presidency of Count Yrsch, of the Grand Duke's staff. General Von Treskou gave very favourable accounts of us. "Since I first met them in Chateaudun," he said, "I have remarked them to be men of honour—of principle!" The president also said, "That since his late connexion with the Mecklenburghers, he has always seen the Irish volunteers to toil in the duties of the ambulance, and that he could not believe them to be of the *Francs-Tireurs*. The evidence of the informers was set at nought, and the Irish were at liberty to proceed northwards; but, under no circumstances, would the authorities permit them to pass down to Le Mans.

By noonday we had every preparation made to leave Nogent le Rotrou for Alençon, but, at the moment we were about starting on the journey, the permission to depart was rescinded, and we were forced to remain, at the same time being left in total ignorance of the causes which led to the renewal of our arrest. Snow, sleet, and rain fell alternately during the day, which added to the misery of our situation. Not all the efforts of the proprietor of the "*Chene d'Or*" towards our comfort could prove successful, and, at length, when the anger of the Irish corps was in its zenith, it was proposed to overpower the outposts on the *Route de Bretoncilles*, and escape—run for Mortagne, a town in possession of the *Garde de Mayence*. It was a desperate project, and would have, without doubt, been attempted, careless of consequences, had not a squadron of the enemy's cavalry passed out of town by the road over which it was our intention to proceed; and after them came the 90th regiment of

the Prussian infantry. No chance of escape now existed. The hour when such an enterprise might be attended with success was gone, and in Nogent le Rotrou the luckless "contingent" should remain during the pleasure of the Germans.

As the day advanced, a report gained currency that the object of the Prussian authorities in countermanding their orders, permitting our men to proceed northwards, was, in the first place, to keep our men behind their lines, and, by so doing, to create the impression that the Irish of the Ambulance were in their service, and not in that of France. But their mean subterfuges availed them nothing in this respect, as the people of Nogent knew full well where the sympathies of the Irish lay, and, moreover, knew us to be prisoners in the hands of the Germans.

The night of the 11th came on at last, and never was night more welcome, for it brought to the close a day which for dreariness could not be surpassed—for trouble and heartburning to our men unequalled since their connexion with the army of the Loire. They only regretted that the projected escape was not attempted, that they should remain within the Prussian lines as prisoners another night; but they consoled themselves with the hopes which another day promised—to-morrow, and something must be done. Freedom or death they resolved upon—a stout resolve; and in its fulfilment they at least were earnest.

At an early hour on the morning of the 12th, the captives assembled in one of the rooms of their hotel, and there brought their plans of escape to perfection. The morning was favourable, as a snow storm raged with all the violence peculiar to such that winter in France, and the snow-covered roads impeded the quick movements of cavalry; so *l'un l'autre* was to their advantage, as the driving sleet might drive the *factionnaire* from his post to some sheltered nook, while they might pass unobserved, and, after gaining the country, the cavalry in pursuit could be easily settled. This would, probably, prove the rule; but, to be *en vidette* for the exception, the outposts were to be surprised—massacred, if necessary—the enterprise, once entered upon, must be carried through.

The clock of the Hotel de Ville, and that of St. Mary's church, were tolling the hour—six o'clock—when we passed from the hotel to the street in Indian file, and continued to move onwards in the same position until we reached the Bureau de l'Octroi, when the line was broken up, and we moved forward in squads *à discretion*. Our best hopes were realised; for, after a short march, marked by caution, we knew ourselves to be beyond the limits of the sentinel's watch—and, better, got there unobserved, undetected. It was a joyful moment; still we lost no time in congratulation, but pushed on at a dashing pace towards some one place or other, where we believed the Mobiles to be; probably Mortagne would be our destination, possibly Bretoncilles; both towns lay in the same direction, and to that one which offered the best protection we resolved to go. The march was continued with unabating energy until three o'clock that afternoon, when many of our men showed signs of weariness, and in a half-hour later we came in sight of Bretoncilles. I must confess, we felt much relieved, and plucking up our failing strength, finished the intervening mile and gained the Grand Hotel de France; which, by the way, is anything but a great hotel, yet it is cheerful and comfortable. In Bretoncilles we made a hasty repast, and in other respects prepared for taking up the march to Mortagne, but our preparations were not requisitioned; the peasantry flocked into the town with intelligence that the Prussians were *en route* to Bretoncilles. Again we were baulked; we knew that their outposts, or *reconnaisances*, would prevent us from continuing the march, and knowing this, we ultimately decided on remaining in Bretoncilles.

To banish melancholy was our next study, and the students hit upon a splendid plan for so doing. A snow-battle was resolved on; the men drawn for, the necessary dispositions made, and an exciting contest ensued. The quiet towns-folk, men, women, and children, ran out of doors; even the priests, the mayor, and two or three members of the French Press Ambulance corps—who, *apropos*, were laid up in the hospital of that town, and at this time were arriving towards convalescence—appeared on the ground. Unfortunately for them, they took their stand in rear of a division which was in peril of

annihilation, and suffered in measure with the discomfited combatants ; but the *coup par excellence* was made by our own O'Neill, who, on seeing the mayor and press-men "taking to their heels," rushed through the ranks of the retiring enemy, eventually came up with the individuals alluded to, and pelted them with snow-balls of his own peculiar make, until the Frenchmen sued for mercy. He, like a chivalrous knight as he was, granted the request, and the last time we saw him that evening was, when in the act of being led off to the house of his fallen foe ; next morning he proclaimed that he never put in such a night. Before darkness came on the Place de l'Eglise was won, as also the streets leading to the railway station, and at the station the remnant of a shattered division surrendered. I may mention here that this battle, or in other words, snow-ball match, was carried out with unflagging energy, and with all the enthusiasm of a regular battle. It was truly pleasing to see victor and vanquished returning to the hotel that evening in grand relation, and in the best of spirits, for though the battle was waged with unrelenting fury, enough to puzzle the towns-people and peasantry, who looked on with open mouths and gaping eyes, there was not an angry word made use of. Later in the evening a company of the Mocquarts appeared suddenly in the Place de l'Eglise, the same company that rendered so much service to us at Evreux, Pacy, and Mantes, during the first days of our campaigning, and from which we were separated for some months, consequent on our departure for the Loire. It is not necessary for me to give even a detailed account of the enthusiasm attendant on this our second and unexpected *rencontre*, as by this time readers should be tolerably conversant with the course of studies pursued by members of these novel services, the Franc-Tireur and the service *des secours volontaire*, when a meeting takes place. Suffice it to say that not only was the evening passed over in the enjoyment of unalloyed pleasures, but the night brought with it a series of adventures which gave to the newly-arrived Mocquarts an insight into the doings of Francs-Tireurs and Ambulance men on the Loire. The hour of midnight was nigh, and our men were making merry in the Grand Hotel, as also the Francs-Tireurs, when

the mayor of the town entered, and in hurried language informed us that the Germans were entering. In a second our party was in the gardens, which, *apropos*, extend to the Chemin du Fer, and are only separated from it by a white-thorn hedge. Seeing no Uhlans just then, we made for the hedge, with the intention of pushing through it, and gaining the open ground beyond the railway ; but as we gained it six Uhlans were discovered not twenty yards away from our position, and coming along cautiously. The Francs-Tireurs were about to fire, when one of our men ruled against such a course, and proposed instead to rush on them with the mounted cutlass, and make them prisoners. This proposition was happily agreed to, and when the Uhlans appeared directly outside the ambush, the men in ambush rushed on them *en masse*, and made the surprised chevaliers prisoners. Our men having taken the disarmed Germans in charge, treated them with unexampled kindness, and finally led them to the mairie, where the mayor received them kindly.

When the men who volunteered to give the prisoners in charge to the Mayor returned from performing that duty, they found neither their comrades nor the horses which they captured. The former mounted the acquired horses and went out on outpost duty themselves, taking the lower road to Mortagne, which runs for a considerable distance parallel with the river Gommeanche ; they made good speed until reaching Regnialard, where they were noticed by the people not to proceed, as five hundred Prussian horsemen were in their advance, and had left only five minutes before the entry of our men and their favorite Francs-Tireurs. Here was a pretty fix to be placed in. What was to be done ? Return to Bretoncilles ? No. Well, after mature deliberation, they agreed to present the captured horses to the Mayor of Regnialard and push forward on foot to Mortagne. Having replenished their flasks and secured the hoods of their great coats, they proceeded *en route*, but had not travelled far along the river road, when the tramp of horses sounded on their ears, and each moment grew more distinct, until at length the voices of the horsemen could be heard. Unmistakeably they were Germans. To conceal themselves was a duty incumbent under the circumstances, and they found an ambush in the

fosse which separates the young plantation along the river from the road. There they resolved on practising the same *ruse* which proved so successful at Bretoncilles ; that is, if the Germans were limited to twelve or fourteen lances—if more, revolvers were to be requisitioned, and so they awaited the nearer approach of the enemy. They had not long to wait, for eight Uhlans appeared through the darkness, with lances *erét*, and seemingly with an air of security, as the horse-pistol, always in the balanced hand of the Uhlán *en vidette*, was in the holsters, and instead of holding the pistol, they invariably held huge cumbrous tobacco pipes peculiar to the Germans and their soldiery. Little did they think that the Mocquarts, the dreaded of the French army, were in wait for them—were in such dangerous proximity to them. But too soon they were to know that vultured-plumed enemies were at hand ; for the very moment the unsuspecting Uhlans arrived opposite the ambush, the men within it bounded forward, and in less time than I take to write it had the eight Germans prisoners, and disarmed. Without further ceremony the captors mounted the horses of the captured, and continued their journey to Mortagne, compelling the unfortunate Uhlans to “tramp it.” At seven o'clock that morning they reached Mortagne, and having given their prisoners in charge to the Garde de Mayence, betook themselves to rest.

What was become of the men left in Bretoncilles ? (they who, as the reader may remember, conveyed the Prussian prisoners away from Franc-Tireur vengeance and gave them in charge to a humane Maire.) They followed *en route* to Mortagne, and arrived there some hours after their comrades (who, I may add, were carried away by enthusiasm and a love for adventure, and never thought for an instant that they were guilty of leaving even one of their party alone in the enemy's country), having passed a night of unenviable adventure, for the Germans learned of the dual surprise of their *avant postes*, and debited it to the account of the Irish corps, consequently their cavalry was despatched in all directions, with instructions to bring into La Loupe or Nogent the bodies of the Irish, dead or alive ; and for this duty volunteers were not wanting, as accounts speak of large

bodies of cuirassiers and other cavalry scouring the country, and even offering money to "loafers" whom they thought likely to furnish them with information regarding the movements of our men ; but there were no informers amongst the Irish or their friends ; on the contrary, each Frenchman tendered his aid in securing a safe retreat for the few Irish, who were in imminent danger ; and had it not been for the priests of Regnialard, they would certainly be made prisoners, as the Germans arrived there about twenty minutes after our men, and at once instituted a search, but the latter were concealed in one of the secret passages under the chapel, and so escaped.

When the Germans departed, the same priests disguised our men as peasants, and directed them to proceed to Mortagne by different routes, at the same time sending guides with them, who were sure to lead them to safety within the French lines.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“ Chained, trampled, weakened by the force
 Of treason’s ancient deadly curse,
 We still can show a gallant face
 To fire the old heart of our race.
 And young and old shall feel that fire,
 Whose burning flame can ne’er expire,
 Till strong and weak alike shall claim,
 In equal share, the patriot’s name.”

LEO.

DURING the eventful day of the 10th January, the men with the headquarters of our corps, or rather *Le Contingent de Le Mans*, as it was officially styled, endured hardship in the severest sense of the word. It was still early morning when orders were brought in—stern orders; they not only told members that their duties would be arduous and dangerous, but that their services would be required along the line at Parigné, Challes, Grand Luce, Changé, at St. Mars, Savigne, Moulfort, Yure, and Pontlieue. The battle of battles was to be fought. “Death or victory!” was shouted throughout the camp, and everything done that could imbue the Mables with a sense of the magnitude, the grandeur of the work they were engaged in. The words, the concluding words of General Chanzy’s address, “*La destinée de France dépend de vous*,” were echoed by his officers along the lines with beneficent results. The line troops, as usual, were ready, the Mables also.

Directly after the orders were read, the men proceeded to the church, where the holy sacrifice of the Mass was being offered up. Having attended to their spiritual wants, and when the sacred ceremony was ended, they returned to the ground on which they encamped the previous night, and from thence proceeded to take up the different positions assigned them.

That contingent of our corps sent down to Parigné was the first engaged, as the troops there were attacked by

Alvenslebin's corps, supported by powerful artillery and portions of other corps, sent to his aid from Prince Frederick's reserves. The Breton's fought unflinchingly, but suffered considerably. Their wounded were so numerous that the men of our corps, then on duty there, were merely able to carry their bleeding burdens without range, and return to take off more. For two long, wearying hours did they work in this manner, the while being fully exposed to the terrific fire which the Germans poured in on the valiant defenders of their country. They were the last to falter; through showers of shrapnel and bullets they went and came with their stretchers. In the meantime, their wagons were moved along the field to the places where the wounded were set down, and their surgeons displayed the usual "pluck," by carrying on their operations in close proximity to the fire, and, in many instances, within that line of which prudence says, beware.

Towards noonday, our Mobiles were forced to retire, but the movement was carried out with such singular precision, that they were again able to make a stand on the high road to Tours. Splendid fighting ensued, and for four hours of the afternoon they continued to drive the Germans back with fearful loss. Every step was made over the prostrate form of a man in German uniform. The chassepot and remington, the mitrailleuse and rival gatling, proved equal to the emergency; they exceeded in the work of human destruction. *Sans doute*, it cost the Germans an awful price to try and keep the ground which only an hour before they bought dearly with their own blood. Now Challes was re-occupied by the French; and even the contemplation of the German loss led all to believe that Alvenslebin would rest content with his new possessions round Chateau Regnault and Champagne; but later events proved such calculations to be wrong, and fortune to be fickle, for Alvenslebin, meeting with reinforcements near Champagne, turned on his pursuers, forced them back, and in turn occupied Challes. Not content with this, he urged his men forward towards Parigné; but in this he was checked, and was even driven to seek refuge in flight. However, before there was a chance given to the French to carry Challes as before, they were flanked,

outwitted. Schwerin's brigade, with a number of regiments quite foreign to it, appeared in their rear, and instantly attacked the little band of Frenchmen, who fought against superior numbers throughout that day. Alvensleben, on learning that his friend Schwerin stood in pretty fair form in rear of the enemy, returned to the attack. Notwithstanding the new arrival of fresh enemies, the Mobiles battled bravely, firing and receiving fire with surprising *sang froid*, and, with a "dash" worthy of the Napoleon's Imperial Guard, managed to cut their way through overwhelming numbers, and arrived in Changé, having suffered little.

During the time occupied by the Mobiles in waging this unequal contest against superiors in force and discipline, our men remained on the field doing their duty to the bitter end; and they did not desist until their liberty was threatened by the Germans, who were closing round Changé. There still remained a means of escape, and lest such means might be rendered useless, they resolved on "hooking it" in all haste. Filling the wagons with the wounded who lay about, they got an escort of cavalry, and leaving the village by the St. Mars road, dashed along it at top speed, until they entered that town in safety. A curious fact in connexion with the escape of this, the Parigné contingent of the Irish corps, is, that at the time they escaped from Changé, the unlucky contingent referred to in the previous chapter was made captive outside Bonnetable.

In ten minutes after the departure of our men from Changé, the Germans had invested that village, and were moving on to the entrance; but in this they met with desperate resistance. The Mobiles fought like lions, in the streets, in the houses, from behind ditches—in fine, from every place that offered the least protection did they give battle to the overpowering enemy. For a time street-fighting raged in all its fury. No quarter! was the suggestive cry. For a time the combatants assumed the nature of brutes, as, casting away all thoughts of safety for themselves, they hacked each other with savage glee, accompanying their labors with demoniacal laughter, cries of vengeance, and appalling blasphemy. In this last accomplishment the Brandenburgers excelled, for the accent of the Berliners

made known itself, even above the din of deadly conflict. And so continued this desperate struggle until ten o'clock that night, when 2,000 Mobiles were rescued from the butcher through the coolness and foresight of a youth. He was a merchant's son, and, though offered a position in the new army, he refused it, remarking at the time that "experience teaches." So he entered the Mobiles as a "private," and, as days rolled on, he was promoted from rank to rank, until he reached that of sergeant-major; and as sergeant-major of company —, he appeared on the scene which I purpose describing. It was at the moment that his countrymen were about throwing down their arms and suing for mercy, that this young man was heard to address his compatriots. He was mounted on a horse, and as he uttered each word, he seemed to be possessed of super-human power. In brief, but soul-stirring words, he beseeched of his *co-frères* to summon up all their energies, and by one dashing *coup* carry a certain position. *Unitie est puissance*. Without hesitation, the panic-stricken Mobiles obeyed the voice of an invisible leader (for darkness set in), and in twenty minutes they were free; and, better still, they passed over the dead bodies of a division of the enemy which opposed their escape. Here I may state that the Prussians fought from behind electric lights, managing the while to keep themselves in the shade, while the brilliant lights flashed upon the uniforms of the Mobiles.

It was one o'clock on the morning of the 11th, when the *avant garde* of the "brave two thousand" were challenged by French outposts on the St. Calais route; of course they were allowed to pass, and so they marched on to St. Mars la Brugere, where, on reporting their arrival, they were ordered into Le Mans, not so much to replace the troops on duty there, as to have an opportunity of having one day's rest. But this they refused, and sent in word that they would much rather prefer remaining at St. Mars, so that they might have an opportunity of meeting the invader on equal ground on the morrow. During the night several members of our corps, were out with the *Francs-Tireurs*; but only one brace of game was bagged; the Prussians in their sagacity changed the ordinary outpost into battalions, so that it was impossible to steal on them unobserved.

Early on the morning of the 11th, heavy skirmishing was being carried on in the front, and, as the day grew apace, extended itself into battle, which was only ended with the night. At Anvours, and on the road to Parigné, the greater number of the men of our corps were on duty with the Roquetaine division, while at Arnage and Chateau-les-Arches a small division was present with the Turcos and Chasseurs. Nothing of importance took place until eleven o'clock of the forenoon, at which hour the German cavalry showed in force, and instantly charged down on the thin lines of the French ; the battle was commenced.

Each successive onset of the German cavalry was gallantly repulsed, and with fearful loss ; the French batteries along the banks of the Huisne played upon them with fatal precision ; the French army fought again with the same ardour as characterized its December campaign.

The hostilities, which visibly slackened consequent on the brilliant defeat of Prince Albrecht's cavalry, were renewed with redoubled vigour. Along the lines the combat thickened, and so afforded another opportunity to the Ambulance of exercising its melancholy calling. Our wagons were driven with lightning speed from place to place, now halting for a moment to take up a number of wounded, who are huddled together on the ground where the stretcher-men placed them, again halting to let the shells pass (for the watchful driver sees them crossing his advance), or to give way to a squadron of cavalry which is formed, and only awaits the order to charge. In this manner our field transport service was managed, and the laborious, dangerous, oppressive duties of the Ambulance are carried on to the end ; the rescued Mobile and regular soldier whisper, "*Vive l'Irlandais!*"

At two o'clock that afternoon an occurrence took place which in a measure attracted the attention of the combatants in the neighbourhood of the scene from the desperate work they had on hands. It seems that a Prussian general with his staff held position within a short distance of another position availed of by a French general ; both were apparently unprotected, and, being so, a company of mounted marines saw no reason why they should refrain from attack-

ing the general and his staff. Accordingly, they dashed against the Prussian position, and in the twinkling of an eye placed the guard *hors de combat*, as also a few of the staff officers ; but at the moment when the marines were on the point of hauling up the Tartar, they were confronted by a regiment of Blucher's dragoons ; and knowing that prudence is the better part of valour, they retreated in good order, followed up closely by the outwitted Prussian horsemen.

The whole affair was watched by anxious thousands ; on one side, the French and their aids all anxiety lest their marines would come to grief ; on the other, the Germans looking daggers at the marines, who flew, as it were, before the overwhelming force of their pursuers. The marines ultimately escaped without a scratch, but not so the dragoons ; a Gatling battery opened on them, which created terrible havoc in their ranks ; the dreadful bullets flew through them, and with lightning rapidity. The fire grew venomous and deadly. In their retreat they suffered most, for the ground over which they retreated presented an awful spectacle ; there lay men cold in death, others dying, and others creeping through the snow, as if to gain a tree or sheltered nook wherein to rest—to die.

At four o'clock the entire German line was seen to recede, while the French advanced with caution. Throughout the day the French troops suffered such trifling losses, that at many points along the lines our men could get time to have a "constitutional," and also time to see the course of battle. At five o'clock the welcome intelligence spread—"Our troops have gained the positions which they held on yesterday. Vice-Admiral Jaureguiberry is in pursuit." The report was true—the Germans were in retreat. Towards seven o'clock the French suffered from reverse of fortune ; the Germans, being further reinforced, rallied, and, renewing the attack, forced the French back on their former positions. This latter affair was unfortunate, not alone for the troops, but for our Ambulance corps. The men of this latter corps, not wishing to have it said of them that they retreated from duty, pushed forward in the "van" of the French in the hour of victory, and when the retreat was ordered found themselves between the pursuers and pursued. Keeping close to

the retreating columns, they raised the wounded as they fell ; and so, on re-entering St. Mars, they could say beyond doubt, " We have done our duty ! None of those whom it was in our power to save, remain on the ground."

Visiting the different hospitals in St. Mars that evening, they found that our surgeons who did duty on the field throughout that day were now engaged in the hospitals. Legs and arms lay in such heaps about that one would be impressed with the idea of an army having passed through the ordeal of amputation ; and yet numbers of the wounded were to be deprived of legs, or arms, or ears, as the case might be, before our skilled surgeons could think of retiring.

Outside the town the sentinels kept careful watch ; their stern challenge rang out at intervals as a reconnoitring party of the enemy, or perhaps a few of their own stragglers, would now and then appear in the advance. During the night the *reconnaissance* brought in information that the Germans were being concentrated on five points. Spies stated that unusual activity was being displayed by commanders, and that, from what they could learn, it was the intention of Prince Frederick to capture Le Mans on the morrow. Human life was of little consequence, provided his objects were attained. These informations were lodged under the seal of secrecy, yet through some channel or other they leaked out, and caused immense damage to the *corps d'esprit* of our citizen soldiery. Each man knew that on the morrow the battle of Le Mans would be fought ; the fate of the new army decided. Each man believed that he was to be led on to the slaughter by inexperienced officers ; yet all were ready, *bon gre, mal gre*. A sad foreboding crossed their minds that to-morrow would prove their past and present gigantic efforts in defence of their beautiful France to be nothing more than the useless spilling of blood, the prolongation of destructive war. Yet those men who ruled the destinies of France from tribuned Bordeaux issued their orders ; the worn-out, dispirited Mobile had no alternative left but to fight to the bitter end. Death or liberty was theirs ; and so they awaited with tranquil resignation the dawn of that day which they had already pictured as unpropitious, as fatal to themselves and to their country.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“Yes, close her with your armed bosoms round,
 And form that barrier which Napoleon found—
 The exterminating war, the desert plain,
 The streets without a tenant save the slain ;
 The wild sierra, with its wilder troop
 Of vulture-plumed guerillas, on the stoop
 For their incessant prey.”

OF all the dreary mornings that dawned on France since the commencement of this exterminating war, not one surpassed—nay, equalled that of the 12th of January, 1871. A violent storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning, burst over the country, and, as it were, took up the “cudgel” of the Germans. Chimney-stacks and, in many instances, the walls which supported them, were sent crashing into the streets, while the *tentes d'arbrî*, which were intended to protect the troops, were blown away, leaving the foot-sore and weary soldiers of France at the mercy of the storm. The men of our Ambulance found shelter within the Chateau d'Ardenay, or, at least, a number of them who happened to be in the neighbourhood of the castle ; the remainder made themselves comfortable in the more humble habitations of St. Mars la Brugere and Arnage, of Les Noyers and Pont-lieue, while one or two were reported at the castle of Paillerié.

No rational being would venture out of doors ; even the outposts came in, and left their dangerous duty in charge of the disturbed elements. In doing this, they merely followed the example set them by the *avant postes* of the enemy, but, in truth, the poor fellows were not to be blamed. The usual punishment of such a crime was mitigated, by the same outposts being sent under guard to take up the positions which they deserted. The storm raged with unabating fury until nine o'clock, at which hour it calmed down to a light north-westerly breeze, permitting each and every one to go

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abroad *à discretion*, consequently our men went abroad (for they found a pleasure in rambling through the troops), and were gratified to find the troops *être de bonne humeur*, notwithstanding the trying severity of the morning.

A search was at once instituted after the portable tents, which were carried off to different portions of the field by the storm: a few of the Mobiles were successful, but by far the greater number failed in getting a clue to the whereabouts of their unfaithful canvas; and when the *rappel* was beaten, all had to form under their respective colours with or without their tents. The Germans advanced from Yvreleque, Montfort le Rotrou, Ballon, and La Force; and as they did the French outposts were driven in, and ultimately the battle was begun. The Germans pushed forward *en masse*, and under cover of their guns, which continued to play upon the French positions from their situation on the heights near Montfort, a converging fire from which dismounted the few French batteries, and the only hope of the Bretons was gone. Their artillery had been drawn off at an earlier hour, and the guns forming the dismounted batteries were old—almost useless pieces. The Germans, seeing that the French were *minus* artillery, advanced their columns with great rapidity, and before these columns the Mobiles retired. It was at this critical moment that the Turcos, with some regiments of line troops, were ordered to advance, and, bounding forward like tigers on their prey, they felled to the earth the flying Mobiles, and continued to advance. The wagons of our corps with six men were at this time left in the rear of the Mobiles, and directly in front of the advancing Germans; towards them the Turcos advanced. It was feared by our men that the Algerian soldiers would treat them to a run over, as they treated the Mobiles; but such fears were unfounded, for at the moment they showed signs of “making scarce,” a mounted officer dashed forward and asked our men to remain—remarking, “You at least have done your duty.” Directly after the Turcos gained the position where our wagons were drawn up. And, as if this was the signal for the German artillery, they fired their admirable field-guns, and in a second a regular deluge of bullets and shrapnel

fell around the position. There were no means of escape left; our men, horses, and vehicles should remain under that destructive fire, at least until Mobiles were rallied, and regular troops sent on to the aid of the Algerians.

It was a moment of deep anxiety. There were the Chasseurs d'Afrique advancing briskly on one side, on the other the Mecklenburghers—the former to the relief of the Turcos, the latter to their defeat. Well, on they came; and as the enemies closed in on each other, our wagons were moved down the hill, and in their place was planted a half-battery of Gatling guns, which at once were turned on the advancing Germans, while the Turcos bounded forward each for his own bayonet. The next moment all were engaged in mortal combat. The Algerians fought again as they fought at Woerth and at Gravelotte; they could be seen to hoist the bodies of the enemy on their bayonets, and at one time a regular barricade was formed by Germans so bayoneted. Chasseurs fought with equal fierceness, and defended their few Gatlings with admirable skill.

“Men fought on earth,
And fiends in upper air.”

The Germans attacked again and again with unsuccessful results. Their commanders had strict orders to advance at any cost; and well they obeyed, for they suffered their men to be swept away in hundreds—whole battalions disappeared at the hands of the Turcos and Chasseurs. The Gatlings served their own purpose and inflicted terrible losses on the enemy. Of course, this desperate resistance could not be offered without a certain loss accruing to the French; but comparing such loss with that of their antagonists, it was trifling—so much so, that our six men were able to carry off the wounded of the Chasseurs and Turcos without exerting themselves to any degree.

For three hours were the French permitted to battle successfully against superior force, but by far the most wonderful incident in connexion with that desperate hand-to-hand conflict was that three, and only three, of the Algerians were placed *hors de combat*. This was owing, probably, to

their engaging the Germans at the point of the bayonet, thereby escaping the fire of their batteries, which would, certainly, be poured in on them had they not come into close quarters with a numerous enemy.

At one o'clock that afternoon, dense masses of troops were seen advancing, as if to the aid of the beaten Mecklenburghers; no aid was forthcoming to the troops of France, for Prince Frederick had the left wing engaged, while two fortunate and able generals—Schwerin and Alvensleben—led the attack against the left centre, and against the gallant few who defended the right centre, as I will call the position near Moulfort. The Germans now advanced their force, knowing well that unless madness took possession of its brave defenders, their numerous host would not be opposed.

The Germans guessed correctly, for no sooner did the advancing troops appear within three thousand yards than the French evacuated that position which they defended with such fatal consequences to the enemy, and carried off the three Gatlings, which proved to be of great use in protecting them from the pursuing cavalry, at the same time inflicting enormous losses on their pursuers. Ultimately the Prussian artillery was brought to bear on the retreating troops, which made them hasten their steps, and they were not again rallied. In the retreat an almost "spent" shell billeted in the upper compartment of one of our wagons, wherein were some twenty wounded soldiers; one of them took the dangerous missile in his hands, and, lifting the side shutters, threw it out, when it immediately exploded; a splinter entering through the back shutter killed one of the wounded, leaving the other poor men to meditate on the prospects of having themselves and the wagon blown to atoms—an event by no means unlikely, as the men at the German guns appeared to devote their attention to the annihilation of the wagons and men of the Franco-Irish corps. However, all their endeavours to achieve their nefarious designs proved unavailing, and the fortunate members of our Ambulance, with the wounded in their charge, and the troops with whom their duties rested, reached Le Mans in safety.

"*Mon Dieu ! Mon Dieu ! tout est perdu !*" These were the

exclamations, but what were the feelings of true soldiers of their country?—All is lost!

It was a melancholy sight to see the French Chasseurs, and their more stubborn brethren of Algeria, entering Le Mans that evening; even the men of our corps who accompanied them were forced to shed an honest tear, though quite accustomed to scenes of woe. France was lost! Le Mans must be evacuated; so the troops who fought so bravely round Moulfort were informed.

At the moment they passed up the Rue du College they heard the cries, "Give us leaders! Give us comrades! Take away the Mobiles!" The fiery Turcos echoed them, so did the Chasseurs, but their cries were in vain. Their comrades, alas! were prisoners; leaders there were none; Mobiles were numerous, but invariably of little use; their youth and ignorance of everything pertaining to *ordre militaire* placed them more in the way than otherwise—that is, where line troops were present. Yet, Mobiles held out at La Tuillerie that morning, and recaptured that position which they lost the previous night; they held it against superior numbers, and were holding it; but common reason said, the fighting corps, *par excellence*, are required—the Mobiles have exhausted their strength—and so they were required. There was a concentrating of troops taking place northwards of Le Mans, and towards the ground the headquarters of our corps were moved, together with that contingent which, as the reader may remember, was driven in from Moulfort; but the moment a halt was ordered on the ground one of our wagons was seen to be driven in hastily, as if coming from Les Noyers, and next appeared the Mobiles in full retreat; next were seen the Germans. Their Tirailleurs, supported by cavalry and artillery, precipitated themselves down on the mass of disorganised Mobiles, driving them across the river Huisne. Pauc-stricken, they fled in disorder towards the town, followed up by the Germans, who from that moment kept victory within their grasp.

Who shall paint the scenes that followed, the hour of vengeance, the hour of despair. Enraged Turcos, line troops, and Francs-Tireurs formed, as it were, a human barricade,

from which was hurled defiance and death at the ruthless invader, and for a time the scales of fortune seemed to turn in favor of the few, the gallant few, who, as a last resource, offered themselves a sacrifice to their country's honor. Houses came crashing down on every side, a continual shower of shrapnel and lead thinned their ranks; still amidst this desolating scene they fought and fell, and continued so to do for two long hours, until

"weakened by the force
Of treason's ancient, deadly curse,"

the remnant of that gallant band was forced to yield. The Germans were led to the rear of the barricade by men calling themselves Frenchmen, but who were in reality Communists, Atheists, in a word, modern Masons—deadly enemies of France, of the Church, the worst enemies of morality. The noble men who kept the invader at bay for two hours were handed over to the butchers by such fiends; the Germans entered Le Mans, the advocates of Reason were the victors. The few Mobiles who did not fly in the retreat, which was commenced at five o'clock that evening, rambled through the streets terror-stricken, and when the Germans entered they fired upon the unoffending Mobiles, who, in turn, fired upon the Germans, and street-fighting was resumed. Neither women nor children were spared—with rifle and bayonet the Germans carried out their malignant designs, with savage ferocity they burned or massacred everything within their reach; their victory was, in truth, abused. In the Place d'Armes an awful spectacle was presented—nothing less than the execution of four men was in progress. It seems that three brothers (the trio being old men) occupied a house in the Rue de Capuchins. In this house a Franc-Tireur concealed himself, not for the purpose of carrying on his "old game," but merely to escape that death which was his portion, if caught. However, in the general search for Mobiles, which was indefatigably prosecuted by the Germans, the Franc-Tireur was found. His good genius had forsaken him—after months of hair-breadth escapes, he fell at last, and, worse, a company of Berliners were his captors. These immediately dragged their hated enemy and also the three old men before their brutal officer, who ordered the *quartette* to

be shot, and, without further ceremony, the unfortunate men were led into the square, where the savage Germans hacked their victims to pieces, and, most horrible to be told, kicked the blood-dripping flesh about in all directions. Such is the manner in which four innocent men were murdered. In other districts the same scenes were enacted. In the Prefecture and in its reception-room a number of Prussian officers were revelling over the dead bodies of four young Frenchmen, whom they murdered in cold blood. Neither did the churches escape these ruthless villains, as plundered tabernacles and broken altars can testify. One church in particular suffered at their hands; entering this church, the first object which offered itself as worthy of destruction was the magnificent high altar, and this they desecrated in every possible manner; they pulled down the whole structure, breaking the stone slabs into dust. The altars of the different confraternities were not forgotten, neither was the organ (which even the Communists of former days spared), for after one of the ruffians amused his associates with *Wacht am Rhin* and an overture, they set about demolishing the piping and frame-work. Having accomplished so much, they bundled up the wood-work and hastened off to their "billets" to make fires of it, to live happy. . . . Little did they then think that an hour of terrible retribution would fall on the *vaterland*, that the curse of new heresies and insane opinions would possess their rulers, and make men, once honest, traitors to their country and their God.

The conduct of German officers was tolerable up to this, but the acts of the majority on that eventful evening detracts much, if not all, from their good name. As far as our corps is concerned, the Germans have invariably treated it with due respect; true, there were a few occasions on which the Germans treated it harshly, yet they had some reasons for so doing. Firing upon the "Red Cross," when it is a means of protecting the enemy, is no crime; making its legitimate owners prisoners, or even shooting them, when they aid in the escape of prisoners or act as spies, is no crime; therefore we have nothing to accuse the Germans of, for any acts of violence they may have done us, as I have no doubt but the

over zeal of a few carried them to acts outside their sphere as members of the "French Society." Still not one member knowingly violated the sacred neutrality or honour of the Red Cross. The men chosen at Havre for that service proved themselves worthy of the trust reposed in them, and if a few of them took part with the Franc-Tireur they were considered as totally distinct from the Ambulance, for the time being, and wore the Franc-Tireur uniform. It was five o'clock on the morning of the 13th January when the men of our field department had finished their duty to France; all the wounded men who fell in the streets were carried into the several hospitals. The regular Prussian ambulance tendered its assistance, and did its work *au parfait*; so did the Christian Brothers. *L'Ambulance sauvage*, as the Prussian ambulance was generally called, performed none of the cruel deeds on this occasion as were attributed to it at Orleans, Patay, Bacon, Chateaudun, Fretvale, and many other well-fought fields. Whether this was owing to the presence of the Irish corps, or to the quantity of blood which they caused to be shed, I know not; but they certainly laboured hard and fast, treating the wounded with a tenderness quite foreign to their former style. For once they devoted all their energies towards the relief of the wounded—for once they kept their double-edged swords in the scabbards, and acted as humane men; it was the fighting ambulance no more—new members, honorable men, made the change.

As I have said, our men finished duty on the morning of the 13th January; they were then at perfect liberty to ramble *à discretion*, for the Germans were too strong to fear them or their opinions. Accordingly, they went down to the great junction station, as being the most likely place to afford them an opportunity of seeing all that was to be seen, and there they were pained to witness the results of a precipitate retreat. Some thousand Mobiles were huddled together under the shed, others in the stores, and the greater number, less fortunate, were kept under strong guard in a field outside the station, exposed alike to the inclemency of the weather, and to the rude tauntings of the Germans who marched into town. There also were

railway carriages without number, trucks, and all the *modus operandi* of the railway. Two Gatling guns, a few batteries of field-pieces, with a large quantity of ammunition. were jealously watched by the Prussian Landwehr men. Over the snow-covered expanse in front of the railway station, Chassepots, Remingtons, Spencers, unconverted and converted Schneiders, old rifles of every age, cutlass, canteens, knapsacks, cartouche pouches, and all the *debris* of a routed army, lay about in picturesque confusion. The unburied dead presented a ghastly appearance; men, women, and children were there, cold in death; the street combat of the previous evening was a merciless one. The Prussians of the 10th corps knew not mercy; they lost 200 men themselves, and seeing that very little loss was being inflicted on the few troops who fired on them, they turned their arms to evil purpose, and dealing destruction amongst defenceless women and children, dishonoured what might be otherwise a brilliant victory. Every little stream ran red with blood, until at last it ebbed down to the river Sarthe, to show on its surface; and the current, as it were, carried down the true sign of woe to the parent Loire, as if to let the good people of Angers and Nantes know that Le Mans suffered to save them.

In the midst of such scenes our men wandered, until the pangs of hunger made them desist, and urged them on to energetic action in the cause of their corporeal necessities. They invariably went in search of "grub," and were fortunate in being able to procure, in small quantities, black bread, lard, and cognac. In the hunt after this latter and very necessary portion of the campaigner, an incident occurred, which I cannot forbear from mentioning. Four men of our field department entered M. Ducos' café, not so much for the purpose of replenishing their flasks as to tell the *propriétaire* that his two sons were killed at Ballon; but their surprise can be better imagined than described when, instead of the agreeable M. Ducos, they saw three burly-looking Hessians selling goods and receiving money with charming ease. They were joint-proprietors, and intended to share the profits arising out of the stock in trade of the persecuted M. Ducos.

Our men called for cognac, and they got it, paid for it and they went their way, disgusted with the soldiers who are permitted to carry on undisguised robbery.

It was noonday on the 13th, when members of our corps were called on parade, and then the welcome order was read out, directing them to return to Chateaudun, there to remain at head-quarters until further orders. One o'clock was the hour appointed to go *en route*, but before that hour came round, our men received numerous addresses from the people, the authorities, and the different trade societies of Le Mans. M. Picard read a letter from the General Chanzy, which was marked as one written by an able though unfortunate commander. It ran as follows :

“La Fleche, 13th January, 1871.

“*To the Chief, Director, and Men of the Franco-Irish Ambulance Corps.*

“It is with deep unfeigned sorrow I am now compelled to write you on a subject alike galling to French and Irish in every clime. You are men who have witnessed our gigantic efforts to drive back the unscrupulous German from our fair land. You have been present with us in the hour of our distress, and know of the last and desperate stand made by our youthful provençals against the well-trained troops of Germany—in fine, you saw the last of that new army which has battled with some success against superior numbers and organisation, and of which you have been zealous members. The army of the Loire exists no longer. Your duty to France and Ireland was ended with its defeat. Therefore, you are at liberty to retire from the field where, for months, you have laboured with untiring energy, leaving your memory to be dearly cherished by the soldiers and citizens of France, who hope to have an opportunity of showing their gratitude at no distant date. Your western island will be ever foremost in their thoughts. In conclusion, I ask of you to accept the gratitude of your General, forget the present misfortunes, and look to better days to regenerated France.”

Other letters there were also, couched in the same language, from several generals of the defeated army, as well as from the authorities at Bordeaux. Many of the Germans, on hearing of the departure of our men for the first scene of their labours on the Loire, came on the parade-ground to bid adieu; and, strange to say, there were four of the detested Brandenburgers among the visitors. But their genuine farewell proved that, even in the midst of savages, there exist some well-disposed creatures—that even amongst the inimical Germans there are friends of Ireland and the Irish.

At one o'clock the men re-assembled on the ground, when it was found that some few members preferred going northwards, while the majority were for returning to Chateaudun. The former wished to see again the Mocquarts, who were reported as playing a fair game with Von Goeben's advance-guard, north of Rouen, and round Honfleur and Havre; while the latter were intent upon returning to Chateaudun, as it were, to the bosom of their families. They knew that each and every one in that town were their friends, and they wished to pay them their parting *devoirs*. Each party acted *à discretion*.

CHAPTER XXXVI

“When rival nations, great in arms,
Great in power—in glory great,
Fill the world with war’s alarms,
And breathe a temporary hate.
The hostile storms but rage awhile,
And the tired contest ends—
But, ah ! how hard to reconcile
The foes who once were friends.”

THE duty of our Ambulance ceased at Le Mans. The Irish of that corps were released from the trammels of discipline. Welcome to remain in France—free to return to their kindred, to the warm-hearted people who entrusted to them the honour of their virtue-adorned Ireland ; who equipped and sent them to France to repay the debt of former kindness ; to represent the nationality, the unchanging attachment of the Irish. Being thus at liberty to carry out their wishes, the men of our corps chose their pleasure—one party went northwards, the other eastwards. Well, the first party we shall now follow. They having bade adieu to their comrades who purposed leaving for Chateaudun, went down to the junction station, and there constructed a “lurry,” on which they travelled over the iron way to Alençon, where they were fortunate in catching the night-mail train to the north. Entering the carriages, they were soon borne away from the Loire districts, and arrived in Honfleur on the morning of the 14th of January. There they instituted inquiries after their friends (now celebrated as being prisoners in the hands of the Mecklenburghers), and to these inquiries they received answer—“Only last evening your comrades left here for Havre.” Welcome news ! for this they propelled the “lurry” on to Alençon—for this they sacrificed a night’s much-required rest. So far they were pleased, but still they must reach Havre, and see their comrades before noonday, as after that hour their long-

looked-for friends might leave for Southampton. However, there was time at their disposal; it was five o'clock when they arrived in Honfleur; they could not leave for Havre sooner than nine, as the ferry-steamer does not leave until that hour—therefore they should be content and wait on circumstances. This delay suggested a time for breakfast, and accordingly they entered the Railway Hotel; but what was their agreeable surprise when they were asked to be seated to breakfast. The Mayor of the town having become cognizant of their arrival, ordered *dejeuner*, and he it was who presided. Well might his guests exclaim, "God bless the land that gave Patrick his birth!" A good deal could be said of the breakfast itself, of the president, the *bon mots*, our men, and, though last not least, of the crowd which formed outside the hotel to cheer the latest arrivals from Le Mans. But I will not weary the reader. Let him imagine himself arriving in Dublin, after having accomplished the discovery of a new world, or the overthrow of a Victor Emmanuel, or in command of a French corps of invasion, and he can judge fairly of the attitude of the crowd. Then let him picture the happiness which must naturally exist, when men escaped from fields of death are once again seated in security, enjoying the hospitality, not even of individuals, but of a people, and he will be enlightened on the subject—"Where is true pleasure to be found?"

At nine o'clock, they embarked on board the "Eclair," and the vessel left her berth amidst the plaudits of a thankful people. Again, at Havre, their return was hailed by thousands. The people turned out *en masse*, and with bands playing, they formed an escort, as it were, and led them to the Elysee, where were the comrades for whom they searched.

The remainder of that day was passed over in a most agreeable manner, and the greater number of our men, who at that time had reached Havre, embarked on board an English vessel for Southampton, *en route* to Ireland.

The men of that luckless contingent who were made prisoners at Bonnetable, and escaped from Nogent, arrived safe in Havre, and consequently returned with the others who came up from Le Mans the previous night.

Travelling through England, they met with marked attention from the Irish population ; even educated Englishmen were not slow in their offerings of congratulation. In London and Liverpool the enthusiasm was universal, each and everyone had a "good word" for the volunteers. Barney O'Neill felt quite at home while *en route*, even as he did during the campaign—to-day dining with a foreign ambassador ; at home in the evening with a "Mac" or "O," and so on, until he reached Dublin, where he managed to while away some days, as also to frighten old women with tales of horror, of extreme hardship. Early in February, 1871, he entered Dundalk, "as proud as a peacock." No one there to compare with M. Bernard O'Neill of the Ambulance ! The hero of the "big wagon" proved a true O'Neill, and Barney was himself again. Let us hope that his friends at home will only entertain the same *beinveillance* as was shown him by all classes of Frenchmen with whom he has been brought in contact during his stay in France, or rather during his brilliant career with the "big wagon," Nancy, and the other splendid animals in his charge. Let the warrior rest his weary limbs ; and when sitting with his wife and family round a cheerful turf fire, he can tell them what brought him to France, who sent him, and the expected results. Let him never have to say, "I wish the Prooshans slew me !" M. D'Arcy carried home the "flag" which was presented to the Dundalk volunteers by an Irish lady of that town. It, too, suffered from the storm ; but, under the fostering care of "the standard bearer," it was kept in a tolerable state of repair. Indeed I might say that M. D'Arcy's attention and energies were directed towards keeping his beloved standard intact, rather than unfurling it to every idle wind ; yet, it was seen on every field, from Orleans to Vendome—from Le Mans to Alençon ; and, though last not least, in the midst of the dreaded Mocquarts.

The volunteers from Dublin returned to their homes, where they, of course, were welcomed ; but having changed their tattered uniforms for the civilian's dress, they passed from the landing stage to their homes unnoticed. They invariably were entertained for a few weeks after returning

by their former companions and warm-hearted friends ; and, thanks to a generous people, their labors under the Red Cross were fully appreciated—themselves, the legitimate owners of the medal of the order, are, even to this day, treated with undisguised respect.

The men for Chateaudun, whom, as the reader may remember, we left *en route* from Le Mans, reached Vibraye about three o'clock on the evening of the 13th. The town was then garrisoned by a troop of Blucher's dragoons and a regiment of Bavarian jagurs, all of whom seemed to be quite as happy as troops flushed with victory could possibly be. On our members entering they met with an ovation, receiving not only the respect due to the volunteer service, but every kindness which the Bavarians could requisition. During an hour's halt in Vibraye they learned more from the Bavarians of Ireland and the Irish than they even knew themselves. Many of the Germans could repeat the names of the Irish composing the old Papal Brigade, and even the towns where they were born—could tell of English treachery towards the Irish, and even prescribed efficacious remedies ; could recite "The Death of Sarsfield," and sing a number of Irish national songs. In fine, they knew Ireland thoroughly, and sympathized with her deeply ; they were Bavarians free from the influences of the court—free from the damning principles of modern liberalism. The hour whiled away in Vibraye was one of pleasure ; and it was with heavy hearts that our men bade farewell to the true Bavarians, and left *en route* for Chateaudun, *via* Courtalin. Along the high road thither, and as far as the eye could reach on either side, was a scene of desolation ; though four days had elapsed since battle raged along this route ; houses were still a-blaze, while smouldering ruins told but too plainly that shot and shell had done their worst. Orphans crawled, as it were, over the snow-covered expanse looking for help, but none were there to help them ; by there, in yonder burnt village, their honest parents, perchance, lived and died ; and now see the result of destructive war. Had not our men passed over the ground, it is probable that these little wanderers would have died in the snow ; but Providence spared them—a happier fate was in store for them. Our men brought

the perishing children into Courtalin, and by twelve o'clock, midnight, they were placed under the care of the good Sisters of Charity, who in turn exerted all their energies in soothing the misery which had fallen upon these little martyrs of their country.

That night our men, who proved the instruments of God in rescuing the orphans from an awful death, were made happy in Courtalin ; the good people of that good town of the Montmorencys left nothing undone which might conduce to the comfort of their visitors ; and so as they retired from the field—the dreadful field of human conflict—they were entering upon a new phase, a home and friends offered everywhere—an unholy war over. The morning of the 14th of January brought with it a feeling of security quite surprising in itself ; the people invariably believed that victory would not belong to France until French troops again showed in Rome as protectors of the Roman Pontiff—until the insult offered to the true Church through the Empire was avenged ; they expected the defeat of their armies, and so they anxiously looked forward to the cessation of hostilities. That hour at length arrived, and now the people of the Loire departments showered acts of kindness on the few of our men who were destined to seek again the scenes of their first labours on the Loire.

At an early hour on the morning of the 14th, the men who were enjoying sound slumber were roused up by the rattle of musketry ; the sharp crack of the Spencer attracted their attention, and each knew that even now the Franks-Tireurs were near them. The thoughts of meeting Franks-Tireurs in such a time and place were incentives towards making the sleepers evacuate the beds ; and accordingly they threw on their great coats, and were in the street immediately. No firing could then be heard, but on reaching the Chateau de Montmorency, from which place the sounds of firing were at first heard to proceed, the whole mystery was solved. Two of the American Franks-Tireurs rushed towards them and embraced them. This example was followed by four Franks-Tireurs of the Pyrenees, and instantly as gay a little party as could be formed were together. Then the dead bodies of nine black hussars told

better than words the meaning of the well-known bark of the "Spencer." The Francs-Tireurs did their duty ; but now it was of no avail. France was then lost. No hope for Paris, for that army which was supposed to save the city was shattered at Le Mans. However, if any individual who had a taste to shoot another individual existed, he could do so fearless of a penalty, for though the war was virtually over, peace was not proclaimed ; and, even if it was, there existed a few "vulture plumes" who could not possibly restrain their ardour—at any cost they would not lose a chance of game.

And here in Courtalin were the representatives of four nationalities—the Americans and French, the Irish and Prussians ; the former were surprised to meet our men, the Germans were surprised in such a manner that they were denied the opportunity of surprising the Irish ; while these latter representatives were surprised, and more than surprised, to meet the Francs-Tireurs under what was considered happy circumstances. Charley Lamant, quoting a scriptural phrase, "Let the dead bury their dead," made a sign to follow, and ultimately the little party of volunteers entered the Hotel de Montmorency, where a substantial *dejeuner* was served up. All that remained to be done was to do it justice, and to "hook it" in haste, for no doubt existed as to the Prussians pushing forward a *reconnaissance* in search of the dead hussars ; and once the Prussian horsemen would get on the track of the Francs-Tireurs, it would be almost impossible to escape ; therefore, they resolved on parting—the Francs-Tireurs for safe ambush, our men for Chateaudun ; and so they in turn parted.

Along the road to Chateaudun, and extended over the fields on either side, were the gangrened bodies of horses and men ; grave-diggers there were none, therefore these germs of pestilence were allowed to remain unburied, save by the snow which was drifted round them by the gusts of wind ; and through this wilderness our men travelled on to their destination. Reaching La Barriere, they were relieved, for the villagers removed all the rotting carcasses, and consequently protected their own health, while adding immensely to the comfort of travellers, as the obnoxious

odours arising from the dead would make one's hair stand on end in dread of disease. By noon-day Chateaudun was reached, and that remnant of the Irish Ambulance corps was welcomed by the patriotic mayor, M. Lumiere, who did all in his power to make the Irish comfortable in his war-ridden town. Our surgeons at head-quarters were also indefatigable in their efforts to secure everything which might tend to create a sense of ease, of plenty, for though they worked hard both night and day at their professional labours, they knew that the men from the field endured extreme hardship, and that an Irish volunteer's recompense, at least all he expects, is kindness and respect. Suffice it to say that in Chateaudun they were again at liberty to choose their pleasures; and though the town was garrisoned by Prussian Landwehr and regular cavalry, our men lived as they liked, at all times meeting with the respect of friends and enemies.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“ Once our cannon spoke in thunder,
And all Europe heard in dread ;
Now, O France, thou’rt torn asunder,
And thine army lacks a head.
Yet as earnest of salvation
While this agony shall last,
Hope, amid thy desolation,
Fairer future from thy past.”

Now that the work of the Irish corps on the Loire may be said to be closed, it is my purpose to make an effort to describe the perils and hardships attendant on that division, better known as the northern contingent of our Ambulance, and from which we, of head-quarters, were separated since the earlier days of November, 1870, to the dawn of the peace. The reader may remember that the men who formed the Irish corps worked in unison at Evreux and Pacy, until orders arrived, which resulted in head-quarters being pushed down to the Loire districts, and the men of the northern contingent left in Evreux, undecided whether they would remain with the Francs-Tireurs under Mocquart, or accept the pressing invitation of the commandant of the troops mustering at Lille. They were under the immediate direction of Dr. Maguire ; and he, rather liking the bearing and principles of the great Franc-Tireur chief, in common with the men of the field and medical departments under his charge, ultimately resolved upon remaining with the Mocquarts—on continuing their service with that gallant band which knew no quailing ; and so I am again to refer my readers to the days when first we took the field, to the days when our corps in its entirety worked with the “ vulture plumes ” of the Eure.

It was advanced in the afternoon of that day on which our head-quarters left Evreux, *en route* to Chateaudun, when the volunteers destined to remain with the Mocquarts received orders to march to Bonnières, a town on the Seine,

about fifteen miles distant, and within a few miles of Mantes, which was then supposed to be in possession of Von Goeben's advance guard. Having made the necessary dispositions for encountering the severity of the evening, and also for defending themselves from the attacks of the prowling Uhlans, they started on their journey, and reached their destination an hour before midnight, where they were no less delighted at meeting a company of Francs-Tireurs of the *avant garde*, than on finding the hospitable people of that pretty town having everything in readiness to make them quite at home; and as a march of fifteen miles is apt to make the most energetic tired, our men gladly availed themselves of the refreshments and beds placed at their disposal. Indeed their arrival in Bonnières created quite a stir; and even after they went to sleep, the young and old kept awake, waiting as it were for the morning, to give a daylight welcome to their visitors. It seemed as if they passed through the trials of war, and that their future would be pleasant.

Early on the 10th morning of November, they were unceremoniously awakened by their Francs-Tireur friends; the proverb—*à la main, à la bouche, souvent se perdu la soupe*, was proved; nothing more nor less was expected of them than to appear on the familiar battle-ground, Pacy, and so they quickly evacuated Bonnières, going *en route* to the post of duty.

The snow was then falling heavily, and a chilling wind made the march quite unpleasant, for then our men were minus the great coats, which were happily served out to them in a few days later, and in time to be of the greatest use, as the hail, rain, and snow, which commenced to fall on the 9th, continued until the end of the war. Yet, accompanied by some twenty or thirty of the Francs-Tireurs, they made good speed, and reached Pacy about ten o'clock of the forenoon. The Germans were seen to advance on the village from the hamlets of Villiers and Thomer; and accordingly Francs-Tireurs were moved along the forest roads, with the simple object of repelling the enemy's cavalry, which showed in force; while Pompiers of the Eure, with their artillery, were moved down in

order of battle to encounter their powerful enemies. As these dispositions were being made, the German cavalry set spur and advanced *en masse* to the charge, which charge was gallantly repelled ; but again and again the Prussians came down, until at length the Francs-Tireurs were silenced, the Pompiers driven to flight. In this manner was a battle, or rather skirmish, gone through, and as usual attended with success to the arms of the invader. The men of our corps performed their field duties with commendable courage and patience ; in many instances the doctors, taking up the stretchers, worked hard with members of the field division, and did much to relieve the wounded of either army who were fortunate enough in falling into their hands.

For weeks afterwards they were engaged in the field, with the Mocuarts, line troops, and Mobiles, between Pacy and Bonnières, their duties invariably light, owing to the trifling losses sustained by their troops in that quarter. It was near the end of November when they crossed the Seine at Vetheuil, and proceeded to Courcelles, where they remained some days ; then to Louviers and Elboef ; and finally into Rouen, which city they made head-quarters of that division *pro tem*.

In Rouen they remained for some time, until orders were received which required them to repair to Havre ; so that early in December they returned to that city, and remained there—to-day on duty at Balbec, next at Lillebonne or Honfleur, and so on until that cause which they were there to serve was lost. General Faidherbe was defeated by General Von Goeben, General Chanzy by Prince Frederick Charles, the North Western army suffered the repeated attacks of Bentheim's northern army, and ultimately scattered before the united forces of Bentheim and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh, which union was effected after the fall of Le Mans ; and on the 24th January, 1871, General Bourbaki, under whose command was the Irish Brigade—*La compagnie d'Irlandaise*—was likewise forced to yield, to seek refuge beyond the Swiss frontier. France was then lost, beaten in a game ; but who then thought that Red Paris would sink the country in disgrace—who believed

that the Parisian mob, low, base-born cowards who neglected to serve their country in the hour of its dire distress—would turn the arms with which they were supplied against their countrymen, and in defence of a most damning clique of villains, whose cherished object was to see the priests, the people of the Catholic Church weltering in blood, the temples erected to the honor of their great Judge dedicated to the foul uses of Reason? None! Few even dreamt of the magnitude, the strength of the villanous scoundrels who, as it were, held down the victim while their German *co-frères* butchered her. But, thanks to men—the principal of Irish descent, Marshal M'Mahon—the scum of the world was checked in its career of wickedness, the impious creatures who formed it suffered a terrible retribution, and France was free again. The tribulation, the disgrace, the misery were occasioned by her departure from the rules of the Christian mission she had undertaken, and heeding only the seducing promises of false men, of immoral and infidel writers of Voltaire's impious school.

As I have said, the duties of the Irishmen composing the northern contingent of our Ambulance ceased with the defeat of the French arms, and they, like their brothers of head-quarters' division on the Loire, were free to return to their own land, or welcome to remain in France. In most cases the members of the corps returned, particularly the men attached to the defeated army of the Loire—not that they were unwilling to remain, but, as each thought and believed, they knew enough of war, and were content with the prospect of returning to the land of their birth, to the people who sent them out in the noble cause, as represented under the standard of the Red Cross. The chief of the northern division accepted the post of Surgeon-in-Chief in one of the finest regiments of the northern army; others, too, not of the medical profession, were offered enviable positions in line regiments; but still the campaigner has always a wish for home—a wish that even foreign honours, ambition, glory, cannot conquer. He who has escaped from well-fought fields, and braved the perils of destructive war, only can sum up the ties of home and kindred; for them true friends, dear friends, companions in the field, part, per-

haps for ever—perhaps wave a last adieu, and such certainly refers to the return of our *Corps de l'Ambulance*.

One and only one, of the Irish Ambulance corps now remains in France, and he, alas! sleeps—let us hope in peace—in the cemetery of Chateaudun. He, poor soul, died for the cause, and was taken away in the prime of life, mourned by all who knew him. Poor Hopkins, as driver of one of our wagons, displayed on all occasions an equal share of bravery and prudence. Though his services were voluntary, he bestowed an amount of care on the horses in his charge which would gain admiration from the most exact cavalry martinet, as it, without doubt, did from all who saw him, after a day's dreary duty, grooming his horses, removing the gangrene and clotted blood which might happen to be attached to the mattresses with which the wagon was provided, polishing the harness and cleansing the wagon of the "slush" which invariably adorned it after being used in the field. He was strictly honourable, and in him the corps lost a most useful member. Of him let me say, with his companions, "May he rest in peace!"

Before our head-quarters at Chateaudun were broken up, the men of the medical and field departments (who, as the reader may remember, returned to Chateaudun after the defeat of their army at Le Mans), the citizens, and the Bavarians then garrisoning the town, turned out *en masse* and proceeded to St. Joseph's Cemetery, thereto witness the ceremonial of placing an unpretending monument over the grave of an Irishman—Hopkins. He died in the midst of friends and foes, and it is remarkable that on the day the stone, with the plain inscription, "Hopkins," was placed over the grave, Bavarians, French, and Irish, were linked in common sympathy—for the time each party forgot all feud, and joined in paying tribute to the memory of deceased.

A few days later, and after the return of the victor's reserves from Vendome and Le Mans, this contingent of our corps left Chateaudun *en route* to the north. Some days they whiled away in rebellious Paris, but otherwise they did not delay their departure until on reaching Havre—which town they found to be, in truth, a harbour of grace,

of comfort. There they met with the same kindness, the same attention, as was accorded them on the day of their public entry into that city, and on the days which intervened before their departure for the seat of war.

In the latter part of February, 1871, they were banqueted by the people, and next day parted for the "old country" in company with the American guerilla corps. The home journey was, to say the least, pleasant. One thing tempered it with a certain sadness, and that was—that victory belonged to the German enemy. They had much rather that their route home lay partly through Germany; but under the circumstances they felt pleased, and deeply thankful to Providence for preserving them from the fate which, alas! befel many of their companions. Arrived in Liverpool, they invariably tried "to knock fun" out of that town of commerce, and succeeded beyond expectation. So that, after the lapse of one or two days, they felt inclined to part for the homes which awaited them, consequently each party "shook" a fond farewell, and marched to the docks, wherein were moored the ships destined to carry them in safety to home and kindred. They too returned.

"Farewell to thee France, but when liberty rallies
Once more in thy regions, remember me then—
The violet still grows in the depth of thy valleys,
Though withered, thy tear will unfold it again."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“ For their dear sakes I love thee,
Mavourneen, though unseen ;
Bright be the sky above thee,
Thy shamrock ever green ;
May evil ne'er distress thee,
Nor darken, nor defile,
But heaven for ever bless thee,
My own Green Isle !”

BERNARD BARTON.

Now that the days of war are over—now that the members of the Irish corps are returned, having accomplished that duty entrusted to them by their countrymen, I would humbly ask, to whom is due the honour—whether to the noble-hearted Irishmen who first conceived the great project or to the instruments they had chosen for its achievement? Well, to the former, I, as a volunteer, give all the credit, all the honour. They, without the slightest hope of temporal reward, roused their countrymen into energetic action, levied the voluntary taxes, organized, equipped, and finally sent into the service of France a body of men worthy of their country. This they did without external aid; the Irish, and the Irish only, they depended upon, and in doing so they reaped most satisfactory results. A “paternal” government looked on their mighty efforts with fearful amazement, neither offering aid nor much opposition. And yet, the fathers of their country (as I invariably and justly call the gentlemen who formed the Irish Ambulance Committee) worked by day and night, with great cost, anxiety, and trouble to themselves, to bring the good work they took in hands to perfection; and never was labour attended with better results.

With what feelings did they look on their volunteers paraded under the auspices of a nation's representatives. With what pleasure did they behold the Irish priest, the man of letters, the tribune, the noble and the peasant, attending, as it were, on the men who had enlisted under

the national banner, of which they were standard-bearers. That October's day of 1870, though bleak in itself, was such as could brighten the heart of the most desponding Irishman. And whom were we to thank? The men of the Ambulance Committee, the Irish people, who helped them, both in men and money—none others. Government lent no aid, neither did its sympathisers at home or in England. A national committee (which, in time, may merge into the national assembly) took the work in hands, and, as far as my experience goes, performed that work with far more energy than the government to which I refer could possibly summon up. Aid to France, to the French people, was the object; and as that object, next to the defence of the Pope, will, to the end of time, be cherished by the Irish people, no alien's aid was required—no alien's permission looked for. Years of persecution could not root out the religion planted by St. Patrick. Years of persecution have not rooted out the gratitude which Ireland owes to France, but, on the contrary, "excites the old heart of the race" to sympathy and love for her friends—her past, present, and future friends.

With integrity and administrative diligence did the men of the Irish Ambulance Committee check and dispose of the vast amount of money which flowed into their national coffers. To-day £500 to the bank of France at Havre, payable to the order of the paymaster of the Irish corps; to-morrow £500 to that great and noble ecclesiastic, Monseigneur Dupanloup, at Orleans. Again, fabulous amounts to the Martyr of Paris, the revered Monseigneur Darboy; and so on to the end. Even Paris, under the Commune—that is, the few Frenchmen who could exist there—received aid from the Irish. They knew it, and the warm, chivalrous heart of the true Frenchman yearned to pay back the debt; but the time was not then at hand. Still, with each successive day, his yearning grows more intense; his love for Ireland pictures a western nation, free and unfettered—he hopes to be present at the "dawn;" therefore let us share the hope, and live to see it gratified.

And must we thank our Ambulance Committee for this also? Partly; they sent us out to represent the nation, or

rather the down-trodden island which we are proud to own as a birth-place. They sent us to renew our acquaintance, as it were, with the people of France, to draw closer the ties of friendship—in fine, to learn to help, and know how to receive aid. And where is the result? It is visible even now. That enthusiasm which was kindled on the day our “La Fontaine” rode at anchor in the northern harbour is not dwindling; the thoughts of the Frenchman oftentimes revert to Ireland and the Irish; he ponders over olden times and says, “Let our part be to serve them. Before have I seen them in France; though slaves, they are soldiers. Ultimately they must be free;” and has for a toast, “*Liberté et l’Irlande!*” None can tell when a more fortunate general than St. Ruth will appear on familiar ground; and if such an event comes to pass, who can doubt the consequences? None! Then, what blessings would fall on those who took a part in bringing to our shore such joy—such messengers of love—the red-legged linesman, the honest Mobile; innumerable as the sands of the desert, ardent as these prayers which preserved for Ireland her faith, her virtue, and kept in store for her a place among the nations of the earth. An O’Neill lives; a conservative republic is not too bad—either is acceptable. Therefore “watch and wait.” Remember Limerick, and be wary of traitors, who, by the way, can adapt themselves to any society—can “don” the worn-out tweed of the town’s labourer, the peasant’s frieze, and look the “beau ideal” of a “swell,” according as circumstances dictate. Honor, not an oath, should be the pledge.

Let me not go further into the prospectus, but live in the present. Who in Dublin does not remember the ever-memorable day in the August of 1871, when a party of French citizens entered our metropolis. Who, outside of Dublin, did not read of that entry? Few, very few! Then, to the great majority, I will subscribe some descriptive lines *en souvenir*.

As well as remembrance serves me, it was on the 16th day of August that “the French were in the bay,” and Dublin turned out its citizens to receive them. The city bands, though banned to play, treated the law with a little of contempt, and rushed forward in the throng. At old

Dunleary, the visitors were to land ; and towards that town (now called Kingstown) the vast multitude marched along. Those who brought their own or hired vehicles, heartily wished that such vehicles were left in the coach-house, or elsewhere, for they were doomed to remain with the rear-guard, as the roads were literally blocked with the advancing thousands ; but lest they would miss what the pedestrians were sure to see, they resolved on keeping their seats, and, with them, a position on the roadside which would enable them to see the latest from France, and accord them welcome after whatever fashion they thought proper. In this manner the people advanced, while those in vehicles or on horseback were forced to tarry and await the advent of the French deputation. They did wait patiently. Hours flew past, but no sign of the trade banners nor their bands. Could there be a disappointment? Well, there is such a thing. How the *Mail* and *Express* would go into ecstasy over such an occurrence! Hold, I hear the bands! Here they come! How the people cheer! And as he soliloquised, the nation's welcome burst forth from the thousands who surrounded him, and the next moment he was carried backward in the throng. Poor man! it proved too much for his feelings—native music, the cheers of the multitude, the exclamations of joy, and the circumstances, which occasioned such a display, carried him back to the days of the Great Liberator, and, at Williamstown, he gave up the ghost *pro tem.*, but, on being carried into a "villa" convenient to the road, he soon resumed his senses, and, rushing out, cheered as lustily as any other man. In fact, enthusiasm rose to such a height, that the people did not know whether they laughed, cheered, or cried. Many eyes were bedewed with honest tears—tears of love and joy ; for that middle-aged gentleman with the grey-tinged imperial and military moustache, was none other than a lineal descendant of our own Owen Roe, he was The O'Neill. The Count de Flavigny, a fresh jovial-looking personage, also of Irish origin, was there, with numerous others, amongst whom was M. le Docteur Maguire, who won laurels in the northern contingent of our Ambulance, and wore them since the war in the French service.

At the Shelbourne hotel, they were received by the Re-

ception Committee of the Ambulance Committee, and there made quite happy that night. To-morrow, and they had to undergo the agreeable ordeal of a public reception, of being banqueted in the evening, and of several other formalities necessary to insure the due observance of the rules which etiquette prescribes.

On the 17th of August, and about noonday, they were driven in the carriages placed at their disposal by the Irish people, to the Rotunda, and there, amidst a scene of unprecedented enthusiasm, were introduced to the great assemblage which thronged the round-room. There, also, were the members of the Ambulance Committee, filled, as it were, with true men's pride. There they stood in all the proud consciousness of having done right to their country, to their countrymen, and of having, in a good measure, paid back the debt of gratitude which Ireland owed to France. With what feelings did these men listen to the report as read aloud by M. M'Cabe Fay, one of the honorary secretaries to the committee. With what pride did they hear the cheers of approbation which successively drowned the words of the reader, as he repeated the concluding words of each paragraph of the report. None but such as deserve, can fully comprehend the meaning of a nation's applause—can know their greatness. For my part, I must say that, then as well as now, I admired them, and said they should be our rulers! We are but the guards, the Mobile!

Even amidst that excited, manly throng, were "our own dear Irish girls." The Irish priest was there; and many a peasant from the plains of Kildare, from honest Connemara, aye, from every part of the dear old land, flocked into the metropolis to witness the national ceremonies which were taking place under the auspices of Ireland's children, the fathers of their country. And well was their visit repaid. That day, our citizens and "country cousins" looked on the features of the descendants of noble Irish progenitors, whom, on being banished from that country for which they fought and bled, met with friends in the persons of the nobility and peasantry of France. That day they saw Ireland pictured in the future! That day they saw returning signs of life and vigour! And must we thank our national Ambulance

Committee for this also ? Yes ! and more still, entertain for them a lasting respect, believe in their honour, and trust to their leadership.

The banquet to the illustrious visitors was no less than a great national gathering, at which all that could be called noble in our oppressed land was represented. True, we had no single instance of an imported "drummer," or an alien plutocrat being present. Still such as French and Irish wished to meet, were there.

"The friends we've tried are by our side."

The presence of the common enemy was not looked for, nor required, to grace the proceedings, and so the banquet passed off with great success. Each and everyone within the Exhibition Palace on that evening were happy, and so happy, too, that they

"Danced all night till the broad day-light,
And went home with the girls in the morning."

For some hours, and after justice was done to the viands, the eloquence of the editor of *The Nation*, of the Rev. Father Lavelle, Father Fox of Glencree, and the fiery speeches of the Counts O'Neill and Flavigny, kept the audience wrapt in earnest attention. Many there were who could remain listening to such speakers for days ; yet the orators could, but would not satisfy them, for they knew that not a few wished to avail themselves of the other pleasures held out on that occasion. As I have said, the night was one of pure and simple pleasure ; but where were the members of the Irish-Franco Ambulance corps ? Only eight of them were represented. Where were the others ? Alas ! three are dead. One died where he should die ; the other two, less fortunate, returned to the land of their ancestors, and died from diseases caught and fostered by exposure to all the hardships which war and a dreary winter can only propagate. The remaining members were, perhaps, engaged at their callings, or were prevented from attending, through some means, the entertainments given in honor of the deputation which came to thank them in the name of France for their aid ; but they were present in spirit, and heartily wished the visitors *Cead mille fáilte*.

Their tour through the southern counties and their visit to Killarney leave behind happy recollections. But why did they forget Aughrim and Killala? Probably they reserved these visits for happier times, for brighter days. At the same time, they would receive proof positive that even at that time the Frenchman was welcome in Connaught; that there, exist the warm hearts, the brave men, of whom alone a nation might be proud. Let us hope that when they come again, they will not neglect to requisition the hospitality, at least, of the Connaught people; if more is required, they shall have it,

“But oars alone can ne'er prevail
To reach the distant coast;
The breath of heaven must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost.”

Let them come, then, as they have come, under the standard of the cross, with Charette as standard-bearer, and who will dispute the victory? What was captured through treachery shall be retaken by honor and fidelity—*Dum spiro, spero!* but this is no idle hope, no senseless day-dream; time is passing, and events prognosticate a change; therefore consult well, and when you have consulted, act accordingly.

Well! our guests have returned from far-famed Killarney, and from the southern and south-western counties, they have, or rather ought to have, a fair idea of the people; and they are in Dublin once again. What numbers of people do congregate in the streets, and with what commendable fraternity do men speak to one another in reference to our Ambulance, to the committee, and to our visitors. Nothing like this some days since! Oh, no; he that was here hopes to possess the stolen crown, and keep the harp lying in silence, the minstrel in despair! But shall he? “That is the question.” Let the people answer.

Nobly they answered. The Sunday following the return of the tourists to Dublin, was such a day as might strike with terror the heart of the most powerful despot. It was the day on which the Frenchmen were to leave Ireland.

From north, and south, and east, and west, the thousands of devoted hearts poured in to swell the throng already formed by our citizens ; the bandsmen of the several trade societies, and of others, dressed out with their usual taste, were foremost in proficiency ; the Foresters were there too, their picturesque uniform contrasting strangely with the crowd which would be uniformed. Green sashes, with orange and green sabrestashes, were peculiar to the day ; and had it not been that everything was arranged in order, a new-comer on the scene would believe it was the eve of "the revolution ;" and so the gathering of the nation was so far complete.

And patiently did this vast assemblage await the order to advance ; patiently did each one remain hemmed in, as it were, by a surging mass of human beings, until, at length, the members of the deputation, accompanied by the members of the Ambulance Committee, appeared on the balcony of the Shelbourne Hotel, when a cheer was raised that seemed to reach to heaven—that certainly shook the earth ; and then, through the waving sea of hats, Mr. P. J. Smyth was seen to give the signal to advance. Next moment the Foresters' banner was advanced, the bands playing—" *Partant pour la Syrie* ;" and as the several trade bodies passed in review order, the members of the deputation withdrew from the balcony, and, descending, entered the carriages which were to convey them back to old Dunleary, to the place of embarkation.

What a scene was presented that day on the old shortcut to Donnybrook ; carriage after carriage, band after band, wended their way through the gay, yet sorrowing multitude. Discipline was visible throughout, order was perfect, and everything went as merry as a marriage bell—that is, over that route ; but otherwise that great national demonstration lost a little of attraction, as one of the ladies, the Countess de —, fell ill, an incident which required all the attention of the other ladies accompanying the deputation ; and therefore they travelled *incognito* by rail to Kingstown ; but there the malady grew worse, and the members were forced to wait until the following morning, when they took their departure, fully convinced that when next they visit Ireland they will leave the women to care the women.

From the triumphal arch which was erected at Dunleary, a caged dove was lowered into the carriage which conveyed the Counts Flavigny and O'Neill ; but the meaning of such a procedure I will suppose to be known to the reader, therefore it requires no comment from me. I merely notice it here to show how perfect in detail was everything the Irish Ambulance Committee took in hands, as also the fertility of their minds, the goodness of their natures.

And now, as my work on the Irish corps is drawing to a conclusion, I will ask the Irish reader to remember, for the sake of his countrymen—first, the independent guerilla corps from which we, on all occasions, received signal service and many acts of kindness ; second, the Mobiles and their officers of the army of the Loire, who lost no opportunity of rendering to our corps honor and respect ; third, to the peasantry and townfolk, people who invariably were at their wits' ends to obtain for us comfort and good cheer ; and, though last not least, to the mayors of the several municipalities which it was our fate and pleasure to enter. To the good Sisters of the various religious orders, and to the Christian Brothers, with whose ardour in the cause of humanity, and kindness to our corps, we have been deeply impressed, I subscribe the following lines, from the pen of "Zœ" :—

Fair moon, that o'er the golden grain
Dost shed thy frost-like light ;
On many a field of woe and pain
Thou lookest down to-night.

Amid the whispers of the grass
I seem to hear a cry ;
Amid the breezes as they pass
A wail of agony.

And then in fancy I behold
That radiant span of light—
The vision Jacob saw of old
With angel forms bedight.

Kind messengers ! they downward fly,
And on the Red Cross shields
They lay their harvest tenderly,
The fruit of those sad fields.

These reapers joy, they do not sigh,
 As home to heaven they haste ;
 For they have gathered thoughtfully
 Out of that grievous waste.

And next, a sad, yet kindred band
 Glean what those bright ones leave ;
 Kindred—because their angel-hand
 Bids misery cease to grieve.

Brave hearts have come to help the brave,
 The weak bind up the strong ;
 O God—whose arm is strong to save—
 Save Thou Thy world from wrong !

Such friends we have met—therefore they deserve our gratitude ; they crave remembrance, and if a nation's voice cried, "Go you and represent me," that nation is bound in gratitude to honor such as honored her representatives—to reciprocate the feelings of mutual love which have been tendered to her, as it were, through the umbered face of battle. Never can we forget our days with the Mocquarts in the North of France, nor those whiled away on the Loire—now with the "vulture plumes" of the Pyrenees, of the Vosges ; again with the Americans, and in the field with the coruscant Mobile ; again acting the cosmopolite in the homesteads of the people or the castles of the nobility. Though such days were of unexampled hardship, yet I doubt if many, or any, complained. Friends, brothers in sympathy were there—victory was only required to fill the cup of their terrestrial happiness.

But for victory they searched in vain ; under the baneful influences of the decaying empire, immorality and infidelity crept in. Though Napoleon's great court was pure in the possession of a model Empress, yet, without her jurisdiction, immorality was fostered—left, as it were, unrestrained by law or morality. The revenues arising from institutions damning to the soul and body went to the building up of Napoleon's power, and by it he fell. Rome even he surrendered, against the will of the French nation, into the hands of the despoiler ;

and for this, according to human judgment, he fell. Let all such men fall. But, O poor country, for you, that must tolerate them, there is true sympathy. What is wealth? What is power and luxury? Nothing; if that wealth, that power and luxury, are not received as the gift of God. Gay Paris, little did you ponder over this meditation. If you paid heed to the teachings of the Church, yours would be another's story; but the chastisement came in its own good time, and clearly proved to the light-hearted citizens of the advanced capital that an angry God avenged Himself—that for the crimes of the city the nation suffered.

Men of the Irish Ambulance have witnessed the cause and effect of destructive war; they know the attendant miseries. The nation which enabled them to learn so much is true and staunch to the old colours; and that it may remain so, with an *addendum* called liberty, is the devout wish of the author.

“To teach with silent eloquence and strength
The lesson of the hour—the lesson sent
By God to earth; though wrath and punishment
Reign now, His love has crowned His own at length.”

FINIS.

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