

companies of the line were left to strengthen the position should the enemy try another attack before daybreak, and then, after congratulating the colonel of the Franc-tireurs on the vigilance that had prevented his being taken by surprise, and the sturdy defence he had made, the officers of the line withdrew their men to the positions they had before occupied.

The loss of the Franc-tireurs was small. The volley that had preceded the attack had done no execution whatever, and as they had fought in shelter they had lost but eight men killed and a score wounded. It was the sharpest affair in which they had as yet been engaged, and the old colonel was highly pleased with the result. After the outpost had resumed their former position Cuthbert related to his comrades the particulars of his struggle with the Prussian sergeant.

"We were pretty well matched," he said, "and I suppose were equally surprised when we found each other grappling in the dark. Of course neither of us knew how many supporters the other had close at hand, but the first thought that struck me was that I must silence him if possible before his comrades came to his assistance. I was only afraid that I should not be able to shake myself free from his grip so as to get to his throat, but fortunately he relaxed his hold the moment he felt that I had loosened mine, and as I was on the top of him the rest was easy."

"Well, you got well out of it anyhow, Hartington," Pierre said. "You did not see anything of the man who was knocked down by a musket, did you?"

"No, it did not occur to me to look for him, but if you like I will go out with you and bring him in."

"That is a very good idea, Hartington, probably he was only stunned. I will go and get leave for us to do so."

However, just as he turned to go a call was heard in front, and a minute later the man came in.

"He had," he said, when he recovered consciousness, "heard a tremendous fire going on, and as soon as he could collect his thoughts became assured that the enemy must be attacking the village. He therefore concluded that the best thing was to lie

still, which he did until the fire ceased and he could hear the Prussians retreating. Then he had crawled in until close to the line of outposts."

"I am heartily glad to see you back again," Pierre said, shaking him by the hand. "It would always have been a subject of regret to me if the expedition that I proposed had lost you your life. As to those who fell in defence of the village I have no personal responsibility, but I should certainly have felt that your death always lay at my door."

CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER month and a great change had come over Paris. The spirit of empty gasconnade had been succeeded by one more befitting the time and circumstances. As the hopes of assistance from without lessened, the spirit of resistance grew stronger and firmer. There was no longer any talk of sweeping the Prussians out of France, no longer was it an article of faith that Paris would be saved; but the thought of surrender was farther than ever from men's minds. Paris would resist to the last. She would give time to France to reorganize herself, and would set such an example of devotion and patience under suffering, that when at last famine forced her to surrender, the world should at least say that Paris had proved herself worthy of her reputation.

The defences had been strengthened to an enormous extent; the outlying forts which, when the siege began, could have been carried without much difficulty by a resolute attack, had now been rendered practically impregnable, their approaches had been thickly mined, obstacles of all sorts erected round them, and the casements, barracks, and magazines protected by coverings of trunks of trees and so great a depth of earth as to be able to defy the heaviest shell.

The walls of the *enciente* had been repaired and greatly strengthened, and covered by bastions and other works, so that even were one of the forts taken the work of the enemy

would but be begun. The theatres had been closed from the first. The cafés chantants, and the open-air concerts had long since followed the example, partly because of the increasing seriousness of the temper of the people, partly because of the failure of the gas. The cafés themselves were no longer crowded until midnight; the dim lights of the lamps that had taken the place of gas gave a sombre air to these establishments, and by eight o'clock in the evening most of them put up their shutters.

The National Guard were being reorganized. From each battalion, three or four hundred of the most able-bodied, for the most part unmarried, men, had by order of the Government, been selected and formed into companies for service in the field, and these promised in a short time to develop into troops equal in physique and spirit to the mobiles, and vastly superior to the line.

Ladies no longer appeared in the streets in rich dresses. It was felt that these were out of place now, and all adornments had been rigidly given up, and the women of the better class set the example of dressing in the simplest of costumes and the quietest of colors. Great numbers had devoted themselves to the services of the hospitals and ambulances, and spent the whole of their time in ministering to the sick and wounded.

As yet there was little real suffering in Paris, and the privations and inconveniences were borne uncomplainingly, and even cheerfully. Beef had become almost unobtainable, but it was agreed that horse-flesh was not a bad substitute; cats and dogs were fast disappearing from the streets, and their flesh, prepared in a variety of ways, took the place on the cards of the restaurants of hares and game, and the change was hardly noticed.

Cuthbert was working hard. The school was now definitely closed, but those who liked to do so were free to work there when they chose. M. Goudé had taken advantage of the cessation of lessons to paint on his own account, and was engaged upon a large canvas which he announced was intended for the Salon.

"All this," he said, "has wiped away old quarrels. If I were fit for it I would do as so many of the artists of Paris have done—take my place in the ranks—but I am past the age for marching and sleeping in ditches; but I can entertain no further anger against men who are fighting for France. It is the duty of those who cannot fight to paint. When the Salon opens we must show the world that, in spite of these barbarians, France still holds her head high, and is at the head of civilization."

Cuthbert, however, was not among the number of those who used the painting-room. He had chosen his lodging so as to have a north light, and kept his door closed from early morning until the light faded. An ardor for work had seized him, and it was with reluctance that he put aside his brush when the day's work was over. He was engaged upon two pictures, and worked upon them alternately as the mood seized him. When he had done for the day the canvas was always covered up and the easels placed behind a screen in the corner of the room and the doors opened to his friends.

Once a week for two days, when the corps marched out to take its turn at outpost work, the work was laid by. Between the regular troops on either side there was but an occasional exchange of shots, except when one or the other side attempted to advance its position, but this was seldom, for every post of advantage and every village was now so strongly fortified as to defy capture except by a large force.

The Germans had recognized already that Paris was not to be taken by force, at the cost except of a tremendous expenditure of life, therefore, they were content to close every avenue of escape and to leave it to famine to do the work for them. The French on their side felt that minor operations to enlarge their boundary somewhat, were but a vain effort, and reserved themselves for a great attempt to break through the line. The Franc-tireurs, however, were ever active. They kept up an increasing fusilade upon the Prussian outposts night and day, keeping them in a state of perpetual irritation and watchfulness.

Except when on this service, Cuthbert saw but little of Arnold

Dampierre. The latter had entirely given up painting and was seldom at his lodgings; nor when at home did he join in the smoking-parties at one or other of the student's rooms. Other luxuries had given out, but tobacco was still fairly cheap and its solace made up for many privations. Nor was Arnold's absence regretted. He had never been popular, and on the few occasions when he appeared among them, he was so moody and taciturn that his absence was felt as a relief. When on duty with the corps, however, he was always in good spirits. He seemed to delight in action and was ever ready to volunteer for any dangerous work, such as crawling up close to the German outposts to ascertain their precise positions. He had so many narrow escapes that his comrades declared that he held a charmed life against Prussian bullets.

"The American would be a pleasant fellow if we were always under arms," Pierre Leroux said one evening; "he is not the same man directly we get outside the walls—he is cheerful, good-tempered, and full of ardor—here he is a bear. He will get into trouble if he does not mind. I was this afternoon opposite the Hôtel de Ville. There were many of the unwashed denouncing the Government and its ways to all who would listen to them. Dampierre was standing in one of the groups where a man, whom I knew to be Minette's father, for he came to the studio one day to say that she was unwell and could not come, was addressing them. He was pouring out threats against the bourgeois, against the Government, against every one in fact. He said that at present the true patriots, the working-men of Paris, were disarmed, but even had they arms, they would not imperil the defence of Paris by civil war; but that as soon as the accursed Germans had turned their backs, their day would come, and the true principles of the Republic, the principles of '79, would then be triumphant, and France would be free of the incubus of the selfish capitalists who ground down the people. I could see that Dampierre thoroughly sympathized with the fellow, and I believe that if there is trouble he is capable of putting on a red cap and marching with the scum of Belleville.

"It is not Minette's father, but Minette, who has converted him. I saw her marching at the head of one of the Belleville battalions the other day, dressed as a cantinière, and carrying herself with the air of a young Amazon."

"That girl is capable of anything," Cuthbert said; "I have always said that she was a small sleeping volcano, and if there are barricades I can fancy her standing on the top of one of them and waving a red flag, however thickly the bullets might be whistling around. I went as far as I could in the way of warning Dampierre in the early days, but I soon saw that if we were to continue on terms of amity I must drop it. It is an infatuation and a most unfortunate one, but it must run its course. Dampierre is a gentleman, and although at present he may be carried away by the enthusiasm of these people, I fancy that if they should happen, which, God forbid, to get the upper hand, he would soon be shocked when they proceeded to carry their theories into execution. As to Minette, if he is ever mad enough to marry her, the best thing would be to do so as soon as Paris is open and to take her straight away to New Orleans.

"She is a born actress, and is as clever as she is pretty, and I have no doubt she would have the good sense to play the part of a grande dame admirably, and would soon become a leader of French society there; but I should be sorry to predict how long it would last and what would come after it, and I believe in my heart that the best thing that could happen for him would be to be knocked over by a Prussian bullet. But after all the thing may never come off. A girl like Minette must have lovers in her own class. I have no doubt she is fond of Dampierre at present, but no one can say how long it will last. I can imagine that she is proud of her conquest. He is good-looking, a gentleman, and rich. No doubt she is envied in her quarter, and besides it must be a gratification to her to have induced or fascinated him into casting in his lot with the reds, but all that will pall in time. If I were in his place I should never feel sure of her until I had placed the ring on her finger."

"That is the time when I should begin not to feel sure of her," René laughed, "my anxieties would begin then. She is as changeable as an April sky. She could love passionately for a time, but for how long I should be sorry to guess. You see her in the studio, she is delighted with every fresh dress and fresh pose. Never was there so good a model for a few days, then she gets tired of it, and wants something fresh. She is like a child with a new doll; for a bit she will be wild over it; she cannot sleep without it, she takes it with her everywhere, she adores it, but will it soon be thrown by, and perhaps she will be battering its head with a stick. When Minette first came to the studio I was mad about her, now I would as soon have a tiger-cat for a mistress."

"That is too severe, René," a young man who had joined the studio but three months before, expostulated. "She seemed to me a charming young woman. I cannot understand what you and Cuthbert are talking of her in this way for."

René laughed.

"Ah, you haven't got over the first stage yet, and many of the others will agree with you. We all like her, you know, we are all glad to have her with us; she is like a glass of champagne, and we cannot say anything against her in that quality. It is only when one comes to talk about her as a wife that one is frightened."

"I believe all this is on account of her standing last month as Judith about to kill Holofernes."

"Perhaps you are right, Clement. I admit that was a revelation to me. I used to laugh at Cuthbert, who declared she frightened him, but I felt then he was right. Good heavens, what a Judith she was; it was enough to make one shiver to see the look of hate, of triumph and of vengeance in her face. One knew that one blow would do it; that his head would be severed by that heavy knife she held as surely as a Maitre d'Armes would cut a dead sheep in two."

"It was only a piece of acting, René. You might as well say that a tragedienne would be capable of carrying out a tragedy in her own family."

"Perhaps so, Clement, but then you see it would never occur to me to marry a tragedienne. I should imagine that she would ask for the salt in the same tone that she would demand poison. I grant it was acting, but there was a terrific truth about it that showed that she was at least able to picture the position and feel it. I tried to sketch her, but I gave it up as hopeless. It was beyond me altogether. I observed that all the others failed, too, except Cuthbert here. He dashed it off in his note-book, and if he ever paints it, I would not have it hung up in my bedroom for a thousand francs, for I should never dare to go to sleep with it looking at me. But, indeed, of late, Minette has changed a good deal; the little fool is carried away by all this talk up at Belleville, and takes it quite seriously. You remember she has refused our last three invitations, and she said quite superbly when I asked her the last time, 'This is no time for feasting and enjoyment, M. René, when Paris is besieged and thousands are starving.'"

"Then I don't know where they are," Pierre said. "Belleville was never so well off as it is to-day; every man gets a franc and a half a day for wearing a kepi and going for a few hours once a week on duty on the wall. His wife gets something, and they have so much for each child. They have no work to do, and I am told that, although six francs a day are offered by the Government for laborers, they cannot get enough men. The fellows enjoy smoking, lounging, talking, and doing nothing too much to be tempted by any offer. There may be starvation before we have done; but at any rate there is none at present, for every man, woman, and child draws their ration of meat, not a large one, but enough to get on with; beside bread is not very dear, and there is no lack of vegetables, brought in every day from beyond the forts."

"I said as much to Minette, Pierre, but she only muttered that working-men would not always exist on charity, and the time would come when there would be plenty for all. We shall have trouble with them before we have done I expect, what do you think, Henri?"

The lieutenant took his pipe out of his mouth and nodded.

"There will be trouble," he said. "I have been up to Belleville several times. This spell of idleness is doing much harm. As soon as we have done with the Prussians we shall have the reds on our hands."

"We are seven to one against them," René said, contemptuously. "The voting the other day showed that."

"Ah, but the seventh know what they want. They want to be masters. They want money enough to keep them without work. They want to set the streets flowing with blood. The other six only want to be left alone. They have no idea of risking their lives, and you will see, when it begins, they will hold the butts of their muskets up; they will say, 'Don't let us irritate these demons,' and each man will hope that, even if others are robbed, he will somehow escape."

"You cannot rely on the National Guard, it is no use to count them in, and the mobiles only want to be off to their villages. If the troops had a leader they might fight, but who is to lead them? Trochu is an imbecile, the real fighting army is in the prisons of Germany, and when it is released will not care to embark in another war. I think things look bad."

"What should we do?" Pierre asked.

"We should paint," Henri said, "that is to say we should paint if things go as I think they will, and the National Guard refuse to fight. If the men who have something to lose won't lift an arm to defend it, why should we who have nothing at stake?"

"You might paint, but who is going to buy your pictures, Henri?" Cuthbert said, quietly. "As soon as the reds get the upper hand we shall have the guillotine at work, and the first heads to fall will be those of your best customers. You don't suppose the ruffians of Belleville are going to become patrons of art. For my part I would rather fight against the savages than level my rifle against the honest German lads who are led here against us. I should think no more of shooting one of these roughs than of killing a tiger—indeed, I regard the tiger as the more honest beast of the two. Still, if you Frenchmen like to be ruled over by King Mob, it is no business of mine."

Thank God, such a thing is never likely to happen in England—at any rate in my time. In the first place, we can trust our troops, and in the second, we could trust ourselves. Were there not a soldier in the land, such a thing will never happen. Our workmen have sense enough to know that a mob-rule would be ruin to them as well as to the rich, and, were it needed, in twenty-four hours half a million men could be sworn in as constables, and these would sweep the rabble into the Thames."

"Your rabble would be unarmed; ours have at present all got muskets."

"More fools they who gave them to them, but what can one expect from such a Government. There is not among them a single practical man except Gambetta, and he is away at Tours. It is a Government of lawyers and spouters; of words they give us plenty, of government nothing. I would rather, infinitely rather, that the women at the Halles should chose a dozen of the most capable women among them and establish them as the Government. I will guarantee you would see a change for the better before twenty-four hours were over. I doubt if you could see a change for the worse. Jules Favre with his ridiculous phrase, not one foot of our territory, not one stone of our fortresses, is no better than a mountebank, and the others are as bad. Would that either Ducrot or Vinoy had the firmness and half the talent of a Napoleon. They would march the troops in, sweep away this gathering of imbeciles, establish martial law, disarm Belleville and Montmartre, shoot Flourens, Pyat, Blanqui, and a hundred of the most noxious of these vermin; forbid all assemblages, turn the National Guards into soldiers, and after rendering Paris impotent for mischief turn their attention to the Germans. The one thing that can save Paris to my mind is a military dictator, but I see no sign of such a man being forthcoming."

"Bravo! bravo!" several of the students shouted, "what a pity it is that you are an Englishman, Cuthbert. You would be just the man for us otherwise."

"At any rate, I should do something and not let everything drift," Cuthbert retorted, joining in the laugh at his own un-

accustomed vehemence; "but there, we have broken our agreement, now let us revert to art;" but the effort was vain, the talk soon drifted back again to the siege, and many were the conjectures as to what Trochu's famous plan could be and which point offered the most hopeful chance for the army to pierce the German cordon.

Mary Brander had a fortnight before enrolled herself among the nurses at the American ambulance, which was doing admirable work, and was admitted by the French themselves to be a model which could be followed with great advantage in their own hospitals. Here everything was neat, clean, and well arranged. The wounded were lodged in tents which were well ventilated and yet warm. The surgeons and some of the nurses were also under canvas, while others, among whom was Mary Brander, went back to their homes when their turn of duty was over. They had, like the ladies who worked in the French hospitals, adopted a sort of uniform and wore the white badge with the red cross on their arms. With this they could go unquestioned, and free from impertinent remarks through the thickest crowds, everyone making way for them with respectful civility.

"It is terrible," she said to Cuthbert, upon his calling one evening when she was off duty, "and yet I do not feel it so trying as listening to the silly talk and seeing the follies of the people in the streets. The poor fellows bear their sufferings so patiently, they are so grateful for every little thing done for them, that one cannot but feel how much there is likable among the French in spite of their follies. I talk to them a good deal and it is almost always about their homes and their families, especially their mothers. Sometimes it is their sweethearts or their sisters. With mobiles and linesmen it is just the same. Sometimes I write letters for them—such simple, touching letters as they are, it is difficult not to cry as they dictate, what are, in many cases, last farewells. They always want those at home to know that they have died doing their duty, but beyond that they don't say much of themselves. It is of those to whom they are writing that they think. They tell them to cheer up.

They bid younger brothers take their place. Besides the letters which will be photographed and sent off by pigeon post, I have a pile of little packets to be despatched when Paris is open—locks of hair, photographs, Bibles, and keepsakes of all kinds."

"I think at any rate, Mary, you have at present discovered one branch at least of woman's mission upon which we cannot quarrel. We grant not only your equality but your superiority to us as nurses."

Mary Brander smiled faintly, but ignored the opening for argument.

"Some of them are dreadfully wounded," she went on, her thoughts reverting to the hospital. "It is terrible to think that when the great battle everyone seems looking forward to takes place, there may be thousands of wounded to be cared for. When do you think it will be?"

"Soon; of course no one can say when, but I don't see anything to gain from waiting longer. The mobiles are as good as they are likely to be made. One can't call the line disciplined, according to the English ideas of discipline, but they are better than they were, and at any rate all are anxious for something to be done."

"Do you think they will get through?"

He shook his head.

"If they could fall suddenly upon the Germans they might do so, but it is no easy matter to move large bodies of men quickly, and to be successful they ought to be able to hurl themselves against the Germans before they have time to concentrate. I have no doubt whichever side we issue out on, we shall get on fairly enough as long as we have the assistance of the guns of the forts; but beyond that I don't think we shall get. The Germans must by this time know the country vastly better than we do. They are immensely better trained in making extensive movements. They have excellent generals and good officers. I fancy it will be the same thing that it has been before. We shall make an advance, we shall push the enemy back for a bit, we shall occupy positions, and the next day the Germans will retake them. We have no method and no commissariat. Even

now bodies of troops are outside the walls frequently four-and-twenty hours without food. In the confusion consequent on a battle matters will be ten times worse. In the morning the troops will be half-starved and half-frozen, and there will be very little fight left in them."

"What would you do if you were commander-in-chief, Cuthbert?"

"I am altogether unfit to make a plan, and still more unfit to carry it out," he said, "but my idea would certainly be to attack somewhere with half my force, to force the enemy back, and to hold positions at the end of the day, so that the Germans would concentrate to attack in the morning. At night I would withdraw the greater portion of them, march them straight across Paris; the other half of the army would attack there at daybreak, and would be reinforced soon after the fighting began by those who had fought the day before. I think in that way they ought to be able to cut their way out, but what they would do when they once get out is more than I can tell you. They have no cavalry to speak of, while the Germans have a splendid cavalry force who would harass them continually. The infantry would pursue and would march infinitely better than we should do. We should scatter to get food, whole regiments would break up and become masses of fugitives, and finally we should be surrounded, either cut to pieces or forced to surrender. Of two things, I am not sure that it would not be best for us to be handsomely thrashed on the first day of our sortie."

"You take a very gloomy view of things," she said, almost angrily.

"Why, I should have thought you would be pleased. I am prophesying success for your friends, the Germans."

"I don't know why you should always insist that they are my friends. I was of opinion that they were right at first, and am so still, but I think they now are behaving hardly and cruelly; at least I think Bismarck is. It was heartless for him to insist, as a condition of the armistice, that Paris should not be re-victualled while it lasted. Of course they could not agree to that, though they would have agreed to anything like fair

conditions. Everyone really wanted peace, and if the Germans hadn't insisted on those terms, peace would have been made. So things have changed altogether, and it is clear that not the Germans, but their leaders, want to injure and humiliate France to the utmost. They were not content with their pound of flesh, but they want to destroy France altogether. I despised these people at first, but I don't despise them now. At least they are wonderfully patient, and though they know what they will have to suffer when everything is eaten up, no one has said a word in favor of surrender, since Bismarck showed how determined he was to humiliate them."

"I think I shall win my bet after all, Mary."

"I am not so sure as I was that you won't. I didn't think I could ever have eaten horse-flesh, but it is really not so bad. Monsieur Michaud told us, yesterday, that he dined out with some friends and had had both cat and rat. Of course they were disguised with sauces, but the people made no secret of what they were, and he said they were really very nice. I don't think I could try them, but I don't feel as certain as I did; anyhow, we haven't begun to touch our stores, and there is no talk of confiscating everything yet."

CHAPTER XI.

Two men were sitting in a cabaret near the Halles. One was dressed in the uniform of a sergeant of the National Guard. He was a powerfully-built man, with a black beard and a mustache, and a rough crop of hair that stuck out aggressively beneath his kepi. The other was some fifteen years younger; beyond the cap he wore no military uniform. He had a mustache only, and was a good-looking young fellow of the Ouvrier class.

"I tell you it is too bad, Père Dufaure. A year ago she pretended she liked me, and the fact that she wore good dresses and was earning lots of money did not seem to make any difference in her. But now all that is changed. That foreigner