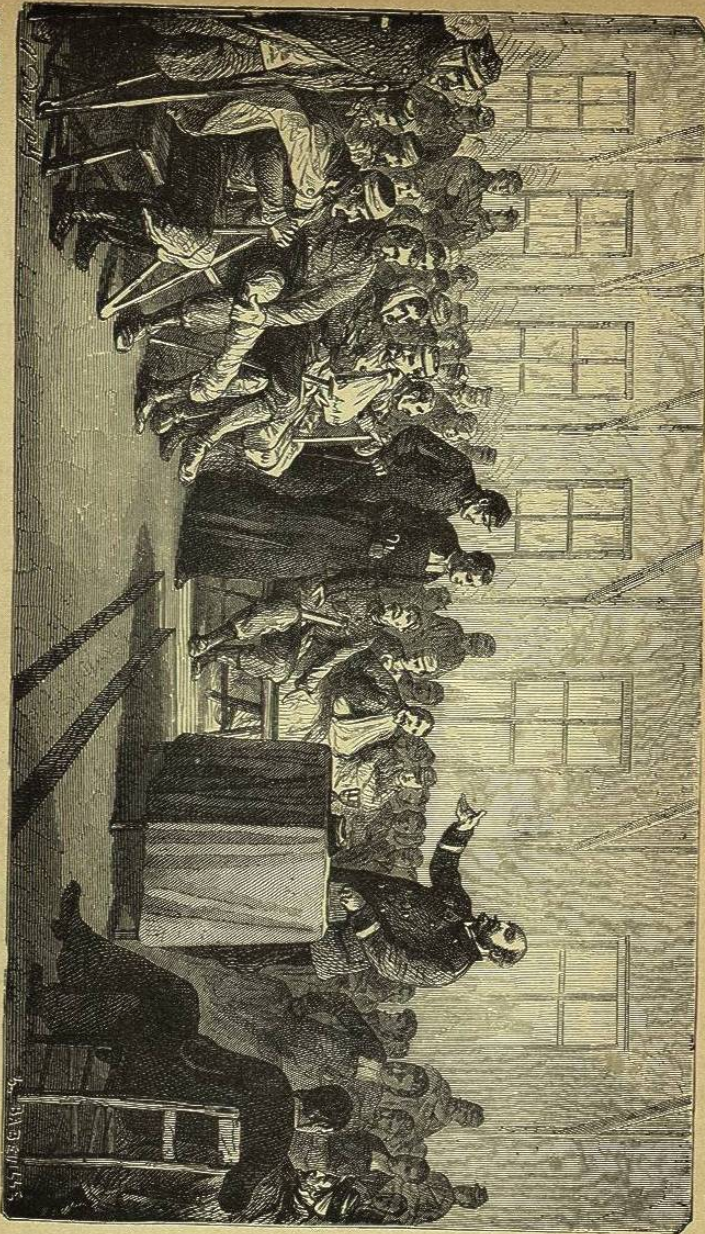


M. DE LA GRANGERIE, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE PRESS AMBULANCE, ADDRESSING THE CONVALESCENTS IN ONE OF THE PAVILIONS OF LONGCHAMPS.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LONGCHAMPS PAVILIONS.

It was on the 19th of January that the Longchamps Pavilions were placed at the disposal of the Press ambulances. M. Ricord, charged with the entire organization, at once asked Brother Philippe for a considerable number of Brothers to act as nurses, and he himself presided at their installation. The great hospital was but a short time unoccupied. Brother Exupérien, Director of Novices in Paris, was placed in charge as chief manager.

The natural kindness of the Brothers made them soon gain the confidence of the sick. Who could resist religious so gentle and charitable? The Brothers were to the sick what the Apostles were to the first Christians. Dr. Ricord, when doing the honors of the ambulance to visitors, never failed to pay a tribute to the merit of his infirmarians. "The Brothers have done everything for us," he would say; "without them we could not have done half so much good, even with double the staff we have."

A Brother once asked him whether things were going on to his satisfaction. "My dear Brother," he answered in the kindest tone, "you do much more than we expected. Your devotedness surprises us. Ah! there is in the religious sentiment a strength, an elevation, a grandeur, that subdues and astonishes me."

Dr. Demarquay spoke in no less flattering terms. "What



should we have done without the Brothers?" he exclaimed. "It is they who have enabled us to do good on so vast a scale."

The work at Longchamps was laborious by day, but it was much more so by night. Many of the wounded required unceasing care. Yet all these duties, painful as they might be, were faithfully discharged. It was consoling to the Brother Director to find, in his nightly rounds, all his Brothers at their post: this one watching by the bedside of a wounded man, that one praying for the soldiers; here, another attending to the stoves; all ready, at the first signal, to hasten to any patient who might require their assistance.

The number of the wounded, the arrangement of the wards, the concourse of intelligent and devoted men, allowed many things to be done at Longchamps that would have been difficult, or even impracticable, elsewhere. To instruct and improve the moral condition of the soldiers, while amusing them, conferences were held at Longchamps, at which all the wounded who were able to do so regularly attended. M. de la Grangerie, secretary-general of the Press ambulances, kindly undertook to give lectures, twice a week, on the history of France . . . . Other discourses on Natural History, Industry, Travels, etc., were successfully given, to the great satisfaction of the numerous staff of the Longchamps ambulance, and also that of Decamp street, who asked permission to be present on these occasions. Numerous games were also introduced by the Brothers, ever anxious to cheer and amuse the convalescents.

The soldiers showed themselves religiously disposed. At their request, the hospital rule was enforced in the ambulance. Morning and evening, before and after meals, a short prayer was said aloud by a Brother in every ward; all the wound-

ed joined, and not the slightest irreverence was ever shown. On Sunday, holy Mass was said at the most convenient hour. Those able to rise, never failed to be present. It was touching to see those poor, infirm men, with their crutches, their arms in a sling, their heads bandaged, praying calmly in the holy place, following the service with interest, and joining with fervor in the hymns that were sung. Dr. Ricord, on witnessing the scene, was deeply moved. "Oh how beautiful is religion!" he exclaimed; "what a comforting and saving influence it exercises on souls! If Mottu were here now, he would not be so ready to take down the crucifix."

When the insurrection of March 18th broke out, the Longchamps Pavilions contained 500, between sick, wounded and convalescents. The Press committee found itself in a very embarrassing and critical position, by the installation in the Hotel de Ville of a usurping and criminal power. Dr. Ricord was enjoying a few days of well-earned rest in the country. In his absence, his friend, Dr. Demarquay, had taken charge, and he judged it best to continue at Longchamps, even under the inauspicious reign of the Commune, the charitable mission of the Press.

The victims of this fratricidal war, and most of their relatives, cherished the strongest prejudices against the Brothers. Some said: "They will give us up to the Versaillists; they will put us in prison;" others: "They'll make us go to confession; they will take no care of us." Numerous complaints were carried to the Commune; spies on spies were sent, and investigation after investigation made. At last the truth broke on those darkened eyes, and the Communists began to do justice to the heroic nurses of the sick and the wounded. By patience, kindness, and charity, the Brothers



disarmed their enemies, their detractors; their great policy consisted in the fulfilment of the Gospel precept: "Do good to all." The most fanatical Communists were the object of the greatest care, the most delicate attention. Esteem and affection soon replaced distrust and hatred. Strange to say, not only the private guardsmen, but the officers and commanders shared these sentiments of gratitude and admiration for the devoted Brothers.

In the first days of April, some half score of officers of the Commune visited the Longchamps ambulance. They inspected the several pavilions with an air of great authority. In one ward nearly full of national guards, the commander of the party found himself face to face with one of his comrades: "Do you want anything?" "My dear sir," said the man in the bed, "we are all of opinion here that we would not be so well taken care of anywhere else." All the others declared the same; the agent of the municipal authorities had to bow to the Brother Director in token of satisfaction.

Some days after, Citizen Ostyn, a member of the Commune, went likewise on a visit of inspection to Longchamps. He saw the order and cleanliness of everything, and heard the unanimous testimony of all the National Guards in favor of the Brothers.

A major of Montmartre, wounded in both legs, asked to speak with him. "Citizen," said he, in a loud voice, in presence of Dr. Demarquay, M. de la Grangerie, and several others, "I have to complain." Every one looked astonished. "Of what?" demanded Ostyn. "The Brothers are too good to us; they spoil us. Their kindness and attention are beyond all bounds." Hearing the same testimony from all, Citizen Ostyn was compelled to thank the Brothers for their care of the patients, without regard to opinions. Alas! here

below nothing but misery is complete. On the 18th of April, the dear religious were to receive the reward of their zeal. They were ordered to quit the Longchamps ambulance. "No more priests! no more religious!" such was the cry of the hydra. The churches were profaned, the ministers of the altar imprisoned. God was to be torn from the hearts of the people, in order to govern them better; say rather, that they might be tyrannized over more easily. Little did they care for their welfare, or their comfort. After having forbidden the Brothers entrance to the schools, they next drove them from the bedside of the sick and wounded. The Brothers that had watched over them so faithfully, so tenderly, that had soothed and lightened their darkest hours, and by their devotedness had led them again to health, or, when they were to die, smoothed their passage to eternity! No wonder the expulsion of these holy, self-sacrificing men from the Longchamps ambulance threw all the patients, especially the Federals, into the utmost consternation. All were urgent in their entreaties that the Brothers might be restored to them. Petitions were signed in every ward. It was curious to see men, so recently the supporters and defenders of an anti-religious cause, demanding the assistance of those who served them in the name of religion.

Knowing that Citizen Roussel, delegated to the ambulances, had broken all the crucifixes in other ambulances, it was thought wise to take away those of Longchamps, fearing to provoke an odious profanation. The Commune turned a deaf ear to the threats and entreaties of their own sick and wounded at Longchamps. A Garibaldian of very advanced opinions would not remain at Longchamps after the Brothers' expulsion. He had himself at once removed to the ambulance of the Grand Orient. Interesting himself in three



young Brothers who had been extremely kind to him, he resolved to facilitate their escape from Paris. Unable to write himself, he dictated a letter addressed to the commissary of the Menilmontant district. The letter had its effect. The commissary gave the passport necessary for leaving Paris. The three *protégés* of the grateful Garibaldian succeeded in getting safely away from the city, which was then but a vast prison, soon to become a field of slaughter.

Religious service was suspended in Longchamps from the 18th of March till the 23d of May. During that time, how many wounded appeared before God! Almost all these men would have died a Christian death, had they been cared for by the Brothers.

Ten other ambulances in Paris had no other nurses, no other attendants, than the worthy sons of the Venerable De La Salle. No suffering was too great for them to relieve, no act of devotedness went beyond their will. These were the incomparable men whom the Communists strove to banish from the schools and the camps. To break the harmony of society with religion, is to deny the natural instinct of the heart, and to reach, by the deification of man, the last extreme of human folly. They who know not how to invoke God, end, sooner or later, by being the slaves of a despot; it is for atheistical people that tyrants are made. "If a nation wishes to be free," says De Tocqueville, "it must have belief; and if it have not faith, it must *serve*."

A remarkable cure was effected in the Longchamps ambulance, through the intercession of the Venerable Jean Baptiste De La Salle. A young soldier, terribly wounded, was brought to the ambulance; at first his case seemed to progress favorably; then grave symptoms set in, and the surgeons gave up all hope of saving him. One of them said

nothing short of a miracle could cure him, and, he added, he had never seen one performed. A Brother, standing at the patient's bed, heard the remark. The word *miracle* roused his faith. He had a filial reverence for the Founder of his Order. "Who knows," thought he, "but Providence may have brought this about in order to manifest anew the power and glory of that great servant of God?" From the back of a picture he got a piece of the habit of his blessed Father. With this precious relic, he went to the patient, and while he told him that human science admitted itself powerless to save him, still he believed he might be cured. "God is the master of science and of life," he said. "He sometimes grants to his Saints the power of raising the dead, and of bringing back to life and health those whom men despaired of saving. Have confidence in our blessed Father; he has already wrought miracles, and we are all going to beg of him to work one for you."

The patient listened with attention, and was most willing to place himself under the protection of the patron of youth. He piously received the last sacraments, and put all his trust in heaven. The precious relic was applied to his wounds. Soon after he sank into a refreshing sleep. During the night the Brothers faithfully prayed and watched over him. The next morning the doctors were amazed at the change in his condition. All the threatening symptoms were gone and he was pronounced out of danger. By the time the novena which the Brothers made for him was finished, he was able to be up. Filled with profound gratitude to the Venerable Jean Baptiste De La Salle, he returned cured to his family, on the very day the Brothers were expelled from Longchamps by the Commune!