

"We are on the eve of being besieged; 60,000 Prussians are marching on Langres, and God knows what will become of us. We are preparing to make the best resistance we can.

"If I could have passed through the enemy's lines, I should have gone to visit you, but we are surrounded and trapped like vermin.

"Adieu, dear Brothers: pray for us, and believe me, ever gratefully and affectionately yours,

"C. LAND VERLE,
"Captain 1st Company, 1st Battalion,
"Egalité Volunteers."

From another letter, dated Marseilles, March 29th, 1871, written by the same officer to the Brother Director of Vienne, we append the following extract:—

"A certain number of the population of Marseilles, furious demagogues, wanting to imitate the insurgents of Paris, took possession of the Government House, and, for eight days, ruled the city. Happily, there was no well-organized authority among them, and very soon their factious demonstrations fell to the ground, condemned by all honest people. Poor France! how low have thy children fallen! There is neither patriotism, faith, honor, nor any political or religious belief. May God have mercy on us, or we are lost. Save us, Mary! Save us by your intercession with your Son!"

The parish priest of Vauchonvilliers writes to the Brother Director of the Novitiate of Toulouse, May 1st, 1871:—

"DEAR BROTHER:

"I thank you in the name of the relatives of Athanase Le-

franc, and in my own name, for the spiritual and corporal care you have given to that young man. The father, mother, and sisters heard the sad news with intense sorrow, soothed, however, by Christian resignation. In the misfortunes which have come upon them, they thank God that pious and holy hands performed the last sad duties to their beloved child.

"Since the young man breathed his last in your house, I recommend him, dear Brother, to the prayers of your pious congregation, as you are by duty and by vocation the friends, the Brothers of Christian youth.

"I celebrated a requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of Athanase Lefranc in the church where he was baptized and made his first Communion. The whole parish united in paying a last tribute of respect to his memory.

"I have the honor to be, etc.,

"BAILLY,
"Pastor of Vauchonvilliers (Aube)."

The father of a young soldier writes thus to the Brother Director of Narbonne:

"ARLES, Dec. 9th, 1870.

"VERY REVEREND BROTHER SUPERIOR:

"I have learned from my son, a young soldier who was sometime in your ambulance, that he was in your care while under treatment for a wound in his foot. I am rejoiced that it was in your house he was located. He tells me that nothing could exceed the kind and unceasing care bestowed upon him by you and your revered Brothers: I thank you from the depth of my heart, and will ever owe you a debt of gratitude.

"I have for many years filled the office of mayor in this

our city of Arles, and have thus been in a position to know and fully appreciate the merit and the untiring devotion of the members of your Institute. I know that no labor, no fatigue, no sacrifice, is too great for their patriotic devotedness, and in the terrible trials which France is undergoing, they are having more than a share.

"It would give me great pleasure, *M. le Supérieur*, and Very Reverend Brother, to have an opportunity of testifying my gratitude in a more convincing manner.

"Accept, with my thanks and respects, the assurance of my affectionate regard.

"MOUTET,
"Notary."

A liberated soldier, writing from his home to the Brother Director of Narbonne, says :

"I hope dear Brothers Lonjin, Jomés and Laurentian are entirely over their illness. Your sickness, Brothers, would be a great national calamity. I depend on you to give me news of every one in your house, all of whom my grateful heart will never cease to love. Every one at home unites in thanking you a thousand times for the great care you took of me. For myself, I can never thank you enough.

"A. BEUNET, JR."

A mobile from Loiret writes from Orléans, March 21, 1871, to the Brother Sub-Director of Nimes :—

"DEAR BROTHER :

"I reached home yesterday evening in good health, and found my family the same. At the Lyons dépôt I met the mobile, Brosse, who was in dear Brother Tranquille's

class-room ; he told me that, on reaching Beaucaire, he was so fatigued that he was obliged to go to the hospital, and from there they sent him back to Nimes, to the International ambulance, where he had good cause to regret the dear Brothers and the care they took of him.

"It only remains for me to thank you, dear Brother Sub-Director, for the great kindness shown me by you and the other Brothers during my long stay amongst you ; it was a great disappointment to me that I could not shake hands with dear Brother Director when I was leaving. You will please tell him so, and give him my best respects, as also to Brothers Terrède, Sabas, Théodule, and Thion. Oh ! I was forgetting dear little Brother Thomas, the pill-man. . .

"It would be a great pleasure to hear from you ; till then,

"I remain, etc.,
"A. BEZARD."

A soldier of the marine infantry writes to Brother Cyprian of Nimes :—

"ON BOARD THE FRIGATE *Orne*, 18th June, 1871.

"DEAR BROTHER CYPRIAN :

"I have not forgotten the kind care you took of me during my stay in your ambulance. There are moments in life when one finds himself plunged in one of those moral fevers which deprive the mind of all clearness, the whole being of energy ; I was in this condition when I reached Nimes.

"Providence had not deserted me ; for it brought me to your house, dear Brothers, to you, whose example is so well adapted to recall one to a sense of duty. Your abnegation, your calm and simple life, which you know how to make so

useful to those who suffer,—all combined to give me better thoughts; I remembered my mother, so good and pious, and I thanked God for having brought me to you.

“There are phases in life which leave imprints within us; they are often a beacon which serves to guide our steps, and point out the way we are to follow. I know not what the future may have in store for me, but, come what may, I will never forget your delicate attention, dear Brothers of the ambulance, or that of the kind lady, Madame Surville. I often think of you all.

“Dear Brother Cyprian, I beg you to convey my kindest regards to the revered Brothers I knew in the ambulance: are Brother Tranquille and Brother Sub-Director still in Nîmes? If you see the Reverend Father, please give him my respects.

“Accept, dear Brother, the assurance of my entire devotion.

“ALBERT POUCHON,
“*3d Marine Infantry.*”

A captain of artillery writes from Lyons to the Brother Director of Sedan, Sept. 1st, 1871:—

“DEAR BROTHER SUPERIOR:

“I know not whether you remember three artillery officers who last year, about this time, came knocking at your door, asking shelter for the night. They were overcome with fatigue and the mortification of defeat. A bench whereon to stretch their weary limbs was all they asked. You brought them in, although your house was crowded with wounded, you gave them lodging, and what lodging?—your own sleeping-rooms! As for them, the remembrance of your great

kindness, inseparably associated with that of their misfortune, shall never be effaced from their hearts.

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“Accept, *M. le Supérieur*, our joint thanks, and believe us ever gratefully,

“LE TRONE,
“*Captain of Artillery.*”

A sergeant writes to the Brother Director of La Charité:

“DEAR BROTHER DIRECTOR:

“I contracted a debt of gratitude during my stay with you. In these unhappy times how many tears are daily shed! how many families are sorrowing over griefs that time can never heal! It is only the Christian religion that soothes them with her bright hope. In their hours of suffering many have had angels of devotedness around them; the sight of them was a consolation; they offered in their own person a living example of detachment from perishable things.

“Monks, nuns, priests, and Brothers, all united their various talents in a work of humanity which honors them, while constituting, at the same time, the glory of our epoch. Happy for him who has been enabled to judge, and, better still, who has experienced the efficacy of so many virtues!

“He will pray for those who, after the example of our Dear Lord, have given themselves up for their brethren: he will ask for them all earthly and heavenly blessings.

“Thanking you every day of my life,

“I am, etc., J. GAUTIER,
“*Sergeant.*”

A soldier from Calais writes to the same Brother Director :

"DEAR BROTHER DIRECTOR :

"March 23d, 1871.

"My wishes are accomplished ! I am again in the midst of my family ; I am reunited to all I love most. My heart is transported with joy ; and yet, since I received your letter, I feel that there is no perfect happiness here below. I am far away from you, and I feel the separation very sensibly.

"I was just going to write to you and to our dear Victor, when your letter surprised me with the sad news of his death, the last in the ambulance. He was so worthy of the friendship and esteem of all who knew him ! The death of one so young and strong gives rise to serious reflections ; my turn may come at any moment, and God grant that I may not have to appear with empty hands before my Judge.

"Adieu, dear Brother ; present my respects to the Reverend Chaplain, the kind Brothers and Sisters, and all who took care of me. I am quite cured now ; my relatives all request me to thank you for them.

"Please to accept, etc.

"ERNEST DENUGE.

"J. M. J."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BROTHERS UNDER THE COMMUNE.

Before and during the war of 1870-71, forerunning signs of the insurrection of March 18th were not wanting. From the ravages of invasion, afflicted France passed to the horrors of civil war. The new masters of Paris profaned all, destroyed all, with their foul, unhallowed hands. Religion, liberty, laws, guarantees, honor—all were violated by the men of the Commune ; by that infamous race capable of conspiring against their country in the very day of her woe and humiliation. In their demoniac hatred against God, they fell on His ministers, His religious, on crucifixes, holy pictures, and, in fine, on everything relating to religion and its soul-uplifting ceremonies.

The Christian Brothers, who had done and suffered so much for their country, and who in their heroic devotedness had shown the beneficent power of religion, were now to receive, as their earthly reward, the basest ingratitude, the most cruel persecution. The Communist leaders forbade them to take their pupils to church, to teach them the catechism, or prepare them for their first Communion ; and they appealed to other teachers, who, imbued with their principles, were willing to follow their programme. The schools of the Christian Brothers were doomed, and the warrant for their destruction was soon to be put into execution.

On the 2d of April, Paris was aroused by the sound of