

But the ghastliest sight in Père-Lachaise was in the southeastern corner, where close to the boundary wall had been a natural hollow. The hollow was now filled up by dead. One could measure the dead by the rood. There they lay tier above tier, each tier powdered over with a coating of chlorid of lime, two hundred of them patent to the eye, besides those underneath hidden by the earth covering layer after layer. Among the dead were many women. There, thrown up in the sunlight, was a well-rounded arm with a ring on one of the fingers; there again was a bust shapely in death; and there were faces which to look upon made one shudder—faces distorted out of humanity with ferocity and agony combined. The ghastly

effect of the dusky white powder on the dulled eyes, the gnashed teeth, and the jagged beards cannot be described. How died those men and women? Were they carted here and laid out in ghastly lying-in-state in this dead-hole of Père-Lachaise? Not so; the hole had been replenished from close by. There was no difficulty in reading the open book. Just there was where they were posted up against yonder pock-pitted wall, and shot to death as they stood or crouched. Let us turn our backs on the blood-stained scene, and pray that never again may the civilized world witness such a week of horrors as Paris underwent in those bright, early summer days of 1871!

*Archibald Forbes.*



DRAWN BY A. F. JACCACI.

WALL WHERE THE COMMUNISTS WERE EXECUTED IN PÈRE-LACHAISE. (FROM A DRAWING MADE IN 1891.)

## WHAT AN AMERICAN GIRL SAW OF THE COMMUNE.



AT the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war in September, 1870, we were obliged to leave Paris very suddenly, and with many others went to England, where we remained all the winter.

In the spring of 1871 my mother, getting very tired of traveling from one place to another with a large family, decided to come back to her home in Paris. All seemed quiet enough just then, and, as my mother very truly said she had never heard of two sieges immediately following each other, we settled ourselves in our apartment. Mr. Washburne, the American minister, hearing we were back, came in to see my mother, and told her to go

at once to London, for he thought Paris no fit place for women and children. This bit of advice was disregarded. After a few days had passed the gates of Paris were closed, and the second siege, commonly called that of the Commune, had begun.

Mr. Washburne was very kind, and came to see us often, sometimes finding us pretty well frightened. One evening when he came he found us on our way to the cellar for the night, but that was almost at the end of the siege. I may as well state here that I never got so far as the cellar, but my intimate friends, children of the concierge, informed me that a great many people had their mattresses brought down to the cellar, and slept there every night, experiencing, I suppose, a feeling of safety, as the only



thing that could then injure them was the falling of the whole house; and surely that was more pleasant and quite as effective as mutilation by a shell.

At first mother would not believe in the siege, and when the first cannon was fired she informed us that the noise was not a cannon, "It was only the *porte cochère* slamming." She had to abandon that theory when the *porte cochère* not only slammed but whistled over the house in a very peculiar manner. So constant was the firing that, when an armistice was given, Paris was disagreeably quiet and monotonous—at least I used to think so. At first every shot frightened me, and I imagined that every shell not only was aimed at our house but would surely strike it. In time I ceased to think of such a possibility, and at last became so accustomed to the noise that I rarely heard it. Indeed when a shell whistled over us or came near us, I often had not heard, or rather had not noticed, the explosion of the gun which had projected it. After a week or so I do not think any one thought much about the bombardment.

We used to study in the back drawing-room, the windows of the front room being stuffed with mattresses to prevent the shells from coming in; I always thought that if the said shells intended to enter, the sight of a mattress would not change their course. However, a shell never tried to get in our front windows, or it might have disturbed our studies. If, while we were reading aloud or reciting, a shell exploded near the house, we would stop for a moment to look at each other with a listening stare, and then quietly go on, the monotonous sound of our voices not changing any more than if we had been interrupted by a knock at the door. This behavior on our part may have come from being so much with our governess, for she certainly was the coolest and calmest woman I have ever met. She had been through the Revolution of 1848 as a child, and I had heard a great deal about it from her, and had conceived, as children do, very false impressions. My own idea of war, revolution, or siege in Paris meant but one thing in the end, which was that your head had to come off sooner or later; so my greatest fear (for the first two weeks) was of soldiers, or any rough-looking man I met on the street. I believe you can get accustomed to anything in this world if you make up your mind to it.

The first time I heard a shell explode, I was with my two brothers in the conservatory overlooking the yard; the conservatory had been made into a play-room. We were standing at different tables, playing with tin soldiers, some being Prussians and others French; somehow I was always a Prussian. My eldest brother

suddenly asked me if I had ever heard an obus whistle? No! I never had. I was not paying much attention to this question, or to his conversation. "Well," he said, "the other day I was on the roof with M—— (the butler), and we heard the queerest kind of noise, and he called out to me to lie down and"—his story was interrupted by—well! it certainly was a queer kind of noise, a loud whistling noise, and as it grew nearer and louder, it seemed as if it would deafen us. I felt my knees tremble under me, and I slowly sank down to the floor, where I remained for a few moments, while the sound gradually grew fainter and farther away, as the projectile passed without striking anything. Terribly frightened, I looked up, and saw that we had all three crouched down with our faces in our hands; and as we stood up one after the other, W——, with a long breath and a relieved sigh, simply said, "That 's one!" I heard a great many after that, and always threw myself down, as I was told to do when I could, but I have never been so frightened as I was that day.

I remember looking out of the front window one day in company with mother and the maid, when a shell went straight down our street without touching anything, until it struck the last house, which was set on fire. One Sunday morning we had a rather unpleasant experience. As we were vainly looking for a church in which to hear mass, we saw a small group of men, women, and children, and, naturally enough we joined the crowd. The object of interest proved to be a man (or, shall I say, a born fool?) with an obus standing in a bucket of water, a wet towel wrapped around it; it was still hot (having fallen without exploding), and he was slowly unscrewing the cap with a long stick. I did not see much more, for I was seized by somebody, and hustled out of the crowd and down the street. Whether the obus burst, and killed the clever individual and his friends, I never learned.

I have heard people say that there were no cabs to be had in Paris during the Commune or siege. I do not pretend to know if they existed during the siege, as I was not there, but I believe carriages were used for firewood and horses sold for beef at the butchers'. During the Commune, however, cabs were to be had; very possibly the cabmen drove their horses till they needed them for dinner, instead of hanging their carcasses in the cellar, thus making the poor animals a source of income as well as of food. My brother was sent for a cab one day, and, as he was so long away, mother got very nervous, and went down to the front door with the governess, wondering what was detaining him so long. Suddenly they heard the most frightful explosion from a shell



bursting close at hand. A fearful presentiment seemed to come over them, as they stood staring at each other. In a little while W—— came running down the street, out of breath, and red with excitement, holding his hat in his hands and looking at it, while he moved it up and down as you would to prevent a griddle-cake from burning. He said he was on the Avenue Friedland, when he heard a shell coming behind him. His first idea was to run away from it, which he did with all his might, but, finding it was getting the best of him, and coming straight for him, he threw himself on the ground, where he remained breathless for a moment, while it struck the ground half a yard from him, bounded up to the first floor of a house, and, striking it, fell down again, at a little distance from where he was lying. He jumped up and went toward the shell to pick it up, when a man came out of the house and claimed it as having struck his house. Neither of them could touch it yet, but W——, with natural American blood in his veins, throwing his hat over it managed to push it in, and ran off. He smelt strangely of sulphur, when he appeared before us with his hot treasure.

Fighting against your own people is not what you might call a pleasant occupation, and a great many men, having refused to do it, and not being able to get out of Paris, hid themselves in the cellars and garrets of their houses. Neighbors are not easily deceived and rarely to be trusted anywhere; this is particularly true of the French concierge; therefore it was pretty well known where the refugees were. The soldiers drummed in the streets to call them out. Some did come out for fear of being shot, but others did not, and our butler was one of those who did not. The soldiers usually drummed three times, then looked for, and usually found, the concealed ones, I am sorry to say. But we had better luck, for we managed to keep our prisoner safe till the Versailles came in; not without trouble, however, and one or two good frights. A paper was sent with M——'s full name, ordering him out. Mother sent word that a man by that name had been her butler before the war, but that he had left her to go to fight the Prussians; this was true enough, and his coming back to us in England was nobody's business. The next thing was to try to get him out of Paris, for fear they might search our apartment for him. The American flag saved us from that annoyance—a piece of good luck, this flag having been bought (I believe by mistake) so big that we were usually mistaken for the American embassy, or somehow related to it. I believe M—— thought of getting through the gates in a cart of soiled clothes, but one or two men had tried it, had been found, and instantly shot. Notwithstand-

ing the flag, I think mother was rather nervous about him, and we had a pretty good fright one day, when the front-door bell rang, and the servants, rushing to my mother, told her that they had not opened the door, because it was a soldier who had come to get the butler to shoot him, as they knew he was there. Whether or not mother was much frightened I cannot tell; she spoke for a few moments to our governess, and then decided to go alone and open the front door. We were very much excited, and I immediately imagined nothing short of a battle in the "ante-chamber," and M—— shot before our eyes. Horrible as the idea was, and fond as I was of the man, I had a queer feeling that if anything was going to happen I was going to witness it, if I died for it, and I was also quite aware that our side would never give in.

By the time we were all worked up to a great state of excitement, the door was opened by mama, who with a frigid stare, and a more than decided expression about her mouth, faced the enemy, and demanded how he dared come to her apartment and ring her bell. A poor, mild-looking, and embarrassed man, in the Communist uniform, explained with a humble manner, and a more humble voice, that he was sorry to disturb madame, but he had been obliged to dress like this for safety. Did n't madame know him? he was the tuner, and had come to tune her piano.

One morning a report was circulated that there was an armistice, and it would last about six hours. The firing had not been heard for some time, so we naturally believed this little story, and decided to go, and have a look at the enemy; they could be easily seen from the Arc de Triomphe. Accordingly we started out in a procession loaded with opera-glasses, and field-glasses, indeed all the glasses we could get. We saw all we wanted, even a little more. We marched up the Avenue Friedland to the Arc, where we planted ourselves all in a row facing the Avenue de la Grande Armée, and began to examine the enemy. Quite a crowd of people were with us, principally servants, children, and some old men and women, all coming with the same intention, curious to see the enemy.

Ambulances rushed past, going to and fro. They were empty going down to the fortifications, but seemed to be full when coming up. I think they must have brought back some drunken soldiers, for the ordinary Communist seemed always drunk. We could see the enemy quite distinctly, even distinguish the uniform; some were standing in small groups, a few were near the cannon, and some were marching from one place to another, very much like animated tin soldiers. I was beginning to be bored, though I do not believe we had been there very long,





DRAWN BY F. C. JONES.

ENGRAVED BY F. FRENCH.

PULLING DOWN THE VENDÔME COLUMN.<sup>1</sup>

when, looking straight before me (without an opera-glass this time), I saw a big puff of smoke and a flash of light from one of the distant cannon. The tin soldiers had fired at us! I do not think I woke up to the fact that we were being used as a target till the people near us screamed, and ran round like chickens with their heads cut off, not knowing in the least what they were going to do next, or where to run to get out of reach of the cannon. In looking vaguely round me I saw an old man fall, struck by a piece of shell; he was instantly killed. I was frightened, but you must have time to get thoroughly

<sup>1</sup> See an article on "Gustave Courbet, Artist and Communist," in this magazine for February, 1884, from which this picture is taken.—EDITOR.

frightened, and I did not have that. I was still looking at the old man, who had lost his hat as he fell, and I remember thinking how the top of his bald head shone in the sunlight, when to my surprise I was grabbed by the arm by my governess, and in a minute we were all running as fast as our legs would carry us down the avenue toward home. We never believed in armistices again, and the opera-glasses were put away out of sight! We heard afterward that several persons had been killed, and did not hear of people going up to the Arc de Triomphe during the rest of the Commune.

All this time the Communists were building their barricades as fast as possible, and one had been put up behind our house, on the Avenue



Friedland. It was quite unpleasant to see it improve each day, knowing that if they once mounted their cannon on it, we would probably have the Versailles passing through our apartment to take it. We heard very extraordinary stories of the down-town barricades; the up-town ones were said not to be comparable with them, so we decided to judge for ourselves and see what they looked like. I was not often taken on down-town walks; that is the reason I am obliged to confess I never saw a *pétroleuse*. I heard my sisters talk of them, and say they had seen them going to be shot, and literally pulling their hair out by the roots; some of them were very well dressed, but I never saw one. We went to the Place de la Concorde, and actually got a cab to take us there, or rather a cabman, for he had to be thanked for doing us that favor. I have never seen anything so wonderfully built as was that barricade; it was across the Rue de Rivoli, in a line with the Tuileries gardens, and was made entirely of sand-bags and barrels of sand; one little passageway, so narrow that only one person could pass at a time, went zigzag through it.

When it was known that the Colonne Vendôme was to be taken down there was great excitement in Paris; people would not believe the Communists would dare to do such a thing. The day was appointed, and crowds went down to witness the sight, including every one of our family. There was no doubt left in anybody's mind when they arrived on the Place Vendôme, for there we found the scaffolding up, the ropes just ready, and men were sawing the lower part of the column. We might have stayed to see it come down, but some people said it would cause an explosion of gas, and others that the Parisians would not allow the column to be taken down, and there would be a riot, and the crowd was so excited that mother decided to take us away and to come back after it was down, which we did. The crowd was very dense, and ropes were stretched across the Place to prevent the people crossing or coming too near. Soldiers were walking up and down with their guns on their shoulders, looking young and sickly.

We managed to get near the rope, and there we stood for a long while staring at the old column, lying in so many pieces on the ground and covered with dust. The people seemed to be less excited. Whether they were cowed or simply subdued I cannot say; some grumbled and talked to each other in low voices, some few in their rage at the destruction of their great monument swore aloud at the Commune, forgetting the danger of their position. I felt very sorry for an old man next to me who was crying like a child; others looked at him with a pitying expression, and seemed to wish they could cry

too. Mother and our governess were talking together in low voices; there was a slight disagreement on a subject. Suddenly, with great decision on her face, mother lifted the rope, and, passing under it, started to cross the Place, but as she turned round to tell us to follow her, a soldier called out to stop, that it was forbidden to cross, and finding she took no notice of him, he came up to her with his bayonet pointed toward her. I suppose he only meant to frighten her, but he came so near that his bayonet caught in the black lace on her dress. Now the Commune was not very particular as to the kind of soldiers in its service, and the average Communist soldier was from fifteen to twenty-two or -three years of age. This one was about twenty, thin, and unhealthy looking. When mother saw that the gun was entangled in her lace, she stopped, and, looking at him with a disgusted stare, said: "Just look what you have done with your stupidity." The boy seemed quite frightened, and bending over the dress tried to help my mother disentangle it from the gun; it was not easy, without tearing it, and took several minutes. We looked on breathlessly, not knowing what was to happen next; but we might have known if we had thought a little, for, as usual, mother got the best of it. She quietly shook the lace, and, turning round without even looking at the soldier, she walked across the Place Vendôme by herself. There was a slight hesitation on the governess's part, but it did not last long, for she lifted the rope and passed under it, followed by five of us. The soldier again protested, but she quietly said, "Je suis avec madame" as a "mot d'ordre," and we crossed the Place Vendôme without any more delays, to the astonishment of the crowd and the soldiers.

It was very near the end of the siege when the bill for the taxes was sent in, and it was unpleasant to know that you would have to pay them over again when the troops would have possession of Paris. The paper was headed "Citoyenne" (with our name badly spelled, of course), and signed Rajincourt, 41 Rue Garibaldi (Rue Billant in time of peace). I found this paper long afterward, having wrapped a piece of shell in it. Mother went to the office by herself, and told us all about it afterward. She told us she had been a little nervous on her way there, and was not very comfortable when she entered the office or bureau. Two men sat at the table with their hats on the back of their heads, and a few others lounged round. As she entered the room they all turned and stared at her, more from surprise than rudeness, and one of them, tilting his chair back, asked what she wanted. She said she wished to see the superintendent; he pointed to a man behind the grating of the desk. Going up to the desk, she told the super-



intendent who she was, that she had received the bill for the taxes, and was perfectly willing to pay, but she had come herself to ask if they would mind waiting for a few days, as with all this disturbance she had had a little trouble about money matters. He smiled and was quite amiable about it; he said he hoped she would tell her friends how *gentil* they were, they did not mind waiting to please the *citoyenne*, and coming out from behind his desk, he accompanied her toward the door, talking all the while; and as a last show of his good nature, he struck her two or three times on the back, remarking at the same time that she might tell people that the Communists were *pas aussi mauvais après tout*.

I remember so well the evening the Versailles troops entered Paris. It had been a very noisy night, and several times I was waked by extra-noisy cannon, and when, at five o'clock in the morning, the one and only cannon on the barricade of the Avenue Friedland was fired, I thought it was in my room, and actually shot myself out of bed. Almost immediately my brothers came into my room to tell me that the siege was over, the Versailles had just entered; all the front blinds of our house were closed, and nobody was to look out, as the Communists were running away to the barricades downtown, and if we looked out of the windows we might be shot at.

These were mother's orders, and she was locked up in her own room with our governess. We all met in the hall, and talked it over, but only for a very short time, for we decided that we would never have another opportunity to disobey for such a good cause; so we opened one blind, and, as we were hanging out to see all we could, the first thing we noticed was our own mother and the governess craning out of the other window, both of them having a very good time. I cannot say I saw very much, for I was not the first at the window, but I do not believe my youngest brother saw anything.

The few Communists who ran by our street were pushing a cannon as fast as possible, and some soldiers were running, carrying their guns anyhow, but the greater part of them went by the avenues. Then for three days we had a very bad time of it. Many of the Communists hid in cellars, and others put on the workman's blouse, pretending to be delighted to see the city delivered, but it was not easy to fool the soldiers, who could find out the truth well enough from neighbors, and it generally ended by their being found, dragged out, and shot on the squares or in the parks.

I happened to be jumping rope in front of our *porte cochère*, when I saw four soldiers and an officer; two of the soldiers were half dragging a man, who was on his knees before the officer begging for his life. It made my blood run cold, my heart stop beating, to see that poor wretch on his knees, screaming to be spared, and the officer holding a pistol at his head. The soldiers kicked him to make him get up, and hit him on the head, so that you could hear the blows across the street. Somebody from a window called out to the officer not to shoot him before so many women and children, so they pushed and kicked him till they came to the end of our street, and there they shot him. As he was being dragged past our house, they stopped for a moment, and I saw a little boy about five years of age go up and kick the man while he was begging for pity from the officer, and one of the little concierge girls I used to play with told me she had gone to see him shot, and was disappointed because she came too late.

A great many of the Versailles entered by the Avenue Friedland. We stood at the corner of our street watching them, and mother had wine and cigarettes distributed to the officers, as they halted. My brothers and I talked to the soldiers, who were tired and hungry. We heard two of them fighting about their bayonets; one said he had run through five Communists that morning; no wonder his bayonet was bent and full of dry blood. We told one of the officers that the archbishop had been murdered; he would not believe it, and thinking that we did not know what we were talking about, he asked M——. They were very angry, and remarked that they might have entered sooner, but the orders were not to injure Paris, and they thought they could force the insurgents to surrender. A few days later we went down to the *archevêché* to see the archbishop before he was buried. There was a great crowd of people, and we were hurried through the dark rooms hung with black cloth.

I was often frightened during the Commune, but I do not remember anything more terrifying than the fires. One night we went on our roof, and saw Paris burning in eight different places. Mother and our governess sat up half the night watching, not daring to go to bed, while we undressed by the light of the fires. The Tuileries burned for three days and the sky was full of black specks and pieces of paper, lists of things. I have now a list of jewelry that fell in our yard. I suppose that came from the Ministère des Finances, which was burning at the same time.

C. W. T.