



CUIRASSIERS.

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THE FRENCH ARMY.

BY GENERAL LEWAL.



I.
“**E**H, my brunettes! Eh! You are doing no work there. That does not help on the mowing to stretch out your necks and strain your eyes to see if there are any husbands growing in the young wheat.”

Two fine girls, tiptoe on the points of the wooden shoes, clinging like goats to the branches of the green hedge, replied, gayly:

“We are not losing our time perhaps

after all, Maître Durevoix; the regiment is coming back from the manœuvres; it will be passing here in a few minutes. Come and see.”

Maître Durevoix approached, followed by all the workmen. Each one, leaning on his rake, his fork, or his scythe, scanned the valley.

“I see nothing,” said one. “Where is the regiment?” asked his neighbor. “The brunettes are making fools of us,” cried a third. “What! Why, it is passing at the bottom of the hill along the new road; you can see it through the trees.” “There’s a patrol on the hill-top close by us.” “True.” “There’s another by the river, and another by the ruined house. When the troop is on the march it places scouts all around it, as if it were going to meet the enemy at any moment.” “Ah! now they are leaving

the road, wheeling round the burnt field. They don’t have to ask their way. The officers all have papers in their hands. They look at them, and then they know the way better than we do. Yes, sure. Ask Rémy, who has been a soldier.”

“That’s true,” said the mower questioned. “In my time, before the fatal war, we knew nothing about those matters. We went through the regular drill, target practice, and marching, without ever thinking of war. Nowadays the army is always thinking of war, and learning how to make war in the best way. Formerly we soldiers did not know anything. Now the law obliges us to send our children to school, and when they have learned their book they will become finer soldiers than we were.”

“So much the better,” replied Maître Durevoix; “and now to work, and sharply.”

“Oh, one minute more, *patron!*” cried the girls. “They will pass close by here. We shall see them splendidly. Who knows? Perhaps we shall see our future husbands in the ranks.”

“Ah! then there are none but soldiers to make husbands?”

“Certainly, *patron*. One can’t marry a man who has not been a soldier. At any rate, I would not.” “Nor I.” “Nor I,” cried all the girls.

“Let us fetch our pitchers; we will give to drink to some of the men; it is so hot.”

“And they have to work so hard. This morning they started out before daybreak, and they will not get home until after sundown.”

“They must be tired.”

“No. They are accustomed to these long marches. Look how quickly they

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A GENDARME.

go. They don't look as if they were tired."

The regiment advanced smartly. It was not a simple march, but a manoeuvre; step correct, easy bearing, rapid pace, the different movements effected with precision, without noise, and without a word spoken. Neither bugles nor drums; from time to time a whistle. Absolute silence in the ranks; no talking, no singing, no joking.

Rémy, the mower, noticed this. "In my time," he said, "we used to leave behind a lot of weak and lame; now there are no laggards; all are hardened. We used to make a terrible noise; you could hear us long before you could see us. The general commanding yonder men will have no nonsense. He has said no laggards, no chatterers, and there are none. Who would have thought that Gascons could be made to march like mountaineers? Who would have believed that they could be prevented from talking? Well, you see, they march and they don't talk, and nobody complains.

Men and ideas have changed, I can tell you."

Indeed, since the war of 1870 things have been greatly modified in the army. The country people are not alone in remarking the progress made. More expert and less kindly disposed critics abroad have noticed it too.

II.

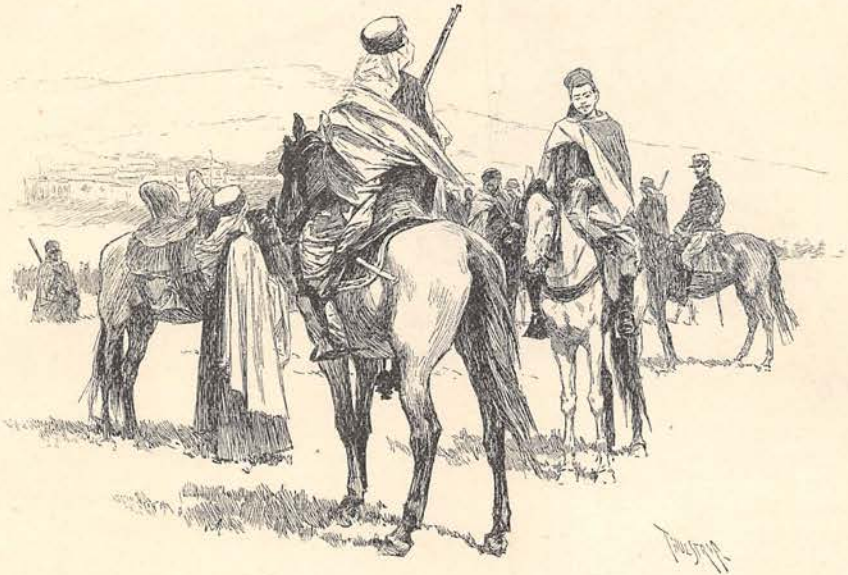
They are right. A new era has begun. Formerly men built temples to a Fortune whose eyes were blindfolded. They waited for Fortune to pass, trusting to boldness, luck, or hazard. Now it is different. Materially, it is necessary to have perfected instruments; spiritually, it is necessary to have complete instruction. We are endeavoring in France to acquire both.

The second Saturday of the month used to be the day of the fortnightly lecture. All the officers of the 175th regiment of infantry assembled in the lecture-room of the barracks of Fontenay, and the colonel called upon Commander Typaud to deliver his address. Typaud, a young major, or *chef de bataillon*, personifying the new army, a brilliant pupil of the *École supérieure de Guerre*, endowed with fine physical and moral qualities, had distinguished himself in the Tunisian expedition. Having knowledge and activity at the same time, he was a thorough officer, and of great promise. His lecture was impatiently looked forward to, the more so as the title was, "Reorganization after Defeat," a palpitating subject, and one worthy of the orator.

The major's discourse might be resumed as follows. After the battle of Cannæ the Roman Senate went out to meet the defeated consul, and thanked him for not having despaired of the safety of the republic. This is a fine lesson, a noble example to meditate upon. Recriminations in misfortune mean discouragement and the end of everything; whereas dignified resignation is the germ of resuscitation, for it is hope itself. Difficult to eradicate in a warlike nation that has known both victories and reverses, the hope of a better future is a vital and regenerating force, a lever of incomprehensible power. Confidence is another thing. Defeat leaves after it, like foul mud, a dissolvent impression, a sort of moral depression, an instinctive sentiment of diminution and of mistrust. Men doubt their strength. They hope, and at

the same time seek serious motives and solid bases for their hope, but they do not find them at once. It is the work of labor, of energetic efforts, of time, and, above all, of acts. They have to make essays and try themselves before entering upon great struggles.

order to avoid atrophy. She re-entered the movement in 1848, forty-two years after Jena, and supported Holstein against Denmark. It was a paltry war, with varied alternatives, without great glory, but very useful so far as practical improvement was concerned. In 1859, at the



SPAHIS.

To reconstitute the *matériel*, to reform old institutions, to renew things, is merely a question of money; but to reconstitute the *moral* of a country is a more difficult task than to reorganize its army. Heroic deeds are indispensable. The words "victory," "success," must come to make the patriotic fibre vibrate and palpitate. Small triumphs are necessary to serve as a preface to the future, and from small things to great, men must be able to reason, to conclude to a probability, to half see a possibility, to feel something almost as good as a certainty. This was the way Prussia proceeded. Pulverized at Jena, invaded in a campaign of a few days, dismembered at Tilsit, almost wiped out of the map of Europe, she did not despair; she set to work and patiently reorganized herself.

For a long time Prussia collected herself in silence. She studied war, but she did not possess a single officer who had seen war. She was obliged to act in

news of the first successes of the French in Italy, the Prussians mobilized three army corps; then three others after Magenta; and, finally, all the federal contingents after Solferino. Although the peace rendered these preparations useless as warfare, they nevertheless constituted a veritable dress rehearsal or essay of mobilization. In 1861 the reign of William I. opens by the reorganization of the army and serious preparations for war.

Having thus completed her programme, comprising the military reorganization of the nation, essays in war, essays in mobilization, realization of notable improvements, Prussia found herself ready; and judging from the carelessness of other nations that she could dare a good deal, she began to unmask her projects. Nevertheless, carrying prudence to its last limits, she would not yet venture single-handed on a campaign. In 1864 she joined with Austria to crush Denmark, and in 1866 she demanded the aid of Italy



A ZOUAVE.

in order to overthrow Austria. These successive trials gave her confidence, and being thoroughly prepared, she felt herself equal to fighting France, whom she surprised before the necessary measures could be taken by the latter.

All this was rational. After the invasions of 1814 and 1815, the logic of facts led France to proceed in the same manner. The year 1823 saw an army march to help the Spanish government, enter Madrid unresisted, and push on as far as Cadiz, where the brilliant affair of the Trocadero peninsula terminated the war. In 1827 France took up the defence of Greece against Turkish oppression. An expedition started for the Levant. The capture of the castle of the Morea and the naval battle of Navarino were successes big with consequences.

Such were the forerunners of the military renovation at that epoch, which soon asserted itself brilliantly in the battle of Stauoueli and the capture of Algiers, July 4, 1830. What changes in less than fifteen years! Iberia restored to liberty, Hellas independent, Christian slavery in

Africa destroyed, the Mediterranean freed from the Barbary pirates and opened to the commerce of all nations—such was the glorious work that France had accomplished before the eyes of astonished Europe. Trocadero, Morea, Navarino, Stauoueli, Algiers, were names that re-echoed everywhere. The army that had been annihilated at Waterloo by the effort of the allies won back by these triumphs its old renown, recovered the first military rank, and preserved it for forty years.

This fine period was followed by the reverses of 1870. France imposed upon herself the heaviest sacrifices in order to prolong the struggle. In this gigantic combat, sustained without warning against a well-prepared enemy, she astonished the world by her obstinate resistance, and so saved her honor. Hope rose above the trial. Disasters were not unknown to France; often she had been invaded, but, like Antæus, as she fell she recovered strength and rose again. What she had done in the past she could do in the future, and this conviction sustained her in the darkest days. Without hesitating,

she set to work and rapidly reorganized her army. Excessive expense, incessant labor, universal effort—nothing was spared in this work of patriotic reconstruction.

In these circumstances some saw salvation only in extreme prudence. Doubting the vitality of the country, they advocated absolute abstention, concentration at home, a horizon restricted to the narrowest limits, the renunciation of all influence abroad. They forgot both history and logic. They did not see that the absorption of a country in one single thought is equivalent to effacement, isolation, decadence. Anæsthesia prevents suffering, but it is of no avail to regenerate. To await in inactivity and oblivion the propitious hour of revenge would mean the certainty of never seeing that hour; it would amount to bankruptcy in the future, to suicide by atrophy. After great reverses great enterprises cannot be faced without prelude, without having made the army smell powder and try its strength in engagements of less importance. Such was the conduct of Prussia after 1806; such the conduct of France after 1815. The method is always the same; there is no other method but this one. Happily France counted not only meditative and hypnotized citizens; she still had many men of action who realized the worth of a few acts of warfare in restoring confidence. Circumstances aided these latter. The repression of the insurrection in Algeria in 1871 proved that the army had not lost its qualities. Work and reforms gave it new qualities,

and when there arose in 1874 and 1875 eventualities of war, the French army, if not quite ready, was at any rate very well able to present itself respectably in line.

Africa was again the land of practical renovation. Various movements in 1876 and 1879 necessitated expeditions. The rising of the Oulad Sidi Scheikh under Bou Amema led to the war in the south Oranais. After a long and painful campaign the rebels were definitively crushed in the battle of Oued Fendi, south of Figuig.

Military affairs then resumed hold of opinion, the more so as at that moment the Tunisian events began to develop. In April, 1881, the borderers redoubled their aggressions, and the Tunisian government was powerless to repress them. The French columns penetrated into the thick of the Khoumirs, and the Bey having accepted the support of France, our troops accomplished the pacification of the whole of Tunisia. To the popular names of Mouzaia, Isly, and Taguin were added those of Bizerta, where Hamilcar fought, of Zama, rendered famous by Scipio, of Kerouan, the sacred city of the Khalifs. This brilliant and rapid campaign struck imaginations and revived memories of the glorious periods of the past.

The deception was therefore all the more acute in July, 1882, when the French government did not think proper to intervene in Egypt in concert with the English. The following year the death of Commander Rivière led to the Tonkin expedition. Hanoi, Son Tay, the heroic de-



CHASSEURS D'AFRIQUE.

fence of Tuyen Kuan, Foutcheou, saw our troops victorious in the far East. Indo-China was created. In Senegal a French expedition founded the fort of Bamakou, on the Niger. At the same time our navy took possession of the bay of Majunga and of the port of Tame-tave, and assured our preponderance in Madagascar. Fine pages of military history; smiles of victory; three protectorates founded, thus increasing the national territory. Everywhere great difficulties were surmounted; volunteers in large numbers; zeal, devotion, endurance. Each of these expeditions showed the army to be excellent. It had plenty of men, fine arms, first-class *matériel*. It could make a good figure against any enemy whatever. Hence confidence has been restored. From the army, always in progress, it has extended to the nation. And this confidence is justifiable, because it is not a thing of chance, but has sprung from the efforts of all, and imposed itself little by little. The lost *matériel* has been replaced. The blood shed has been renewed. The father-land has recovered its serenity, and although still suffering from the amputation of its beloved province, it looks out calmly upon the future. Trusting in itself and in its army, it eyes proudly the Teuton who threw it by surprise.

France is still the Velléda cherished by her children; the immortal Gaulish prophethess adored by her warriors; often vanquished, but never killed, retiring to bind up her wounds in the depths of her great forests, and reappearing again radiant with fresh youth. After the disaster of Rosbach she contemplated Jena; after the woes of Sedan she will have, if it please God, the joy of another Jena. The duel is not yet ended, but at the next *reprise* the engagement will no longer be unequal. The sons of Velléda remember, and others will remember too.

III.

By contact with misfortune, characters have been steeled. The instruction of the French army has been developed, and even its amusements have become more serious, and those which necessitate exercises useful in warfare, such as drag hunts, raids, and "rally-papier," or paper chases, are very popular. A brilliant example was recently seen in Brittany. In the middle of the trees the polygon of Rennes, with its hawthorn hedge in

bloom, looked like an immense Coliseum of verdure. The study batteries and the hill offered to the crowd every facility for viewing the marvellous panorama formed by the river Vilaine winding through the meadows striped with lines of tall poplar-trees, the woods of the domain of La Prévalaye, the town of Rennes rising up the hill-side terrace-wise, and dominated by the incomparable promenade of Thabor. The plateau on the top of the hill was the best spot whence to watch the incidents of the paper chase, and so it was occupied by all the notabilities of the district. A crowd, too, was gathered round the huntsmen at the starting-point, fixed in a clearing of the woods of the old Château de la Freslonière, whence issued the sounds of the hunting-horns announcing *le lancier*. The expectation is intense. At last the signal is given; all the horsemen go away at a gallop along the avenues and roads, following the track indicated by the scraps of paper. When they get out of the wood they see the "stag." He has made a wide double, and is already near the bridge over the Vilaine. All the troop dash into the meadows, putting to flight a herd of heifers astounded by this sudden invasion. The bridge crossed, the huntsmen enter the domain of La Prévalaye. The horns sound the *bien-aller*, and the echoes reach the polygon, where the crowd watches eagerly, with its race-glasses fixed in the direction of the old manor-house, whose pointed gables emerge from the midst of the trees. A fault cleverly prepared by the "stag" leads the huntsmen off the track toward a decayed old oak-tree, under which Henri IV. is said to have sat; they have to return in a direction almost diametrically opposite, and then turn to gain the polygon. Their zigzags in the broad avenues of the park, and the leaping over ditches and hedges that enclose the rich meadows, are all visible to the spectators, who can distinguish through the trees the dashing company of officers in varied uniforms, with here and there the red coat or the black jacket of a civilian. They get nearer, and finally they enter the polygon, bending forward over their foaming horses. When the huntsmen feel that the eyes of the ladies are upon them, their animation redoubles; their horses bound forward responsive to the spur; the jumps arranged around the hill are cleared with ease and



DRAGOONS ARMED WITH LANCES.

style; and the splendid finish is greeted with bravos and hurrahs as the horsemen pull up and salute the company.

The paper chase is over, but the day is not yet finished. The ladies know very well that the officers are not going to rest, and that they themselves have not come merely to look on, but also in the hope of having a dance after.

All the carriages laden with sight-seers are drawn up in line along one side of the polygon. The huntsmen, in ranks of six abreast, defile past the company and dismount at the extremity of the line, when all the carriages follow them. The officers then conduct the ladies into a little wood, where a delicate lunch has been prepared. A military band plays, and

after a few overtures it strikes up dance music. A closely mown lawn is ready hard by; the officers are not tired, the ladies are not tired either, and in a few seconds the ball is in full swing, and lasts until the dinner hour and the approach of night warn the gay waltzers that they must go home, and that the charming *fête* must come to an end.

IV.

Pleasure, however, does not interfere with work. After a day's amusement each one feels all the more zealous in his service. The recruits have just joined the regiment. The pessimists are in despair. The contingent seems to them to be very mediocre. It is the same story

every year. Going back to the old days in Africa and the Crimea, they vaunt those vigorous generations which braved everything—danger, climate, privation. The young armies of the terrible war of 1870 were not bad either. Improvised, badly trained, badly armed, poorly officered, always in presence of an enemy superior in number, they nevertheless managed to make a good figure during that rigorous winter, when they were incessantly beaten and yet always resisted.

The troops of to-day will be just as good. The soldier has changed; that is incontestable; but he has preserved his essential qualities. His carelessness, his "chaff"—which foreigners sometimes mistake for indiscipline—console and sustain him in the hour of trial, and render him well fitted to endure privations. The retreat from Moscow, the siege of Sebastopol, the siege of Metz, the expeditions in Asia, Africa, and Mexico, have all borne witness to the same solidity, the same endurance, the same contempt of danger, and indifference to the hardness of campaign life, the same zeal and pluck ever ready to manifest themselves.

The French soldier possesses bravery, the legendary virtue of the Gauls; his spirit is warlike rather than military. Our endeavor has been to preserve the one while developing the other; to add method and prudence to innate fancy and spirit of adventure. Military education is the great preoccupation of the modern French army, and in this matter the subaltern officer is the most precious agent.

When young the subaltern is a little light, familiar, and too near the age of the soldiers under his orders. When he re-engages, after he has settled down and won his medal, he is excellent, and possesses a considerable situation *vis-à-vis* the recruit or the reservist. His brusqueness is of the right sort; he reprimands, scolds, and punishes, but he does not abuse the men; still less does he strike them. His whole being is a picture of action and movement. He joins example to precept; he demonstrates and he executes. Athletic in form, of bronzed complexion, cleanly shaven, with heavy mustaches, a long *mouche* under his lower lip, his dress irreproachable, his physiognomy is kindly, his aspect serious, and he rarely laughs.

Such was the appearance of Sergeant Trévert when he was instructing the

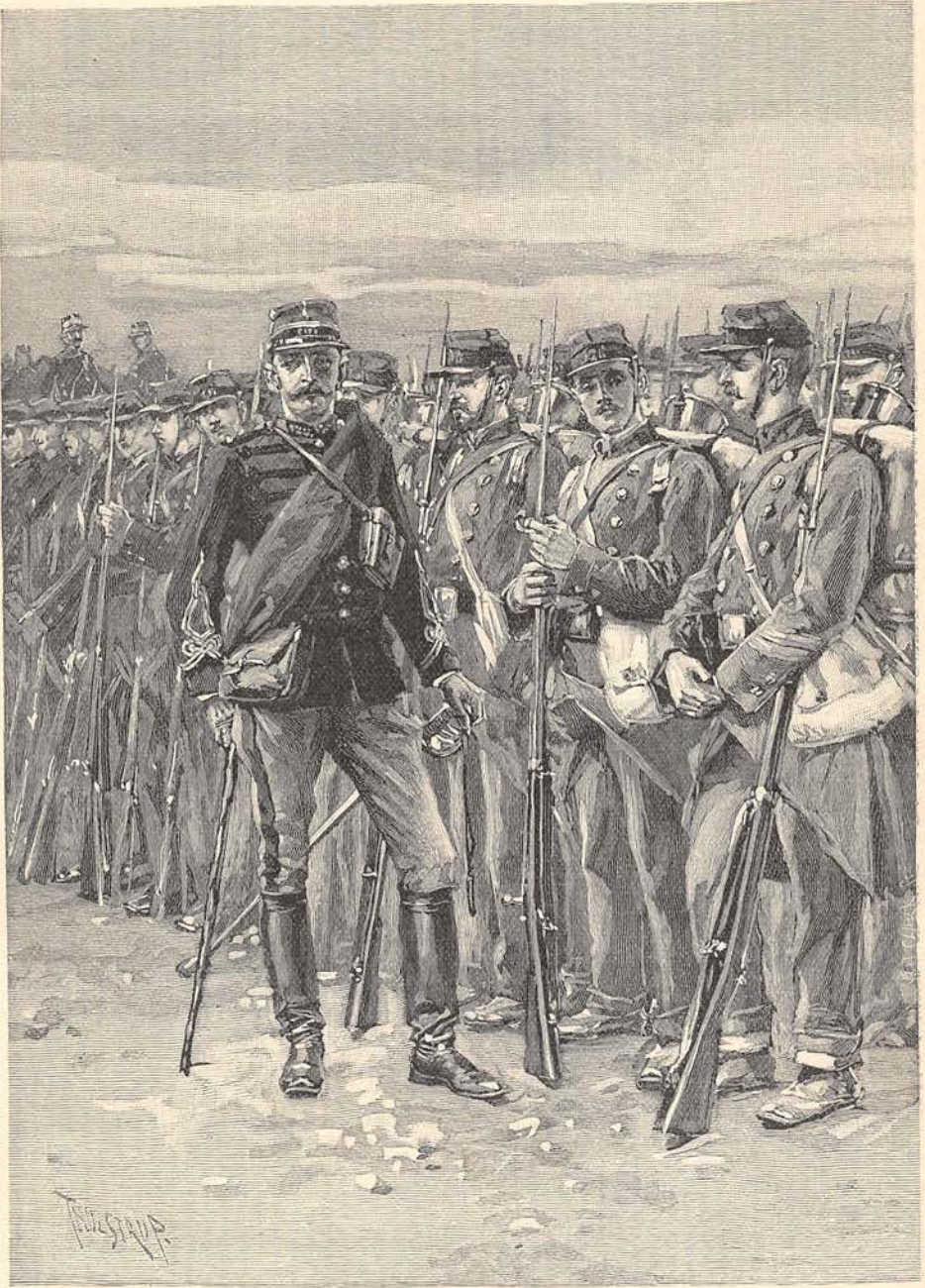
newly arrived conscripts. "All your duties," he used to say to them, "may be reduced to one, namely, obedience. Obedience includes all the others. Discipline is obedience. It is very simple, you see. To wear a uniform, handle a gun properly, put a bullet in the target—all that a militia-man can do as well as a soldier. But a soldier is a different thing from a militia-man; he is disciplined; that is to say, he obeys; whereas the militia-man criticises; there's the difference between them. When I tell you to obey, that means that you must execute an order at a word or a sign, and divine the thoughts of the commander, because that is always the right track. Obey, and never make reflections; that, young conscripts, is the occult and great toe of discipline. If you do not understand my anatomical comparison, I will complete it for your limited intelligences by adding that it is the beginning and the end of the soldier's business. When I order you to do something, you need not understand. Trévert speaks. Trévert knows what he is talking about. Trévert thinks for you. All you have to do is to execute his orders, and sharply. Always keep your eye on me, whether in a manœuvre or on the battle-field. I march, you follow me. I run, you run. I fall down wounded. . . . and what do you do?"

"We pick you up."

"Nonsense! On the battle-field we do not stop to pick up the wounded. You continue all the more sharply; you go on, marching over me. I shall be pleased to feel how vigorously you are going along, and if I am not killed outright I shall shout to you, 'Trample on me, crush me, *nom d'un bleu*, but charge!'"

This was not perhaps academic eloquence, but it was nevertheless eloquence of a certain sort, warm and communicative, because it was sincere. All his young listeners, students, tradespeople, farmers, were stirred by this picturesque and often incorrect language, always frank, always to the point, and always exalting duty. A subaltern officer well educated and a good literary speaker would never have produced such an effect.

Sergeant Trévert thus terminated his discourse: "Here is the order for to-morrow. At nine o'clock review of the regiment; reception of the newly promoted; presentation of the recruits to the colors. You understand? Try and furbish



INFANTRY.

yourselves up brand-new from head to foot."

The men who have just come to the regiment are dressed on the day of their arrival, and set to work the next day. They do not take part in the manoeuvres of the regiment until they are in a condition to figure decently under arms. The moment when they are, so to speak, declared soldiers is that when they are presented to the colors—an old custom which is not followed everywhere, and which has an imposing and inspiring character. It strikes young imaginations, and at the same time it fills with emotion the hearts of the old soldiers.

In order that everything may be in order, the men sit up late and rise early, busy making up their knapsacks, brushing their clothes, polishing their accoutrements. Then comes the examination by the subalterns and the platoon officers. The men after that go down into the drill yard, and are inspected by the captain. The battalions are then set in line. The colonel arrives. The band plays. The colonel reviews the men in detail. The recruits feel their hearts thumping when they see so many officers examining them minutely. The officers and subaltern officers recently appointed are recognized according to the regulation formulæ. Meanwhile a company has gone to fetch the flag, which advances with its escort, and stops in the middle of the court-yard of the barracks.

The drums roll. The colonel orders the presentation of arms, and salutes the flag with his sword. Drums, bugles, and music sound the order, "To the flag!" All the old soldiers of the regiment who have a decoration or a medal go and take their place around the colors. The newly promoted officers stand in front of them. Then the colonel orders, "Shoulder arms! vanguard in open order," and pronounces the formula of investiture before each officer, strikes him on the shoulder with his sword, hands him the insignia of his grade, and kisses him.

Then he orders the vanguard to close its ranks, and the guns to be stacked.

The recruits, without arms, then come and stand in a semicircle before the flag, which is still surrounded by the officers and the soldiers who have decorations or medals.

"Soldiers," says the colonel, "in your towns, in your villages, in the fields, the church steeple was your rallying-point.

Around it were your families, your homes, your interests. Here the colors take the place of the steeple. They are even more; the colors are the image of the father-land itself, the sign of honor, the symbol of devotion even unto death. Proud to serve them, feeling honored to defend them, you cannot abandon them without becoming cowardly deserters, traitors to your country and to your countrymen. You see how we love and venerate our national colors. Let this same spirit of affection and respect henceforward animate you, and in all circumstances rally always to the cry, *Au drapeau! au drapeau!* You will be told the history of the colors and the history of the regiment which is now your military family. It contains already many fine pages; try by your valiant deeds to increase the number of those pages."

Then each captain explains to his men the signification of the flag. Symbol of the father-land, it remains in the middle of the regiment. Its folds speak. What words? On one side "valor" and "discipline," which embrace all the duties of a soldier; on the other, the names of the battles that recall all his souvenirs. The captains mention the brilliant actions in which the regiment has been distinguished, the losses it has sustained—in a word, its whole history; and when this record is ended, the men take up their arms and march past the colors, saluting them, to the sounds of the regimental march.

The presentation to the colors is followed by their exhibition in the *salle d'honneur*, where they remain all day, with a guard relieved every hour. The recruits, guided by their subaltern officers, come to visit them, and to see the room where are displayed all the souvenirs of the regiment—pictures, portraits, photographs, relics, busts, statues, etc. An attempt is made to explain to them all that concerns the regiment, and to give them a high idea of the military family to which they henceforward belong.

V.

It is not easy to find one's way without a guide in the Alpes Maritimes. A company of tourists more venturesome than prudent discovered that not long ago. They had started from the charming inn of La Girandola, perched on a rock on the banks of the Roya, and intended to climb the peak of Gonella, in order to get a view



ALPINE CHASSEUR.

of the high ridges. They missed their way, passed the point they were seeking, and continued up and down, almost all the time through woods, until at last fatigue caused them to stop. The ladies of the party were in despair, and began to

talk of dying of hunger in those fearful solitudes, when the notes of a bugle were heard in the distance. The tourists recognized the French *clairon*, which is much shriller than the Italian cornet, and advancing in the direction of the sound, they

were soon out of the wood, and within view of a troop on the march, a battalion of *chasseurs de montagne*, with gray dolmans and trousers and leggings. As they advanced, the tourists distinguished clearly the column developing its spirals on the side of a steep spur, mounting from the depths of the valley of Luceran toward the peak of La Calmette. On a point to the left a group halted, forming the vanguard; the main body of the troop climbed slowly, followed by a long line of mules.

At that moment the firing of a cannon re-echoed from rock to rock, and announced the beginning of the attack. Little by little all the battalion got footing on the top of the spur, deployed on this difficult ground, and advanced toward the principal peak. The musketry rattled, backed up by the thundering of the artillery. Lines of agile foot-soldiers rose from the hollows of the rocks, from the midst of the bushes, from the irregularities of the ground, showed themselves for a moment, then disappeared, and kept on advancing. The frightened chamois, surprised by these sounds in their solitudes, bounded from rock to rock. Their wild flight will carry news to the inhabitants of the Italian slope, who have a proverb saying, "When the chamois come down in flight, the French are mounting on the heights."

The attack continues. The noise redoubles. The *chasseurs* are running up the steep slopes. At last they reach the summit. What lungs! what legs they have!

Now the troops halt, assemble together, make coffee, and take a rest. The tired tourists join them. The officer in command, having been informed of their misadventure, promises to help them.

"I cannot have you taken back to the plain to-day," he says to them. "You will have to stay with us until to-morrow, and follow us to our camp to-night."

"Oh," said one of the ladies, "that is impossible. We cannot walk another step."

"Do not be alarmed, ladies," replied the officer. "Our pannier mules will carry you. We will put you up comfortably in the bivouac; and to-morrow we will go down to La Bollène, where you will find carriages for Nice."

The proposition was promptly accepted. The bugle sounded the signal for departure, and the ladies were placed on the

backs of the ambulance mules, accompanied by the men of their party, and intrusted to the care of the doctor of the battalion. For a time the road was fairly good. An hour's march brought them to the wood-cutters' camp, a group of huts inhabited by the men who work the forest. Here the mules' straps were tightened, their shoes examined, and their burdens carefully put in order, for the last part of the road is the hardest. The wood-cutters' camp is the last point where there is any water, and so, before starting, all the animals are given to drink, and all the pots, gourds, and other receptacles are filled.

The zigzag and very precipitous path, mounting up a steep incline formed of loose fragments of rock, is hampered by roots and branches of trees. The men march briskly. Their step shows that they are accustomed to the mountain, its steep paths, and its rarefied air. Their lungs, like their muscles, are strengthened by these repeated exercises in the woods, on the heights, and across the glaciers all through the fine months of the year.

Further on the ground gets bare; the path runs over the rock itself; the zigzags are so short that they have scarcely the length of a mule. The animals advance but very slowly, and by the time the ambulance reaches the plateau the soldiers have already been there some time, and the bivouac has been rapidly formed.

The officer in command comes forward to meet the tourists, and, to their great surprise, proposes to conduct them to their hotel. They follow him. The mules stop at the extremity of the plateau, where the woods begin. Under the trees a bivouac has been installed for the tourists. A *gourbi* of pine branches will protect them from the coolness of the night. The entrance is decorated with bouquets of mountain flowers.

"Here is your home for one day, mesdames," says the officer. "We will send you the mule litters, and, with some fern and a rug, you will have a fairly comfortable bed."

"We accept the lodging, but not the beds. We will not deprive your sick."

"I have no sick," replies the officer. "There is nobody in the ambulance. The ambulance is, so to speak, useless. We have been on the march during the past three months. We have just marched



TURCOS.

six long spells without a rest. We shall march again to-morrow, and then perhaps we shall take a day's rest. My men are in perfect training. Now I will leave you, mesdames. In an hour I will come to take you to dinner."

At the appointed time the officer came, and all the tourists followed him across the plateau, admiring the splendid panorama spread out before them. From the summit of the Aution (2060 metres) they saw at their feet, like a gigantic ditch, the valley of the Mimiera joining the Roya

at the east near San Dalmazzo, and commanded by an Italian fort, the most advanced of the works that defend the Col de Tende. Beyond the depth of the Mimiera rose the last chain of the Alpes Maritimes, throwing up heavenward the ridge Del Diablo (2687 metres) and the peak of L'Abisso (2775 metres), an enormous mass, with its snowy covering tinted rose by the setting sun—a grand and striking spectacle, especially when seen from the midst of a bivouac, itself always so curious and so attractive. The senti-

nels watch as they pace to and fro. The mules browse the scant but tasty grass of the high plateaux. Seated on old tree trunks, the officers finish their itineraries, complete their notes, draw up reports on the country they have traversed, make sketches of the distant mountain silhouettes. The soldiers sing as they clean their arms, shout, run, and amuse themselves with games. To see their movements and their activity you would never think that they had marched twenty-five miles and accomplished a manœuvre amidst all the obstacles of mountainous ground. The Italians have reason to be proud of their Alpine companies. Our *chasseurs de montagne* are not one whit inferior to them in tenacity and endurance.

Night closes in. Dinner is served on a table formed of wattled branches covered with flowery turf. Old pine trunks, cut down in time of former wars, serve as seats. A big fire and torches formed of pine branches light the guests at this original and rustic feast. At such an altitude frugality is obligatory, nevertheless the fare is quite respectable. The chief dishes are red partridges and *civet de chamois*, pine mushrooms, an ice made with ewes' milk and snow, while strawberries, arbutus berries, and wild forest fruits, served in nests of moss, formed the dessert. The tourists are delighted, and thank the officers by drinking their health, and soon all retire to rest, for the next morning they will have to be up betimes.

At daybreak the battalion resumes its march along the ridge, alternately through woods and across meagre pasturages. The solitude is absolute except for some *pastorello* guarding his goats, who seem literally to cling to the mountain-side. The view is marvellous when the distance appears through a rent in the opaline morning mist.

The summit of the Tuor is reached without great difficulty, and after that the road follows the jagged edge of an extinct crater, at the bottom of which winds a silver ribbon, the Planchette, which at the end bathes the foundations of the Hôtel de la Bollène, whose dazzling white walls seem not far away, although it will take hours to reach it. The inclines become steeper and steeper, and the path narrower and narrower. The ladies seated in the panniers and swayed by the

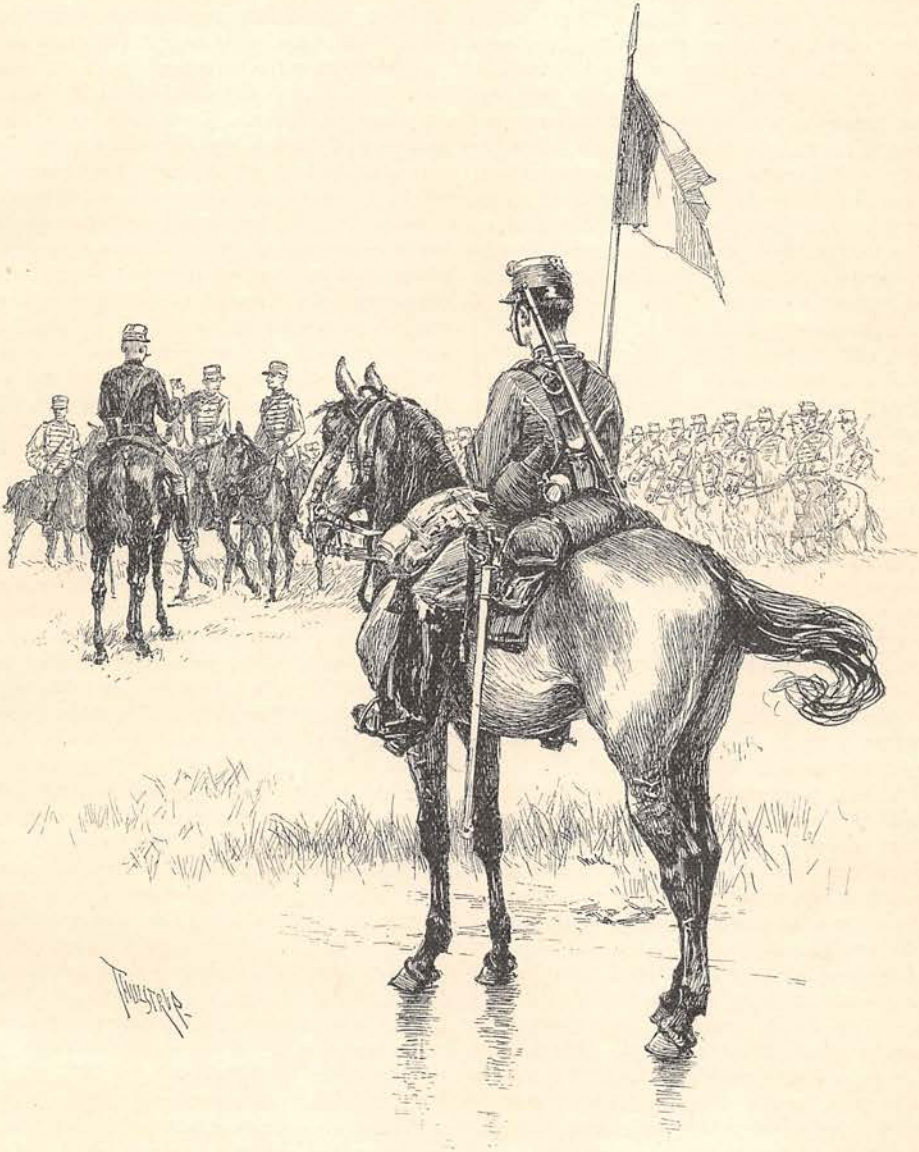
movements of the mules above the abyss are not without alarm. They are not accustomed to the sensations of these giddy heights and depths.

The road gets worse, and becomes absolutely execrable at the point where the grand descent begins, and where the track is scarcely marked out in the sinuosities of the rocks. At one point great blocks overhang; at another sharp projections have to be turned; almost all the way the road follows the edge of a precipice. One cannot imagine how the mules will pass with their burdens, or how they can even get footing in this dangerous pass. The battalion passes without winking, as if it were the simplest thing in the world, and the mountain battery follows in its turn. But not the tourists; they find the danger too imminent and dismount, preferring to trust to their feet. Meanwhile they wait till the path is free, sitting on a granite promontory, and watching the whole battery defile along this track, which seems impracticable even for the goats themselves. It is a work of strength and patience, and requires as much skill as it does coolness. The soldiers hold up the mules, and even their burdens, by means of ropes. Thus relieved, the animals glide along rather than walk, stiffening their forelegs, and almost touching the ground with their hind quarters. A few accidents happen, but, thanks to the manifold precautions and to the care of the drivers, they are rarely serious; the mules that fall are soon put on their feet again. At last this long and perilous pass is cleared; the battery and the ambulance rejoin the battalion, and after a short halt the march is resumed, and La Bollène is reached.

The tourists rushed into the hotel, delighted to find themselves once more in a civilized place, and to be able to rest for a few hours. The column, however, continued its march. Later on the tourists started for Nice in a carriage. Toward the end of the day they overtook the indefatigable *chasseurs*, who were still marching along, although more than twelve hours had passed since they had begun their day's work.

VI.

Toward the end of the month of August the station of Florac on the Midi railway presented an unaccustomed aspect. The employés were all on the *qui vive*. A picket of soldiers under arms was waiting



HUSSARS.

at the door. An officer was superintending the arrangement of tall wooden indicators with the inscriptions, "Caserne haute," "Caserne Ducale," "Caserne des Célestins." A number of subaltern officers were walking up and down the platform in the midst of a crowd of people who had come merely to see. The 4.30

train was expected, bringing most of the reservists who had been convoked to do their twenty-eight days of military service.

The train steams into the station with a bunch of heads straining through every car window, and with a din of cries, calls, and songs. From all the compart-

ments issued young men, each carrying a valise or a bundle. Most of them wear civil costume; some are in military uniform. The agitation is extreme. The officers at the top of their voices call out the names of the barracks, and group the reservists around the indicators. Gradually order is established; the noise ceases; a roll of the drums has sufficed. The reservists follow the subaltern officers out of the station, and proceed to march firmly along behind the regimental band which has come to meet them. The mass of men, so noisy and loquacious a minute ago, has become silent, taken place in the ranks in correct order, and marches along to the rhythm of the music in the most methodical manner, without murmur or protestation.

When they reach the barracks the detachments are handed over to their captains. The roll is called. There are few missing. The reservists take up their quarters in the rooms that have just been occupied by the men of the territorial army. In military life there is no dull season; the various categories of men succeed each other; recruits, *disponibles*, *non exercés*, *dispensés*, *territoriaux*, *réservistes*, come, one after the other, to receive or to renew their instruction.

The next morning, as if they had been touched by a magic wand, all these men were dressed, equipped, armed, and at work on the drill-ground. To see their bearing, their zeal, and their readiness in the exercises, inexperienced eyes might confound them with the regular soldiers of the regiment. This rapid transformation—one of the necessities of modern warfare—has become part of the manners and customs of the country. Three days afterward the regiment left Florac to take part in the grand autumn manoeuvres, absolutely in the same conditions as if it had started on a real campaign.

VII.

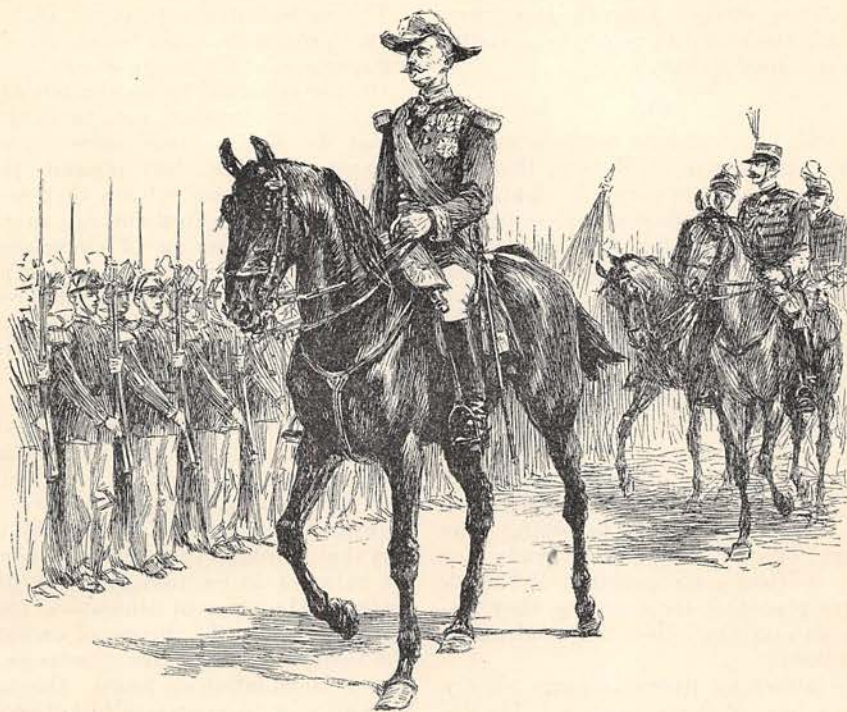
During the autumn manoeuvres the captment of the troops has a peculiar and picturesque character. It is neither a fête, nor a fair, nor a market, but all three put together. The streets are crowded with vehicles, horsemen, *estafettes*, troops, canteen women, sutlers, contractors, all hurrying about and very busy. Every house is changed into barracks. The stables, the sheds, barns, and storehouses are full of soldiers cleaning their accoutrements, fur-

bishing their arms, cooking their food. The population has suspended its existence. Those who can find anything that the troops want, offer it for sale. Those who have nothing to sell stroll about to satisfy their curiosity. Cart loads of bread and meat follow wagons laden with straw or wood, and no sooner have they arrived in the market-place than they are emptied into the regimental carts, which distribute their contents in the different quarters. Meanwhile the telegraphists unroll their cables and fix them along the houses; the ambulant station is installed in front of the town-hall, and messages begin to go and come. There is the staff—the motor, the brain, the apparatus, that transmits the will of the commander of the army corps. On horseback, surrounded by all his officers, the chief of the staff listens to reports, gives orders, signs papers; the officers write on the pommel of their saddles; messages are despatched in all directions, and conveyed rapidly by *estafettes* on horseback, orderlies on foot, velocipedists with light trousers, gaiters, and little caps.

A big cart with four horses arrives at a trot, with difficulty cleaving its way through the crowd. It contains long baskets that seem to hold poultry. The crowd salutes this apparition with a volley of jokes, but soon it becomes all attention when it sees that the baskets contain carrier-pigeons. The birds are to be let go, and all crowd and crush to see the operation. An officer verifies the indications on the baskets, and has them opened one after the other. The pigeons come out slowly, rise, sweep round two or three times, and then start off in a straight line for their homes, not a little alarmed by the cries and the joy of the public deeply interested by the spectacle.

Next follow the aeronautical carts, with a big balloon swaying over the first one, while on the other carts are numbers of little pilot or reserve balloons, the oven for making the gas, and ropes and tackle of all sorts. The sight-seers are much impressed by this new war apparatus, which they now see for the first time, and which, in their enthusiasm and astonishment, they honor with an ovation.

Suddenly the market-place is cleared. The people hasten away as quickly as they came. A word has sufficed: "Les étrangers arrivent!" The foreigners are coming! And everybody hurries away to the railway station.



GENERAL AND STAFF.

A regimental band plays when the train arrives bringing the foreign officers. The chief of the staff welcomes them in a room decorated with flowers and verdure, where the local authorities are assembled. After these compliments the foreign officers are conveyed in breaks to the principal hotel, where rooms have been engaged for them, and while the regimental wagons are bringing their baggage, a lunch is served in the dining-room. After lunch the foreign officers go for a walk through the town in little groups. The crowd gazes at them deferentially, trying to distinguish their nationality from their uniforms, and discreetly manifesting its sympathies.

But the streets are so crowded that it is not easy to walk about. It is the hour of the evening meal. The streets, the open spaces, the court-yards, are encumbered with tables. Hotels, inns, cafés, make every effort to satisfy their swarms of customers. Soldiers and reservists are eat-

ing, drinking, laughing, and singing. During the march, the manœuvres, and the *corvées*, the men have remained serious, but now that they are no longer on duty, *gauloiserie* resumes its rights and overflows like the glasses. There are no sulkers, no sufferers from homesickness. Oblivion wipes out all cares. The soldier's life is hard at times, but there is no help for it, and the men are gay and joyous all the same—a precious quality in manœuvres, admirable in war, and an excellent resource against adversity.

Night comes on. Lamps, lanterns, and candles are lighted, and throw into relief the dark shadows of the garlands of foliage and the transparencies, with their inscriptions in honor of the army. Indoors and out-of-doors there are sounds of music and dancing. No scandalous scenes, no drunkenness. This frank gaiety, this vigor of our men, who, after marching all day, and with the prospect of hard work the next day, still run about

and dance, always astonish foreigners, who are struck by their physical endurance and good-humor.

VIII.

A little after sunrise solitude reigned in the little town of Monvel, that had been so animated the previous night. The troops had all disappeared, and nearly all the inhabitants too, for they had gone to see the manœuvres. At a distance of about six miles from the town the columns of troops begin to appear and to close up. A long file of breaks brings the foreign officers up to a vast circular tent, where a well-provided buffet awaits them. The general-in-chief is announced, and all the officers place themselves according to nationality, and the official presentations take place. Then the general retires to order operations to begin. The foreign officers find horses ready for them, and under the guidance of French officers placed at their service they disperse, in order to follow the incidents of the action.

The attacking troops advance slowly in long lines of sharpshooters. The defence retreats, and concentrates its efforts on defending the passage of the valley, the hedges from which tall poplar-trees rise, the mill, whose dam, running parallel with the river, augments its power of resistance. Still the defence is obliged to yield, and accordingly falls back half-way up the hill, where a village forms its centre. This point becomes the object of all the efforts of the assailants. The defenders are once more forced to fall back to the summit of the hill; the position is excellent and difficult of access. The defence has taken its measures well. The attack, however, behaves equally well. The lines close up; the reserves approach. You feel that the *dénouement* is not far off.

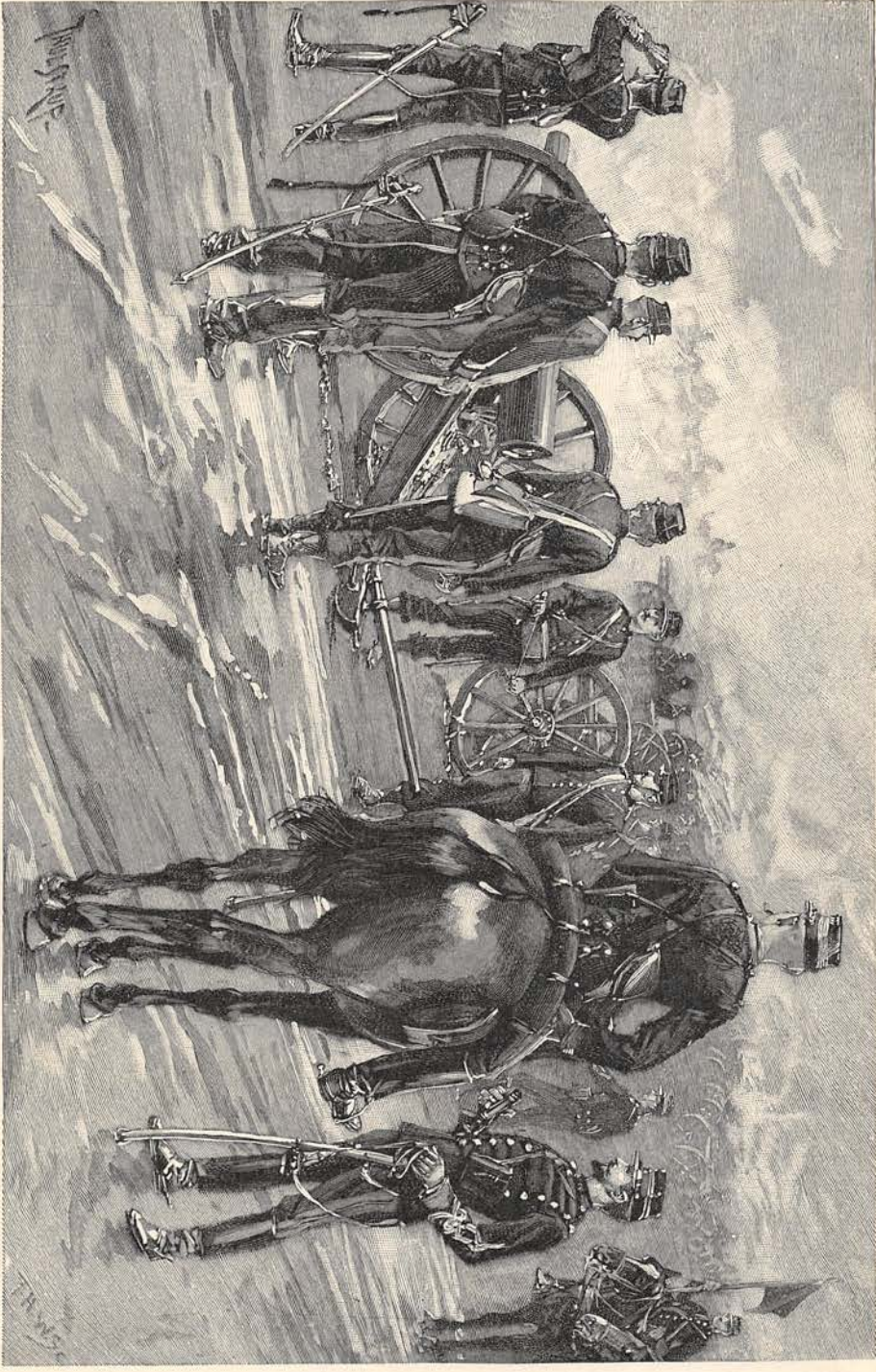
To the right a long cloud of dust and a dull rumbling announce the approach of the artillery, which dashes forward, and soon deploys on a hill-side. They are no longer small cannons of shining bronze, such as the Prussian pieces destroyed in 1870, without fear of being touched by their projectiles. In place of these old-fashioned guns we see a long row of stiff and black steel tubes without artistic character—artillery of long and precise range, with which the enemy will have one day to count.

The public hurries up on foot, on horse-back, in carriages, eager to see the exciting spectacle of the image of war.

On the side that forms the left of the attack is an elevation commanding the Canal du Midi. Some horse batteries trot up and take their position there. They clear walls and ditches, then deploy at a gallop, stop in line, and run out their guns. Two squadrons of chasseurs, on their little smoking horses, gallop after them, leap over all obstacles, dash through stones and bushes, and take up their position a little in the rear of the batteries, to protect them.

The crowd applauds the artillerymen and the chasseurs, whose rapid evolution has been executed with incomparable dash, boldness, and *maestria*. Absorbed by their enthusiasm, the spectators want to see everything without heeding the dangers that surround them. No sooner are the batteries in position than the firing begins. The repeated detonations frighten the horses in the throng of carriages. The ladies stop their ears. Screams and cries of lamentation are heard. One horse bolts away with a carriage full of people; the coachman has lost all control; the descent is steep; the road runs along the brow of the hill that dominates the canal; the turn is very short, the danger imminent, and no help appears possible. A lieutenant of the supporting squadrons sees the danger and the way to meet it, makes his horse leap over hedge and ditch, and places himself tranquilly across the road. The carriage comes tearing along; there is a terrible shock; officer and horse are overthrown, and the runaway horse and carriage come to a stand-still in a cloud of dust. The people in the carriage are unhurt, but the lieutenant, who has saved their lives, is picked up grievously wounded and unconscious. Thereupon the men of the Red Cross Society come up and take charge of him. The canal is near, and on it is a section of the floating ambulance, a recent creation of the Union des Femmes de France, whose litter-men carry the wounded officer on board, and convey him to the village of Pontpetit, where at night the ambulance of the army corps is to be established.

This episode could naturally make no change in the normal development of the manœuvre, the intensity of which increases every second. The riflemen thicken their ranks; the reserves enter in line



FIELD ARTILLERY.



VELOCIPEDIST.

in compact masses; from right to left the artillery quickens its fire. Platoons of infantry well sheltered form veritable human mitrailleuses. The rattle of the musketry increases. The attack accumulates all its resources, thus intimidating its intention of making a vigorous effort. On the right wing the cavalry advances at a trot, a little masked by the irregularities of the ground. The horses are uneasy. You

feel from their restrained step that the charge is about to take place.

The signal is given. From all sides the troops dash forward, the cavalry toward the enemy's flank, the infantry in the same direction. Bayonets are fixed. Drums and bugles beat and sound the charge. In spite of the steepness of the ascent the step is quickened to a run, to repeated cries of "En avant! en avant!" The enemy retreats, and the public too, terror-stricken by the torrent of mounting bayonets. The assault is finished; the crest of the hill is reached; the position is won.

IX.

A few days afterward the army corps was assembled on the banks of the Gers, in the splendid Armagnac region near Auch. The grand autumn manœuvres were at an end. The final review was about to take place. This event is the fête, the crowning of the efforts, the recompense of the labor of all.

From very distant points the spectators have gathered in such immense crowds that, although very numerous, the troops are almost lost amidst the ocean of heads. The faubourg is decorated with flags, garlands, triumphal arches of greenery, banners, and *banderoles* bearing inscriptions in honor of the army. The Place de Strasbourg is thronged with people—on the roofs, on the trees, at the windows—every corner is occupied. The review is passed. The general-in-chief returns to

the Place, followed by all the foreign officers in full-dress uniform, and the marching past begins amidst the applause of the spectators, who comprehend the importance of the result manifested by the smart and regular step of the infantry, still fresh and in fine form after twenty days of hard manœuvres.

In this part of France people are impressionable; they feel and appreciate vividly; their demonstrative nature delights in exterior manifestations; they feel a need of giving vent to their enthusiasm. To see their reservists, their children, their fellow-citizens, march smartly past and represent their province brilliantly in the eyes of all the foreign military missions excited their enthusiasm to the highest degree, and made them prodigal of their cheers. All the regiments, all the arms, all the colors, were greeted with roars of applause; the very length of the spectacle seemed to revive them; and their enthusiasm was justified.

When it was over, when the command-in-chief saluted the foreigners and the authorities, and then returned into the town, followed by his brilliant cortège, cries of "Vive le général!" rose from all sides. The crowd seemed to have but one voice to say to him, "Merci!"—Thank you. Amongst these ardent Southerners it was, as it were, a veritable explosion of national sentiment and local self-love. Doubtless there was in it a warm and grateful feeling toward the chief who had directed the manœuvres, but this unanimous homage was addressed principally to the army, to its activity and its good training, which are pledges of security and of hope. And in their enthusiasm you felt the vibration of the nation itself applauding the living expression of its resuscitation.

X.

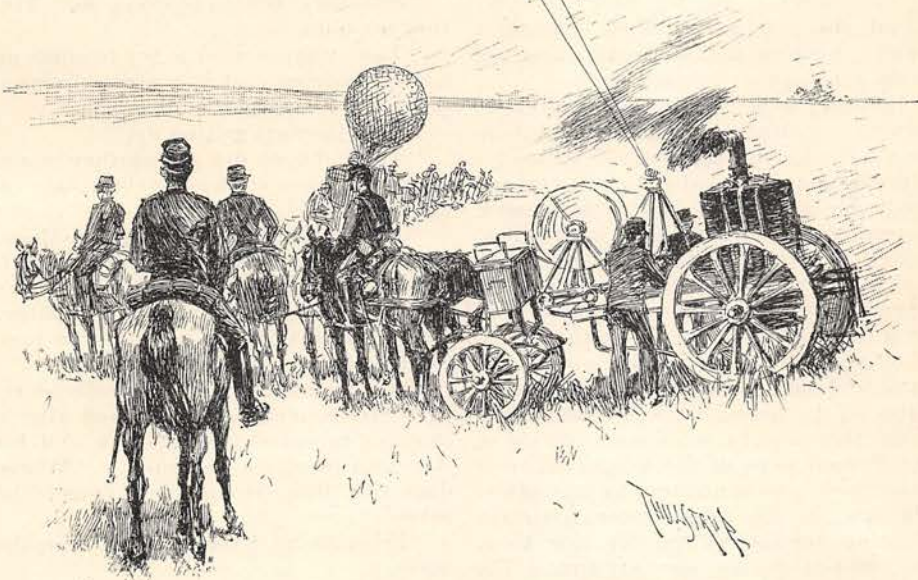
Other manœuvres, more restricted but not less interesting, were then taking place in the Vosges district, where excellent troops found enthusiastic hearts to admire them. Under the less luminous sky of eastern France you no longer find the noisy expansiveness of the south. On the frontier the attitude is silent and melancholy, and cries are replaced by looks that are as eloquent as words.

The contrast is complete between the two sides of the mountains. On the west, calm, tranquillity, hope. On the east, agitation, persecution, alarm. A strange

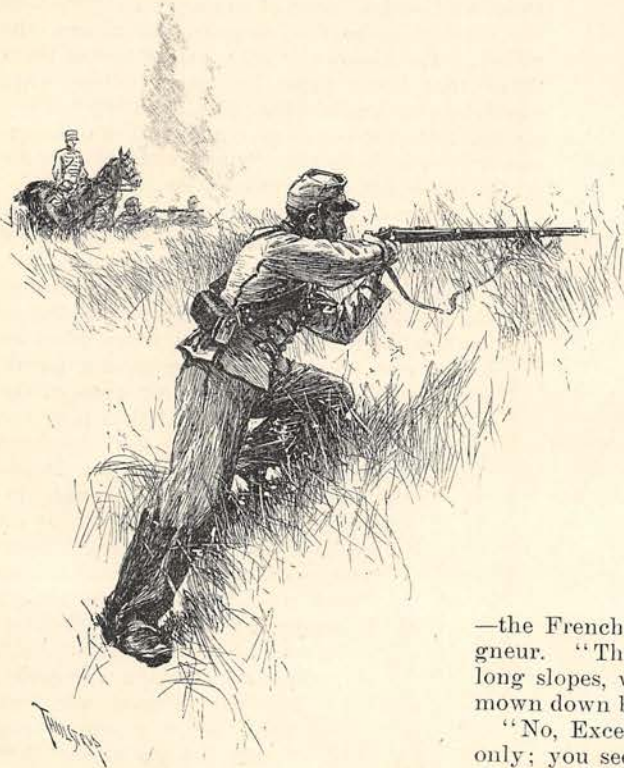
spectacle. The Germans live in a state of perpetual suspicion. The smoke that rises in the air, the wind that blows, the gunshot of a hunter, the digging of a ditch, the building of a wall—everything excites their suspicion. The movements of our troops in particular worry them intensely. Military reconnoissances, making rapid explorations on

the slopes of the Hohneck or the Prayez, drive them wild, and all sorts of suppositions come into their heads as to the motives, the means, the object. The absence of all mystery makes them think that there must be some. They want absolutely to know what we are doing. They are astonished to see us moving about in our own country, so little do they themselves feel at home on the other side of the mountains.

The Germans are tortured with apprehension. Their ever-increasing armaments do not make them feel secure. The victor, the conqueror, the mighty man, declares that he fears nothing, and at the same time he fears everything, both what he sees, and still more what he does not see. The Germans are peculiarly concerned about the progress of the French army. They feel that they are already equalled, and that perhaps they will soon be surpassed. Hence that immoderate need of getting information under all pretexts, by all means, under all disguises. Tourists, workmen, peddlers, ambulant musicians, etc., are always wandering about the frontier zone. But, in spite of that, they are always in doubt. All the precautions they take, all the spies they send, all the money they



BALLOON CARTS.



CHASSEUR À CHEVAL.

spend, do not satisfy their curiosity. Why? Because the information obtained is not such as they could wish.

Refusing to believe in the so complete reorganization of the French army, a Pomeranian seigneur resolved to judge for himself, and requested his doctor to prescribe for him an air cure in the Vosges. Armed with an iron-shod alpenstock, which he carried so that all could see it, and with a revolver hidden in his pocket, accompanied by some friends and preceded by a few spies, he climbed up the mountain, gained the edge of the woods, and came and sat close to the frontier, on the ruins of the feudal castle of Zweifelhof. From this point he could see a portion of the French slope of the Vosges, where a manœuvre was announced to take place. He saw on the ridges some Alsacians showing themselves timidly, for they, too, wished to see our soldiers. The Pomeranian was well placed in order to appreciate the emotion of the former

and the merit of the latter.

Soon the solitude became animated. Some scouts are seen at the bottom of the valley. Riflemen appear in the black woods. There are preparations for a fight, and the firing begins.

"Oh!" cries the foreign spectator; "by the devil, who is the accomplice of these Gauls? I hear shots, but I see no smoke. Another legend gone overboard."

At this moment an infantry regiment, issuing from the forest, crossed the valley calmly, and advanced in battle array toward the opposite slope.

"Always imprudent—the French," remarked the grand seigneur. "They are going to mount those long slopes, where they would be easily mown down by the fire of the enemy."

"No, Excellency, that is a pretence only; you see they are bearing more to the right."

"To the right there are rocks. They cannot get up that way, I imagine."

"Still they seem to be doing so. Yes; they are climbing."

"They must be mad to try to climb up a rock so steep that it is almost perpendicular. The ascent is impossible."

"Still, they are getting up."

"Well, if they did get up they would be cut to pieces at once by the enemy on the top."

"But the enemy could not stay there. See the French batteries opposite, half-way up the hill, and covering by their fire the eminence that the infantry are scaling. Their bold manœuvre might be successful after all."

The Pomeranian seigneur made no reply. He seemed ill at ease, and after a moment he asked for his cloak and his flask, out of which he drank. "Where does this Branntwein come from?" he asked.

"From Aarau, Excellency; it bears the mark."

"The bottle, yes; but not what is in it. It comes from France. There can be no

mistake." Then he murmured to himself: "Inexorable fatality! Germany cannot produce cognac! What a subject of observation for the physiologist and the moralist! So much weakness combined with so much strength!"

Mute, his eyes fixed on the battalions scaling the rocks, he shook his head as if to drive away some disagreeable thought. He suffered, and yet he continued to watch. He saw the summits carried with impetuosity, while the infantry reformed their ranks in an instant, and simulated a thick fire against the enemy supposed to be retreating.

At that moment some women wearing broad bows of black ribbons in their hair, and big white embroidered aprons, and holding their children by the hand, came out of the wood and advanced toward the troops at rest, where they were received with cheers.

"What are all those women doing?" asked the Pomeranian seigneur of one of his followers.

"The French soldiers are a great attraction for the Alsaciennes, Excellency. There will probably be a dance to-night at the farm of Le Tanet."

"I thought our people were forbidden to cross the frontier and enter French territory."

"Yes, but they cross it all the same."

"Shall we have to wall in the frontier, then?"

"That would be a costly and doubtless a useless measure. Walls cannot stop hearts or ideas."

"True," murmured his Excellency. "Implacable fatality! The Germans can do everything with the help of God, but still they cannot make the Alsaciennes love them."

After a short rest, the troops marched back down the slopes and regained their bivouac. They had just accomplished, by way of exercise, one of those manœuvres which sometimes secure a victory. Their good-humor bore witness to their confidence and to their power of resisting fatigue.

The tourist had risen. He wished to go away, and yet he could not take his eyes off the French regiment engaged in disposing its advanced posts and patrols. Shortly afterward a patrol coming up to the guard posted just below the Zweifelhof was met by the cry, "Qui vive?" And the patrol replied, "France."

The Teuton wiped his brow, threw a last glance at the encampment, and went away with the uneven step of an angry man, while the echo of the rocks and the voices of the Alsaciennes issuing from the depth of the woods sent back to his grieved ears the words, "Vive France!"



CHASSEURS À PIED.