



THE STARTLING EXPLOITS

OF

DR. J. B. QUIÈS

FROM THE FRENCH OF

PAUL CÉLIÈRE

BY

MRS. CASHEL HOEY AND MR. JOHN LILLIE

WITH 120 ILLUSTRATIONS

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THIS book is only a flight of fancy. I have not written it for the purpose of enlarging the horizon of thought, astonishing the world, or shaking the foundations of the social edifice.

Neither have I conceived the notion of adding anything to the sum of human knowledge ; but, although no instruction of a scientific, industrial, or moral character is to be obtained from these startling exploits, they are perfectly inoffensive.

That I shall not be suspected of desiring to turn science and savants into ridicule, I feel assured. I ardently admire the former, I profoundly respect the latter, and I protest that I have not for one moment entertained an idea of assailing the rightful position of either.

Bearing in mind that it has been well said of books, "Every kind is good except the tiresome kind," I have written my book with a simple-minded intention to avoid boring my readers.

P. C.

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# THE STARTLING EXPLOITS

OF

DR. J. B. QUIÈS.

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## CHAPTER I.

“FOLLOW YOUR CATTLE!”

NO doubt you have more than once in your life closely observed the minute hand of a clock. It does not appear to move. The monotonous swing of the pendulum is the sole indication of the march of time. You reckon it off—tic, tac, tic, tac; you go on reckoning; still the slender pointing dart is motionless, but at the end of a period which appears to you endless, it has travelled over one of the little spaces marked upon the dial.

“Ah!” you say, “how long a whole minute is!”

Then you turn to your work again, and when you are no longer looking at it the minute hand goes at a gallop. You have hardly begun before it has passed over five of the little spaces.



“Ah! how long a whole minute is!”

“Dear me,” you say,  
“how short ten whole minutes are!”

Now, you were wrong in the first instance, and you are wrong in the second. One minute is very short, ten minutes mean much. Ten minutes suffice to endanger the fate of empires, and to change the face of the world. Ruin or success, happiness or misery, may depend on ten minutes. Nay, that brief space may shape the whole of a lifetime.

Experience has often proved this truth, which is indeed a truism ; nevertheless, we are about to demonstrate it once more by an example.

On the 28th of September, 1874, the train from Paris, which was due at Marseilles at a quarter-past nine in the evening, arrived ten minutes late. The train next in order was timed to enter the station at thirty-two minutes past nine, so that there was an interval of seven minutes only in which the passengers had to get out of the compartments, luggage out of the vans, and the defaulting train out of the way. Of course the trunks and boxes were mercilessly knocked about, and any travellers who had glass or china among their impedimenta, arrived at home with their property in fragments.

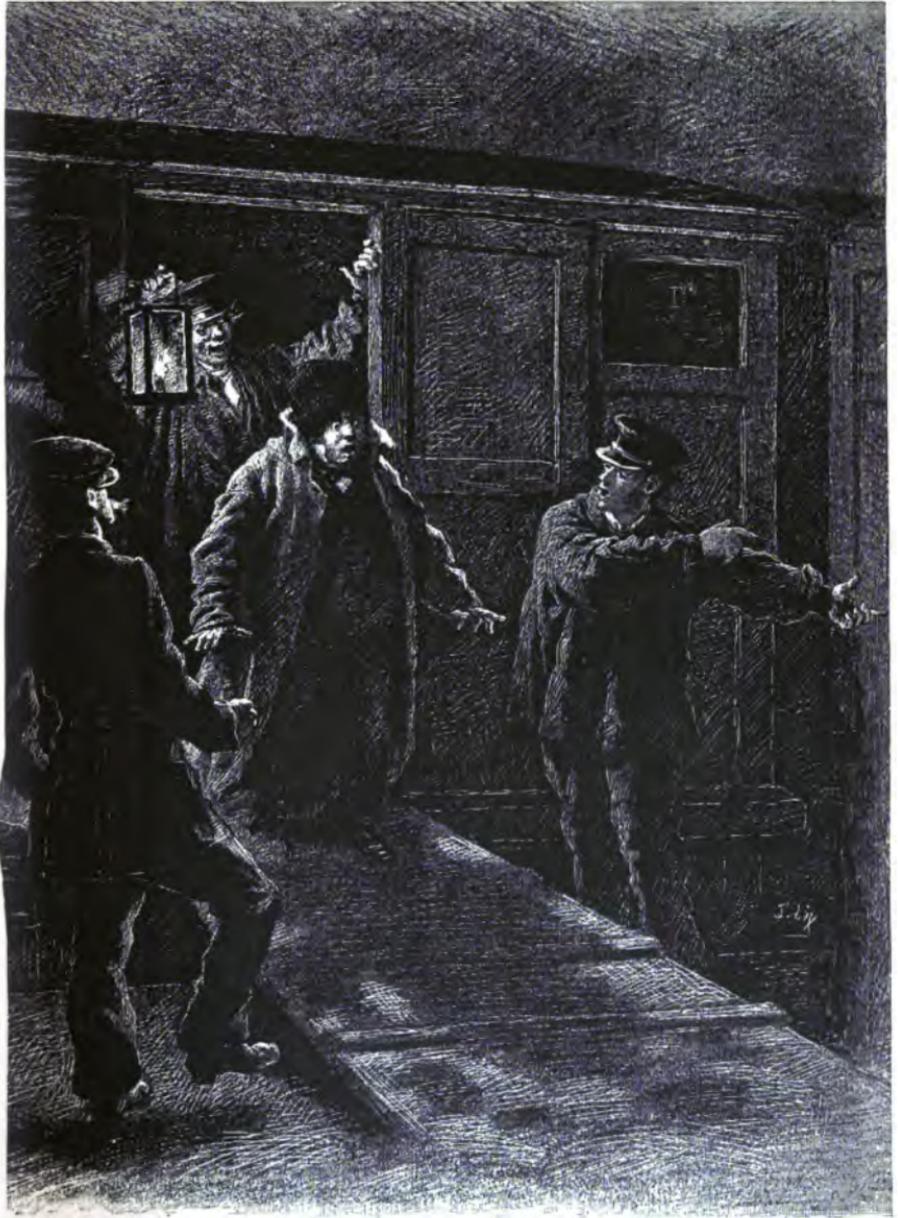
How could it be helped ! Ten minutes after time !

The travellers, knocked about like their belongings by the guard and the station-master, had hurriedly got out of the train, and were making for the exit, but two receptacles were still full. Their occupants had been unable to open the doors.

Why ? Because these travellers were not men, but beasts ; magnificent specimens of the Hungarian variety of the bovine species, sent by Karl Brünner, an agriculturist in the neighbourhood of Pesth, to M. Lemoine, an agriculturist at Médéah, who purposed to acclimatize that particular breed in Algeria.

“Deuce take the cattle !” Thus spoke the station-master. “They will have us late. Get them out ! Get them out !”

The bolts were shot back, the sliding sides of the cattle vans were removed, and the four-footed travellers were



**“Look sharp, there,” said one of the workmen ; “ follow your cattle !”**

apprised by heavy strokes of a driver's whip that they had reached their destination. One after the other the Hungarian exiles shuffled awkwardly out of the vans. This operation was not effected without some difficulty, but it was still worse when, after the horned beasts had been got out, it came to the turn of the man who was, or seemed to be, in charge of them.

The poor fellow's legs were bending under him ; he was breathing so hard that it was pitiable to hear him, and his strength seemed to be completely exhausted.

"Look sharp, there," said one of the workmen ; "follow your cattle."

The person addressed did not appear to understand what was said to him.

Ah ! those ten minutes after time !

Had it not been for those ten minutes, by which they were harassed and driven, the station-master, the guard, and the workmen, everybody in short, would have perceived that the man who had just been extracted from the van had nothing of the Hungarian about him, although he had a cap of Astrakan wool on his head, and he wore a great coat of coarse cloth with a curious pattern on it, about which there was a certain local colour. But it was plain that the cap had not been made for his head ; it came down below his ears, and the great coat must have belonged to a man six feet high, while its present wearer was little over five. This singular garment trailed behind the heels of its accidental proprietor, and made him look like a mountebank magician.

Nor was that all. The blind themselves might have seen that never—no, never—was such "a fair, round belly," legs so short, and face so chubby and ruddy, to be found under the coat and cap of a driver of Hungarian cattle.

But there was no time to look at the man !

Ten minutes late !

"Follow your cattle !"

"Excuse me, sir," said the person thus roughly apostro-

phized, in a voice hardly audible from fatigue and emotion, "my name is Quiès—"

"What is that to me?"

"Doctor Jean Baptistin Quiès."

"All right, follow your cattle."

"But I don't know anything about the cattle! I am the victim of a deplorable fatality, an inexplicable error."

"Follow your cattle, I tell you!"

Thereupon the workmen, who had not heard a word of this heart-rending protest, hustled the unfortunate man—whom we shall henceforth call Doctor Quiès, since he has just asserted that Dr. Quiès is his name—into the midst of the herd of horned beasts.

A stinging lash impartially distributed started the animals at a heavy trot, and their involuntary keeper, squeezed up in the midst of them, was also obliged, whether he would or not, to go at a trot. That he was equally averse and unaccustomed to any such rate of progress, was abundantly indicated by his frantic gestures, his staring eyes, and his loud protest:—

"It's a mistake, I tell you; it's a mistake!"

No doubt his voice acted as an additional stimulant to exertion on the part of Herr Karl Brünner's bovine specimens, for the more he shouted the more they bellowed, and the beseeching tones of the poor doctor were lost in the noise. The whole herd, beasts and men, were turned out of the station, and their course was directed towards the quay. The *Triton*, a fine steamer, on which the Hungarian exiles were to be embarked for Algeria, was moored alongside.

There, in a place like a barn, amid piles of bales and merchandise of every kind, sat an official whose special duty it was to register all the consignments previous to lading, and to receive the dues if any there were.

The railway clerk called out: "Eight bullocks, six cows and their driver."

At the word "driver," Quiès sprang forward, collected

all the breath he could muster, and addressed the official sitting at the table,—

“ Sir,” said he, “ my name is Jean Baptistin Quiès, and I live at Saint-Pignon, in the Department of—”

“ What is that to me ? ”



“ It’s a mistake, I tell you ; it’s a mistake ! ”

“ No doubt, sir, a matter of indifference ; but it is quite otherwise to me. Here I am mixed up with—”

“ All right ! Follow your cattle ! ”

Doctor Quiès made a last attempt to secure a hearing. The man at the table had got up and gone away, and the only person now remaining was the railway clerk. That official, addressing the sailor charged with the superintendence of

the shipping of the cattle, in the dialect of Provence, told him to look after the Hungarian peasant, their driver.

The sailor accordingly took Doctor Quiès by the arm, and promptly dragged him across the plank which led from the quay to the steamer.



He hauled the doctor across the plank.

Anybody who has seen an ass refuse to ford a river (in this comparison let nobody detect a latent sneer at our hero) may form an exact idea of the attitude assumed by Doctor Quiès at the moment when he had to cross the plank. He planted himself upon his widely-severed legs and resolutely exclaimed,—

“Never, never! There is a mistake of identity!”

The sailor, however, simply obeyed orders. He promptly hauled the doctor across the plank and flung him, half dead, into a cabin, and also into the presence of the ship's clerk. This functionary was a little man with a foolish face, and eyes devoid of expression. He wore a cap with a gold band, and a tunic similarly adorned; and as he sat upright and motionless on his chair, he looked like one of the waxen images which are to be seen outside travelling anatomical museums at country fairs. He raised his eyes, looked at Quiès, produced the barest outline of a smile, and bent his head over a sheet of figures as he said,—

“Well, what is it?”

The doctor heaved a sigh of relief, thanked God from the bottom of his heart, and took a chair.

The clerk made no sign.

“Here, at all events,” thought Quiès, “is a person who will listen to me, and perhaps furnish me with the means of returning to Saint-Pignon.”

Then he said very distinctly,—

“My name, sir, is Jean Baptistin Quiès, of Saint-Pignon—*doctor* Quiès!”

“Ah!”

“You know me by name? So much the better, for I need not now tell you that I do not understand anything that is happening to me at this—”

“Oh!”

“I am quite unable to account for having awoke and found myself—after I had left Plessis, in the Department of Seine-et-Marne, where I had gone to stand godfather to the son of my good friend, Commandant La Carriole—in the middle of Provence, and in the corner of a van full of horned beasts.”

“Ah!”

“The most unpleasant part of this matter, sir, is that I have no money. . . . I venture to think that you will

enable me to return to my home. Serious interests are at stake."

"Oh!"

"Yes, sir! Yes, indeed. In the first place, I have to read an important paper before M. de Préchafoin, and his learned colleagues of the Geographical, Numismatical and Archæological Society."

"Ah!"



He fell senseless upon the cabin floor.

"And besides, I have to finish a very interesting match against M. Poggenbeck, of Haarlem."

"Oh!"

"I also acknowledge, sir, that I am not accustomed to travelling. I am a stay-at-home. I shall be overjoyed again to see my house, my garden, and my bed! One more day of similar tribulation, and I should not survive it, I feel sure."

“ Ah ! ”

During the whole of the doctor's impassioned address the clerk had gone steadily on with his sum in addition ; he now laid aside his pen, looked at Quiès with his outline of a smile, and said,—

“ All right, my good fellow, we shall try to settle this matter. Follow your cattle ! ”

The worthy clerk had been deaf for ten years past ; but during the whole of that time he had confidently asserted that he heard every word which was said to him.

Quiès had not time to seek an explanation of the strange answer he had received. Those three words, “ Follow your cattle ! ” had affected him as a blow from a hammer upon his head might have done. The poor remnant of strength and courage forsook him in an instant, and he fell senseless upon the cabin floor.



## CHAPTER II.

IN all France, including her colonies, there existed at that time—within a few thousands more or less—sixty-seven thousand six hundred and twenty-eight doctors; doctors of letters, doctors of science, doctors of law, theology and medicine, and doctors who were not anything of the kind.

What place did Doctor J. B. Quiès hold among this number?

What was his speciality?

What was his aim? What did he do?

What had he written; or what did he propose to write?

Where did he live; and what was his manner of life?

Where was Saint-Pignon, his alleged place of residence, to be found?

What was the subject of the remarkable paper which he proposed to read before M. de Préchafoin?

Who, and what was this M. de Préchafoin?

Who was that Commandant La Carriole, to whose little son the doctor had, as he asserted, stood godfather?

What was the subject of the match with M. Poggenbeck, of Haarlem?

Why did Doctor J. B. Quiès wear an Astrakan cap on his head, and a Hungarian great-coat on his back?

What were the events that had led to his arriving at Marseilles, involuntarily, if his own statement is to be believed, in company with several head of cattle belonging to Herr Karl Brünner, of Pesth?

We propose to answer all these questions, and many others, in the third and following chapters.

## CHAPTER III.

SHOWING HOW JEAN BAPTISTIN QUIÈS HAD DISPLAYED  
EXTRAORDINARY APTITUDE FOR THE NATURAL  
SCIENCES FROM HIS EARLIEST CHILDHOOD.

It will be generally acknowledged that it would be foolish to seek in a name the qualities, faults, and proclivities of the person who bears it; yet it must be admitted that chance takes strange whims sometimes, and thinks fit to label human beings after the fashion of apothecaries, who label their phials so that there may be no mistake about their contents. Of a surety chance made a lucky hit on the day when it decreed that the hero of the adventures which we are about to relate was to be the son of a father whose name was Quiès. If we open Quicherat's "Dictionnaire Latin-Français," we shall find therein, *Quiès*, s.f., *repos*; and the chief characteristic of Jean Baptistin Quiès was desire, thirst for, absolute need of repose, carried to such a pitch that nothing short of inexorable necessity would have induced him to go ten paces beyond the wall of his garden, which hardly extended to thirty from one end to the other. This peculiarity of the worthy man was, however, purely physical. He craved for repose, but he loved not idleness. His legs objected to locomotion, but his mind travelled briskly.

J. B. Quiès, who was a doctor of science and a member of the Geographical, Numismatical, and Archæological Society of his Department, passed very justly for a learned personage. He was enthusiastic about everything relating to the progress of science. Night and day he would pore

over the solution of a problem, but always on condition that his studies should not expose him to the necessity of moving about.

The mere sight of him suggested and explained his sedentary tastes. He was short, stout, and afflicted with an "unbounded stomach," which overhung two little, hardly-perceptible legs.

Was this lamentable obesity to be regarded as a cause or as a consequence? Had Dr. Quiès a horror of motion because he was fat; or was he fat because he had too long cherished a horror of motion? We incline to the latter hypothesis, and we shall furnish a proof in support of it which cannot fail to convince the most incredulous.



Jean Baptistin uttered dismal cries.

Jean Baptistin was only a week old when M. Quiès the elder determined that his son should be put out to nurse in the country, for the sake of the child's own health, and also that of the paternal tranquillity. Jean Baptistin, who had never cried at all until then, got into a violent passion and uttered dismal cries. So sudden a manifestation can only have been caused by his strong antipathy to motion.

The village in which his nurse lived was eight leagues from his parents' home. During his transit thither, Jean Baptistin never ceased to cry, but no sooner had the woman to whom he was confided set foot within her own door, and deposited her nursling in his cradle, than his screams were hushed as though by magic.

Surely this was a clear and sufficient protest; nevertheless, as though the young Baptistin had learned even at so

early an age that you cannot convince people at once, he renewed his protest on being taken back to the paternal roof, roaring lustily all the way. Not until he found himself under the sheltering wing of his mother after a two years' absence, could he be induced to leave off screaming and to smile upon a new existence.

When M. Quiès beheld his son, in the first hour of his restoration to his home, blotched with tears and crimson with passion, the father's heart misgave him that the boy would prove to be a troublesome, disagreeable, ill-tempered brat, and but for the timely intervention of his mother, Jean Baptistin would probably have been sent back with his nurse for two more years.

It was, however, for only a short time that M. Quiès regretted what he had at first called his "weakness." The little Baptistin went on growing bigger very quietly, leaving his father ample leisure to attend to his affairs. He was held up as an example to the other small boys of his age in the place. He was never seen to run about the street, he was never caught in the fields in the act of eating feloniously-acquired apples, or of hunting birds.

His contemplative instincts developed themselves within the four garden walls of the paternal dwelling, and in a little wood where he passed most of his time during the daylight.

Mme. Quiès, who was not a mother for nothing, was strangely disquieted at times by the oddities which she detected in her son when he was eight years old, or thereabouts.

"That child is not like other children," she remarked to her husband.

"What is the matter with him?" asked the father, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"I don't know. But he does not play, he does not run, he hardly speaks! Yesterday, again, I found him lying in the wood with his eyes fixed on the ground—"

"He was asleep."

"No, he was not asleep."

"Very well, then, he wasn't. But what do you want me to do with him?"

Upon which M. Quiès walked out of the room, muttering,—

"Oh, those mothers! They are all alike. Their sons are all prodigies!"

A trifling occurrence was the means of opening the eyes of the father, justifying the vague previsions of the mother, and indicating to them both the path in which Jean Baptistin was destined to walk with distinction.

The summer was drawing to a close. Mme. Quiès had just happily terminated her useful and important task of fruit-preserving. Apricots, plums, and currants were transformed into delicious-looking yellow, orange, and red jelly, and deposited in pots of glittering glass, which were symmetrically ranged on the sideboard, on the table, on shelves in the kitchen, and indeed all over the dining-room. Mme. Quiès had retired to rest in a mood of proud self-complacency, and intending to cover her jam-pots betimes on the morrow. She had also resolved to send a dozen of them to M. le Curé, a dozen to her cousin, Mme. Ragot, and a dozen to Mme. de Malleville.

The morrow! Ah! On the morrow morning Mme. Quiès uttered a scream, and all but fainted. Her jam-pots were black with ants. The whole of her preserves would have to be thrown out. Not a pot could be used.

"Where did the odious things come from?" she inquired, in vain distress.

"Perhaps they would tell you if you asked them," answered M. Quiès, with true marital sarcasm, while Jean Baptistin, open-mouthed, watched his parents as they performed the exasperating operation of burying the jam.

All day long the ants that had got into the Quiès' preserves were the talk of the town, for Mme. Quiès had very naturally hastened to relate her misfortune to all comers. All day, ay, even until nightfall, did she bewail



An army of ants.

her loss, and she was still bewailing it when the hour came at which she was accustomed to retire for the night. As may be supposed, she was still agitated, but she settled her pillows, smoothed her counterpane, and extinguished her lamp, and after a last sigh of regret for her cherished preserves, was about to compose herself to sleep, when a sudden sting in the left leg made her start. Mme. Quiès passed her hand lightly over the spot and resumed her former position. A sting in the right leg this time! She had not time to put her hand to the place ere the same sharp pain attacked her in the shoulders, the arms, the neck, in fact all over her body.

She jumped out of bed muttering,—

“This comes of letting the dogs into the house! I will let Theodore know that—”

She had relighted the lamp, and the last words of the sentence were arrested on her lips by surprise and terror. The bed was literally black with ants!

She rushed into the adjoining room, shrieking,—

“Theodore! Theodore!”

Theodore made no reply. Standing in the middle of the room in his night attire, and distractedly scratching his head, was Theodore, contemplating an army of ants marching and countermarching upon his bed, his carpet, and the furniture of his room.

This was invasion!

“Oh! Good Heavens!” exclaimed Mme. Quiès, “Baptistin!”

The parents ran to their child’s room, and found him sleeping sweetly in his little white bed, on which not a single black spot appeared.

Mme. Quiès quickly shut the door, stopped up the slit at the bottom of it to prevent ingress by the enemy, and proceeded to a general inspection of the house.

Horror! Ants—enormous ones—had invaded the whole of it.

“Where can the little wretches have come from?”

asked M. Quiès. "We must find out how they got in. It is not natural."

"Oh, Theodore, do look here!" cried Mme. Quiès, presently, as she pointed out to her husband a huge ant-hill which had been deposited in a china-closet opening into the dining-room.

"What an extraordinary thing!"

"I was in the china-closet to-day at noon, and there was nothing there then."

"It is not in one night that—"

"No doubt."

"This is a trick that somebody has played us. Look, the ant-hill is stuck upon a board!"

"We have no ill-wishers that I know of."

"One is always more sure of having enemies than friends."

With this profound remark M. Quiès carried off the *corpus delicti*, in order to throw it into the wood on the far side of the garden, and afterwards returned with all speed to assist his wife in sweeping and brushing away the legions in occupation.

The next morning a strict inquiry was instituted. The servants, the gardener, and the under-gardener were questioned in vain. M. Quiès was about to have recourse to the *juge de paix* to claim the aid of his intelligence and the authority of his name in obtaining justice, when Baptistin entered the salon in which the court of inquiry had been held, in tears.

M. Quiès, who was exceedingly irritated, felt a sudden inclination to turn on the child and make him pay for the damage done, but the mother again interposed, fortunately, and said to the little fellow,—

"What are you crying for?"

"They—they—they are gone," sobbed out Baptistin.

"Who are gone?"

"My ants."

M. Quiès made a spring into the air, and coming down

on his feet in front of his son, with his legs apart and a terrific frown upon his brow, shouted at him,—

“You little wretch!”

So intense was his rage that he was unable to utter another word.

Baptistin, whose tears had been suddenly arrested by



“What are you crying for?”

this strange demonstration on the part of his father, stared at him with distended eyes.

“Question him, madame, question him.”

“Tell me,” said Mme. Quiès to the child, “was it you who brought the ant-hill into the house and put it in the china-closet?”

"Yes, ma."

"And what did you do it for?"

"I wanted to look at the ants."

"But you could look at them in the little wood where you got them."

"It's too far off, ma."

With this Baptistin fell a-crying once more, and nothing further could be elicited from him. After M. Quiès had recovered his temper, he drew the following sound conclusions from this adventure: That his son had an extraordinary taste for study; that he was gifted with precocious intelligence, because he had bethought him of placing the anthill on a board in order to carry it to the house; that such talents ought not to be left uncultivated; and finally, that it was his duty to send Baptistin to school.

He acted upon the latter conclusion the very next day; but three months after the departure of Baptistin there still remained ants in the house.



## CHAPTER IV.

## SAINT-PIGNON LES GIROUETTES.

THE process of dislodging the tenacious and exasperating insects proved to be so difficult and so costly—for the operation was only to be effected by extensive repairs—that the occurrence above related made a profound impression upon both the feelings and the pocket of M. Quiès. The result was that Baptistin was kept in a sort of perpetual disgrace, lest he should think proper to break out a second time. His visits to the town during the eight years of his life at school were few and brief. His studies did not suffer in consequence, nor did he suffer either. His indolent disposition led him to bestow little ; it also hindered him from exacting much. He was well content with the amount of affection which his parents bestowed upon him once a week, and for the slight annoyance of feeling himself, so to speak, a prisoner, he was amply compensated by not having to walk five hundred yards in order to go from the school to his home, and five hundred yards more in order to do the return distance. The total of one thousand yards filled him with dread and repugnance. He therefore resigned himself to durance more readily than could have been supposed, and devoted to his studies all the time that the other boys passed in the fields.

So assiduous was the lad that he carried off all the prizes at every distribution, and one fine day, in spite of the ants which still lingered in his resentful memory, M. Quiès was obliged to acknowledge that he had a son of whom he might be proud, and to restore him to his heart and home.

Baptistin accepted the favour without either ingratitude or enthusiasm. With this revival of paternal affection a new feeling took possession of M. Quiès, from the very day on which Baptistin, having completed his studies, resumed his place by the paternal fireside. By dint of hearing it constantly said in the town, "Young Quiès is a wonderful boy!" or "The lad will do great things!" and even, "Baptistin will be an honour to the department!" M. Quiès had become convinced that his son's future distinction was a thing proper and personal to him, M. Quiès, and that one day a statue would be erected to him for the sole reason that he had been clever enough to be the father of his son.

This hallucination is not so extravagant as it seems at first sight; there are many people who seriously regard themselves as distinguished persons because they have occasionally shaken hands with an illustrious individual.

M. Quiès then resolved to extract as much advantage as possible from the talents of Baptistin, and for the furtherance of this object he made up his mind to send his son to Paris, there to qualify for the dignity of a licentiate and doctor of science.

The title of "Doctor" was all in all in his estimation.

We need not say, considering the disposition of the future laureate, that he turned a deaf ear to this proposal so long as he possibly could. At length his father resorted to the use of authority, simply ordering him to set out for the capital.

Baptistin took his place in the diligence, much against the grain, and travelled the twelve leagues with many and deep sighs. So long did the way seem that he asked himself very seriously whether he would not do well to settle down in some fixed post in the capital, so as to avoid the fatigue of the return journey.

He answered his own query first in the affirmative, then in the negative: he could not make up his mind to

remain in the midst of the noise of the great city, where contemplative natures find it so difficult to follow their inclinations. Fate, too, did not give him time to come to a decision. He had just brilliantly passed his examination for the doctor's degree, when he was summoned home by an urgent letter.

M. Quiès the elder was dangerously ill ; so ill, that he had hardly strength to embrace his son before he expired. As beseemed a faithful wife, Mme. Quiès followed him to the grave after very brief delay, and Baptistin found himself at twenty-eight years of age the sole inheritor of the name and fortune of the Quiès'.

The name was honourable, the fortune was ample, and Baptistin, having given as much time and as many tears as he could spare to his filial affliction, set about arranging his life to the best advantage, that is to say, making the most of his land, drawing his income, and pursuing his own occupations without having to stir from his study.

From that day forth he was commonly called Doctor Quiès by the whole town. He possessed a yearly revenue of thirty thousand livres in lands, woods, and Government securities, without reckoning his house, a handsome dwelling with a porch facing the street, and a tolerably large garden with a good conservatory.

Being the possessor of so good a fortune, and already renowned for his learning and oddity, he speedily took and easily kept the leading place at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

The town of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes is not marked upon any map of France. This we hold to be an omission on the part of the geographers, unless indeed it figures on the maps under some other name, which is not an impossible case. We have even had some communications on the point made to us, but as we do not desire to expose ourselves to recrimination and resentment, the geographers may give any name they please to the sub-prefecture in question, and we shall continue to call it Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

It is a charming little town, perched on the top of a green slope, like a white turtle-dove in the foliage of an oak. The slate roofs of its dainty houses shine brightly in the first rays of the rising sun, and in the last broad lights before evening falls. The town looks as though it gets up earlier and goes to bed later than other towns, simply because it is so glad to be alive. A river bordered with poplars and willows flows beneath the green hillside, through wide meadows intersected by long rows of poplars; far beyond stretches



Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

the plain, rich in crops, and reminding one of a harlequin's suit, with its little brown, green, and yellow patches; while farther away still other slopes rise, clothed with vineyards and woods, which close up the horizon, and seem to say to the fortunate dwellers in this favoured little corner of the earth, "God gives you enough; you have no need to see beyond."

Every medal has, unhappily, its reverse. Absolute calm no longer exists, except in the perpetual motion; and Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, notwithstanding its peaceful aspect, was, like other towns great and small, a

prey to discord of all kinds, which rendered it a less pleasant place of abode than might have been expected.

There, as elsewhere, the wife of the sub-prefect considered it highly improper that the wife of the *huissier* should wear a fur cloak which cost eight hundred francs, while she herself wore one at three hundred; the notary complained of the encroachments of the attorney, who lived in far too good style; there, in short, as elsewhere, every man made little of his neighbours, and passed a good part of his time in climbing over the wall of private life, which no legislation has yet succeeded in raising high enough to render enterprise of that kind impossible.

Nevertheless, Saint-Pignon held its place none the less honourably among the towns of the department. It comprised all that ought to be comprised within a self-respecting town—a Court of Justice, a Prison, a Hospital, a Choral Society, and a Geographical, Numismatical, and Archæological Society.

But, more than upon all these, Saint-Pignon prided itself upon M. J. B. Quiès, who returned the compliment in part only. When his name was uttered, it was with a sapient shake of the head, as much as to say, "He will do great things!"

If it had been announced at Saint-Pignon that M. Quiès had discovered a way of going to the moon and coming back in forty-eight hours, no one would have breathed a word of doubt. A man so rich and so learned could do anything. Thus the good doctor lived on good terms with everybody; that is to say, with almost everybody. We say "almost," because, as shall presently be demonstrated, he had unintentionally sown some seeds of enmity, and when they sprang up—

We must not, however, anticipate events; and before we speak of the only enemy he possessed in the town, let us say a few words of his friends, several of whom play a part, however slight, in this most remarkable and improbable history.

First of all, comes Gertrude, his housekeeper, who also discharged the functions of steward, treasurer, and cook. There is something more to be said concerning Mme.



Madame Ragot and her daughters.

Ragot, a widow lady, the good doctor's first cousin, and presumptive heiress, who, being afflicted with six marriageable daughters, could not be otherwise than

seriously solicitous lest a too liberal testamentary deposition of his property should reduce the dowries of her dear ones to almost nothing.

The doctor was barely forty years of age. One might say that it was rather soon for her to concern herself about his death. His death! Good heavens! Who ever thought of such a thing! Mme. Ragot would have strangled with her own hands any one who should have had the audacity to say to her that she was reckoning in her secret soul upon the inheritance of her cousin Quiès; that dear cousin Quiès whom she coddled and cossetted and plied with cunning confections and goodies of her own making; for whom she annually embroidered a pair of braces as a New Year's gift, and a skull-cap for his birthday. Thinking about his death! What an idea! She was anxious for his own good, that was all, it was his interest she had in view—and then she would say to herself that as a matter of fact her dear cousin had a decided tendency to apoplexy; that a fatal accident might happen at any moment, and that if it pleased God to take her dear cousin, she could soon get her daughters married—nothing more.

That is not reckoning upon people's death, you know! We must, however, look also at the good side of things. Mme. Ragot, although transparently envious, was nevertheless sincerely fond of Quiès. At all events she believed herself to be fond of him, and the shade of difference is so slight! The good doctor allowed himself to be fondled and petted without troubling himself in the least about any of those involuntary speculations of his dear cousin's, to which he unconsciously gave rise. Mme. Ragot had not come to this point all at once. She was a widow, and still well-looking; she had reflected that M. Quiès at forty years of age might marry and settle; that he would not find any one at Saint-Pignon to love him and take care of him as she would do; that they had known each other for a long time; that a union between them would certainly be approved by the whole town, and

could not surprise anybody ; with many other reasons in support of her views.

When, however, after five or six fruitless attempts, Mme. Ragot was made to understand that celibacy was a settled vocation in the case of Dr. J. B. Quiès, she was obliged to cast her eyes towards a more distant horizon in search of the dawning of a "dot" for her daughters.

No one is perfect anywhere ; not even at Saint-Pignon. If, by any unhappy chance, Quiès had been enabled to read the thoughts of his cousin Ragot, his surprise would have been brief, and he would not have shed a tear over it.

Without being entirely selfish, he entertained no more than a calm and tranquil affection, not very far removed from indifference, for those who were connected with him. The only two beings whom he loved in the true sense of the word—that of being willing to sacrifice something for their sake—were Commandant La Carriole, of whom we shall have to speak hereafter, and Henri de Malleville, a big youth of twenty, his pupil, whom the force of time and habit had made him regard almost as his own kinsman.

M. and Mme. de Malleville were old friends of the Quiès'. M. de Malleville, having met with heavy losses in Paris, by unfortunate speculations, had realized the remnant of his fortune and retired to Saint-Pignon, where he bought a small house, in which the family had been residing for ten years, while awaiting the coming of better times.

Schooling was expensive ; M. de Malleville's means were restricted ; the boy must be educated. Doctor Quiès offered to teach him. Such a proposition was in itself an instalment of good fortune, and it was eagerly accepted. Henri de Malleville took so kindly to the house of his instructor that he was perfectly at home there, and nobody, himself included, thought of such a thing as his leaving it. A change was, however, impending.

M. de Malleville was tempting fortune in Algeria. The latest news of him indicated a more prosperous future. He hoped to get a share in an association formed for the exploitation of a great cork-tree forest, and was at the same time sending in tenders for engineering works to be executed on the boundary of our possessions in the province.

One day or another Henri would have to leave the doctor, and rejoin M. de Malleville with his mother. Until then, Quiès considered himself invested with the paternal and responsible guardianship of the youth.

Little did he think that his dear pupil would have an involuntary share in the deplorable calamities which chance was about to heap upon his devoted head.



## CHAPTER V.

HOW AND WHY DOCTOR J. B. QUIÈS, HAVING ASCERTAINED THAT A MAN-SERVANT WAS INDISPENSABLE TO HIM, ENGAGED ONE AT NOON AND GAVE HIM A WEEK'S NOTICE AT A QUARTER TO ONE O'CLOCK.

"THE town clock is striking eleven, sir," said Gertrude, as she half-opened the door of the study and then banged it to again.

Doctor Quiès started, and muttered, "This is intolerable!"

Gertrude's footsteps died away at the end of the corridor; the doctor carefully expunged a blot, and resuming his pen, wrote as follows:—

"If, as I hope, I succeed in showing that the articles which I have found date from 450; if the inscriptions which I have deciphered do really bear the meaning that I assign to them, it is evident that a great battle was fought by Attila under the very walls of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes against Theodoric, King of the Goths, and the Roman General Aëtius. Admitting that this battle is not the conflict mentioned by Olaüs, the architect of Upsala, and must be regarded only as a minor engagement, it remains none the less certain that Saint-Pignon les Girouettes already existed at that date, since one or other of the two armies had come thither to establish a centre of operations.

"It remains then for me to examine and explain the inscriptions of which I speak, and to deduce from them

a proof of what I say. This I propose to do without fear of refutation."

M. Quiès wrote down a full stop, drew a line, and threw himself back in his armchair to collect his ideas.

He was evidently well pleased with himself. His eyes twinkled, the grey locks at the sides and the top of his head seemed to stir with gladness, and his good-humoured, thick red lips were parted in a wide smile which told of exuberant health and a conscience free from reproach.

Perhaps he owed a little of his beatitude to external influences.

It was early in September. The summer sun diffused a warm and cheerful light over the room through the Japanese blinds. Birds were chirping in the branches, forming an invisible orchestra to which the pendulum of the chimney-clock kept time. Souls expand like flowers when Nature thus displays all her beauties unveiled. Doctor Quiès formed no exception to the general law.

If, however, anybody had questioned him concerning his high spirits, he would have been at a loss for an answer, so deeply absorbed was he in his important essay upon "Saint-Pignon les Girouettes in the days of Attila."

Although he loved knowledge for its own sake, the doctor had come, by dint of hearing himself called a great man, to be conscious that the seeds of ambition had been implanted in him. "Member of the Institute!" How well the title looked upon a card! And he believed that he should be quite capable of acquiring that distinction, provided he were not obliged to put himself too much out of his way.

What a sensation his essay would make! All the hitherto known documents reduced to nothingness! An entirely new mine to explore! The whole scientific world at bay! And all done by him, J. B. Quiès!

He softly passed his left hand under his chin as though to encourage himself to persevere, and continued to write:—

“ Let us take the subjects which I have the honour of submitting to the Geographical, Numismatical, and Archæological Society of Saint-Pignon in the order in which I have catalogued them.

“ 1. Nos. 1 to 16. Iron rings absolutely eaten away by rust, and on which it is no longer possible to distinguish more than one letter, an A. This I do not hesitate to regard as the initial of the name of Attila ; these rings being doubtless those worn on the arm by the slaves and prisoners of the Huns.

“ 2. No. 17. A horseshoe, bearing the still visible mark C. C. This mark it is easy to complete ; in fact it completes itself, thus, CCCCL. 450 ! As all the indications lead us to think that Attila's horses were not shod, there is reason to believe and affirm that the horseshoe above described was one of four belonging to a troop-horse in the cavalry of the Roman general Aëtius. A hardly visible mark, which on being carefully examined proves to be an S, on the right side of the horse-shoe, comes to the support of my assertions—S.P.Q.R., the Roman mark !

“ 3. No. 18. An earthenware vessel, without any mark or indication, but shaped—”

“ It's half-past eleven, sir ! ”

This time Gertrude had come into the room, and sticking her feather-brush under her left arm, looked imperiously at her master.

“ Well ! What then ? ” asked the doctor.

“ What then ? Why, the auction is at twelve o'clock. ”

“ The auction ? ”

“ Of the Cochariotte's farm. ”

“ Ah ! ”

“ Are you going to lose this opportunity ! The land is worth thirty thousand francs if it is worth a sou ! You can have it for twenty thousand francs, and you are going to leave it to M. Anthime Bonamy ! He wants to get it, I know. But he will not bid more than eighteen thousand francs, if you are not there — ”

"I have given instructions to my lawyer."

"Your lawyer! As if it wasn't well known that he has a grudge against Maître Grimblot. Grimblot conducts the sale, and he will be right glad to play your lawyer a trick. You must go to the Palais de Justice yourself, sir."

"Gertrude, it is 354 yards from this house to the Palais de Justice. 354 and 354 make 708 yards. I do not think it well to undergo so much fatigue."



"It's half-past eleven, sir!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Why, Gertrude? The strength which a man expends in bodily motion is so much lost to mental exertion. I have a task to fulfil for the benefit of humanity."

Doctor J. B. Quiès was so convinced of the truth of this assertion that he dismissed Gertrude, and resumed his occupation.

"4. No. 19. A short, wide, two-edged blade, rounded at the end, such being either its original shape, or—"

"Sir," cried Gertrude from without, "here comes the man-servant you are expecting."

Gertrude was growing old, and the good doctor felt the necessity of providing her with an assistant. A friend had recommended to him a tall, stoutly-built fellow, neither too fat nor too thin, ruddy, smiling, and jovial, with light hair cut like a clothes-brush.

"Yes, sir," said this individual, as he entered the room, "here I am. This letter is from the Commandant—"

"Give it to me."

The doctor took the letter, broke the seal, and read,—

"MY OLD FRIEND,—I send you the person in question, whom I have never seen. It appears that he is a perfect treasure. You will give me news of him.

"Always yours,

"VERNET LA CARRIOLE.

"P.S.—Apropos of news, I think I shall require your services shortly. The matter is—but I will write to you."

The doctor attached little importance to this postscript. Commandant La Carriole had occasionally dipped into his purse, and he merely expected a request for a loan which he was quite ready to grant; so he quietly folded the letter and addressed the bearer of it.

"Your name is—?"

"Magloire, with your permission."

"Certainly, certainly! You are given an excellent character. Get an apron from Gertrude."

And then M. Quiès resumed his pen.

"H'm, h'm—I was saying, its primitive form, unless the rust, by altering the angles of an accidental fracture, may have—"

"Ha! It seems that Monsieur has travelled."

Quiès, rather startled at this unexpected interruption, turned round and found himself face to face with his new man-servant, who was closely examining a knotted club which he had taken down from the wall.

"You were saying—?"

"I said Monsieur has travelled ; one may see that by only looking at the walls of the study. Oh, travel, sir, travel ! I was born to travel ! For a man like Dr. Livingstone, I would have let myself be cut in little pieces ! It is so delightful to tread a soil on which nobody else has ever set foot, to give one's own name to islands, gulfs, lakes ! Ah, foreign travel for me !"



"Ha ! it seems that Monsieur has travelled.

Magloire took the look with which the doctor regarded him, albeit a very significant grimace, for a smile of approbation, and subsiding easily into an armchair he went on :—

"Just as you see me, sir, I learned to read in the voyages of Captain Cook, and I may say that I have profited by them. Geography and I are old acquaintances.

Ah, you shall see me at work next time you go exploring ; for it seems Monsieur is a savant."

Quiès considered awhile whether this was not the proper moment at which to assert his authority by sending Magloire to the kitchen ; but as it was his custom never to do anything lightly, he merely paid no attention, but took up his pen to write. Nevertheless his hand trembled slightly.

"5. No. 20. A pointed spear-head, which—"

Meanwhile, though he continued to write, he was obliged in spite of himself to hear what Magloire was saying, for the man went on talking with serene indifference to his master's occupation.

"It is an incomprehensible thing—I am sure Monsieur agrees with me—that man, placed upon a ball so small as the earth, should die without knowing even that little space. In these days especially ; it's so easy ! It is no greater feat to travel five hundred leagues than to drink a glass of water ; you can go all round the world without having time to think about it, and anywhere you like with a dozen shirts and a good lump of money. I am very glad that Monsieur has travelled."

"Magloire ?"

"Sir ?"

"You see I am writing ?"

"And I am sure that what Monsieur writes is most interesting. When one has done a great deal, one has a great deal to tell. When you have finished your narrative, sir, if you will do me the honour to ask my opinion of it, I am vain enough to think that I may not be altogether useless."

"Really, Magloire ! However, in the meantime, will you have the goodness to do a little dusting. It is especially for that purpose you are engaged at fifty francs a month, counting from to-day."

"Oh, sir," said Magloire, "the pen and the dusting-brush (*la plume et le plumeau*) have the same origin ;

there is no more dishonour in using the one than the other."

With this reply, equally humorous and philosophical, Magloire rose, and before setting to work cast a scrutinizing eye upon the room which was henceforth to be his own special care.

The walls were hung with arms and curiosities from foreign lands, presented to the doctor as marks of the esteem and respect in which he was held by his numerous correspondents. The book-cases, which occupied one side, were filled with books, pamphlets, maps and prints.

Specimens of the rarest kinds in the three kingdoms of Nature were arranged behind glass doors, which were carefully closed. Lastly, on a Japanese stool, in one corner, was placed a very handsome chess-board, covered with its pieces, carved in ivory by some patient Chinaman, so exquisitely that he must have passed his lifetime in the execution of the set.

Magloire was not a man to pass such a thing by unnoticed. He paused before the chess-board. All the pieces were in their places. Wishing to examine the board in detail, Magloire gently removed the black queen, closely inspected the piece, and approached the doctor.

"This is very valuable?" said he—"Monsieur is aware of that?"

Quiès looked up, saw the piece in Magloire's hand, snatched it from him angrily, and pointing to the door, said,—

"The deuce take you! I dismiss you with your week's wages. Be off to the kitchen. Gertrude will pay you."

"I beg to observe, sir—"

"You shall be paid your week."

Magloire shrugged his shoulders, muttered "He's mad," and left the room.

Doctor J. B. Quiès was crimson with rage. If any one had told the doctor and Magloire that they were ever to

meet again, great would have been the surprise of both. It was, however, so decreed.

For the right understanding of the emotion with which Doctor Quiès was overpowered for fully a quarter of an hour after the departure of Magloire, it is indispensable to know that being a great lover of the game of chess, which he rightly regarded rather as a science than an amusement, he had competed with the best players in Europe,



“ I dismiss you with your week’s wages.”

and was at the present time finishing one of the most interesting games he had ever played, by correspondence, with Mynheer Poggenbeck, of Haarlem.

The urgent matter now was to find the place from which the black queen had been dislodged by Magloire

The doctor scratched his head, hesitated, finally took up his pen and wrote,—

“ MY DEAR ADVERSARY,—An unlucky accident has dis-

turbed one of the pieces on my board. I think I have played D. 7 R. Let me know by return of post whether this is the move."

He folded the letter, rang for Gertrude, and without giving a thought to the sale of the farm of La Cochariotte, he went gravely on with his description of the spear-head, which was to make it as clear as daylight that Saint-Pignon les Girouettes was a fortified town of the first class in the year of grace 450.



## CHAPTER VI.

PROVING THAT IF TWENTY LITTLE RIVULETS MAKE  
A BIG RIVER, A THOUSAND PIN-PRICKS ARE EQUAL  
TO A SWORD-THRUST.

WHILE the doctor, smiling and calm, was pursuing his labours, M. Anthime Bonamy, one of the wealthy citizens of Saint-Pignon, an influential elector, a member of the Geographical, Numismatical, and Archæological Society, and a correspondent of several other learned bodies, re-entered his own house in a rage.

M. Anthime Bonamy was a tall, thin, solemn personage. Every day he was dressed in black, every day he wore a white necktie, spectacles on his nose, and an air of gravity; but on this particular day, although he was in a rage, he was graver than usual. His thin lips were so tightly closed that his mouth looked like a slit made with a pen-knife underneath his nose; and that long, sharp nose, reddened with anger, seemed to share in the general disturbance.

"It is infamous!" exclaimed Anthime, bursting like a rocket into the room where Mme. Bonamy, his wife (her maiden name was Legras), sat at her needlework.

"What is the matter now?"

"The matter is that I have been done out of La Cochariotte by a bid of one hundred francs. Do you hear that? One hundred francs! And again it is that fellow Quiès who has cut the ground from under my feet."

"Pray be calm, Anthime."

"Be calm, indeed! Can't you understand that I shall

have no rest until the day comes when I shall be rid of this detested rival?"

"The rivalry is only accidental."

"He appears not to meddle with me, but I know what he is capable of. I know the man from A to Z."



M. Bonamy stalked majestically into his study.

"I think he is very inoffensive."

"Madam," said M. Bonamy, drawing himself up, "never say that again in my presence."

Mme. Bonamy bent over her work, and M. Bonamy stalked majestically into his study.

Those few words exchanged between the husband and wife show that M. Bonamy cordially hated Doctor Quiès, who had not the least notion that he had an enemy in all Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, and was, if possible, still farther from suspecting how he could have given rise to such an animosity.

We shall be able to understand and explain it, if we do but take the trouble to remember that one drop of water has only to meet other drops of water on its way, to become a river or a torrent.

The large sum of M. Bonamy's enmity was composed of a thousand petty spites, which, though all puerile and insignificant in themselves, had been accumulating for a long time ; for we must go back to the schooldays of both the hater and the hated if we would see the figures that head the first column of the account.

Anthime, plodding and eager, had been beaten by Baptistin always and in everything. Prize for composition, verses, history, mathematics ; Baptistin ; Accessit : Anthime.

If cuffs were exchanged, Anthime got the most of them. If the wrath of a master was aroused by some misdeed whose author was unknown, Anthime was charged with it. Baptistin was not even suspected.

Anthime finished his studies and left the school unperceived, absolutely ignored. At the same time nothing but Baptistin was talked about all over the town.

Shortly afterwards Anthime, who wished to marry, cast his eyes upon one of the best matches in Saint-Pignon, Mdlle. Duclos. His parents had selected Mdlle. Legras as a wife for him. The Legras family, on their side, preferred Baptistin. If Baptistin would marry Mdlle. Legras, then Anthime could marry Mdlle. Duclos. Unfortunately Baptistin positively refused, and out of spite Mdlle. Legras became Mme. Bonamy.

There are things which it is difficult to forget.

Before this unpleasant impression had had time to wear

off, the deplorable influence of Baptistin again made itself felt.

Anthime, whose name had long figured upon the list of future members of the Geographical Society of Saint-Pignon, thought himself sure of the vacant armchair, when M. Quiès was elected to it by a unanimous vote.

It was not until three years later that a similar honour was awarded to M. Bonamy.

In short, Quiès always came between him and his aim. On the great race course of life Quiès had a quarter of an hour's start of him. Let his pace be what it would, Anthime always came in second—and a bad second.

Hence the animosity which we have recorded, and which only wanted an opportunity to manifest itself.

Anthime's heart was full of gall; another drop and it would overflow.

At five o'clock he took his place at table, opposite to Athenaïs, as usual; but the farm of La Cochariotte was evidently in his thoughts still, for he put his spoon into the plate of soup that was set before him, and said angrily,—

“What is this?”

“Milk-soup.”

“Milk-soup!—when you know perfectly well that I cannot endure milk!”

“But, Anthime——”

“Milk-soup! A hit, I suppose, at my quick temper? You might bear in mind that you are not absolutely perfect yourself, Athenaïs.”

“If I forget the fact, it is not for want of hearing you repeat it.”

“That is to say that I don't behave well to you; that I am a brute, a tyrant, because my patience breaks down sometimes? Why, a saint would not be able to put up with you sometimes. However, it is in the family.”

“Sir!” exclaimed Madame Bonamy, highly indignant.

“Well, what? What have I said? Milk-soup, indeed!”

"Do hold your tongue ; the maid is coming into the room."

"The maid, indeed ! I'm not to speak before her, am I not ? Much I think about her !"

"If Monsieur is not satisfied with me—," said the woman, who had overheard his last words.

"What's all this ? What's all that ? No, certainly I am not satisfied with you."

"Monsieur has only to say so."

"I do say so ; you can go away."

"I shall await my mistress's orders."

With these contemptuous words the maid went out of the room, as noisily as possible, leaving the wedded pair with a leg of mutton, burnt in the roasting, on the table before them.

"You see, madam, you see the very servants know that you will support them against me. I am respected by nobody, thanks to you. Ah, Quiès, Quiès, you shall pay for this !"

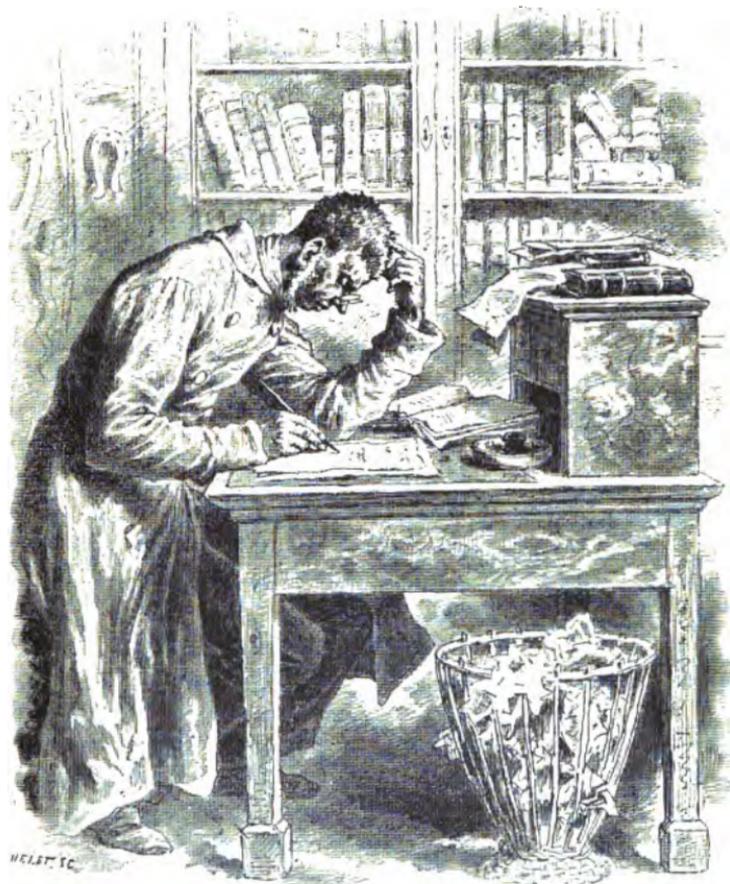
He rose from the table without carving the joint, and locked himself up in his study.

"It must end," he muttered ; "it must end ! Always J. B. Quiès ! How does this fellow, a snail never out of its shell, contrive to plant himself in the middle of my path ? A savant indeed ! I am a savant, ay, and *savantissime in omni re scibili*, just as much as this Doctor Pancratius, and I will prove it to him. There lies my revenge !"

Then, becoming suddenly calm, he approached his writing-table with the dignity of a Rector followed by the four Faculties, opened one of the drawers, and took out some medals, which, judging by the verdigris that had accumulated upon them, were of considerable antiquity. He repeated, "There lies my revenge !"

M. Bonamy seated himself in a stately manner, turned back his coat-cuffs, passed his fingers through his hair, and wrote as follows :—

“I entertain no doubt, gentlemen, that, after having examined the curious documents which I have the honour to submit to you, you will be struck with the probability of my conclusions, which rest on—



M. Bonamy passed his fingers through his hair, and wrote.

“1. The four medals catalogued under No. 13. Although it is true the effigies have entirely disappeared, we cannot fail to recognize these medals as belonging to that period of our history.

“ 2. The three spear-heads of whose authenticity no doubt can exist in minds so cultivated as yours.

“ 3. The horse-shoe catalogued under No. 8, and still bearing a date which almost seems to corroborate my assertions.

“ Therefore, gentlemen, I unhesitatingly claim to be the first person who has authoritatively demonstrated that in A.D. 450, that is to say, in the time of Attila, Saint-Pignon les Girouettes was a fortified place.”

If some evil genius had apprised M. Bonamy that Doctor J. B. Quiès was in the act of writing the same sentence at the same hour, this last pin-prick would probably have proved fatal, or if he had not died of it he would have planned some frightful crime.

Happily he knew nothing of it—as yet.

## CHAPTER VII.

## A GRAIN OF SAND IN A WATCH.

TWO more days had fallen into the bottomless gulf of eternity. (How a classic would enjoy that sentence!) It was seven o'clock in the evening. Henri had just come in after a long day's shooting, fully half an hour late, eager to excuse himself for this breach of the chronometrical customs of the house, and also ready to do honour to the dinner, which, indeed, he had well earned. A hare and two pheasants!

What was his surprise to find the doctor standing upon the doorsteps. Henri made sure that he would have been far on the way through his dinner by this time. The worthy doctor appeared to be greatly upset by some unexpected event. His kindly fat cheeks, usually so fresh and ruddy, were suffused with a livid hue; the rest of his face was dead white. His eyes, which were very wide open, glittered feverishly behind his spectacles.

It was evident that something in the mechanism of Dr. J. B. Quiès had given way.

We say "mechanism," because no other word is applicable to natures mathematically organized like his. But, for the reason that they are so accurately framed, a mere nothing destroys them. Imagine the finest chronometer that could be constructed, with the most delicate movement, and let a grain of sand, nay, even a grain of dust, fall into it, the machinery will stop suddenly, and the hands will mark midday at five o'clock.

Thus it was with Doctor J. B. Quiès. In all cases of

vexation or emotion he multiplied everything by ten. Everything was a grain of sand or a grain of dust, and he had often been depressed to the point of wishing himself dead by the merest trifle.

This time, however, trouble was so plainly to be read in his face that Henri could not but exclaim,—

“What on earth has happened to you?”

“A catastrophe,” answered Quiès, in a lamentable voice.

“What is it? Tell me at once!” said Henri, who was seriously uneasy.

The doctor’s sole reply was to hand him an open letter. It was only by look and gesture that he bade Henri read the missive.

“My dear Friend,—I had prepared you; it is over. For just a week I have been the father of a fine boy, whom I mean to christen by the name of Baptistin. To tell you this is to tell you that you are to be his godfather. The christening is fixed for the 12th instant. Pack your valise and come.

“You bring our dear Henri with you: that goes without saying. I have also written to that old stick Anthime; he is not much good, but one likes him all the same.

“You will do your thirty leagues together. Divided into three, the distance is only ten leagues apiece. You will not refuse this small kindness to your faithful and attached

“C. VERNET, (called) LA CARRIOLE.”

“P.S.—I shall take advantage of this opportunity to submit to your inspection, and to leave in your possession if you care for them, some old medals which have been found on the verge of the forest. I have no idea of their value, and am inclined to think they have none, except to an antiquary of your calibre. Bring a magnifier.”

“Well?” said Henri.

“Well! you say, ‘well?’ You don’t understand? La

Carriole is my oldest companion, my best friend ; his father was the friend of mine. La Carriole will never forgive me."

"You refuse, then?"

"To be godfather? Not at all. On the contrary, I accept most willingly."

"Well, what is it, then?"

"I refuse to make the journey."

"Impossible ; you cannot do such a thing."

"Thirty leagues ! You little know how much thirty leagues are."

"One hundred and twenty kilometers, no more."

"Just one hundred, nineteen and a half too many."

"You will consider the matter, doctor?"

"I have considered it. I will not go. I should have an illness after the journey. Ah, this is really a sad business, to lose a friend of twenty years' standing.

"You'll lose a good many more friends at the rate you're going," remarked Gertrude, who had just appeared on the scene ; "you are too selfish !"

"You know perfectly well, Gertrude, that my constitution will not stand knocking about from place to place."

Gertrude merely shrugged her shoulders, and left the room, saying :

"Dinner is on the table."

While the meal was in progress, Quiès never opened his lips except for the purpose of eating, and even in that cause he showed less zeal than usual. He was not altogether at ease with his conscience ; it repeated Gertrude's words, "You are too selfish."

But another voice, and this one seemed to speak out of the very depths of his being, cried :

"Thirty leagues ! One hundred and twenty thousand yards !

"Five hours' journey, not counting delays and stops !

"Five hours of fatigues, of jolts, of shaking ! And then the possible accidents ; trains getting off the line, awful collisions, carriages upset, &c., &c."

Doctor Quiès shuddered, and said to himself :

“ No, positively I will not go.”

All the evening he kept on saying to himself and to the others :

“ I ought to go, but, on consideration, I will not go. Nevertheless, I ought to go.”

Saying these words he fell asleep, and dreamed a terrible dream.

Seated in a vehicle of strange construction, and drawn by fantastic birds, he was carried at furious speed towards an unknown region. Whirlwinds surrounded, and dreadful bellowings terrified him. The more he tugged at the reins of his diabolical coursers, the faster they went. Faster! always faster! He was suffocating, and his hair stood upright on his head, every moment he expected some obstacle to rise up before him, against which his wondrous equipage and himself must be dashed to pieces. But no, space, always space, only space, stretched before him. And his indefatigable coursers redoubled their speed! He stretched out his arm to catch at something in passing, by which he might hold on and arrest this horrid headlong course, but there was nothing. He ceased to breathe. A moment more, and his little remaining strength would be exhausted. A moment more, and he must die, stifled in that great tunnel of air, with not a breath to reach his lungs. He made one supreme effort to cry out, to call for assistance, and awoke.

“ Ah, no ; a thousand times no ! ” he said ; “ I will not go.”

He lay down again, and so strong was his resolution this time that he slept soundly until eight o'clock in the morning. At breakfast he was quite gay and happy at having come to a resolution so much in accordance with his inclination and his tastes. He reflected that after all Commandant La Carriole could not desire his death, and would not bear him any resentment ; in short, he found such valid excuses that he ended—such is the invariable

history of human failings—by absolving himself, and being persuaded that everybody else would absolve him.

He had, however, reckoned without Gertrude, who had said to Henri on the previous evening :

“He shall go ! If he doesn't I will raise the town against him.”

The doctor was eating his last mouthful when Gertrude came in.

“Monsieur has quite made up his mind ?” she asked demurely.

“About what, Gertrude ?”

“About not going to the christening ?”

“Quite, Gertrude.”

“The town will take it very ill.”

“I do not trouble myself about what my fellow-citizens do ; cannot they in their turn——”

“Oh, you can do as you like. But it hurts my feelings, when I am doing my marketing, to hear it said, as I did this morning, “M. Quiès is this, M. Quiès is that——”

“We must let them have their say, Gertrude.”

“Of course we must, and it is just that which vexes me. I can't defend you, because what they say is quite right.”

“Do you think so ?”

“Yes, indeed I do, sir. And you see, sir, when one can no longer depend upon one's master it is better to part.”

“What's that you say, Gertrude ?”

“I say that if Monsieur does not go to the christening I shall be obliged to leave his service.”

“Ah, ah !”

Gertrude looked covertly at her master, who had put down his fork and was twirling his thumbs, in evidently painful hesitation.

“Well, well, my poor Gertrude,” said he at length, “I have no right to keep you. You must do as you like.”

“Oh,” muttered Catherine, shocked and amazed, “oh !!!”

And then she disappeared, being unable to add a word to this shower of notes of exclamation.

The doctor rose from the breakfast-table, and strolled out into his garden to escape from the annoying impression of this domestic incident.

All the flowers in the flower-beds were smiling their welcome to the sun, and, lightly shaken by the morning breeze, they diffused a delicious and penetrating perfume. The good doctor, who usually inhaled the scent of his beloved flowers with delight, seemed mournfully insensible on the present occasion to the attractions of the fair and home-like scene.

Gertrude's leaving him was an important event. Gertrude knew of old all his little ways. Gertrude left dust and papers alike undisturbed; she had no mania for the use of the feather brush. Gertrude was invaluable. Yes—but thirty leagues, the fantastic carriage, the winged coursers of his dream!

“No, no, decidedly I will not go.”

And the doctor, after having heaved a last sigh to the memory of Gertrude's usefulness, re-entered his study.

There he found M. Anthime Bonamy awaiting him, black coated, wearing a white tie, and ominously grave.

“It appears,” he began, “my dear Quiès, that our good friend the Commandant has a son.”

“Yes, it is so,” said Quiès, much surprised.

“Whom he means to call Baptistin?”

“If such is his idea——”

“It appears also that you refuse to present the child at the baptismal font?”

“Well, yes.”

“You know this is talked of?”

“Ah!”

“And very much talked of?”

“I can't help that.”

“You will not go?”

“Certainly not.”

"I shall then be obliged, my dear Quiès, in order not to come in for a share of public reprobation in this affair—"

"Reprobation. Oh! Oh!"

"To see you less frequently."

"You need not see me except when it pleases you to do so. And, let me say, without reproach——"

"I come here but little, from discretion."

"Just so."

"I shall be obliged not to come at all, from respect for public opinion."

"Ah!"

Anthime bowed coldly, opened the door coldly, and went out coldly, leaving Dr. Quiès confounded and grieved.

He believed in the friendship of M. Bonamy, and to lose it was a trial. True, but thirty leagues meant a trial of a far more severe kind! He struck the name of M. Anthime Bonamy off his mental list of friends, wondering the while how so trifling an affair had come to assume such large proportions.

Was he to be shunned as a leper because he refused to—but no, the thing was absurd.

Perhaps it was, nevertheless the fact was so, or seemed to be so. Gertrude had made her arrangements to that effect.

After M. Bonamy came M. de Préchafoin, President of the Society of Numismatics and Archæology of Saint-Pignon, to endeavour to make Dr. J. B. Quiès understand how much his refusal was to be regretted and blamed.

M. de Préchafoin, a dry little chip of a man, as thin as Anthime, whom he resembled in more respects than one, owed his lofty position neither to his personal merits, which were *nil*, nor to his fortune, which was small, nor indeed to anything of weight or importance. He was President of the Society of, etc., etc., Member of, etc., etc., and many other things, simply because he wore gold spectacles.

The influence of a pair of gold spectacles is extraordinary; it gives a man a position at once.

The fact is, a man does not take to wearing gold spectacles until he has acquired a high idea of his own importance ; and having done that he cannot fail to let some reference to it escape him, if only in a few words, which being repeated and added to, finally establish his celebrity.

M. de Préchafoin was not absolutely devoid of tact, and he acquitted himself of his delicate errand with every kind



M. de Préchafoin.

of precaution. Quîès pleaded his stoutness, and asserted that travelling is an exercise to be avoided when one weighs over one hundred and ten kilograms.

M. de Préchafoin replied that Dr. Quîès owed a duty to science ; that the medals alluded to by Commandant La Carriole might possibly be of inestimable value from the archæological point of view. To absent himself was more than weakness, and the doctor's refusal might bring about

a rupture between himself and the learned Society of Saint-Pignon.

Dr. J. B. Quiès dismissed M. de Préchafoin politely.

Mme. Ragot had no better success ; the forsaken doctor seemed to take his ostracism with great resignation, and the scandal spread apace.

The whole town declared that, notwithstanding his scientific eminence, Doctor J. B. Quiès was a man on whom no one could depend, since the mere fear of a few hours' fatigue sufficed to prevent him from rendering so slight a service to his oldest friend.

Would he go? Would he not go? These were the burning questions of the day. Sides were taken for and against ; there was the party of Aye, there was the party of No. In short no diplomatic note ever produced such an effect.

Saint-Pignon was in a volcanic condition.

The christening was fixed for the 12th of September. Up to the 9th the doctor held out. An ultimatum which amounted to no less than boycotting him, was tendered to him by his cousin the widow, in the names of the family and his friends.

The doctor held out.

On the morning of the 10th, Henri accosted him.

"It's for the day after to-morrow, Doctor."

"After to-morrow?"

"The christening."

"Ah—yes!" muttered Quiès.

"I shall be greatly grieved personally if you persist in your refusal."

"But—my boy——"

"It would be a great sorrow to me to leave you."

"What? What are you saying?"

"My mother has given me to understand that if you don't go——"

"She too!" groaned Quiès, quite confounded.

Henri laughed covertly.

The doctor was half choked by his feelings. The loss of his housekeeper ; the loss of his seat as a member of the learned society of Saint-Pignon, he might disregard ; to lose the friendship of M. Bonamy was very well ; to lose Mme. Ragot, good ; but, to lose Henri ! No, that was too much.



The departure of Dr. Quiès.

Doctor J. B. Quiès gave in—worse luck for him !

It was not, however, as will easily be believed, without a great mental struggle, that he presented himself on the following morning at the railway-station, accompanied by Anthime and Henri.

What a journey !

He would have to reach Paris, get out of the train, get into another train on a second line of railway, and afterwards travel three leagues in a diligence in order to arrive at Plessis-les-Assoux, the little village in the department of Seine-et-Marne in which Commandant La Carriole resided.

Quiès embraced Gertrude, his cousin Mme. Ragot, Mme. de Malleville, and even the station-master, after the manner of a man who was never again to behold his native land.

Alas! The proverb which says that "Songe est mensonge" is not of invariable application.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Attila,  
Attila,  
Pour sur a passé par là.

(*Well-known air.*)

WE have not thought it necessary to investigate the origin of the odd addition of La Carriole to the name of Commandant Vernet, but we entertain little doubt that it might be traced to a barrack-room jest. The bearer of it was a short, thin, active little man, with a moustache which entirely concealed his mouth, and might have been coveted by a follower of Vercingetorix, thick hair, frowning brows, and a fierce, hard, intractable expression of countenance. But one only needed to



Commandant La Carriole.

know him for five minutes in order to discover that he was the best of men. His character may be summed up in a few words—no vices, few defects, and one passion—sport.

From the 1st of September to the 1st of March, the Commandant was identified with his gun and his dogs. They were never seen apart; they formed a harmonious whole, whose respective parts resumed their isolation only at the period when they were rudely put asunder by the law.

From the 1st of September to the 1st of March, the Commandant went out at daybreak, and did not come in until nightfall.

The arrival of Dr. J. B. Quiès and his companions was an event of sufficient importance to bring him back to the house three hours earlier than usual.

He was dressing when the cracking of a whip announced the approach of a carriage, and presently a diligence stopped before the porch.

Henri and M. Bonamy stepped lightly out of the ponderous vehicle. The unhappy doctor had to be extracted from his ambulatory prison, and this delicate and protracted operation required the aid of the coachman, the gardener, and the man-servant for its safe and successful performance.

“Are you all right?” anxiously inquired the Commandant.

Dr. J. B. Quiès made no answer.

No words in any language could describe the state of prostration and dejection to which he had been reduced by this wretched transit of thirty leagues, after the long repose of forty years.

“And to think,” he murmured piteously, “that there are people who like travelling!”

Nothing more could be extracted from him. They hoisted him up to his room somehow, and he went to bed and to sleep, without giving a thought to the dinner that

awaited the new arrivals, although he passed for a valiant trencherman.

It is not known whether the waking nightmare of travel pursued him during his sleep, whether he felt his bed grind and creak under him like the iron wheels of the



He had to be extracted from his ambulatory prison.

railway-carriage, but it may be hoped that he was spared that supreme misery, as he remained unseen the whole evening.

Henri and his companion, who were less susceptible to fatigue, did ample justice to the Commandant's excellent

dinner, and after they had drunk their coffee and smoked their cigars, they adjourned to the billiard-room.

While the balls were rolling about the table, Anthime, who had a good deal of the ferret in him, went all round the room, poking his sharp nose into everything within his reach. Presently he paused, and exclaimed :

“ Oh ! Oh ! Ah ! ”

The Commandant turned round, and asked Anthime what was the matter with him.

Anthime had three or four pieces of coin in his hand. He had found them in a small vase.

“ What are these ? ” he asked, with some excitement.

“ How should I know ? They are old sous that were found on the border of the wood, and I have kept them to show to Quiès.”

“ Quiès, always Quiès ! ” growled M. Bonamy. “ One would think that nobody in the world but Quiès could pronounce upon a question of archæology.”

He took one of the coins, put it in his pocket, threw the others back into the cup, and fell into deep meditation.

“ These coins ”—so ran his thoughts—“ are identically similar to those which I found at Saint-Pignon. Other remains of the same period ought to be found where these have lain so long. Now, if I succeed in proving that Attila came to this country, his route through it comes to the support of what I say concerning the early history of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes ; the Archbishop of Upsala is wrong, or the texts have been misinterpreted. Oh, science, science ! ”

He raised his hands to heaven, let them fall again, shook hands with his host, and betook himself to his bedroom. An hour afterwards, everybody at Plessis-les-Assoux, except the dogs, was asleep.

The following morning, Quiès, the first to awake, after a sleep of fifteen hours and some minutes, came down from his room, and cast a melancholy glance upon the garden, upon which the sun was shining. Then, as he

was already tired of standing, he inspected the sofa in the billiard-room, and finding it comfortably cushioned, he gently subsided upon it, resting his hand on a table which stood by its side.

Once seated, the doctor recovered the full use of his faculties, and his mind, more active than his body, began again to seek the boundless realms of science. He applied himself to considering one by one the arguments of his admirable treatise upon Saint-Pignon les Girouettes in the days of Attila ; and while he was busy with his thoughts, he idly fingered a number of small articles in a vase within reach of his hand. It was the vase in, which Anthime had replaced the coins that had attracted his attention.

Doctor J. B. Quiès' bump of archæology was as largely developed as Anthime's, and no sooner had his sensitive fingers detected the ridges on the surface of these coins than he took them up, examined them, and exclaimed, like his rival, "Oh ! Oh ! Ah !" Then he too fell into deep meditation.

"These coins," thought he, "are identically similar to those which I have found at home. If I succeed in proving it—and prove it I shall—that Attila came into this country, his route through it comes to the support of what I say concerning the early history of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes. The Archbishop of Upsala is wrong, or the texts have been misinterpreted."

Doctor Quiès, in the pride of his discovery, actually hummed the old tune to which we have all been rocked to sleep :—

Attila,  
Attila,  
Pour sur a passé par là.

At this moment M. Bonamy entered the room.

"Ha !" exclaimed he. "What is that you say, my dear Quiès ?"

"I say Attila certainly passed that way."

"Are you concerned about Attila, then ?"

“H'm! It's an obscure period of history, and therefore very interesting.”

“And do you hope to throw a ray of unexpected light upon it by any chance?”

“Perhaps.”



The christening of the little Vernet La Carriole.

“Ah!”

“You will soon see that.”

“Ah!!”

“At our next meeting.”

“Ah!!!”

" I mean to read a short paper—"

" Upon Attila ?"

" Yes ; upon the early history of our good town of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes."

" A paper on—"

" Yes, yes. But what's the matter with you ?"

M. Bonamy was livid, and a sudden gush of bile lent a yellow tint to his cheeks and forehead.

He answered with a great effort, " Nothing."

But the blow had struck home ! Once more Quiès stood in his path and barred it. Once more Quiès was about to deprive him of the fruit of his toilsome labours.

" No, no," he muttered, " this shall not be !"

Then the idea of an evil deed took root in his mind.

M. Bonamy did not choose that Dr. Quiès should read his paper upon the origin and early history of Saint-Pignon at the meeting of the Archæological Society, and he regarded any means by which this could be prevented as allowable. He took good care, however, to conceal the sentiments which disturbed him ; for to betray them might thwart his scheme of vengeance.

The apparent harmony that reigned among the guests of the good Commandant was, therefore, entirely undisturbed, and on the following day the christening of the little Vernet La Carriole took place with great pomp in the church of a neighbouring commune. There is as yet no cathedral at Plessis.



## CHAPTER IX.

## DIJON !—FIVE MINUTES !

HALF an hour after the close of the festivities, Doctor J. B. Quiès, who thought it unnecessary to remain any longer at Plessis, announced his intention of departing, since travel back he must, and M. Bonamy applied himself to thinking how he could prevent the worthy savant's return to Saint-Pignon. The solemn sitting of the Geographical, Numismatical, and Archæological Society was to take place in three days from the present time.

How could Dr. Quiès be kept at a safe distance for that period? Ever since the preceding evening M. Bonamy had been putting this question to himself, and it had cost him more trouble to solve the problem than to compose his famous memoir. He would probably have failed altogether and given it up, had not the devil, who takes pleasure in helping out evil schemes, seconded him in the accomplishment of his design. The Commandant was summoned by telegraph to the south on urgent business, and had to start that same evening.

"My young friend," said he to Henri, "would you like to come to Tarascon with me? It is quite close to Marseilles. Marseilles is at the gate of Algiers, and I engage that your father will be glad to embrace his son and shake hands with old La Carriole. Hey! what do you think? We will write to mamma when we get there, and we won't say a single word to Quiès about it. He abhors travelling as nature abhors a vacuum, and he is just the man not to let you go."

A youth of twenty who would refuse such an expedition is as rare as an urchin of five years old who would say "No" to a slice of bread and jam.

Henri jumped with joy, and pressed the hand of the Commandant all the more closely because he felt himself under a double obligation in this matter, imperative reasons of economy alone having prevented him from accompanying or rejoining his father.

Quiès, as we now see, was about to be left at the mercy of his rival.

The christening feast was copious and prolonged, and the party set out in a carriage at five o'clock for the railway-station at Mehen, so as to be in time for the express which leaves Paris at eight o'clock, and crosses that from Marseilles at this point. The arrangement rather frightened the doctor at first, but he soon got over his fear. After all, it was not travelling in the dark that he dreaded, it was travelling at all.

It was already dark when the party alighted at the entrance to the station. A few gas-jets flickered amid the gloom. It was just the time and place for an evil deed.

During their drive Anthime had not taken his eyes off the unhappy Quiès. He had observed how the poor fellow, shaken and hurt by the jolting of the carriage, overpowered by the fumes of the generous wine, of which he had drunk freely, had tried to find a place of repose for his weary head—had slept, awoke, and slept again. Fatigue would deliver him over helplessly to his enemy.

What was he going to do with him?

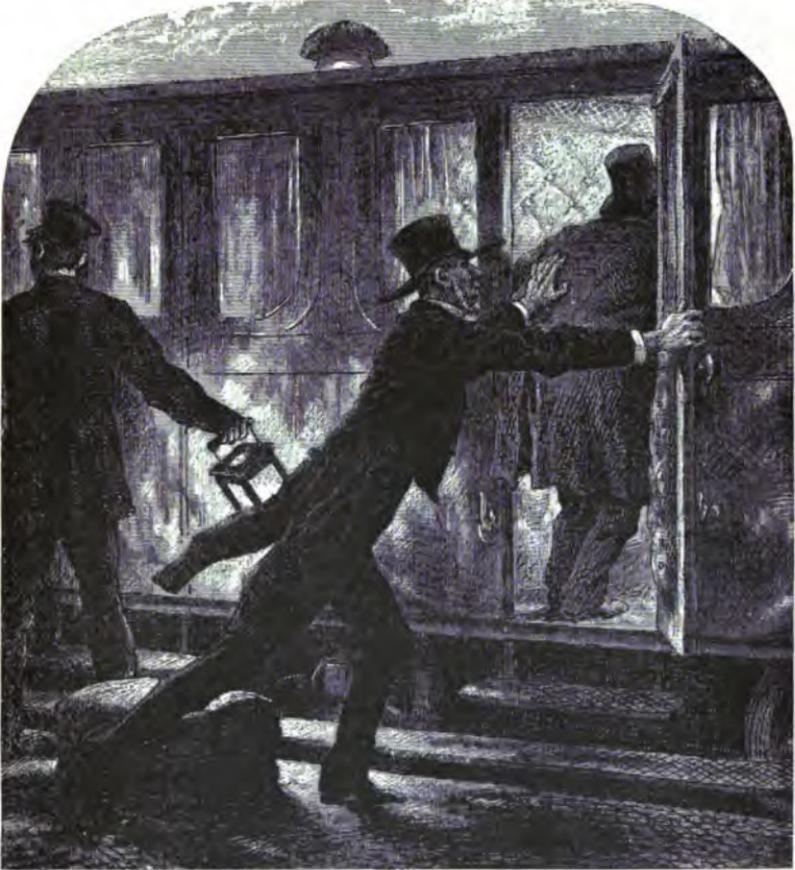
Commandant La Carriole and Henri had already got into their compartment, after the usual farewells, and Anthime was still anxiously seeking for a means of wreaking his vengeance, when a loud voice uttered the familiar words:

"Take your seats! take your seats!"

A diabolical idea occurred to him. He shook Quiès, who was half asleep on a bench, and shouted in his ear:

“Quick, quick, take your seat!”

“Quiès stood up, mechanically. His enemy took him by the arm, opened the door of a carriage, and having hoisted him into it with great difficulty, shut the door, saying :



“I will be with you in a moment.”

“I will be with you in a moment.”

The doctor sank down upon the well-stuffed cushion, and re-closed his eyes, without troubling himself about his travelling companion. Quiès, on a journey, descended

at once to the rank of the lower animals. He was sound asleep when, two minutes later, the train steamed out of the station.

During this brief interval Anthime, radiant with delight, and more elated than a general who has just won a battle, got into the train that was in readiness on the other side of the station, and was carried comfortably towards Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

"Let me see, let me see," thought he, rubbing his hands; "he will awake between Lyons and Avignon—he has no money—one of two things must happen; he will either recognize what has happened and look for the Commandant, who will supply him with funds, or he will not understand the position, and will stop, in a state of bewilderment, at some intermediate station. From thence he will have to telegraph, and then he will have to wait for the money. Besides, Quiès is just the sort of man to stay where he finds himself rather than do one hundred and fifty leagues over again. Even putting things at the worst, his paper is not ready, and if he comes back he will take to his bed for three days at the very least. However things may turn out, I am master of the situation. Ha, ha, Doctor Quiès, he laughs best who laughs last! Sound sleep to you, my good friend, sound sleep to you!"

Doctor Quiès did not sleep for so long a spell as his enemy desired. He was awakened towards the middle of the night by a sudden jolt caused by the abrupt stopping of the train.

He opened his eyes and looked about him. He was alone in his compartment.

"Where is Bonamy?" thought he, "and whereabouts are we?"

He put his head out of the window; the night was dark, and the train had run on beyond the station, which lay behind it in deep gloom. Quiès, as uneasy at finding himself forsaken by his travelling companion as a child

would be on missing its nurse, got down, and walked a little way, calling out :

“Bonamy ! Bonamy !”

At the same time he approached a carriage in order to ask the name of the station. But the glasses were up, the travellers were asleep, and Quiès, who was very shy, had not courage to arouse any of them. The officials were all at the front of the train. Quiès thought he should save at least ten steps by going himself to read the name which he wanted to learn. Unfortunately there were two goods trains in the station at the same time, and in trying to cross the line, he got mixed up with the carriages, lost his way, and was stopped by the ringing of the bell for the starting of the train, and the imperative :

“Take your seats ! Take your seats !”

We know that the respected doctor was not quick on his legs. He could not reach the compartment in which he had made a portion of the journey, and he had barely time—the train being already in motion—to jump into the last carriage, when the door was shut upon him with a tremendous bang.

Little he cared whether he was in one carriage or another ; he was wretched in any. This particular one, nevertheless, had something very odd about it. It was quite dark. Happily one does not want light to sleep by. Quiès stretched out his arms, felt a soft warm substance under his hands, and promptly let himself drop upon it.

But—oh ! wondrous to tell—he had hardly sat down ere the bench reared itself up, and bellowed after a formidable fashion.

The bench was a bullock, and the doctor had disturbed the animal in its sleep !

Quiès had blundered into a cattle van.

We know many persons, accustomed to sleep in ordinary beds, whom a similar discovery would have terrified and bewildered. Quiès was almost glad of it. There was straw in the van ; he would be able to stretch himself out and

sleep in peace, without being disturbed every few minutes by people getting in and out.

Bullocks are harmless animals.

It did not take very long to make the doctor's bed, and in five minutes he was fast asleep again.

When he opened his eyes, the train had stopped again, and he heard the cry of :

"Dijon ! Dijon ! Five minutes here !"



The bench reared itself up, and bellowed.

"Dijon," muttered Quiès, "Dijon ! Chief place of the department of Côte d'Or, 270 kilometres south-east of Paris, 24,800 inhabitants, is a bishop's see, has a court of assize, is the birthplace of Bossuet, and the former capital of the Duchy of Burgundy. Dijon !"

He sprang up from the straw as if the last trumpet had called him to his feet, and flung himself against the side of the van, shouting with all his strength :

"Let me out ; let me out ! I want to get down !"

The only result of this was that he woke up the bullocks, who drowned his voice with their bellowing.

The train was off again.

Dijon! He was beyond Dijon! He, Quiès! Of all the things reputed to be impossible, there was not one which could have seemed to him so utterly out of the question.

How had it come about?

But this was not all, not nearly all. Where was this train, which was carrying him away with it, to stop? Would the useless effort he had just made remain useless?

We are not afraid of being accused of exaggeration when we say that his terrible discovery threw the unfortunate doctor into such a state of fever that his usually calm and steady pulse beat at the rate of ninety pulsations in a minute. His blood surged and buzzed in his ears; his hands trembled; a mad fear possessed him.

He let himself fall on the straw, with his head in his hands, and groaned out:

“What will become of me?”

A fresh sensation soon roused him from his torpor.

It was that of cold. His chest, his shoulders, his hands were cold, with that peculiar chill of fever which precedes or follows a crisis. Instinctively, without thinking of what he was doing, he stretched out his hands in the darkness, and, groping about, found a rough coat, which he threw over his shoulders, and a cap, which he put on his head, and drew down to his ears.

He felt a little better after this, and, wedging himself in between two bullocks, he endeavoured to collect his ideas.

The effort was, however, useless; the shock had been too sudden and too violent. He fell into a state of numbness, which deadened his perception of external things, and even of his own identity.

He heard innumerable noises, without distinguishing any of them. He wanted to rise, but only as one wants to rise in a dream, and finds oneself fastened to the bed.

This condition lasted, no doubt, for a long time ; for, when his consciousness returned, and he was able to hitch himself up to the opening in the upper part of the side of the van, he beheld—splendidly illuminated by the sun—a landscape which he did not know, but nevertheless recognized without hesitation—

Provence !

The train still sped on.

Quiès fully comprehended that all was over with him. As a mere matter of duty, and for the form of the thing, he still tried to make himself heard when he came to a station, but no sooner did he open his mouth than his eight companions began a competitive bellowing.



Wedging himself in between two bullocks.

The poor wretch, trembling with the cold of fever, wrapped himself up in his coat, pulled his cap over his eyes, and lay down again, with his head in the straw, as though he were trying to forget whom and where he was.

“ The train,” he thought, “ cannot go beyond Marseilles. At Marseilles the van must be opened, and I shall be set free from this nightmare.”

He did arrive at Marseilles, but without being set free from his nightmare, as we have seen in the first chapter of this narrative, at the end whereof we left the poor doctor in a dead faint on board the *Triton*.

## CHAPTER X.

## A GALE.

WHEN Dr. Quiès regained consciousness, he had some difficulty in recovering the thread of his ideas. He was in the state of mind that is produced by a suddenly interrupted dream, and in which one does not know where reality begins or ends.

When memory returned, the frightful recollection that came to him could not be, and was not, anything but the continuation of his dream.

It was all too impossible to be true.

His first effort was to make sure that he was still alive ; a fact which he readily ascertained by opening his eyes and looking about him.

He was lying in a room with a very low ceiling, feebly lighted by four little round glazed apertures. In this room half a dozen men, wearing cotton nightcaps, were asleep on beds—such beds as he had never seen—beds suspended from the walls one over the other.

In one corner slept a big fellow, who wore the traditional white apron of hospital attendants. Quiès had a vague consciousness that he was in a hospital, and began to wonder what malady he was suffering from.

The symptoms that he could identify were :

1. Distressing twinges of the stomach ;
2. Buzzing in the head, and ringing in the ears ;
3. A nervous twitching in the jaws ;
4. A general sense of weakness and lassitude.

It is not necessary to have passed an examination in

medicine in order to diagnose the vulgar complaint called hunger. Everybody is acquainted with the symptoms, although it is, unfortunately, not always in the power of everybody to cure the disease.

It was not at all surprising that Dr. Quiès should suffer from hunger ; he had eaten nothing for thirty-six hours.

For a moment all his other cares were superseded by



Dr. Quiès' breakfast.

the pressing need of food. He called the attendant, and without any circumlocution, requested that his breakfast should be served at once.

"Ha ! It seems you are better," said the man, with a grin.

"Yes, I am better, or, rather, I shall be when I have had a bouillon."

“A bouillon! Monsieur is in the habit of taking his bouillon! Ha! ha! You are well fed in Hungary. Well; you had better go and see the cook. Perhaps he may have a hunch of bread and a sausage to give you.”

Quiès made a melancholy grimace. He did not like sausage, and he had not the least notion where to find the cook.

Fortunately the attendant took pity on him, and went to the cook's galley to get what he could for his patient. He returned with a lump of bread, a bunch of radishes, and a ration of wine.

To have nothing but radishes to eat at the end of a thirty-six hours' fast was, it will be readily admitted, a melancholy experience for a man like Doctor J. B. Quiès, landed proprietor, elector, and “eligible” in general, of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

Bitter indeed were his thoughts while he ate his meagre meal. With what agonizing minuteness did he recall those happy days, already so distant, when he used to sit at his breakfast, sedulously waited on by his old Gertrude, with his feet on soft cushions, and purring like a cat in the sun. In what marvellous colours did this picture of the past, which he only now recognized in the fulness of its calm delight, present itself to his eyes!

But while Quiès was thus thinking of his lost ease and comfort, he was also thinking of the absent—for he was not so entirely selfish as to care for nothing and nobody—of his dear Henri, of the good La Carriole, of Anthime. Yes, Quiès had regretful thoughts for Anthime Bonamy!

When he had eaten the last radish and the last crumb, when he had drained the last drop of wine, Quiès heaved a sigh, wiped away a tear, and now, feeling stronger, rose, with the intention of seeking an interview with the head physician of the hospital, who would surely be able, in virtue of his high position, to come to the poor doctor's assistance, and procure for him the means of returning to his home.

The attendant promptly opened the door for him, saying :

“ The stair in front of you ; take hold of the rail.”

Quiès obeyed, took hold of the rail, mounted half a dozen steps with some difficulty, and having reached the top of the staircase, which seemed—it was the oddest thing possible—to slip from under his feet, tumbled against a coil of rope, unaccountably left in so very awkward a place, and fell flat down at his full length.

He picked himself up gradually, cast his eyes around, and found himself in such a situation that he could only open his mouth, but was unable to utter a cry.

Around him, before, behind, on the right, on the left, everywhere lay the immensity of the sea.

The sun, rising on the horizon, already illuminated the crests of the little blue waves, rippling under the cheerful breeze.

The deck was almost deserted. Quiès did not disturb anybody, while he ranged its length three or four times, as wild beasts tread the floor of their cages, only to make themselves doubly sure that there is no way out.

On the high seas !

This discovery completely terrified him.

Where was he going to ? Whither were they taking him ?

Every turn of that screw which revolved with such incredible rapidity was removing him farther from his dear Saint-Pignon.

How was he to live, unknown, and without resources, in the strange land, whatever it might be, towards which he was speeding ?

And how was he ever to get back ?

All these ideas assailed him simultaneously, and to none of his questions could he find an answer.

Almost mad, with tears streaming down his cheeks, he threw himself into the first aperture he came to, tumbled down some stairs, and getting on his feet again entered a

stowage place in the between decks, and crouched down upon the boards, there to wait for death, if God would mercifully send him that great deliverance.

All day he remained hidden in his retreat, and it was not until evening that an unexpected occurrence forced him to emerge.

The wind had risen ; the pretty little blue waves of the morning had turned into great billows, which swept over the deck every moment with a terrible sound. The black sky was ploughed up by the lightning, and the howling of the storm overhead replied to the angry roar of the sea.

A tempest is a magnificent spectacle when one contemplates it in perfect safety from the shore, with the certainty of finding food and shelter at need. Then may the beholder study its aspect from the point of view of the dreamer or the painter, careful only to note the alternations of light and shade, of tumult and silence, and oblivious, for a moment, that the caprice of the wind will cost the lives of many men.

On the deck of a ship one sees things from a different point of view ; the reality is so near that there is no room for imagination, and one thinks less of the pleasure of admiration than of the danger of death.

Quiès thought of neither one nor the other. An entirely new sensation had seized upon him. A severe hiccough shook him from head to foot, his head swam, his ideas became confused, his temples throbbed as though they were bursting, and he was racked with unbearable pains.

He rose to his feet, not knowing what he was doing, and staggered to the deck. The spectacle that awaited him there completed his moral overthrow.

The storm was at its height. The vessel, tossed on the wild waves, rose madly on their summits and sank into their depths as though it could never re-appear.

The sailors were hurrying about, executing the orders of the officers. No harm had been done as yet. The crew

had the vessel under perfect control ; but the noise and seeming confusion were terrific. To those accustomed to it, the storm was merely a storm, without any formidable features ; but to the wretched Quiès, it was the end of the world.



“ Mind what you're about, you fool !”

All the elements seemed to him to be mixed up together in a chaos out of which nothing could issue evermore.

Maddened by fear, stumbling, falling, picking himself up, going blindly on, not knowing whither, he reeled against the legs of a sailor, who gave him a push which

sent him reeling against some other legs, and their proprietor in his turn pitched him off, with a rough :

“Mind what you’re about, you fool!”

Quiès was in no condition to display anger ; nor, indeed, would he have had time to do so, for the same person who had just treated him with such scant respect, caught him round the body, and held him tightly, exclaiming :

“Why it’s Quiès ! Our good Quiès !”

“The doctor !” cried Henri, who came running up at his friend’s explanation. “The doctor ! Here !”

“Himself ! Look at him.”

“Yes ! Yes ! But what a state you are in ! What does this extraordinary rig-out mean ?”

No answer was to be had from the unfortunate Quiès.

The Commandant and Henri took him, one by the shoulders, the other by the feet, and carried him into a first-class cabin.

He was now merely an inanimate bundle.



He was now merely an inanimate bundle.

## CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH DR. QUIÈS TAKES AN IRREVOCABLE  
DETERMINATION.

FOR eight days, and as many nights, it was impossible to induce Dr. Quiès to leave his bed. He lay with his face to the wall, and his head under the coverlet, without looking round or taking a mouthful of air. During those eight days and nights he asked himself whether he was alive or dead, awake or dreaming, and whether it could really be the sedentary recluse, J. B. Quiès, of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, who had travelled so formidable a distance, and accomplished so Homeric a voyage.

When, after the expiration of a week, he perceived that he was in one of the best rooms of the best hotel in Algiers, that his three meals a day were served regularly, and that no more or less familiar demon dragged him off through space; when, on approaching the window one glance showed him the marvellous Algerian sky, the luminous blue sea, the landscape worthy of the "Arabian Nights," he was surprised to find that confidence in the future was returning to him, and that he was almost forgetting, not his tribulations, but the happiest hours of his past. He sought to recall them with tears of tender regret, and from the bottom of his heart he bade them an eternal farewell.

One morning Commandant La Carriole and Henri came into his room and, after the usual greeting, said to him :

"What do you intend to do?"

Quiès looked at them with the alarmed expression of a

man who has been asked whether he has ever breakfasted in the moon, or taken a trip to the planet Jupiter.

“What do I intend to do?” he repeated, blinking his



“What do you intend to do?”

eyes and stretching himself out in his easy chair, “What do I intend to do? Why, exactly what I am doing. To rest! Nothing more.”

"You know, my dear friend, that M. de Malleville is no longer in Algiers. We have just left the engineer's office——"

"Yes," continued Henri, "we have just learned that my father is, or ought to be at Boghar. He has got the concession of the public works, which are to be executed by order of the Governor-General."

"Ah, indeed!" said Quiès, "that's well! You will congratulate him for me."



Algiers.

"You will not come with us?"

"I!?"

It would need at least three notes of admiration to convey the introduction of that "I!?" followed by a short laugh, which fully expressed a firmly taken resolution.

"As you please, my good friend," said La Carriole, "as you please. Wait for us here; we will come back for you in a month's time, and then we can all return to Saint-Pignon les Girouettes."

"Saint-Pignon les Girouettes! Never! cried Quiès,

starting up from his easy chair, and repeating "Never!" as he again sank into its cushioned depths.

The surprise of Henri and the Commandant was so great that they could do nothing but look stupidly at Quiès, who hastened to answer their unspoken questions.

"Do you imagine," said he, "that I am going to expose myself a second time to the fatigue of a sea voyage, to the horrible sufferings of sea sickness? Do you think I am inclined to retrace the two hundred and forty leagues that divide Marseilles from Saint-Pignon, in company with a herd of cattle? My good friends, if you were to offer me a yearly income of five hundred thousand francs, all the decorations known to exist in the five parts of the world, and the title of perpetual secretary to all the academies, I should still answer you, No, a thousand times, No! I never mean to stir again. Where I am I stay."

"But your house at Saint-Pignon?"

"It will be sold."

"Gertrude?"

"She will join me here."

"Your land?"

"It is rented."

"Your woods?"

"They are cut regularly."

"Your income?"

"It can be sent to me here."

"Your writings?"

"They can be arranged for by correspondence."

"Your chess?"

"By correspondence."

"Your friends?"

"They will come to see me."

"You are determined?"

"Absolutely."

And to prove that he was in earnest Quiès took a pen and wrote the following, which he read aloud sentence by sentence :

"MY DEAR GRIMBLOT,—A deplorable accident has flung me upon the African shore. My indolence keeps me there. Be good enough, therefore —"

"Tut, tut, my good friend," interrupted La Carriole, "what are you saying? That will not do. Why should you needlessly expose your little weakness? Preserve appearances, at all events."

He then dictated :

"MY DEAR GRIMBLOT,—Unforeseen circumstances have made me decide upon remaining for the present in Algiers. Have the goodness, therefore, to take charge of the administration of my affairs, and to forward my funds to me here, through the agency of Messrs. Von Saachen and Co.

"Yours truly,

"J. B. QUIÈS."

Quiès, after having written the above, with the utmost docility, took a second sheet of paper, and wrote :

"DEAR SIR,—I am awaiting, at the Hotel de la Régence, Algiers, the reply to my previous letter. Have I, or have I not, played, D 7 R?"

"Kindest regards,

"J. B. QUIÈS."

He folded the two letters, sealed them, directed one to Maître Grimblot, Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, France, and the other to Mynheer Poggenbeck, Haarlem, gave them both to Henri, requesting him to post them without delay, and then, rubbing his hands contentedly, said to the Commandant :

"Now, then, I have burned my boats !"

"What an extraordinary notion you have taken up."

"You think so! I am no traveller. Such fatigue would kill me. I have lost ten pounds' weight already."

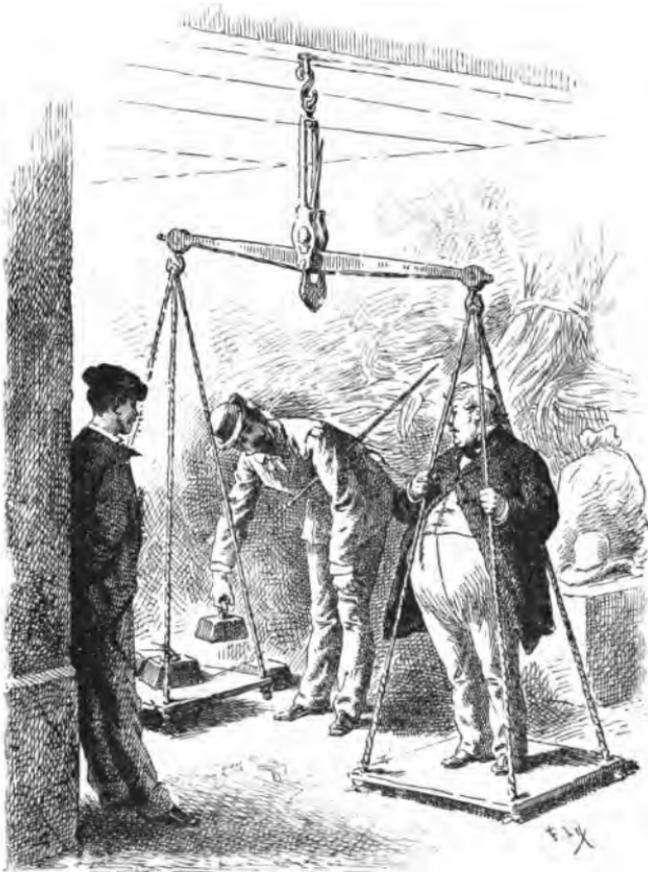
"Nonsense! You are joking!"

"Ten pounds' weight at least, I tell you."

“You never looked so fresh and well in your life. Your cheeks are filled out. Have you been weighed?”

‘No.’

“Take my arm, doctor, and come along.”



“How much did you weigh at Saint-Pignon?”

“Where to?”

“To the yard.”

“No farther?”

“Upon my honour.”

The Commandant took Quiès into a place adjoining the courtyard of the hotel, and made him step up on the machine which was used for the weighing of provisions.

“How much did you weigh at Saint-Pignon?”

“One hundred and ten kilograms, five hundred centigrams.”

The Commandant, having piled up the weights, exclaimed:

“One hundred and sixteen kilograms! You have gained five kilograms, five hundred centigrams! That is prodigious! Travelling does you good! You ought to come with us to Boghar. It is not far; only one hundred and forty-eight kilometers.”

Quiès was so frightened at the mere mention of a fresh start that he ran back to his room, and promptly locked the door against all comers.

## CHAPTER XII.

## IN WHICH COMMANDANT LA CARRIOLE DEPARTS ON A HORSE AND RETURNS ON A MULE.

THE next day, after they had made a final effort to induce the good doctor to change his mind and accompany them, Commandant La Carriole and Henri took their places in the diligence which then performed the journey between Algiers and Medeah.

The lumbering machine was drawn by five horses, and took only an hour to reach the bridge of Wady Kerma.

In front of them stretched the immense plain of the Mitidja, with its rich vegetation, its lakes, and its woods, and in the far distance rose the mountains of Milianah, bathed in the bluish tints of the horizon, and melting into the sky. On the right the eye rested on the broken outline of the Sahel, on the left the giant mamelons of the Atlas stood out in bold distinctness against the blue.

The diligence stopped at Birfonta, three leagues farther on, to change horses, and then took the road to Boufarik.

The journey was totally uneventful.

Henri met with some fresh surprise at every mile, and soon made up his mind that all the descriptions which he had read of this beautiful country fell very far short of the reality.

His enthusiasm reached its height when he caught sight of Blidah, that pretty white town set in a frame of lemon and orange groves, and he compared it, in a pardonable fit of poetic fervour, to a pearl lying in its green velvet case.

Blidah is ten leagues from Medeah.

At a short distance from the town, the traveller crosses the Chiffa, a wide river which flows down from Atlas, and enters the terrific gorge of the same name.

For an extent of five leagues the mountain, cleft in twain through all its bulk, gives passage to the tumultuous waters. On the two sides of the rolling and tumbling river, rocks three hundred feet in height rear their frowning heads above the abyss. Two vast forests seem to be suspended there as though by a miracle.

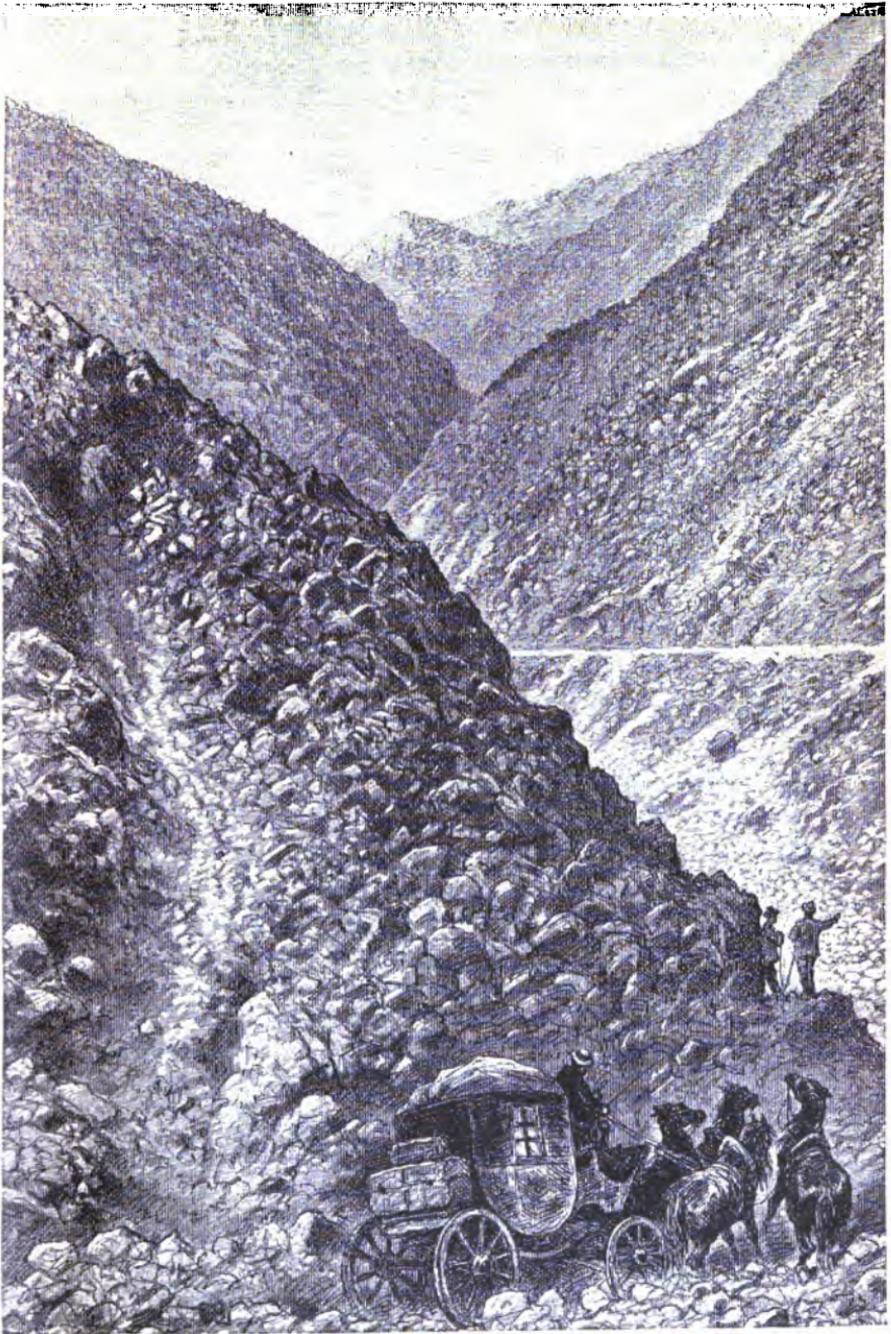
The Alps and the Pyrenees have no more imposing



Medeah.

spectacle to show, and it is with an involuntary shudder that one sets out upon the road that has been cut out of the flank of the mountain. The first thrill of momentary terror soon yields, however, to the admiration inspired by this wild and romantic scene, and the traveller long retains his impression of the Chiffa gorge, which may be called without exaggeration one of the wonders of the world.

In the evening the travellers came in sight of Medeah. The city was half hidden in the twilight, only the white minarets on the housetops, and the double arches of



Chiffa Gorge.



the aqueduct which adjoins the east end, were to be seen.

Henri was tired of admiring everything; the Commandant was very hungry. They went to the Hôtel des Gastronomes, where they made a copious meal, and on its conclusion adjourned to their respective chambers and a good night's rest.

As no regular traffic existed between Medeah and Boghar, they had to bargain with an Arab for the hire of horses. Commandant La Carriole had not been a campaigner for twenty years for nothing, and he undertook the task. On the following day, at dawn, the two travellers and their guide set out for Boghar, their way lying through the splendid forests of ancient oak, pine, maple, and cork trees which cover the Sahel of Medeah.

In the evening they dismounted before the buildings which form the Arab Bureau, and are situated on the summit of a lofty hill above the redoubt that overlooks the village.

La Carriole relied upon the good offices of Commandant Lefèvre, one of his former brother-officers, to procure them a suitable lodging. But the Commandant had set out for Awhata, by order of the governor, accompanied by the engineer officers of the place, and also by M. de Malleville. In his absence, however, M. de Chany, a captain in the first regiment of Spahis, extended such cordial hospitality to La Carriole and his companion that at the end of three weeks they were still at Boghar, expecting from day to day the return of M. de Malleville. Hunting and dinner parties were the order of the day at Boghar, and although La Carriole declared every evening that as De Malleville did not come back they must go to him, and that they were to start the next morning for El Aghwat, the irresistible attraction of a fresh battue inevitably proved too strong, and he stayed on.

At length, however, the Commandant made up his mind

that according to the proverb, "the best of friends must part," and one evening he gave orders that everything was to be ready for a start before dawn on the following morning.

Now, it happened that on that very evening, information was sent to Boghar that the Sheiks Abon Mohammed, Yahga ben Soltaci, El Berkani and several others, whose united camps were pitched at some distance, held themselves at the disposal of the Captain in temporary command of the Arab Bureau, for the regulation of certain business then pending between their tribes and the French administration.

This intimation put it out of the power of M. de Chany to accompany his guests, as he had intended to do, and it also afforded Henri an opportunity of gratifying his curiosity which he could not resist. On similar occasions the Arab sheiks generally make a display of luxury which lends an air of oriental splendour that recalls the "Thousand and One Nights" to these peaceful interviews.

The good Commandant had too often seen those personages at close quarters to feel inclined to disturb himself on their account, and he determined to take advantage of the postponement of their departure to make a solitary expedition to certain coverts which he had remarked shortly after his arrival at Boghar, on the border of the military road on the Medeah side. The distance was inconsiderable—three or four leagues at most. He had his horse saddled at dawn of day, and set off in high spirits, and at a sharp pace, so as to reach his hunting-ground before the heat of the morning. This purpose he easily achieved, and he found the place very promising. A wide, gently sloping plain covered with small plantations divided from each other by clearings overgrown with brushwood, formed an ideal preserve for all kinds of furred and feathered creatures.

The Commandant tied up his horse in a safe place under an ash tree, and plunged into the thicket, gun in hand. In an hour he had exhausted his cartridges and killed as

much game as would have fed the inhabitants of Boghar for three days. But the true hunter kills for the sake of killing ; he leaves off only when his powder, his shot, or his



His horse came headlong down.

legs give out ! Therefore did Commandant La Carriole, instead of resting upon the laurels of this first victory, remount his horse in order to establish his centre of opera-

tions at a greater distance, and carry away a truly grand trophy of this day's sport.

Unfortunately, he had not taken the ground into account, hidden as it was by the thickness of the undergrowth, and a painful and unpleasant surprise was in store for him. His horse came headlong down ; he had barely time to free his feet from the stirrups, but he escaped with a severe bruise on his right thigh. The poor animal could not rise, one of its fore-legs was broken above the pastern. After having exhausted all the known formulas of vexation, the Commandant reflected that the accident, which was so sad for his horse, was also very unpleasant for himself. There he was, five leagues from Boghar, and how was he to get back on foot, in the great heat, and hindered by the bruise, which became more and more painful every moment. It was impossible for him to wait until somebody should come to look for him ; he had not told any person whither he was going ; and besides, he was in haste to get back that he might send a veterinary surgeon to look after his horse. The poor animal turned its eyes upon him, when he moved away, with a heartrending look of entreaty. If a baggage-waggon could be brought to the spot, and the helpless creature carried back in it to its stable, it might yet be saved.

Beasts, like men, have a right to pity.

The Commandant made all the haste he could ; but at the end of an hour's painful walking, he had only done three kilometers, and he could hardly go a step farther. The pain had spread from the thigh to the leg, and, though endurable when he did not move the limb, was intolerable in motion. He also suffered cruelly from the heat, which had become overpowering. Four leagues are no great distance, but under such circumstances they constitute an impossible journey.

The Commandant's only hope was to regain the military road, where some fortunate chance might send him the succour he so much needed. He dragged himself through

the wood as well as he could, stumbling blindly along, hardly making any way, until at length, exhausted with fatigue, and overcome by the heat, he lay down upon the ground, unable to move. The grass was soft, and happily



It was a mule ! A mule saddled and bridled.

the shade was deep. He stretched himself out and closed his eyes : this enforced rest gave him an inexpressible sense of relief. The sun did not get at the little corner where he lay, and it was cool. He was thankfully inhaling a few mouthfuls of fresh air, when something hot and

damp, like breath, passed over his face. He reopened his eyes, and found himself face to face, or rather nose to nose in the most literal sense, with an animal looking at him with big eyes full of amazement, and smelling him cautiously, while its big ears stood up in the air, expressing surprise as eloquently as its eyes.

It was a mule ! A mule saddled and bridled ; in other words, it was rescue, safety ! In a second the Commandant stood upright, and put his foot in the stirrup. Yes—but the mule belonged to somebody. For the sake of his conscience, the Commandant called out two or three times :

“Hallo ! hallo ! Anybody there ?”

No answer.

“All right,” said he to himself, “the mule belongs to some Arab marauder. He will not fail to come and ask for it, and then he shall have it.”

Without any farther scruple he mounted the mule, and, taking the road to Boghar, reached that place two hours afterwards, utterly worn out. He took all the necessary measures for sending aid to his poor horse before he had his own bruise attended to ; then, after he had undergone a good rubbing, he went to bed and to sleep, and awoke only to sit down to dinner with Henri and the Captain, who had come back well pleased with the result of their day's excursion. The Commandant was preparing to relate the particulars of his misadventure, when the door was suddenly thrown open.

“Ah ! who's this ?”

“Impossible !”

“You !”

These three exclamations were uttered simultaneously. And not without reason, for it was Doctor Quiès who had entered the room. Yes, Doctor Quiès in person. But, good heavens, in what a state ! Covered with dust and perspiration, as red as a peony, his eyes starting out of his head ! He made an unavailing attempt to speak ; he

could only throw himself into the arms of Henri and the Commandant. After that effort he closed his eyes, and let himself drop into a seat. No explanation was to be expected from him.

The Commandant had him carried to his own room, and



It was Dr. Quiès who entered the room.

when he was convinced that the doctor was not dead, since he was snoring loudly enough to shake the window-panes, he went downstairs again, and resumed his place at table, muttering :

“What the deuce can have induced Quiès to come here?”

## CHAPTER XIII.

TREATS OF THE EVENTS WHICH LED TO DOCTOR J. B. QUIÈS' HAVING MADE AN ADDITIONAL JOURNEY OF ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHT KILOMETERS.

QUIÈS had not been induced to do anything of the sort. Chance, which was so inexorably against him, had once more played him a cruel trick. We think it well, in order to show (although the demonstration be accounted superfluous) of what small and insignificant details the great events of life are composed, to relate as briefly as possible the principal facts of that lamentable Odyssey.

When Commandant La Carriole and Henri were about to leave Algiers, they came to bid Quiès good-bye, and the former asked him whether he wanted anything.

"Nothing but rest," was the doctor's curt reply.

It had not occurred to him that, as he had left Saint-Pignon with one hundred francs in his purse, expended eighty-five francs seventy-five centimes on the day of the christening, and not received a centime since, he was now the possessor of precisely fourteen francs twenty-five centimes. Reckoning his expenses at the minimum of ten francs a day, it was evident that his funds would not last long.

Henri and the Commandant overlooked this little matter as completely as Quiès did. They did not expect to be more than a month away; the doctor had written to Saint-Pignon—the answer to his letter and the money would arrive together. They set off, therefore, without any prevision of the future embarrassment of their unfortunate friend.

For five days all went well. Quiès' meals were served with the same regularity, and he received the same almost obsequious bow from the hotel-keeper and the servants each time that he crossed the vestibule, when venturing to go outside the door for a walk of a few yards.

On the sixth day he observed that his breakfast, which had hitherto been served at eleven o'clock, did not make its appearance until twelve, nor was his dinner served until half-past seven.

On the eighth day his breakfast was entirely suppressed, and when he went downstairs he observed that its cap remained immovably fixed on every head.

These symptoms would have been perfectly intelligible to a man who was well versed in the ways of the world. To Doctor J. B. Quiès they only afforded matter of surprise, and he was still striving to solve the problem when, two days afterwards, a waiter brought him the solution in the form of a bill:—

Apartment . . .	70 francs.
Lights . . .	5 „
Breakfasts . . .	30 „
Dinners . . .	50 „
Attendance . . .	10 „
— —	
Total . . .	165 francs.

Quiès sent for the proprietor of the hotel, and explained to him that, having left home without money, he could not pay the bill until he had received the funds which he expected from France. The hotel-keeper consented to give him credit until the arrival of the next steamer.

Needless to say that Quiès watched for the coming of the vessel during the three ensuing days, with an anxious eye. One fine evening the steamer came in. The hotel-keeper, who had been watching for its arrival with a still more anxious eye, himself examined all the letters addressed to persons staying in his house. There was one for M. J. B. Quiès, and mine host took it upstairs with

his own hands, and presented himself, bareheaded and with his most gracious smile, before the guest, to whom he was ready to make ample and humble apologies for his misgivings.

Quiès broke the seal, unfolded the letter, and read,—

“DEAR SIR,—I do not understand your communication.

What do you mean by : ‘ Have I, or have I not, played D 7 R ’ ? ”

“ Good heavens ! ” exclaimed Quiès, “ I have misdirected my letter.”

The proprietor of the hotel put his cap on his head, and his bill in his pocket, and left the room with a shrug of the shoulders which said as plainly as words : “ If this fellow thinks that I am going to be done by him— ! ”

Every traveller

knows that on his travels he is judged by his appearance and the weight of his trunks. No one, therefore, will be surprised that Doctor J. B. Quiès, who had arrived without any luggage at all, and in a dilapidated condition, had not inspired his host with complete confidence. He had been given only just so much credit as was consistent with the more decent appearance of his



“ If this fellow thinks that I am going to be done by him ! ”

two travelling-companions. But they had taken their departure, and Quiès, to use a phrase more significant than choice, now stood on his own bottom. Neither Commandant La Carriole nor M. de Malleville, whose name he attempted to use, was known at the hotel, and he was not acquainted with any person in Algiers. He had, therefore, no valid security to offer.

He asked for two days' respite, and this favour being granted to him, he employed them in writing again to Maître Grimblot, and in running about the town. The two days elapsed, his debt was increased, and he was politely shown the door and told to go about his business. The hotel-keeper carried his generosity so far as to forbear from lodging a complaint against him. Had it not been for the shame of the thing, Quiès would have been delighted to be imprisoned. To sleep in prison is, after all, to find a bed somewhere. Now the poor doctor did not know where to find a bed.

As a matter of fact, that night he slept beneath the stars.

Under the benign sky of Algiers, this was not quite so bad as it sounds, once in a way, but it was totally opposed to the ideas and the habits of Dr. J. B. Quiès, who was very fond of his bed, and also of his meals.

Alas ! the latter seemed likely to be as insecure henceforth as the former ; a fact of which he became painfully aware towards noon, when it was his harmless custom to consume two eggs, a cutlet, a dainty morsel of cheese, and a bottle of good French wine. By collecting the remnant of his fortune, he was enabled for that one day to substitute a piece of bread for the eggs, the cutlet, and the cheese, and a copious draught of cold water for the bottle of good French wine. In the evening he dined on a glass of water. The next day he did not breakfast at all, and he had again slept beneath the stars.

How came it, we shall be asked, that in all Algiers there was not a man who would trust the placid Quiès, whose

kindly round face beamed with candour and uprightness? Could he not, when the worst had come to the worst, have applied to some official personage, and obtained, on proof of his identity, a loan which would have enabled him to await his friends' return or Maître Grimblot's answer?

How? why? Because one does not in general see the way out of a difficult position unless one is not interested in it one's self; because it is easy to lose one's head, and because Doctor J. B. Quiès, who was already severely affected by the shocks he had sustained, gave way under this last trial.

Just as a stray dog will run about the town with its nose down, looking at nobody, seeking no one but its master, being sure of finding shelter nowhere but with him, Quiès, lost in the midst of a crowd of unknown and indifferent people, felt that no succour was to be hoped for except from his friends.

Unhappily his friends were no longer there; they were at Boghar.

He thought at first of apprising them of his terrible position; but he was not only doubtful whether he could find any charitable soul who would undertake to carry such a message gratis, he also knew that he could not afford to wait for the reply. Harassed and hungry as he was, he should be dead of fatigue and want ere it arrived.

His last, his only chance of rescue was to rejoin them, and that prospect was a frightful one by reason of the length of the way and the difficulty of the enterprise.

Quiès no longer possessed a centime, and the reception he had met with over and over again within the last forty-eight hours, left him no room to hope that he would get credit on the strength of his looks and bearing. Perhaps he did not even think of asking it, and he directed his steps towards the office of the diligences from Algiers to Médéah mechanically rather than intentionally.

It was starting-time. The heavy vehicle, drawn by five

horses, was ready ; several passengers had already taken their places, and the conductor was calling over the names of persons who had engaged seats.

“Monsieur Létourneau !” he shouted.

No one answered.

The conductor looked around him, stamped his foot impatiently, and again vociferated,—

“Monsieur Létourneau !”

Silence still.

Quiès, moved by whom or by what we know not, stepped forward.

“You are Létourneau, are you ?” said the conductor to him.

Quiès was incapable of answering, still more incapable of perceiving the use to which he might turn this mistake. He hung his head like a detected criminal.

“If you are, why didn't you say so ?” roared the angry conductor, as he took the laggard by the arm and pushed him towards the diligence.

Quiès set his left foot upon the steps, not so much yielding to the man's bidding, as to prevent himself from falling. The conductor shoved him headforemost into the coupé, and banged the door. Before the breathless and bewildered doctor had time to protest, the five horses were started with a prodigious cracking of the driver's whip, and the diligence was rattling through the streets of Algiers. In a few minutes it had left the town behind, and was speeding towards Blidah.

Thus it was that Dr. Quiès, under the name of Létourneau, had been enabled, without money or resources, to reach Médéah without accident or inconvenience.

It would need the pen of a Balzac or a Dickens to convey an idea of the looks, the gestures, the countenance, the sighs of the doctor, as, seated at a table in the dining-room of the fort at Boghar, with a cold fowl before him, and his friends listening attentively, he told the story of his misfortunes.

He was still trembling with fright, fever, and fatigue.

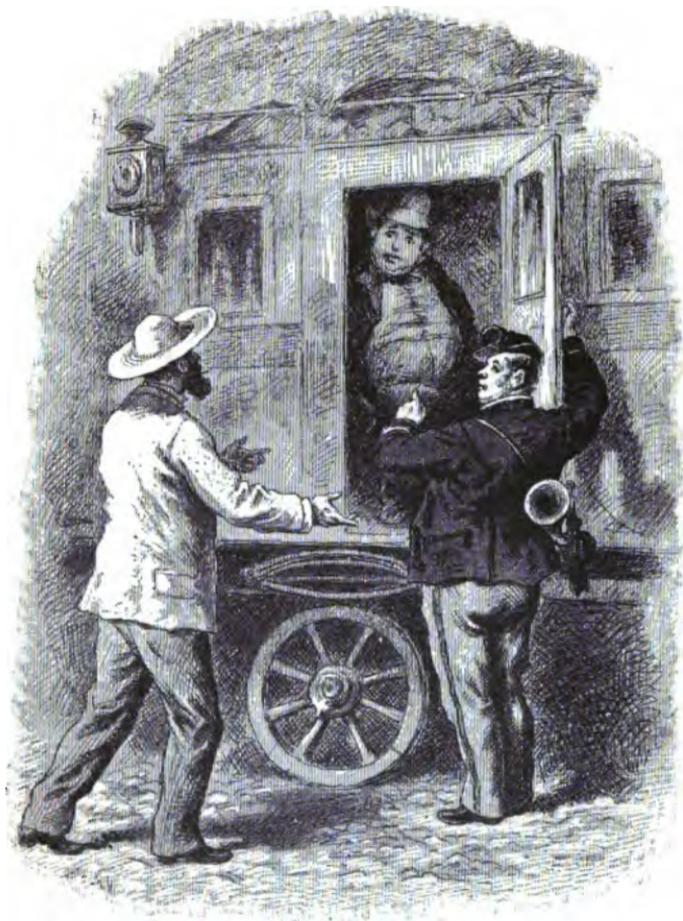
"Thank heaven, my dear doctor," said Henri, "you have come out of it all to your great honour. You have only to reimburse this Létourneau for the cost of his place in the diligence."

"Eh! eh! not so fast!" said Quiès. "I shall not be able to reimburse him for all that I have taken from him, or rather all that I have taken in his name."

"Really?" said La Carriole; "how is that?"

"You may suppose that when we had started I was very uneasy as to how my involuntary escapade might end. The mistake might be discovered, a chance might ruin me. Perhaps I should be flung out on the road, as a vagabond, if I were not arrested as a common cheat! Oh, my dear friends, when the diligence stopped at Médéah, and when I heard a big fellow—I can see him now with his white waistcoat and his straw hat—call out to the conductor, 'Is M. Létourneau there?' I would have given anything to have been six feet underground, or at least active enough to run away. It was impossible. The conductor opened the door of the coupé, and said, pointing to me, 'There he is, M. Salomon.' To my great surprise, just as I was about to step down, M. Salomon stretched out his hands to me, and, when I was safely down, took me by the arm. 'You are not going to the hotel,' said he; 'you are coming home with me! And you must not think of starting for El Aghwat until tomorrow. I have found you a good guide, and the best mule in the province.' The only thing I could say was, 'Ah! ah!' What would you have said in my place? You would have said, 'I am not Létourneau, I am J. B. Quiès, and I do not know you.' Yes, yes; that is all very well; but I was dying with hunger. Ah! I assure you that never in my life did I eat a better meal than that one. When the dessert came, I was on the point of confessing all. Fortunately I had to do with a man who loves to hear himself talk. If you pass through Médéah again,

I recommend you to make his acquaintance. Between breakfast and dinner I did not get the chance of saying ten words. Salomon put question after question to me,



“There he is, M. Salomon.”

but he answered them all himself, for which I am infinitely obliged to him, for I should have betrayed myself twenty times over. It appears that I—that is to say Létourneau,

with whom he has business relations—had sent him, a few days previously, a large consignment of soft goods. I have accepted on behalf of Létourneau a discount of six per cent., and an abatement of 144 francs on the sum total. After that stroke of business I went to bed. There !”

Into his utterance of this “There !” Doctor J. B. Quiès threw such an accent of repentance and contrition, accompanied with so deep a sigh, that Henri and the Commandant laughed until they cried ; a fit of hilarity which the doctor forgave all the more readily that he was too busy with the fragments of the fowl to inquire into its cause.

At length La Carriole recovered his gravity sufficiently to speak.

“That’s all then,” he said, “so far as Médéah. Well and good. But from Médéah out here ? Fifteen leagues, Quiès ; fifteen leagues ! Why, it’s tremendous, you know ! How did you do it ?”

“I rode Létourneau’s mule, my dear friend ; and I followed Létourneau’s guide. By way of taking a short cut this fellow took me by a horrible path, where I left fragments of my clothes and my skin to mark my passage ! Oh, I would not do it over again for a kingdom. I fell fifteen times.”

“Once for each league.”

“And yet, how sorry I was for my mule !”

“What do you mean ?” asked La Carriole, pricking up his ears.

“This morning, when the heat began to be overpowering, my guide and I lay down to rest in a little wood, about five leagues from this place ; I fell asleep, and so did the guide.”

“And ?” said the Commandant.

“While we slept some rascal stole—”

“Your— ?”

La Carriole could not finish the sentence. He was

seized with a fit of laughter, that sort of nervous laughter which infects a whole company. In an instant, Henri, the Captain, and the spahis who were waiting on them, were laughing convulsively.



From Médéah to Boghar.

Quiès only did not laugh. Indeed this merriment seemed to him most untimely.

“I do not see—” he began with grim gravity.

“The rascal,” said the Commandant, when he had recovered his breath, “the robber.”

“Well?”

"It was I, my poor dear friend."

"You?"

"I, myself. I had hurt myself in a fall from my horse; but if I had known—"

"You would have left me my mule?"

"No; but I would have taken you up behind me."

"To fall for the sixteenth time. I should not have arrived alive. Ah! no, I shall never be caught again."

With this he rose from the table, and announced that he was going to bed.

"You know," said the Commandant, "that we start to-morrow?"

"Oh," cried M. de Chany, "surely you will give the doctor one day?"

"One day, then. So be it."

"And, besides, we have arranged a wild-boar hunt for to-morrow."

"All right. The wild-boars to-morrow; but we start the day after."

"A good journey to you," said Quiès quietly.

"We shall pick you up on our way back in a fortnight."

"Thanks; but you need not."

"What!"

"I mean to remain here."

"You can't. With the exception of the fort, Boghar is uninhabitable. And the fort—but you must not think of such a thing."

"A cabin will do for me; a hole; anything you please. I will not stir from hence."

"As you please," said Henri and La Carriole, laughing.

Did they believe in the doctor's resolution? Did they think it useless to endeavour to dissuade him? Or did they merely bear in mind that "the night brings counsel"? We cannot tell. At any rate they bade their host good-night in merry mood, and went off together to make their preparations for the morrow.

## CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH IT WILL BE MADE EVIDENT THAT DOCTOR  
J. B. QUIÈS WAS VERY WRONG TO HAVE PIGEONS  
STEWED WHICH OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN ROASTED.

THE numerous wild boars in the vast forest of O-Anteur and the smaller forests in its vicinity did not hesitate in those days, and probably do not hesitate in these, to make excursions so far as Boghar, and even as Boghari, at the entrance of the valley of the Chelif.

The tusked brutes had arranged many parties of pleasure of this kind during the year that witnessed the events now in progress of narration, and a great number of the inhabitants had helplessly looked on at the ravages committed by these unmannerly visitors upon their gardens. Hunting-parties had been organized in order to get rid of them, and in several places pits had been dug on the boundaries of the fields and gardens, and covered over with boughs. But, for ten wild boars caught in these primitive traps, twenty others had come out of the wood, and the plague was increasing. The approaching battue promised magnificent results, judging by the abundance of the game.

Let us leave our sportsmen to their sport, and remain at Boghar with J. B. Quiès.

The Commandant had asked him, for politeness' sake, whether he was quite determined not to join the hunting-party. He had not, however, even waited for an answer, but galloped off with the parting words,—

“Mind you look after our dinner”

Perhaps it may be difficult to believe that poor Quiès, still bruised and smarting from the journey of 148 kilometers which he had performed in so strange a manner, could be in a condition to undertake the delicate commission which he owed to his well-known experience in things gastronomical. But human nature is so constituted that the mind becomes hardened like the body. The first day's march is more fatiguing than the ten which come after; the first pang is more poignant than all the pains that follow. As Dr. Quiès advanced step by step on the road, along which he was impelled by some invisible power, the period of prostration that ensued upon each of his disasters was less prolonged.

After an excellent night passed in a good bed, he was quite surprised to find that his limbs hardly ached at all, that his head was clear, and that his ideas were distinct. A ray of sunshine, the incomparable African sunshine, stole into his room through the closed shutters; the soldiers were singing as they went about their everyday tasks.

Around him all was bright and cheerful. He unfastened the shutter and raised the window, and, indifferent to the beauties of nature as he was in general, he could not refrain from admiring the magnificent panorama formed by the plains, and the mountains stretching from Id to Médéah. Without wishing to make little of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, he had to admit that it did not command so fine a prospect. This involuntary comparison set the doctor thinking of the town, and of those whom he never again expected to see.

In reality he cared little about resuming his former habits and labours, provided it were feasible for him to settle down where he was, and stir from the spot no more. The more one drinks, it is said, the more one wants to drink. The more Quiès travelled the less he wanted to move. Nevertheless this did not prevent him from crossing the courtyard of the fort, and going into the

canteen, to inspect the bill of fare, and approve of it if he could.

At the moment of his appearance the cook had just



“Make a stew of them, of course.”

finished the plucking of twelve young pigeons which were to figure as a roast at dinner.

“A heresy!” exclaimed Quiès, “a rank heresy! Two roasts! Here are two superb bustards which can’t be cooked in any other way.”

"Yes, sir ; but what is to be done with these pigeons ?"

"Make a stew of them, of course."

"But I have no mushrooms, sir."

"No mushrooms ! You have no mushrooms !"

Dr. Quiès left the canteen with uplifted hands.

There is only one step between the regret that one does not possess a certain thing and the desire to procure it. By a succession of natural ideas, Quiès, having asked himself why mushrooms were not cultivated at Boghar, went on to inquire whether it was possible to cultivate them there. Having answered his own question in the affirmative, he formed a resolution to say a word or two on the subject in the proper quarter. But, long before a mushroom-bed laid down in a favourable place could give the desired results, the subjects of this interesting one-sided botanical-culinary discussion would have been eaten and digested.

Quiès then asked himself whether it might not be possible to procure mushrooms on the present occasion. He looked out over the surrounding country with an inquiring eye, and uttered a very significant "Parbleu !" At the distance of hardly a kilometer from Boghar, in the direction of Boghari, lies the forest of O-Anteur, and from his window, Quiès could discern the sparkling of some little pools on its border which the sun of August and September had not wholly dried up.

Although the mushroom grows more freely in northern countries, it was not impossible that specimens of that fungus might be found in the neighbourhood of these damp spots, amid the thick undergrowth of the oaks, elms, and maples. Dr. Quiès was not a member of eighteen learned societies for nothing ; he knew he could select his mushroom without any fear of making a mistake. Unfortunately, he would have to make a journey of nearly two thousand yards, there and back, in order to exercise his discrimination.

Was this worth while ?

After having weighed the pros and cons of the question, he decided it in the affirmative ; not that he would risk a sunstroke for the sake of eating stewed pigeons, but because, as he had been invested with the responsibility of the dinner, he wished to repay the hospitality of his temporary companions by making a sacrifice for their benefit, and giving them a pleasant surprise.

After all, two kilometers do not mean much to a man who has just done nearly two thousand seven hundred ; so he resolutely buttoned himself into a white jacket, rather too tight for him, put on a straw hat, which was much too large, provided himself with an old umbrella, and a botanist's tin box, which he had found among some lumber, and started. The heat at that hour of the day was not above 28 degrees.



Provided himself with an old umbrella, and started.

Slowly, softly, blowing, perspiring, pausing, going on again, now by narrow footpaths, and again where there were none, he at last attained his goal, and seated himself with a sigh of content in the shade of an oak and maple grove, near a little pool with a fragrant border of wild mint, marjoram, rosemary, and asphodel.

An hour's rest was indispensable to him. He took two, then rose, and began to explore the ground with the slow-

ness of a lazy man, and the minuteness of a savant. In less than an hour he had his box full of mushrooms of all the various edible kinds. He could not have found so extensive an assortment in the Paris market.

He had then only to get back to Boghar, and to superintend the stewing of the pigeons. But the sun was shining fiercely on the edge of the shady grove. It was beyond his strength to quit the cool, beneficent shelter, and the fresh and perfumed border of the pool. He yielded—easily, it must be owned—to the temptation, and, lying down in the grass, observing with one eye while he slept with the other, he sketched the outline of a work upon the Algerian Flora, which, added to his previous works, could not fail to enhance his legitimate reputation.

When the sun began to decline, Quiès rose, and set off in the direction of Boghar, with the reluctant suddenness of a man who has painfully resolved to get up an hour earlier than usual in the morning. In order to shorten the tedium of the road, as well as to reach the fort and the pigeons more quickly, he drew an imaginary straight line from his starting-point to the redoubt, and followed it, keeping his eye fixed upon the goal, as though he hoped that the magnetism of his gaze would make the mountain come to him.

Needless to say, the mountain did not move. On went Quiès, head up, eyes front, mechanically lifting his feet to avoid catching them in the brambles, or stumbling over the stones. He would have done better if he had bent his head and looked about him.

When he had accomplished just half his journey, and was about to strike into the military road, within ten minutes from Boghar, with the goal in view, the ground gave way beneath his tread, and he disappeared into the depths of the earth, with a prodigious crash of broken boughs.

He was stunned for a moment, but he presently rose, feeling thankful that he was able to do so. A layer of

sand had broken his fall. Having ascertained that he was not hurt, he proceeded to investigate the causes and effects of this fresh accident, that is to say, why he had fallen, and into what manner of place fate had decreed that he should fall. A glance sufficed to explain the situation.

He was in one of the pits recently prepared for the accommodation of the wild boars. At first sight there



The ground gave way beneath his tread.

seemed to be no great cause for alarm, but on a closer examination matters assumed a singularly unpleasant aspect. The pit was six or seven feet deep, and on three sides there was no possible means of escape ; for they were formed of convex blocks of granite as smooth as marble. The fourth side, dug out of a sandy soil, was raised three or four feet above the others, so that there was a height of ten feet to be scaled. Quiès, who had never in his life

achieved such a feat, did not even dream of attempting it, and could think of no other resource than shrieking for assistance at the top of his voice.

After an hour of this exercise, his voice was gone, and nobody had come.

"Well! well!" said he, as at last he sat down despairingly at the bottom of the pit, "I am doomed! An evil genius is bent on my destruction. That was an accursed day on which I left Saint-Pignon! I may die of hunger in this pit. If they search for me they will never come here, and even if they take this road, if I have no voice to call them with, my friends will pass close to me and not see me. Ah! I am lost! I am lost!"

His fit of despondency did not last long.

No man, however timid or helpless, lets himself die in a pit, without having tried to get out of it.

The doctor's first proceeding was carefully to examine the boughs which had been spread over this abominable, treacherous hole, and had gone down into it with him. If he had found one of sufficient length among them, he might have been able to stick it down firmly in the sand and climb up by its aid, little as he was used to any such bodily exercises; but no such means of escape was available. The boughs were all short, thin, dry, and broken. On realizing this fresh disappointment, he again desponded for a short but very bitter period.

An ordinary man would have taken two hours, perhaps, to scoop out holes in the sandy side of the pit, and get out by climbing up to the surface by their aid; double the time would be little enough for Quies to do it in. No matter! hope had revived in his breast. He took off his jacket, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and set to work. Partly with his hands, and partly with a twig, rather bigger and tougher than the others, in about a quarter of an hour he made a hole in the wall of his prison large enough to give him a foot-hold. He put his foot into it, and the whole thing gave way and came tumbling down under his

weight. To make a second hole would simply be to undermine the side of his pit, and expose himself to the danger of an earthfall by which he might be buried alive. He reflected for a moment and again took heart. By attacking the wall of sand half way up, he might bring about small earthfalls, and by degrees substitute a gentle slope for the vertical barrier which stood between him and freedom.

It would take eight or ten hours to accomplish this. Never mind ! Quiès had gone through worse things, and survived them. He set to work resolutely, and his first efforts were crowned with success. Nevertheless, fast and hard as he worked, not a third of his task was done when night came, starry, and light, like our days in Europe.

Breathless and feverish, he toiled on. His only thought was how to get out of that hole. He worked all night ; all night he tore at the earth with his hands. He was near the end of his labours, a vague, uncertain gleam was already spreading over the sky, when he heard the sound of wheels and the tread of men and horses on the road above him, not a hundred yards away. He strove to cry out, but his voice was gone.

“No matter,” said he to himself, stoutly, “in ten minutes I shall be free.”

Poor Quiès !

How was it that nobody at Boghar had perceived his absence ? How was it that no search was made for him ?

After a long and fatiguing day's sport, Commandant La Carriole and his companions had returned to the fort, but not until after nightfall. They had all eaten as much as they needed on the way ; they were all very tired, and anxious to go to rest without delay. They were to leave Boghar at dawn the next morning, and would have only about two hours for rest. La Carriole and Henri took it for granted that Quiès had been asleep for hours before they returned, and merely for form's sake, they called out “good-night !” as they passed his door. On coming

down, before sunrise, they had not the heart to arouse him from the slumber he prized so much, and they mounted their horses and rode away, having slipped under his door a paper on which Henri had written "au revoir."

The detachment which left Boghar consisted of a company of the 1st regiment of Engineers, and four waggons. At half-past 3 a. m. all was in readiness, except the fourth waggon, laden with straw. One of the saddle-girths of the



"Eh! it's the old lunatic from yonder!"

near horse was broken, and it would take half an hour to repair it.

The captain was anxious to start in order to avoid the great heat. He gave orders to set out after he had said to the driver of the fourth waggon,—

"You must come on at the trot to overtake us."

The little troop left Boghar, and advanced towards Boghari to take the military road to El Aghwat. A

quarter of an hour afterwards, the last waggon set out in its turn, and the driver, according to his orders, started at the trot. He had gone about 500 yards from the fort when a cry of "Holloa! hi!" uttered in a feeble voice, made him turn his head.

A man, half buried in the earth, was calling to him, and gesticulating wildly.

"Eh!" growled the driver, "it's the old lunatic from yonder!" and without asking him why or how he came there at such an hour, and in such a condition, he got down, helped Quiès to emerge completely from his pit, and hoisted him up on his waggon among the bundles of straw. The doctor, on his side, was equally free from obtrusive curiosity; he did not ask whither the waggon was going; but, immensely delighted to find himself stretched upon fresh straw, he promptly fell into the heavy sleep that follows feverish exertion.



## CHAPTER XV.

## MADEMOISELLE HAYDÉE.

THE Chelif valley, below Boghari, is one of the dreariest regions of the earth. Throughout its extent there is no vegetation, not a tree, not a blade of grass; desolate hillocks, shapeless, yellowish mounds, are the only variations of the surface of the hard and shining ground, which reflects the pitiless rays of the sun like a mirror. No living creature inhabits this solitude. Sometimes it is crossed by crows and vultures as they wing their heavy flight back to the wooded heights of Boghar.

Dr. Quiès would inevitably have died of the heat in the midst of this desert if he had not slipped down, by reason of his weight, between two bundles of straw, which united their edges above his prostrate body, and formed a perfect shelter for him. The double result of this happy chance was that he was saved from sunstroke, and also hidden from the observation of his companions when the latter made their first halt at Dalna-Kalala, to avoid the great heat of the day. Quiès heard neither the shouting nor the singing of the men, nor the neighing of the horses. He heard nothing; he slept.

At about four o'clock they started again. Quiès was still asleep, and he saw nothing of the wild aspect of the defile which forms the extreme boundary of Tell, or the marvellous prospect that rejoices the eyes of the astonished wayfarer on emerging from that mountainous track. Before them lies the first great plain of the south, green all the way to the horizon; a plain of thirty leagues in

extent, with nothing but the faint, vague outline of mountains in the far distance to arrest the eye, and here and there, like specks, the camps of the Waled-Mokhtar.

When evening fell, the detachment encamped on this wide plateau at Ain-Wasern, about twelve leagues from Boghar, on the edge of a marsh, which French industry has since turned into a vast tank.

A trumpet-blast awoke Dr. Quiès, and he emerged from the straw like a Jack-in-the-box. Then he cast



He emerged from the straw like a Jack-in-the-box.

his eyes on every side of him, and uttered such a cry of bewilderment and grief that the Commandant and Henri, who were walking about arm in arm, beguiling the time before supper, turned sharply round and perceived him.

“ Dr. Quiès ! ”

“ You !! ”

“ Impossible ! ”

“ What the devil are you doing there ? ”

They advanced smiling, and with outstretched hands ; but Quiès, in utter despair, had replunged his head under

the straw, as an ostrich hides its head under its wing, and nothing could induce him to move. Henri proposed that they should have the waggon emptied.

"Never mind," said La Carriole, laughing; "hunger drives the wolf out of the wood."

Proverbs, which pass for being the wisdom of nations, are so often deceptive, that we are bound to do justice to the accuracy of this one. The Commandant had not, however, so early an opportunity of testing its exactness as he expected. A whole night and a day passed without the doctor's giving any sign of life, and by that time the detachment had reached the left shore of the great lake Zahres, near Chazza el Maserah, and was encamped at the edge of a tamarind wood. Then did Quiès, all in disorder, and with his eyes starting out of his head, tumble out of his waggon, and, without uttering a word, seat himself in the vicinity of his companions, who were preparing to do honour to a plentiful and succulent repast.

He ate and drank voraciously, and, when he could eat no more, he raised his eyes to heaven, wrung the hands of his friends,—but without making any attempt to answer their questions,—and climbed back into his waggon, alone and unassisted, with the sombre resolution of one condemned to death.

On the morrow, and on the following days, he reappeared at the same hour, still pale, mournful, and obstinately silent. He ate, he drank, he raised his eyes to heaven, and he vanished into his waggon.

Profound misery was so plainly to be read in his countenance, that the Commandant and Henri, both of whom were sincerely attached to him, but who had at first laughed at this fresh adventure, which they were totally unable to explain, now began to be alarmed about its possible consequences. They made such strenuous efforts to rouse Quiès, that at Djelfa, being probably bewildered by the noise and movement about him (it was a marching

day), he yielded to their urgency and made up his mind to speak.

"Well, well, my good friend," said La Carriole, "there's no great harm done after all. You are seeing the country, and you will have an opportunity of writing a charming book, which will greatly enhance your reputation."

"I shall write no more books!"

"Nonsense. We shall have arrived in five or six days."

"Five or six days!"

"And we shall see De Malleville, and set out again with him."

"And in three weeks at the latest," said Henri, "we shall be back in Algiers."

"You will not take me back there alive," sighed Quiès. "No, my friends, no. It is too much for me. I feel that I am lost! Each step in advance costs me a year of my life. I was not born to travel."

"Promise us, nevertheless, that you will remain and come back with us."

"I must. I can't help myself. I cannot settle down in the middle of the Sahara for the rest of my life."

"Ah, I see your meaning, Quiès," said the Commandant. "The rest of your life. You don't think yourself so near death, then?"

Quiès shook his head despondently, but made no answer. He was then in the great square of Djelfa, and a crowd of Arabs, Kabyles, negroes, Spahis, and ragged women and children swarmed about him. He paid no attention to them, but followed his companions sadly, dined with them sadly, and when the hour of departure came, got into his waggon sadly, and disappeared under the straw.

No incident worthy of record occurred during the last days of that too long journey. The detachment arrived in safety at Awhata, a small town in the Sahara, built upon a height above a ravine. This position has, or rather it may have hereafter, a certain importance from the military

point of view, and that fact was no doubt the reason why M. Lefèvre had been sent thither, had taken M. de Malleville with him, and, lastly, had summoned the detachment, in whose train arrived Commandant La Carriole, Henri, and Dr. J. B. Quiès.

M. de Malleville, concerning whom we have only a few words to say, was fifty years of age, tall and thin, and with a cool, resolute manner. He wore his grey hair very short, and his still black moustache very long. His ill-fortune had marked his physiognomy with the impress of gloom, but the expression of his bright and determined eyes was that of an unconquered will ; he did not acknowledge himself beaten, but was ever ready for conflict, and would to the end strive to secure the future of his son. Henri was his idol. Great was his joy at seeing him again, greater still his amply-justified surprise at seeing him accompanied by Dr. J. B. Quiès, whom he had reasonably taken to be incapable of leaving the good town of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

We will leave the father and son to all the happiness of their meeting, and follow the doctor, our hero, who had slipped into one of the huts—we dare not call them houses—which were temporarily put up at Awhata during the preliminary works and the survey of the district.

Poor Quiès seemed to have conceived a distinct enmity to life and mankind. He no longer wanted repose only ; he had need of solitude. The sound of human speech was irksome to him. He would not answer, and he did not question. The machine that was to him Quiès, was seriously out of order. To recall him to proper self-consciousness, and reawaken some life and spirit in him, one of those fortuitous occurrences which bring about a sudden reaction was sorely needed. Chance is never short of expedients, as we are about to see.

The house in which the engineer officers and their companions were lodged, consisted only of a ground floor, divided into seven or eight rooms, which communicated

with each other by means of doors which were always open. Quiès had taken up his abode in the smallest of these, a sort of cage, and out of this he never came except at meal-times. On those occasions, however, he observed a mathematical punctuality.

One evening, at dinner-hour, he had just taken his place



It half-opened its jaws, and uttered a roar of satisfaction.

at the table, and, with his eyes fixed upon his plate, was beating the devil's tattoo with his fork, when a hairy head insinuated itself between his arm and his breast, and at the same time a cold damp nose rubbed itself on his face. He instinctively put his hand on the back of the familiar animal, and returned its politeness by stroking it. The

creature was probably sensible of this act of deference on the part of a person worthy of so much consideration, for it half-opened its jaws and uttered a roar of satisfaction which made Quiès start up from his chair.

"What's that? what's that?" he called out in a great fright.

"That," said Commandant Lefèvre, who had just come in, "is Mdlle. Haydée."

"Mdlle. Haydée?"

"Yes. A young lioness. I took her from the cradle, and have brought her up by hand. She is as gentle as a lamb, as obedient as a spaniel, and as intelligent as a monkey."

Quiès had heard enough. He regarded the white tusks of Mdlle. Haydée with many misgivings, and we are obliged to confess that he dined ill and slept worse. Mdlle. Haydée, to whom the entire building was absolutely free, and who roamed about it just as she pleased, took a fancy to pass that night in the doctor's room, and even carried her friendly advances so far as to rest her head against his portly form.

To turn out a personage of the importance of Mdlle. Haydée was not to be thought of. Supposing she were to take offence! He preferred to keep himself wide awake and ready to call for assistance in case of accident.

It was strange, but true, that Dr. Quiès, the true Quiès, the hearty, expansive, talkative Quiès, had reappeared. All day he was at the heels of La Carriole, questioning, answering, chattering. When the Commandant escaped from him he laid hold of Henri or M. de Malleville. His ardent desire for repose and solitude had vanished like a puff of smoke before a blast of wind.

Mdlle. Haydée followed him persistently, cocking her ears, licking her lips, and breathing deep; a fact which leads us to believe that the excellent doctor dreaded a *tête-à-tête* with the admirable animal. The salutary

result of his fear was to restore him to his former self.

If you put a pistol into the hand of a person who is tired of life, the odds are ten to one that he will promptly return it to you, and he will do well. The doctor took no pleasure whatever in the prospect of being snapped up one fine morning like a sparrow by Mdlle. Haydée, and from thence we may conclude that, although he had reached the point of wishing to die, he still preferred to select the manner of his death. When one comes to



Familiarity of Mdlle. Haydée.

that, one does not want to die at all. The intentions of the young lioness meanwhile seemed perfectly pacific. She had merely taken a great fancy to the new comer who had stroked her so gently. Quiès suited her, and she liked him. Those are things concerning which it is vain to reason. She followed him. Where he went she went ; at table she sat by his side ; when he went out she stalked solemnly behind him, and rubbed her head against his legs ; at night she stayed in his room. Everywhere Haydée !

The quantity of ground the well-meaning beast made Quiès cover in a week was prodigious, especially when the character and habits of the good doctor are considered. And this, alas ! was but the beginning of another stage of the incredible journey to which our unhappy hero was destined.



## CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH DR. QUIÈS RIDES ON HORSEBACK FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE.

AFTER he had passed a fortnight in the plateau of Awhata, Commandant Carriole began to get tired of it. So long as the engineering works were merely in a state of projection he was interested in them, but when they were put in execution their slow monotony wearied him. Being sick of levelling and trenching, he resorted to his favourite pastime and exercise, sport, and he found that the surrounding country offered inexhaustible resources.

The vast plain which lies to the south of Awhata is studded so far as the eye can reach with *daïas*, as the Arabs call the little groves of jujube-trees, in which partridges, bustards, hares, and gazelles abound. In two days, and though he only went out in the morning before sunrise and in the evening at sunset, he had killed more than fifty head of game. But this very success wearied him. One of the great charms of sport consists in the expectation, the anxiety, the uncertainty, and the difficulty that accompany it. If, at the first step one makes, the quarry runs between one's legs and allows itself to be killed, there is no pleasure in the chase. One soon gets tired of attacking creatures that do not defend themselves with the weapons given them by Nature—cunning or speed.

The third day Commandant La Carriole did not go out shooting; he yawned all day long instead. He had begun to long for the completion of the works, and a

return to less facile pleasures. Indeed, he had already pressed M. de Malleville and Commandant Lefèvre on this subject more than once. His friends were, therefore, very reasonably surprised when, the ardently-desired day being come, he begged for a delay on the score of an important affair. His proceedings had become quite mysterious ; he had been seen to saddle his horse and set out at a gallop in the direction of an Arab encampment, two or three kilometers from Awhata. With the tacit



He had been seen to set out at a gallop.

assent of the officers, he had given the strangest orders to the Spahis on the subject of the horses under their charge. No more green food, half-rations of barley, and a daily march out in the full sunshine. Although it was now early in October, this was very hard upon the poor animals, and they lost flesh perceptibly. The Commandant's companions were puzzled mightily, but to all their questions he returned only one answer,—

“Leave me to myself ; I am preparing a surprise for you.”

The surprise seemed likely to become a mystification, when one morning La Carriole exclaimed, rubbing his hands,—

“Everything is ready ; we start to-morrow.”

“For — ?” asked all present simultaneously.

“For an expedition that will last ten or twelve days.”

“Where to ?”

“Towards the south ?”

“And what are we to do towards the south ?”

“To hunt ostriches.”

This announcement was hailed with a cheer.

“Wait a bit,” interposed Commandant Lefèvre, “our good friend has forgotten only one thing, that it is October. The Mekhralif-el-Djerenb, those Sahara pirates who relieve us of their presence during the summer, have reappeared with their cattle and camels.”

“What does that signify ?” asked La Carriole.

“That the hot season is drawing to an end, and that ostriches are not hunted except from June to August.”

“Do you take me for a tyro ?” exclaimed the Commandant. “Do you imagine that I should put the whole caravan in motion to look for a mare’s nest? No, no ; I have sent out my scouts, and they report that the ostriches are not gone down south as yet, but that we shall find plenty of game on the ground.”

“But you know what we shall require, if we go to look for it ?”

“Certainly. We shall want beaters, and I have got them ; camels, and I have got them. Provisions you can supply.”

“From whom have you asked — ?”

“From the Mekhralif-el-Djerenb, of course,” answered La Carriole impatiently.

“Be on your guard, Commandant ; don’t trust them. Those fellows are a bad lot. They rob and kill freely. They profess to us that they have forsaken their evil ways, and wish to make amends. Don’t you trust them.”

"What have we to fear? We shall be a dozen of determined men, well armed. Those dogs will never dare to bite us. Besides, nothing venture, never win. Why, even if I was to go alone, I would not miss such a chance of seeing sport as I shall never have again."

There was no opposing the fixed determination of the Commandant; and, indeed, M. de Malleville, Henri, and all the officers of the detachment made no great difficulty about yielding to it. It was arranged that they should start on the following morning. La Carriole undertook to give the orders and superintend the final preparations. He was engaged in this interesting occupation when he was accosted by Quiès, and was struck with amazement by hearing him utter the following words:—

"You will choose a very quiet horse for me, won't you?"

The Commandant ran his eyes over his old friend from head to foot; not only to make sure that it was really he who spoke, but also to ascertain whether he was in his right mind. The doctor looked wretched, his mien was that of utter discomfiture, he hung his head, and one of his eyes was watering, but there was nothing to indicate that he had lost his reason.

"A horse! for you, Quiès?" said La Carriole at length.

"A horse—for me—Quiès—yes!"

At each word the doctor heaved a heartrending sigh.

"You come with us?"

"Y—es!"

"Impossible!"

"Oh, it is not with my own good will, I assure you."

"Explain yourself, my good friend; I do not understand you."

"You don't understand," sighed Quiès, "that if you were gone I should be left—alone—brrrou—in this abominable house—brrrou!"

"Well?"

"Tête-à-tête with—Mdlle. Haydée!"

"Oh, nonsense! The gentlest beast!"

"Oh yes, I like that notion!"

"And an animal that adores you!"

"We have had a painful misunderstanding, my dear friend. A little scene—"

"The deuce you have!"

"I unfortunately gave her a kick last night—without intending it; oh, quite accidentally. Since then, whenever she sees me she wrinkles up her ugly muzzle in a highly significant way. I tell you, between ourselves, I don't feel at all comfortable."

"We will give you a garrison of ten men."

"Thanks. A bite is the affair of a second, and even if the beast were killed afterwards, much good that would do me. I would rather go with you."

"Reflect, Quiès. Twelve days on the move!"

"I know."

"On horseback!"

"I know."

"Ten nights of sleeping on the ground in the open air!"

"I know."

"And camp fare!"

"So be it. Death for death, I—"

Quiès' voice faltered, he said no more, but sank down helplessly. It was evident this grim resolve tore his heart as ruthlessly as the claws of Mdle. Haydée could have torn his body. Perhaps, with a little patience, he might have been convinced of the puerility of his alarm, but La Carriole did not try to convince him. He was, on the contrary, mischievously amused at the notion of the figure that Dr. J. B. Quiès would cut on horseback, he who had never in his life mounted any animal except the mule that had brought him, in fifteen falls, to within five leagues of Boghar.

"Never mind," thought the Commandant, "in two days he will get used to it."

"It is quite clear, my good friend," said he, "that you have missed your vocation. God created you to be a great traveller and a scientific explorer. Take notes, Quiès, take notes. When you come back, you will regret it if you have not taken any."

"I shall never come back!" sighed the unhappy doctor.

"That is always your song."

Quiès raised his eyes to heaven.

"A very quiet horse," he repeated, and then he disappeared, for Mdlle. Haydée came stalking into the stable where the interview just recorded had taken place.

Those among us—and they form the majority—who have never hunted bigger game than hares and partridges, cannot imagine an ostrich hunt in the Sahara, across the endless steppes which the Arabs call, in their expressive language, the "Land of Thirst," and throughout whose entire extent there is not a stream of running water or a spring. The only moisture it ever has comes from the rains that fall during the storms, and form little pools, to which the wandering tribes resort in haste for their supply of water, as the sun dries them up quickly. It is, therefore, no light matter to undertake a twelve days' sojourn in such a desert, and La Carriole must have taken infinite trouble to organize such an enterprise successfully.

The caravan, which was placed under his command, comprised no less than fifty camels, twenty-five horses, ten mules—camels and mules carrying eight barrels of water, ten sacks of barley, victuals for fifteen days, salt, and all the necessary camp gear. It happens, sometimes, that the ostriches reported by the scouts to be at a short distance, have gone off during the night ten or even fifteen leagues farther to the south. The hunting party then encamp in a *daïa*, and resume their progress on the following day until the *bedou* or the *gaad* becomes feasible.

By these two names the principal methods of hunting the ostrich are known. In the *bedou* the hunter pursues the bird alone and with the same horse. The chase is a

mad gallop, and by no means without danger. The *gaad* is the pursuit of the game by several hunters, in relays, and the birds are driven into the ambuscade prepared for them by beaters.

La Carriole and his party had decided upon adopting the *gaad*. At the last moment, that is to say during the night which preceded the start, Quiès experienced some hesitation. Being feverishly wakeful, he sat up in his camp bed every few minutes.

"Stay," he thought, "let me consider. Am I wise to encounter such terrible exertion in order to fly from a danger which I may possibly exaggerate? No, certainly not! If this horrible brute was capable of such a deed, these men, who do not wish me any ill, would not leave her at large. And, besides, she has never shown any spite against me."

Chance—still chance!—would have it that at the very same moment Mdlle. Haydée, tormented doubtless by some insect, made a prodigious bound and uttered a formidable roar in the next room. Quiès' jaw fell, his hair rose on his head, and cold perspiration suffused his skin. He cut short his fine argument with the muttered words,—

"I think it is prudent not to stay here."

He then rose, lighted his candle, placed it on the little deal table which, with his camp bed and a chair, formed the entire furniture of his room, and occupied himself for a full half-hour in covering a sheet of paper with his close, small, and precise handwriting.

This task accomplished, he blew out his candle, and raised his eyes to heaven. The sun, still invisible, was casting some pale yellow gleams upon the horizon, and the *daias* of the plain were emerging from their bed of deep shadow like so many luminous specks. The stars were disappearing one by one, and seemed to be soaring into the eternal heights. All around was rest and sleep. No human sound broke the mournful and imposing silence of the desert.

Quiès was overpowered by an unspeakable emotion. Never since he left Saint-Pignon les Girouettes had the terrible fatality which held him fast more heavily oppressed him. Although he had borne severer trials, he had never scanned the future with a more anxious eye, or turned upon the past a more mournful glance. Never had his former peaceful existence been recalled so plainly to his wistful fancy, with all its blessings, its calm and simple



J. B. Quiès writing his last will.

pleasures, its firm friendships, and its nights without nightmare! Slow tears oozed from his eyes, and fell heavily on the paper which he had left on the table in front of him.

Perhaps that tear was a *mea culpa*. In the hour of sorrow we are impartial judges of ourselves. For the first time Quiès was awakened to a sense of his egoism, too long indulged, and of the innumerable failings of

which he had been guilty. He said to himself that the evil which had now befallen him was but the chastisement of his faults. He was enduring his purgatory in this world. He did not, however, go so far as to believe that paradise was closed against him for ever.

The morning call sounded by the camp trumpeters interrupted his reverie and arrested his tears. He cast one look at Mdlle. Haydée, who was stretching herself out and showing her white teeth at the door, sighed deeply and went in search of Commandant La Carriole, whom he accosted with an air of great solemnity.

"My good, dear, excellent friend," said he, handing him the sheet of paper on which he had been writing shortly before, folded, but not sealed, "take great care of this paper. Put it in your pocket. It contains my last wishes."

"Why, Quiès!" exclaimed the Commandant, "you must be mad!"

"I am going to my death. There are presentiments that do not deceive us."

"Nonsense, man!"

"I am going to my death, I tell you. You will be my testamentary executor. My cousin Ragot is my sole heiress, I confirm her rights, charging her only to pay in my name—it is not much—some debts of gratitude which I enumerate. You will see to this, my dear friend. I also charge you to express to all those who love, or have loved me, my deep regret for having so ill understood the duties of friendship."

"Really, Quiès, one would think you were speaking seriously."

"I am speaking very seriously."

"Reflect then that a ten or twelve days' trip into the plain is no great affair. We are so well provided that you will be as well off at the camp as in your own room. No one dies of a little fatigue, and that is the only risk you run."

“God grant it! You have chosen a very quiet horse for me?”

“A girl might ride it. See, here it comes.”

A Spahi had just come up, leading two small Arab horses, bony, nervous animals, thinned by the training they had gone through. Quiès thought that the horse



The departure of the caravan.

which he took for the quieter of the two was far from being quiet enough for him, but he was resigned to his fate. Aided by a push on one side and a pull on the other, he succeeded in getting into the saddle, and, holding on desperately by his horse's mane, he followed the Commandant, and rejoined the caravan beneath the mamelon of Awhata.

The strangeness of the spectacle which awaited him there diverted him for awhile from the sufferings of his novel situation. It would indeed have been difficult, not to say impossible, for him to remain absorbed in his thoughts in the midst of the indescribable tumult caused by the shouts of the Arabs and the neighing and trampling of the horses. On one hand he beheld an Arab remonstrating with his kneeling camel on its obstinate refusal to rise ; on the other a second Arab, already mounted and endeavouring to restrain the ardour of his animal. Here was a staved-in barrel of water, there a burst sack of barley. Farther on, a mule had broken its saddle-bands, and kicked off its load. Horses were galloping and plunging, their riders were seeking and calling for each other. It took La Carriole a full hour to reduce his unruly forces to something like order.

It was six o'clock in the morning when the caravan started, and at the same hour in the evening it encamped in a *daïa*, eight leagues from Awhata. The tents were struck, the horses were tethered, supper was eaten, with coffee and cigars to follow, and then a council was held, in the regular course, upon the measures to be taken for the morrow. The French officers and sportsmen, being quite new to this kind of thing, merely put in an appearance on the solemn occasion. The ordering of the hunt was properly left to the Arabs, who sat phlegmatically in a circle and spoke one after the other. They had all come to an agreement in a quarter of an hour, and then their arrangements were promptly made.

Four scouts, mounted on swift camels, were sent on in advance to track the ostriches. These scouts were not to drive the birds until the relays of hunters should have taken up their position ; this they were to do at noon precisely.

No sooner had the scouts disappeared in the semi-darkness of the desert, than each man lay down in the best place he could find, and fell asleep.

During the day Quiès had only twice fallen off his horse, but the continuous exertion by which he had obtained this result had completely exhausted him, and if all the cannon in the three provinces had been fired close to his ear, he would not have started in his sleep. It was a difficult job to rouse him and hoist him up on his horse the next morning, and it is unnecessary to observe that his only anxiety was to have as little riding to do as possible. With this end, he kept close to the baggage, with the five or six Arabs who had charge of it, and who followed at an easy pace. Quiès cared about as much for the ostriches as a fish cares for an



The encampment.

apple. La Carriole and Henri, on the contrary, placed themselves at the head of the hunt at once, and were riding madly after a male ostrich ; such a splendid bird that the Arab who had started the game actually thrilled with greed and ardour on beholding it, and joined the two Frenchmen in their pursuit. It is the custom to give the Arab scouts one half of the number of ostriches killed or captured, and they make largely by this perquisite.

The ostrich, like the pig, is valuable all over, from its head to its feet, inclusively. Its flesh is eaten, its feathers and its skin are sold ; therefore the Arabs pursue it with a wild passionateness, bordering on frenzy.

We shall not attempt to follow our hunters in their headlong career, or to depict their emotions, their disappointments, or their general sentiments. We shall merely return with them in the evening to the place that had been fixed upon for their camping-ground.

There we find them worn out with fatigue and heat, hardly able to sit upright, and yet not so much exhausted by physical toil as cast down by the melancholy result of the day's work. Of the twelve or fourteen ostriches reported by the scouts on the previous day, they had been able to



La Carriole and Henri placed themselves at the head of the hunt.

follow only two, and they had captured only one. The others had disappeared, why or how none could tell. They had drawn nothing but blanks.

“Ugh!” said La Carriole, as he dismounted, “what a day!”

“We shall have our revenge,” answered Henri.

“I hope so.”

“At all events we are in for a good week more than I counted upon.”

“Yes—and won’t Quiès be in a way about it! By-the-

bye, where is he? I have not seen him since we arrived here."

The Commandant and Henri called the doctor. There was no answer. They then searched for him in vain. Lastly, they questioned the Arabs left in charge of the baggage, and learned from them that they had seen "the fat gentleman" set out at a gallop to rejoin the hunt at noon.

"Well," said La Carriole, "he's not lost. Let us eat and sleep."

Everybody was satisfied that there was no cause for uneasiness; that Quiès, guided by the instinct of his horse, would speedily turn up at the camp. Everybody got through the evening meal as soon as possible, and lay down thankfully, to sleep soundly.

Morning came, but Quiès had not "turned up."



## CHAPTER XVII.

## TREATS OF THE PROBABLE DEATH OF DOCTOR J. B. QUIÈS, AND THAT WHICH ENSUED UPON IT.

DOUBT was no longer possible. An accident had befallen him. But what was its nature, and what had been its results? Was he dead? was he only hurt? or had he merely lost his way?

"Gentlemen," said the Commandant, "I incline towards the latter hypothesis. Our Arabs declare that they saw him start at a gallop. Now we all know that such a pace is by no means habitual to our dear doctor, and I positively refuse to believe that he adopted it of his own free will and intention. He was simply run away with by his horse, and that sagacious animal will have stopped when such was its pleasure."

"Supposing that the rider fell off before it stopped?" suggested M. de Malleville.

"The horse would have come back without him."

"That is true."

"Then he did not fall, but, being doubtless very tired, and overtaken by the darkness, he will have sought shelter in some *daïa* or other, and be now on his way to join us."

"Does he know where we are?" asked Henri.

"Where we are! My good youth," remonstrated the Commandant, "do you suppose Dr. Quiès, who isn't a doctor for nothing, does not know the north from the south?"

"God send, my dear Commandant, that your forecast

may prove correct ; but, in the meantime, do you not think we had better go and look for him ? ”

“ By all means.”

In reality, La Carriole was not at all so easy in his mind as he pretended to be. He would not, however, admit the possibility of a misfortune for which he felt himself partly responsible, except in the last extremity. Had he not left poor Quiès a prey to the childish fear which had impelled him to accompany the hunting party in spite of his natural repugnance ?

“ Ah,” cried he, as he put his foot in the stirrup, “ were he in the very middle of the desert we must find him.”

The detachment, divided into five groups of four horsemen each, set off in five different directions, so as to form a wide fan-shaped cordon round the camp. They were all to unite at the upper end of it in case of failure. At two o'clock the twenty horsemen were all assembled ; no trace of either Dr. Quiès or his horse had been found. They took one hour of indispensable repose, and then resumed their search, going towards the south. They rode on until evening, scouring the vast plain in every direction.

Nothing ! still nothing !

La Carriole swore like a demon, and tore his hair. Henri, who was seriously alarmed, galloped about on all sides, with far greater ardour than he had displayed in hunting the ostriches.

Night fell, and the search had to be suspended.

The horsemen encamped, to resume their efforts on the following day ; but every man among them had an increasing conviction that those efforts would prove vain. They persisted in the search for three days, and then it was abandoned, and they decided upon returning to their fixed camp. Quiès was but too surely lost. And yet, as there was nothing explained or proved with respect to his strange disappearance, his friends retained a remnant of hope, and they searched every shrub, every tuft of grass, every *daia*, on their return, going over again the

ground they had already examined twenty times, like dogs on the scent of game.

La Carriole, who had come back equally enraged and grieved, was about to dismount, when he was loudly hailed. M. de Malleville, Henri, and their companions had just met, close to a mamelon covered with prickly plants and bushes, and they were bending over something. La Carriole spurred his horse, and joined the group in a few moments. With real anguish he recognized that the object attracting their attention was the horse that had



The searchers had found a note-book.

carried his good friend the doctor, lying dead upon the ground, and already half-eaten by vultures.

The searchers had found a note-book and an open knife close by. Quiès had evidently fallen there, and those things had dropped out of his pocket or his hand. But what had become of him ?

“ He must have hurt himself in falling,” said Henri.

“ No doubt. And if the injury was serious he could not have gone very far, and we shall find him in the nearest *daïa*, if he has been able to drag himself that distance.”

“And if he has not?”

“If he has not, the body must be here, near the horse.”

They searched a space of five hundred square yards with such minute care that not an inch escaped inspection, but they found no trace of the doctor.

Then said La Carriole, catching at the last straw, “It is four days since we left the camp! No doubt he has reached it during our absence. He will have been bruised by his fall, and walking slowly, morning and evening, to avoid the sun. Yes, he is at the camp! I am sure he is at the camp!”

“I hope so,” said M. de Malleville. “At any rate it is only two leagues. Come on, Henri, we shall soon know.”

An hour later M. de Malleville and his son returned. Quiès had not reappeared at the camp. They were all amazed. If he were living they ought to find him; if he were dead *à fortiori!*

“Ha!” exclaimed Henri, “the vultures!”

“The vultures!” repeated the Commandant, as he clenched his fists, “they leave the bones at least! But nothing, nothing! That accursed ostrich hunt! It is all my fault.”

For five long days, without giving in, they searched around the dead horse, enlarging the circle day by day. At the end of that time they were forced to yield to the conviction that all hope was lost. Quiès had vanished, like a mysterious apparition, leaving no other trace of his presence upon the earth except the note-book and the knife which they had found close to the horse.

“Had he any money?” asked Commandant Lefèvre of Commandant La Carriole, in a low voice.

“I lent him some lately. Why?”

“That explains all. These Mekhralif-el-Djerenb are all robbers, as you know as well as I.”

“They have murdered him?”

“Very probably. They could dispose of the body.”

“Yes, yes ; it is so. I see it all. They shall be made to pay dearly for it.”

“Alas, my good friend, it is very difficult, even in our dear France, with all its civilization, to lay hands upon a criminal ; here, on these plains of the Sahara, all the police in the world could not do it.”

“No matter ! I will fire into the lot of them, and kill four or five of them at any rate.”

“And to-morrow we shall be attacked by a dozen tribes in revolt.”

“So, then, the murder of my dear Quiès must remain unpunished ?”

Commandant Lefèvre lifted up his hands and let them fall again dejectedly. La Carriole perceived that neither repression nor vengeance was to be hoped for. In his anger he clenched his teeth and broke his pipe ; then he mounted his horse and galloped off. The party returned to Awkata on the following day, and on the next La Carriole, Henri, and M. de Malleville took leave of their hospitable entertainers, and sorrowfully set out for Algiers.

When that untiring marauder, death, enters into a dwelling, and strikes down a beloved one, it seems to those who loved the departed that they cannot survive that terrible grief. They are cold and indifferent to everything. They move about the house like shadows, seeking the one who is no longer there, and who can never return. They weep, and they will not believe that a time can ever come when they will no longer have tears in their eyes, or, perhaps, in their hearts. Yet so it is, and so it must be. The inexorable daily demands of life absorb us whether we will or no, and we are driven by the egoism that exists even in the best among us, to indifference or oblivion.

The more than probable death of poor Dr. Quiès had painfully affected M. de Malleville and Henri, and still more deeply Commandant La Carriole ; and yet, at the end of a month, the impression was almost, if not totally,

effaced. Each of them had to attend to his own affairs. The dead are dead, the living are obliged to live.

M. de Malleville, whose interests detained him in Algeria, and whose position was rapidly improving, established himself at Algiers, where his wife was to join him. La Carriole, who was returning to France, undertook to arrange that matter at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, where he also had to make known the melancholy end of Dr. J. B. Quiès.

It is our duty to forestall the arrival of the Commandant, and to cast a retrospective glance upon some of the persons whom we have left at Saint-Pignon.

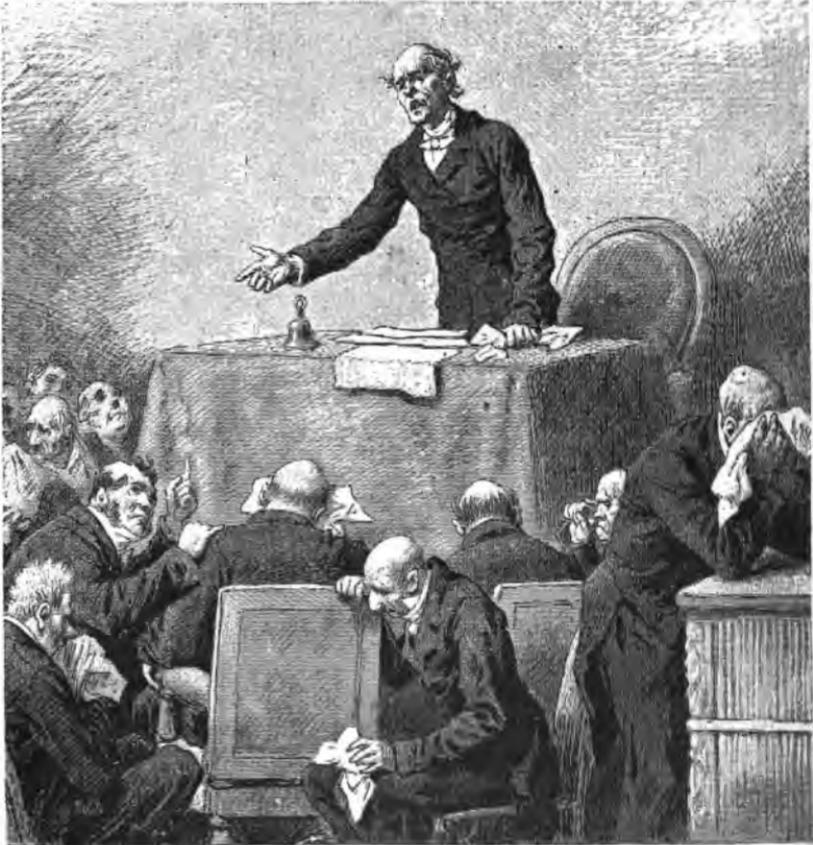
On the close of a solemn meeting of the Geographical, Numismatical, and Archæological Society, at which M. de Préchafoin had propounded his belief that Dr. J. B. Quiès had voluntarily absented himself in order to endow his country with some wonderful discovery, the entire town had assented to the view of the honourable president. With the exception of Anthime, who was better informed, and Mme. Ragot, whose instinct led her to doubt, everybody had accepted this improbable hypothesis, which became a certainty from the day on which Maître Grimblot, the notary, received a letter addressed to him in duplicate by Quiès, who apprised him of his intention to remain in Africa for a long time, and instructed him to transmit funds through the agency of Von Saaken and Co.

Quiès in Algiers! The fact was beyond dispute.

The faint remorse which Anthime had felt vanished at once, and his jealousy was increased in proportion to the unforeseen results of his malicious deed. As for Mme. Ragot, she shed three tears of joy in public, and went home to tear her pocket-handkerchief with her teeth in her despair. Her six daughters would inevitably be old maids.

The logical conclusion would be that M. Bonamy would rub his hands on hearing of the death of the doctor, and that Mme. Ragot would jump with joy. But it was not

so. Anthime straightway forgot all his grievances, and heartily forgave the unhappy man whose destruction he had caused ; while, as for Mme. Ragot, she wept the sincerest tears, and if the loss of one of her little fingers could



The funeral oration.

have restored Quiès to life, she would have laid her hand on the block.

To the inhabitants of Saint-Pignon in general, and the members of the learned society in particular, the news was

a thunderbolt. J. B. Quiès at once assumed the proportions of a hero and a demigod.

M. de Prèchafoin summoned a meeting, at which, in a voice trembling with emotion, he delivered a funeral oration, beginning with, "Standing by the side of this hardly-closed grave," and ending with, "Adieu, Quiès, adieu!" All funeral orations, those of Bossuet excepted, begin and end thus.

A statue to Dr. J. B. Quiès was voted by acclamation. Anthime held up both hands, and subscribed one hundred francs. Mme. Ragot put down only fifty, but then she was not a member of the learned body of Saint-Pignon. The worthy woman believed, no doubt, that she had fully discharged her debt to the memory of Dr. Quiès by this slight sacrifice; for no sooner had she written her name on the subscription list than she went off to see the notary about her interest in the doctor's property. She decked her face in her most gracious smiles, saluted Maître Grimblot with all courtesy, and explained the object of her visit.

"Pardon me, dear madam," said the grave official, interrupting her, "Dr. Quiès is not dead."

"How! Not dead? When they are putting up a statue to him?"

"Oh, that proves nothing."

"Not dead! when Commandant Carriole affirms that the search for him was vain?"

"Precisely, dear madam. Dr. Quiès has disappeared. In the eyes of the law he is not dead; he is only absent."

"But his property, then?"

"His property is about to be placed in the hands of an administrator."

"Until—?"

"Until its deposit in the provisional possession of his heirs or those having rights."

"When—?"

“After the lapse of four years from the period of the declaration of absence.”

“So that I shall not inherit for four years to come?”

“You will not inherit at all, dear madam. You will have the enjoyment of the usufruct, with the obligation, in case of the doctor’s return, to capitalize it and return it to its lawful owner ; but you will not have power to dispose of anything except the income until final possession is awarded.”

“And that will take place—?”



“The usufruct ! What should I do with your usufruct?”

“In thirty years.”

“In thirty years ! But Quiès had not thirty years to live ! He was apoplectic.”

“Such is the law, dear madam.”

“So that I am ruined, simply ruined !”

“The usufruct, the usufruct, dear madam.”

“The usufruct ! What should I do with your usufruct ?”

With this ironical question, Mme. Ragot bounced out of the notary’s office, and banged the door. Her face was

crimson, and she gesticulated wildly. How glad she would have been if she could only have got back the fifty francs which she had thrown away on the statue of the defunct doctor, who had died in so inconsiderate and inconvenient a fashion. All that evening she kept the house in a turmoil, her dinner was detestable, her daughters were intolerable, and her cook was impertinent.

To be four whole years without handling a centime, and then to be able to touch the income only! What an abominably selfish creature was Quiès, thus to act towards an unfortunate kinswoman, afflicted with six marriageable daughters! Where were their "dots" to come from under such circumstances? All of a sudden a bright idea occurred to Mme. Ragot, and her thin lips expanded sideways in a smile which said plainly,—

"I am saved! Why did I not think of that sooner?"

Thereupon Mme. Ragot, having replaced upon her shoulders the shawl she had worn for twenty years, and put on the only bonnet she had ever possessed, set out to call upon M. Bonamy.

It is a fact to be observed that the success of a request depends, nine times in ten, upon the state of mind of the person to whom it is addressed. At noon the petitioner would have succeeded, at half-past twelve he fails. Mme. Ragot had the good fortune to reach Anthime's house at the precise moment when, having been engaged in a semi-quarrelsome discussion with Mme. Bonamy, his spouse, he was in urgent need of a pretext for getting away and leaving her the last word.

"Our dear cousin!" cried he.

At Saint-Pignon everybody is everybody else's cousin.

"I must speak to you," said Mme. Ragot in a mysterious tone. "You will excuse me."

"Oh, of course," replied Mme. Bonamy sullenly.

Anthime left his wife to grumble, ushered Mme. Ragot into his study, placed a chair for her, took both her hands in his, and said,—

"What is the matter?"

"What do you make out Quiès' fortune to be?"

"Six hundred and fifty thousand francs at the lowest figure."

"Bringing in annually?"

"Thirty thousand francs."

"What would you say if you were offered that yearly sum for three hundred thousand francs?"

"I should say it was a good bargain."

"Very well then, done!"

"I don't understand you."

"And yet it's clear enough. Quiès has disappeared. His death is an ascertained fact. Although the law refuses to declare his decease, it is none the less certain that my dear cousin will never reappear."

"That is more than probable."

"Now, I am his sole heiress."

"Are you quite sure?"

"The will has been brought from that place beyond seas and handed over to Maître Grimblot."

"Really!"

"But, as Quiès is only absent, I shall not be put into provisional possession for four years, and thirty must elapse before I get final possession. Now, my dear M. Anthime, I have not, or rather my friends have not, time to wait."

"And you propose to me to discount Quiès?"

"Exactly."

"The devil of it is," said Anthime, scratching his head, "that three hundred thousand francs is a large sum to disburse."

"But one for which I yield up to you all my rights. For three hundred thousand francs you have thirty thousand francs a year."

"Inalienable?"

"For thirty years only."

"And if Quiès should come back?"

"Oh," said Mme. Ragot, with a smile, "on that point you know well that we have nothing to fear."

She intended to say "to hope," but she had let the true word slip, and she thought it unnecessary to withdraw it. So she left M. Bonamy, repeating as she took leave of him,—



"That three hundred thousand francs is a large sum to disburse."

"We shall each of us make a good bargain."

No doubt it would not prove a bad one for either; it might indeed be considered excellent for both. Nevertheless, Anthime would not have concluded it had he not held himself morally pledged to do so. If he, Anthime, had not conceived the infernal idea of sending Quiès off, full

steam, towards the south, Quiès would never in his whole life have gone to Africa, Quiès would never in his whole life have gone ostrich-hunting, and Quiès would not be dead. The least he could do was to come to the aid of the doctor's heirs, seeing that no other means of repairing his fault was open to him.

On the following day Mme. Ragot and M. Bonamy signed the agreement by which the said Mme. Ragot made over to the said M. Bonamy, her rights as next heir to Dr. J. B. Quiès, in consideration of three hundred thousand francs paid down. Anthime realized his resources, sold some timber, and also a number of shares, at a loss, and paid down the money.

He resigned himself to living on six thousand francs a year for four years. Poor man! It is true that at the expiration of that time he would be the great man of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, and he did not regard the price as too high to be paid for that end.

Mme. Ragot was radiant with delight! Three hundred thousand francs down! She reserved fifty thousand for herself, and, like a good mother as she was, made over the remainder to her daughters, for whom she received twenty-four offers of marriage in less than a week. Their only difficulty was now that of selection. The first decided upon accepting the hand of a farmer, the second selected a neighbouring notary, the third favoured the tax-gatherer of Saint-Pignon, the fourth married a Paris merchant, the fifth an inspector of registration; the sixth and last chose a hunchback who possessed a private fortune.

It was arranged that the six weddings should be celebrated on the same day at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, and in spite of the law's delays and inevitable accidents, all was ready for the first week in November.

We may leave to our readers imagination the scene of the six weddings, to which one hundred and ninety-six guests were invited. The table was spread under a

tent, specially erected in the garden for the purpose, which was pillaged on the occasion. After the feast, Anthime delivered a second funeral oration upon the illustrious Dr. J. B. Quiès : " Standing by the side of that hardly-closed grave,—adieu, Quiès, adieu," and drowned his grief in such a flood of burgundy and champagne that he awoke under the table.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## IN THE DESERT.

PROBABLY the reader will now be glad to learn what had become of J. B. Quiès, and what were the extraordinary circumstances that rendered his companions' search for him fruitless.

The Arabs who had been questioned about him had told nothing but the truth. His horse had followed the baggage with great docility for two hours, and then suddenly, but with no evil intention, had started off at hunting speed. The doctor, as we know, found a slow trot too much for him, and this new gait of going plunged him in the first place into the profoundest perplexity. Had he not been afraid of breaking a limb he would certainly have allowed himself to slip off the odious saddle to which he could only cling by intolerable, even inconceivable efforts.

The first impulse of an inexperienced rider in a similar case, is to catch hold of the horse's mane, and tighten his legs round its body. Quiès resorted to both expedients, and the horse, thoroughly acquainted with its business, took this vigorous pressure for an order to go faster, and changed its hunting for racing speed. Quiès let go the mane, but with his right hand only, and seizing the bridle tugged at it with all his might. Wrong again! His horse only went the faster. He might, perhaps, have succeeded in stopping the animal, or, as he was borne along in the direction of his companions, he might have had a chance of one off them coming to his aid, had not a huge ostrich

which chanced to be sitting in his path suddenly risen and crossed it.

Just as a well-trained troop-horse will go through the manœuvres of war at the sound of the trumpet, without any direction from his rider, so will a well-trained hunter pursue the quarry of its own accord. Unfortunately for Quiès, his "mount" was a highly-trained and courageous animal, and, into the bargain, one possessing large experience. He knew the swift ostrich as well as J. B. Quiès knew the square of the hypotenuse, and would have held himself a sad laggard in duty if he had not instantly charged in pursuit of the game that had been so unexpectedly put up. He therefore wheeled suddenly round, and, putting forth all his speed, followed the bird, which strode away over the plain with ruffled wings and outstretched neck. From that moment Quiès had but one thought, one hope, one object—to stick on! Half rising in his stirrups, bending over the horse's neck, and holding on desperately by its mane, he beheld, as though in a dream, *daïas* succeed to *daïas*, and the great plain flying at both sides of him! The remains of an old habit made him form a confused calculation to the effect that, supposing his horse to be going at the rate of five leagues an hour, and to keep on at the same speed for four hours, he should have traversed a distance of twenty leagues! He reflected that the animal would then be exhausted, and unable to return, and that he himself would have to lie down in solitude under some wretched bush, at the mercy of wild beasts, to suffer from hunger and thirst, and that, after all this misery, he would probably fail to find his way back, and would die in that dreadful country.

He had no provisions except two biscuits in a courier's bag. The botanical case, which he wore slung over his shoulder, contained herbs that were rather purgative than nutritive. This box hung at his left side; the strap by which it was suspended on his right shoulder passed under

his linen jacket, and was fastened by a buckle to his waistband for fear of accident. The courier's bag hung on his right side, and also under his jacket. We should not, as it may readily be supposed, dwell upon details of this kind if they were not, as will presently appear, of the utmost importance.

The ostrich sped on and on ; its long legs were spread like a compass, and literally devoured space. The horse, full of emulation, and determined not to give in, pressed the great bird closely ; its nose touched the quarry. Quiès



The ostrich sped on and on !

could have pulled the wing feathers by putting out his hand ; this, however, was the last thing he thought of doing. He was occupied exclusively in reflecting on the probable consequences of an adventure which was becoming more terrible with every moment of this formidable gallop.

The idea of killing his horse occurred to him. That would ensure the animal's coming to a stop, to be sure, but it would not help Quiès to regain the camp. Could he get back on foot ? Never ! He sought for another

expedient, and was led by his natural logic to conclude that if he were to kill the ostrich, his horse, having no more object in maintaining its speed, would stop of its own free will. But how was he to kill the ostrich? He had neither a revolver nor a rifle. His sole weapon was a penknife—a good big one to be sure, and more than sufficient for the perpetration of the murder that he meditated, although, from the position he was in, it would be difficult to use. He would have to get within arm's length of the ostrich. Did Quiès manœuvre towards this end, or did the horse instinctively comprehend his project? However that may be, five minutes after the cut-throat device occurred to the doctor, the horse and the ostrich were racing side by side.

Quiès opened his knife, clasped it firmly in his right hand, then leaned over as far as he could, and stretched out his arm to strike the bird. Unfortunately for him, this movement caused a sudden deviation of the left hand; a pull upon the rein made the horse plunge, and, in trying to change its foot, it stumbled against a block of stone, and came headlong down, bringing with it not only its rider but the ostrich, on which it had fallen.

Quiès had been pitched clean over the horse's head. He was shaken by the fall, and giddy; nevertheless he was preparing to rise and get into the saddle again, even though his diabolical courser should bear him away to the end of the world, when he felt himself taken up by his middle, and carried off, his legs just brushing the ground, in a second race which had not even the negative advantages of the first.

A glance apprised him of what had occurred, and he thought with a shudder of what might yet happen. He was hanging by the strap of his botanical case from the ostrich's neck, the bird having passed its head between the strap and the doctor's body in its effort to rise.

Quick as lightning he bethought him of cutting the strap! Alas! he no longer possessed a knife. Cast loose

his botanical case ! To do this he must take off his jacket, an impossibility in the attitude he was in !

The ostrich would have been by no means sorry to get rid of its cumbersome burthen, and shook itself violently in attempting to dislodge Quiès. The bird was, however, no more successful than the doctor, who, more than half choked, and severely bruised by the bumpings and buffetings of his extraordinary "mount," could think of nothing better—if indeed he thought at all—than to cling to the left wing of the ostrich and hoist himself on its back by the strength of his wrists. This feat took much longer to accomplish than it takes to relate ; he succeeded in effecting it, however.

On getting rid of the inconvenient bundle which had been knocking against its legs, the bird made but light of the weight transferred to a comparatively legitimate part of its person, and started off at much increased speed, to escape from a danger that no longer existed. Not but that the doctor was resolved to kill it. Will is, however, one thing, and power is another. The instant he attempted to let go he lost his balance, and in order to avoid falling, and once more finding himself hanging by his middle, he had to seize the bird's neck with both hands. If his fists had been strong enough, he would have strangled it.

The ostrich, terrified and wild, sped on and on like a cloud driven by the wind !

What was in reserve in the future for the unhappy Quiès, once more the victim of that fatality which had pursued him ever since his departure from Saint-Pignon ? He dared not think of this. He tightened the grip of his hands, he tightened the hold of his legs, he shut his eyes to escape from the fearful vision through which he was swept.

"Sooner or later it will stop," he thought. "No creature, not even an ostrich, can go on beyond——"

Quiès shuddered at the figure that came into his mind.

“At any rate the bird will stop at some time,” he repeated to himself. “They will come to look for me. They have good horses; it is impossible that they should lose all trace of me. They will not let an old friend die of hunger, thirst, and fatigue. An old friend, a companion of their childhood! Childhood! Oh, Saint-Pignon! Saint-Pignon! Stop, stop, I say, you accursed animal!”

As he thus apostrophized the ostrich he squeezed its neck with renewed force, and the furious bird made a wild bound and sped on more swiftly than before. It had maintained this almost incredible pace for upwards of an hour, and Quiès, who was now exhausted, felt his hands stiffening, and his benumbed legs slipping off their support, when a fresh torture supervened on all those from which he was already suffering so cruelly.

It may safely be asserted that women have not the monopoly of curiosity, and that ostriches do not yield in that respect to the most charming portion of the human race. Half-a-dozen of the desert birds, having seen their sister pass by in the curious accoutrement acquired in her fall, had started in pursuit, and having rejoined her, and observed with great surprise that she carried an appendage of strange form upon her back; they stretched out their long necks with the evident intention of discovering what the unhappy rider was made of. If they had been satisfied with a close inspection only, the evil would not have been so great; but they pecked with their beaks at the unknown objects with great vigour and perseverance.

These reiterated pecks not only inflicted acute pain on the wretched Quiès; but excited the ostrich, already nearly mad with fear. The pace changed to steeple-chase speed; the flock of ostriches and their prisoner swept on like a whirlwind. It became evident to Quiès that his torment would end only with the life of the bird. For how much longer would it have strength to run? If it were only

phthisical! That would save two or three hours! But the ostrich, on the contrary, was apparently endowed with lungs of exceptional capacity. Long after its companions had dropped out of the race, it still held on, speeding away straight before it, like a creature entirely bereft of reason.



The ostrich suddenly dropped beneath him.

Night fell, and the bird was still speeding on like the wind! How many hours had that headlong course lasted? Quiès could not have told. He was half dead, hardly conscious, and at last he had let go his hold, and remained, God knows how, clinging automatically to his fantastic courser.

All chance of safety was escaping his grasp! Around him the *daias* had disappeared. The yellowish-green, arid plains of Awhata had been succeeded by others, then by others still which were of a yellowish-brown hue, and anon by plains of a lighter yellow, so far as the eye could reach.

Sand! Sand everywhere! The desert! He had commended his soul to God, and felt that he was about to die like a man and a Christian, when the ostrich suddenly dropped beneath him. He heard around him a noise like the clatter of saucepans, then like human cries, and he fainted.

It will be admitted that he did not do so without reason. The only wonder is that he had not fainted long before.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE PROJECTS OF SIR THOMAS NICHOLL.

WHEN the doctor recovered his senses, the first thing which he vaguely remembered was the metallic sound that had caught his ear at the moment of his fall, and from that trifling particular the logic due to his studies enabled him to draw several conclusions, even before he had fully realized his own condition, or had discovered on what spot his fortunes and the ostrich had dropped him.

“Where there are no men,” said he to himself, “there will be no saucepans. Ergo, I am not in a desert place. Again, saucepans imply civilization ; savages do not travel with any such incumbrances. I am, therefore, in the midst of hospitable beings who will not seek to harm me. Who are these beings ? The Sahara is justly reputed to be little frequented. All the indications point to my having returned to the place I started from. My ostrich, no doubt, ran head-foremost into the midst of the hunters. La Carriole will soon make his appearance—my dear La Carriole, and Henri, my pupil, and M. de Malleville—all the others too. Ah, how they will laugh at my absurd adventure !”

Quite, satisfied by his own train of reasoning, the good doctor opened his eyes. He was under a comfortable tent, stretched on a clean mat of plaited straw, so exactly like that in the camp at Awhata, that he rose, went out, and cried aloud,—

“I am not dead, Commandant, I am not—”

He left his sentence unfinished, and stood there, with eyes staring wildly and mouth half open.

Right in front of him, in the midst of a circle formed by the tents of the camp into which he had been carried, sixty camels were taking their rest, with half-closed eye and hanging lip. Negroes, whose entire costume consisted of white cotton drawers, were running hither and thither ; at a little distance a group of impassive Arabs



“ Where can I be ? and who are these people ? ”

were smoking tranquilly. All around, so far he could see, was sand, nothing but sand !

His knees knocked together, his legs bent under him, and he promptly retreated within the shelter of his tent, in order to collect the ideas that were whirling through his head.

“ Where can I be ? ” he asked himself, “ and who are these people ? ”

As it was impossible for him to answer his own question, he very wisely reflected that it was not to himself he ought to address it, but to the people before his eyes. He accordingly put on an immense straw hat with a pointed crown which he had found in the tent, sallied forth, and, accosting an Arab, said with a very low bow,—

“Will you tell me, my friend, where I am, and who you are?”

The Arab looked at him, sent a puff of smoke in his



The Arab sent a puff of smoke in his direction.

direction, then cast down his eyes and gravely shook his head.

“He knows no French,” thought Quiès, “and, unfortunately, I do not know one word of Arabic. It is clear that we shall never understand each other.”

In hopes of better fortune, he questioned successively all the people belonging to the caravan, but obtained only unintelligible replies. He was, therefore, obliged to fall back upon probabilities. The one indisputable fact upon which he might base his suppositions was that he was in

the actual desert. He had, then, been carried to the south, and a very long distance, since the desert, properly so called, began only below Whargla. That word was a ray of light to him. Whargla is the starting-point of the caravans which travel to the Soudan and bring back the products of Central Africa to Algiers.

He was on the road to the Soudan! He! Quiès! On the road? Why so? How did he know but that the caravan was returning from the Soudan instead of going thither? He so ardently desired to find the realization of this conjecture that he immediately took it for granted. Once restored to the inhabited country, it would be quite easy for him to find his friends, to regain Algiers, and to establish himself in that town for the rest of his life.

It would, however, be a great mistake to suppose that Dr. J. B. Quiès accepted the probable consequences of this adventure with resignation. As he lay in the tent, deeply despondent, he debated with himself whether it would not be better to have done with life altogether. Two things, however, deterred him from committing a rash and irreparable act; he had no means of effecting self-destruction, and he felt certain that he should not survive the sufferings of this last journey. Therefore was he resigned.

“A day sooner or a day later,” said he, with a deep sigh; “what does it matter?”

Nevertheless, he was quite willing to put off the fatal hour by devouring a ration of rice and drinking a bowlful of acidulated water; refreshments which were respectfully offered to him by a negro, and which afforded him a welcome proof that those into whose hands he had fallen did not cherish any design against his life.

A ration of rice is not indeed so restorative to an exhausted man as a good cutlet with its appropriate accompaniments; but for all that Dr. Quiès was so much revived by his frugal meal that he immediately became more anxious than before to know where he was, and

especially when he might come to a stop. He had just put his nose outside the canvas, and was about to resume his investigations, when his ear was caught by a sentence uttered in English. He darted out of his provisional domicile, and instantly beheld the person who had uttered that thrice-blessed sentence standing amid a crowd of attendants.

The individual in question was a tall man, over six feet high, and of Herculean frame. His complexion was of almost womanish fairness, and his hair, eye-lashes, and long whiskers, were all, and equally, light. The expression of his grey eyes was extremely sweet and gentle, his hands were slender and elegant, his feet small. He was a true gentleman. He spoke in a firm decided tone, like one accustomed to command, but neither rudely nor harshly.

His eyes had already lighted twice upon Quiès; but he turned his head away as though he had not perceived him.

"He is probably short-sighted," thought the doctor, drawing near to this imposing personage, hat in hand, and with his spine at an angle of forty-five.

"Sir, I have the honour to salute you."

The gentleman turned his back without making him either an answer or a bow.



Sir Thomas Nicholl.

Quiès rapped his forehead with his knuckles, and said to himself,—

“What an ass I am! Of course he does not speak French.”

Unfortunately for himself the poor doctor knew no English, or, at least, he could only put three or four words together. He called up all his school memories, and quite proud of his success, he ejaculated,—

“Sir, I am French.”

The “Sir” whom he addressed did not even turn his head in the direction of the speaker, so fully was he occupied with setting up hydrometers, sextants, graphometers, and other instruments, all, as may be supposed, well known to the doctor, who could not refrain from muttering :—

“What the devil is this strange person about? Is it the survey of the Sahara? But why does he not speak to me? Why does he not look at me? I have perhaps offended him unintentionally.”

Then he lessened the angle of his vertebral column by a dozen degrees, and approached this singular individual bare-headed. He even went so far as gently to touch his arm with the finger-tips of his right hand. His second attempt to attract attention proving as ineffectual as the first, Quiès boldly seized the Englishman by the end of his round jacket, and pulled it as one pulls a bell when the door does not open readily.

The Englishman did not turn his head, but he uttered a few words in a language entirely unknown to Quiès, and had hardly spoken ere two negroes laid hands on the doctor and carried him to his tent. There they set him down and left him, closing the canvas flaps over the aperture. Quiès was inclined to resist, but he had two stout fellows to deal with, and he thought better of it.

“Well,” said he, as he sank down heavily upon his mat, “here is another trick of his Majesty, Chance! This man must have a bee in his bonnet. Here I am in company

with a madman and half a hundred ruffians, at I don't know how many leagues from a civilized country. I, Quiès! No! No! It is impossible! I am dreaming! I have a nightmare! I am at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes in my own bed! Gertrude! Gertrude!"

As he uttered that dear name which evoked the recollection of so many toothsome repasts and friendly chats, Dr.



Two negroes laid hands on the doctor.

J. B. Quiès felt a tingling sensation in his right arm. A large corking pin, the last remnant of his zoologist's outfit, which had been dispersed in the desert, had stuck itself into him, and wrung from him a cry of pain, which afforded a more conclusive proof of his identity than a sheaf of sworn affidavits. To sleep is to forget. He stretched himself out, shut his eyes, put

his fingers in his ears, and—got up. They were taking down the canvas of his tent! Everything was in confusion; the camp was up! The camels were awaiting the signal for the departure, which the Arabs and the negroes were hastening on with strange cries and barbaric talk. In ten minutes all was ready; the caravan was about to resume its march.

“And I!” exclaimed Quiès; “what are they going to do with me? Will they leave me here?”

The English gentleman called out “Forward!” The camels began to move slowly in single file, escorted on either side by a long line of human beings. When the last of the men had passed before him, the Englishman took his place at the rear of the column, from whence he commanded a view of the whole company.

For the third time Quiès approached him, but with folded hands and an imploring mien. As he was convinced that it was useless for him to speak, since the Englishman did not understand French, he had recourse to an expressive pantomime. Pointing to his legs and comparing them with those of the chief, pointing to his portly person, and exaggerating its dimensions, he staggered and made believe to fall. Was not all this saying, as plainly as it could be expressed in a long speech, “I am too fat for walking; in five minutes I shall be exhausted; I shall fall; to subject me to such an ordeal is to condemn me to death”? The English gentleman made no answer, made no sign that he had even seen Quiès, but called loudly. The column halted. Two men approached the doctor, hoisted him on a camel’s back, tied him securely in his place, and threw a covering over his head and body. The caravan started afresh, and Quiès was once more reduced to the condition of a parcel.

In the evening the caravan stopped, and the tents were struck in the same order as on the previous day. The doctor was set at liberty, and supplied with rice, biscuits, and water, as before. Again, too, his sleeping

place was pointed out, and no one took any farther notice of him.

During this time, the strange traveller, whose prisoner, so to speak, poor Quiès had become, was scanning the horizon as though he expected an arrival. He even allowed himself to be betrayed occasionally into a gesture of disappointment and anger, in spite of the phlegmatic bearing which seemed natural to him. He had been speaking in an animated way to his Arabs, and a party of them was preparing to carry out some order which he had given them, when a group appeared on the horizon, standing out against the sky. The Englishman heaved a sigh of relief, and stretched out his hand to stop the movement.

An hour later the travellers who had been discerned from afar reached the camp. The party consisted of twelve negroes, an Arab in charge of a laden camel, and a European, at first sight of whom Dr. Quiès uttered a cry of surprise.

“ Magloire ! ”

“ Dr. J. B. Quiès ! ”

Magloire, yes ! Magloire, the troublesome domestic whom the doctor had retained in his service for just three-quarters of an hour. Magloire in the midst of the Sahara !

Distress and danger have a marvellous efficacy in diminishing distances, and reducing social inequalities to very trifling proportions : the quondam master stretched out his arms to the quondam valet, who threw himself into them.

This mutual impulse was due in the former to the evident satisfaction which he derived from meeting with a human being who could render him assistance when he needed it so sorely, and in the latter to the pleasure of being publicly welcomed in such friendly fashion by so eminent a savant as Dr. J. B. Quiès.

“ Magloire, you are acquainted with this gentleman ? ” said the Englishman, who had looked on at the scene without the slightest indication of surprise.

“Yes, sir.”

“Introduce him to me, if you please.”

Magloire bowed, took the doctor by the hand, and said,—

“I have the honour of introducing to you Dr. Quiès, member of all the learned societies in France.”

The Englishman bowed.

“Introduce me now,” he said.



“I have the honour of introducing to you Dr. Quiès.”

Magloire wheeled round, and resumed,—

“Doctor, I have the honour of introducing to you Sir Thomas Nicholl, member—”

“That will do,” said the Englishman.

Magloire bowed and stepped back, and Sir Thomas Nicholl, smiling in the most gracious way, held out both his hands to Quiès, saying,—

“I am delighted, sir, to make your acquaintance.”

Then, without giving the doctor time to reply, he said to Magloire,—

“Was I mistaken?”

“No, sir. I have made out a chain of mountains at three days’ journey on our left.”

“That’s right.”

With this, Sir Thomas, delighted with the result of Magloire’s expedition, went away to give orders, leaving Dr. Quiès and his servant of an hour face to face.

“I was quite sure,” said the latter, “that Monsieur had travelled. Ah! Monsieur made a great mistake in not keeping me in his service. He would have been well pleased with me. I should have been proud to follow Monsieur to the end of the world.”

“I thank you, my friend,” replied Dr. Quiès, “for so flattering a preference. But how comes it that I find you here in the—”

“Oh, that is very easily explained, sir. On leaving your house I went direct to Paris, to the Geographical Society; for I was born to travel. I begged that I might be taken into the employment of the first explorer who would accept my services. A week afterwards I was directed to apply to Sir Thomas Nicholl.”

“An extraordinary oddity!”

“Thanks, doctor,” exclaimed Sir Thomas, who had given his orders and retraced his steps.

“Upon my word, sir,” said Quiès, “I cannot withdraw the expression. And you will be the first to acknowledge that I am right.”

“Indeed?”

“Remember the very strange manner in which you received me! I must ask you to do that! Here was I, for three whole days, and you never spoke to me; you seemed as if you never even saw that I was present! You speak French, and you made no answer either to my advances or my questions.”

“You had not been introduced to me, doctor?”

“Ah, ah, ah,” said Quiès, with the modulations of an ascending gamut, “I am thankful to Magloire for having arrived just in time to introduce me, for, if I had not been introduced to you—”

“Then, my dear doctor, I should always have had to regret that I had been obliged to terminate my journey without availing myself of the knowledge of one of the most distinguished savants in Europe.”

Quiès rolled his eyes like two solitaire balls, and stood on his toes. This point-blank compliment was pleasantly flattering, and it healed some of the still bleeding wounds which had been inflicted upon him by his extraordinary peregrinations.

It must indeed be admitted that, although he had been dragged against his will into a distant country, and committed to a journey whose end was hidden in the mists of uncertainty, the joy of having found, under such circumstances, beings to whom he could speak, Europeans, almost friends, reduced the gravity of his situation very considerably.

He shrank with great repugnance from admitting to his new companions, who were so fully persuaded of his scientific eminence, by what a succession of chances—the ostrich only excepted—he had been driven to the spot where they found him. He replied to their questions by hums and haws and other monosyllables, which were interpreted by Sir Thomas Nicholl and Magloire in the sense most favourable to his prowess and his devotion to science.

“We know,” said Sir Thomas, “that all savants are modest.”

“I hope, at least,” said Quiès, whose chief desire was to turn the conversation, “that you will not be so modest as to keep from me the great and useful purposes which have brought you here, and that you will let me know—”

“Anything and everything you like, my dear sir. In the first place I am at present engaged in the delimitation of the northern extremity of the former great inland sea,

which has become, in consequence of the invasion and accumulation of sand, the existing desert. On the east it is naturally bounded by a chain of mountains. I do not care about the western side just at present ; as for the south we shall see. The most important is the northern side."

"From what point of view ?"

"From the point of view of the formation of my first port."

"Your first port ?"

"Certainly. I purpose to connect that portion of the desert with the Mediterranean by a great canal. Owing to the difference of level between these lands and the sea, the waters will pour into them precipitately. All Africa will be fertilized. Centres of commerce will be established on this new seaboard of which I have taken possession in the name of England."

"This is wonderful !" exclaimed Quiès.

"The project, then, does not annoy you ?"

"Not in the least."

"And you consent to second me ?"

"Most readily."

"After all," said Quiès to himself, "the journey will not seem so long to me ; I shall end by forgetting that I have several hundred leagues to travel before I can hope to see Algiers again."

"It is a settled thing, then ? You belong to our party ?"

"I can't do otherwise," muttered Quiès.

"That is good news," said Sir Thomas, "and I shall send it off at once to my correspondent in Europe."

"Then you have a post-office here ?" said the doctor, slyly.

"Yes, certainly."

"That being so, will you be good enough to transmit my kindest regards to the relations and friends whom I have left at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes."

“What you wish shall be done.”

Sir Thomas Nicholl selected a sheet of extremely thin paper, wrote a few lines upon it, rolled it up, and placed it in a little tin tube, which he closed and sealed with the utmost care. During this time, a negro had approached, at an order from him, carrying a large wicker cage, in



Quiès stood with uplifted eyes and open mouth.

which about a dozen pigeons were fluttering. Sir Thomas selected one of them, tied the little tin tube to its claw, and let it loose. The bird flew straight upwards into the air to a great height, hesitated for a moment, and then, darting off, was lost to sight in the far distance.

Quiès, although he was not ignorant of this mode of

correspondence, stood with uplifted eyes and open mouth, amazed, not at the departure of the pigeon, but at the perfection of the arrangements of the caravan. Nothing, indeed, was wanting ; everything was so carefully provided for, that Sir Thomas travelled in the Sahara as he, Quiès, might have travelled in his modest domain at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

“ Doctor,” said Magloire, “ don’t hold your face up like that ; you will have a sunstroke.”

Indeed the poor doctor’s face already glowed like a furnace.

“ And you are getting on ? ” he asked Sir Thomas.

“ Hum ! I don’t expect to have finished my exploration for these five months.”

“ How long did you say ? ”

“ Five months.”

These words produced the effect of a thunderbolt upon Quiès.

“ Just consider,” continued Sir Thomas, “ that we still have to explore the whole of the southern portion of this immense lake.”

“ Have you not just said,” Quiès ventured to ask, “ that this seaboard is of secondary importance to you ? ”

“ Yes, but I must hoist the flag of Great Britain upon it as soon as possible.”

“ Allow me. When a Congress—”

“ There is no Congress,” exclaimed Sir Thomas, “ I take possession of it ! From thence I pass on into the Soudan, I make a halt at Khartoum, I come down the Nile—”

“ And do you imagine,” said the unhappy Quiès, with feverish excitement, “ that I am going to follow you to the Soudan, across Nigritia, I know not whither ? I, Quiès ! Ah, that is quite too much ! ”

“ You must do as you think proper, my dear doctor ? ”

Sir Thomas shook his guest’s hands heartily, and walked away rolling a cigarette.

Quiès remained where he was standing, as if a fairy's wand had stricken him into immobility. He repeated his invariable "Ah," and when he had recovered himself a little, he said,—

"As I think proper! As I think proper! Truly this Englishman is prodigious!"

"Ah," said Magloire, "What a grand book Monsieur will write, while we shall be busy with levelling and such like."

"Do you think, Magloire, that I shall write a good book?"

"I am sure of it, sir."

"Well—if you feel sure—"

"Oh, I will go bail for Monsieur for that. Why, are you not one of the glories of France?"

Quiès actually chucked himself under the chin, in his self-congratulation on this flattering estimate of the result of his lifelong labours. But pride held only the second rank among the doctor's feelings. This little gust of it soon passed away, and he relapsed into the poignant sense of reality. Wild with anger and despair, he sought the shelter of his tent, with the muttered words,—

"What does he mean to do with me?"

Under the influence of this terrible anxiety the wretched doctor decreased his head of hair by another good handful. If this were to go on much longer he would be completely bald, even before he should have reached the southern boundary of the great inland sea of Africa. When the time for raising the camp came, Sir Thomas, still smiling, approached him with outstretched hands.

"You come with us, doctor?" said he.

"Never!"

"Why? It is a charming journey."

"Never!"

"You will have some trouble in getting back alone to Whargla."

"Alone?"

"Certainly. I cannot give you anybody. I require all my people, and have only the indispensable supplies with me."

"Well, sir," said Quiès, standing up on his toes, and swelling with indignation, "since you carry selfishness to the point of cruelty, I shall await the death to which you condemn me in this place! Perhaps France may call you to account for the loss of one of her renowned sons?"

"You are very wrong to want to die, doctor."

"But I don't want to die, sir."

"Then come with me."

"Never."

"It's suicide, remember."

"So be it, sir."

"After all, life is so little worth. Perhaps you are right! Good bye, doctor. Delighted to have made your acquaintance."

Five minutes afterwards the tents were folded, the baggage was in its place, and Sir Thomas Nicholl was giving his orders for the start of the caravan, with no more reference to Dr. J. B. Quiès than if Dr. J. B. Quiès had never existed. He spoke, and the caravan began its march. The last camel, and the last men escorting it, were about to vanish. The doctor uttered a piercing cry, and ran after them with all his might, wiping his forehead, and saying to himself,—

"This madman is a savage! He would leave me to die here!"

The caravan halted at the sound of his voice. Sir Thomas, still smiling, and Magloire, still all graciousness, waited for him at the rear.

"You've changed your mind?" said Sir Thomas.

"Yes," panted Quiès.

"As you please."

"Oh, I was quite sure Monsieur would come," added Magloire, as he helped the doctor to climb up to his seat upon the abhorred camel.

Quiès growled,—

“The devil take you!”

Presently he settled down as best he could on his uneasy seat under his canvas covering, and resigned himself to circumstances, which obliged him to accompany Sir Thomas Nicholl; but at the same time he firmly resolved to quit the caravan on the earliest opportunity, and esta-



The doctor uttered a piercing cry.

blish himself in the first habitable place he should arrive at. According to Sir Thomas's programme of travel, the first town at which he would be able to make arrangements for receiving his indispensable resources was Cairo.

“I shall never live to get there,” said he to himself with a sigh. Good God! What have I done? What crime have I committed to deserve such a punishment?”

## CHAPTER XX.

SHOWING HOW DR. J. B. QUIÈS BEGAN HIS GREAT WORK  
ON THE UNEXPLORED TERRITORIES OF CENTRAL  
AFRICA.

HOW came Dr. Quiès, being in such a state of prostration as he was, to put his private impressions on paper! It would be hard to tell. Perhaps the explanation may be found in that prostration itself, and that the doctor was driven to work by the deadly ennui from which he suffered. Probably, too, Magloire, by constantly talking to him of the results to be expected from his labours, had a good deal to do with his resolution. At any rate, I shall transcribe some of the notes that were to serve as the basis of the important work in contemplation.

*“November.*—I cannot tell the precise date. I don't know how many days we have been journeying through this endless desert. Magloire, whom I have questioned on the subject, answered in the gayest tone, ‘It is not more than three weeks since we had the pleasure of finding Monsieur.’ I could have choked him. It never seems to occur to him that I suffer horribly. My ideas are growing confused. I have a burning sensation all over me, which deprives me of rest. I have a constant ringing in my ears, and I am so dazzled by the sun that I can hardly see.

“I must do Magloire the justice to say that he has constructed out of canvas as perfect a shelter as can be made to cover me on camel-back, but no canvas avails against the desert sun. Everything that I touch burns my fingers.

And I cannot tell when we shall arrive at the end of this fearful journey.

“Why do I say ‘we’? I ought to say ‘when they will arrive,’ for most certainly I am destined to die here. I shall be buried under the sand, and there I shall be dried up like those dead animals that Magloire was telling me of only yesterday; bodies of camels and men whose skin is hardened by the sun, and which are preserved from decomposition by the fervid heat. He told me that he and his companions pelted these bodies with stones, which rattled on them as if they had been drums, without doing them any damage. I should have liked to make sure of this phenomenon by personal observation, and to deduce the possible results from it, regarded zoologically, physically, and physiologically; but the heat prevented me from leaving my tent. Sir Thomas Nicholl, however, would not have asserted the fact if it had not been true. I rely upon his word, therefore, and accept the fact as proved.

. . . . “I could not point out upon a map the exact spot we are in. I have been several times informed upon this point by Sir Thomas Nicholl in the most obliging manner, but I have unfortunately omitted to take a note of it immediately, and I have forgotten it, for indeed my memory also seems to be undergoing a sort of atrophy. At times I can hardly recall my past life; at other times, on the contrary, it recurs to me with singular precision in all its details. . . . It is great pain to me to remember. My present misfortune seems all the more terrible. I cannot bring myself to believe that it is not a dream. In Africa! In the middle of Africa! I!

“One idea that besets me is the uncertainty concerning the primary cause of my misfortune. How did it happen that on leaving Plessis, where I had just stood father to La Carriole’s little son, I got into the express train for Marseilles? Why did not Anthime Bonamy, who was with me, get into it also? Why, if he became aware of our mistake and my disappearance, did he do nothing to

put me right again? Perhaps this point may be cleared up in the future.

“The future! Why does this word come so easily, so often, to my pen? Do I not know that there is no future for me? I shall succumb to this last stroke of fate; the attentions of Sir Thomas Nicholl and Magloire cannot prevent that.

“Nothing can exceed their kindness. The tent reserved for my use, and in which I am hastily scribbling these imperfect notes, is the most commodious and the best fitted



“One idea that besets me.”

belonging to the caravan. I have a table and a camp-bed. I should be almost comfortable in my tent if it were not for the intolerable heat.

“What an oddity this Sir Thomas is! Each morning, when the grunting of the camels wakes me—those animals make a prodigious noise—he comes into my tent, asks me how I am, and never addresses another word to me until evening, when he bids me good night.

“He is entirely engrossed with his investigation of this inland sea. Madness! neither more nor less than

madness! Nevertheless I should have liked to be of some use to him. My extensive knowledge of geography, physics, cosmography, hydrography, and several other sciences, might perhaps have enabled me to elucidate some doubtful points of the question. But the heat forbade. I made the attempt on one occasion. At his request I dismounted to determine the barometric altitude. It seems that I made a mistake of forty millimetres. The fact is, I could not see, and, to make things worse, I had not covered my face, and so I got a partial sunstroke. I suffered severely from this misadventure, and resolved never again to expose myself to a similar accident.

. . . . "Three days more! I am going mad!

"It is impossible for me to pronounce upon the nature of the country through which we pass. I have every reason to believe that we are still in the midst of the sand-ocean. Yesterday, on putting my eye to a chink in my sheltering canvas, I caught sight of the immensity of the desert, and all over it lay a hot mist, which swayed like smoke over a smouldering fire. In regard to our position from the geographical and physical point of view, and to the phenomenon of the mirage (which I should have been much pleased to observe for myself), I shall refer to the statements of Sir Thomas Nicholl and Magloire. I shall also consult upon these matters a number of excellent works which I hope to find in the library at Cairo.

. . . . "A terrible day! This morning—we had just quitted the place where we had halted for the night, and which it is impossible for me to indicate with precision—I was huddled up on my camel (at first the animal's gait was very painful to me, but now it rocks me to sleep) and I slept. Sleep is the greatest solace to my misery that I have yet found. I was awakened by a frightful hubbub of acclamations and cries. My camel had gone down on his knees. I was about to peep out of my shelter to ascertain what had happened, when I was prevented by a whirlwind, which scorched my hands and face through the canvas.

Night had fallen suddenly ; the darkness was profound. I closed my eyes, and almost lost consciousness. I was suffocated ; the air no longer reached my lungs. I cannot tell how long this kind of swoon lasted. When it passed off my camel was again marching on, the sun was again darting its rays through my miserable canvas screen ; in short, nothing was changed around me.

“ In the evening, when we halted, Sir Thomas came as usual to shake hands with me.

“ ‘ We’ve come off very well,’ said he ; ‘ I have never seen the simoom worse than it was to-day.’

“ Sir Thomas seems to take this kind of thing as a matter of course. I don’t think Magloire minds it either. As for me, I am completely done for. My poor head is in a deplorable state of weakness. Nevertheless, I should have liked to study this fresh phenomenon—one of the most interesting the desert has to show. I should have been able, had the state of my health permitted, to record a series of meteorological and barometrical observations, to co-ordinate them, and to draw very useful conclusions from them. Unfortunately, as I failed to secure a basis, I shall be obliged to refer to what has previously been said and written on this point. I reserve to myself the giving of a character of originality and individuality to the work which I propose to publish, in quite another way.

. . . . “ Eight days since I have been able to write. I do not know how far we have advanced into the south. Every morning Magloire and Sir Thomas Nicholl say to me, ‘ We are near the goal.’ What goal ? Neither one nor the other explains that point. I presume they mean the extreme limit of the desert. It would be a great relief to me to see some verdure once more, and to drink some fresh water. My health is giving way more and more. There is a strange smarting in my eyes, and the singing in my ears grows worse. I can hardly hear what is said to me, and I no longer see anything around me, although Sir Thomas Nicholl has presented me with

a pair of smoked spectacles. He is a perfect gentleman. He has placed his purse at my disposal for the future.

"The future! Again I have used that word!

"Ah! if I do but escape this time; if I cross these endless steppes without dying on the road; if I reach Cairo, no power on earth, I swear, shall ever tear me away.

"A town! Cairo is now a European town. I will settle down there. I will resume the thread of my old habits and studies, and I will have my books sent to me from Saint-Pignon— Saint-Pignon! Never again shall I behold that little corner of the earth in which I was so happy. What has become of them all? My poor Gertrude wanders about the house disconsolately, and dusts my books and collections in preparation for my return, for no doubt the news sent by Sir Thomas has safely reached its destination. What a commotion it must have made. Quiès in Africa! Worthy M. de Préchafoin is counting the days, I am sure. Anthime comes down the hill many a time to see whether there is not a carriage at the turn of the road. My cousin Ragot has masses said for me. Good hearts! Kind friends all! We shall never see each other more. We will write; the post was invented for that. Henri and the Commandant delight in traveling; they will come and breakfast with me in the little house that I shall have built for me at Cairo. That is a settled thing, for I shall most certainly never cross the sea which separates me from them a second time. No, never! The recollection of my first voyage is still—

. . . . "Magloire has just come to tell me that we are close upon the edge of the desert, and in twenty-four hours we shall see vegetation again, and find fresh water. This good news has restored my strength somewhat. I will go and look about me.

. . . . "I was very foolish to disturb myself. Still the same red-hot sky, the same boundless horizon, except that in front of us the ground is split into ruts, and heaped into

hillocks, as if the sand had been hollowed out to imitate mountains and ravines. We are about to enter this labyrinth, Magloire tells me, and at the end of it we shall find coolness, trees, life!

“God be praised, if indeed this be true! I am still trembling! And yet I cannot pass over in silence the events of the terrible day of the—I don’t know. It ought to be the end of November, if I have calculated rightly. But I no longer answer for anything.

“We started, according to custom, a little before sunrise, in the same order as on the preceding days, that is to say, I formed, or rather my camel formed the rear-guard. It was an excellent animal: I had no fault to find with it, but every reason to place the utmost confidence in it. Accordingly, after I had shaken hands with Sir Thomas, and said ‘good morning’ to Magloire, I went quietly asleep. I don’t know what hour it was when I awoke. The sun was still very high above the horizon, at least so far as I could judge from the heat of the rays that came through the canvas, for, most unfortunately, I did not look out, being afraid of sunstroke. One thing, however, surprised me; my camel remained motionless.

“The caravan had halted then.

“I heard nothing. But I had long been accustomed to the silence of the desert. During the hours of fearful and overpowering heat, men and beasts have hardly strength to breathe, and utter neither word nor cry. I merely presumed that Sir Thomas had called a halt in order to give a little respite to his camels and his negroes, and that everybody was asleep in the tents. I had, besides, perfect confidence in him, and I did not trouble myself about this delay. I no longer counted the hours that divided me from the goal. It was so far off.

“Doubled up on my saddle, and with my eyes half shut, I indulged in a vague reverie, like that which precedes the awakening from sleep. No doubt I remained a long time in this state of prostration, for it was dark when, asto-

nished at the prolonged silence, I determined to look out of the aperture in my canvas. I perceived that my camel was kneeling, and took advantage of that convenient attitude to slip down to the ground. A cry of despair was forced from me. My camel was dying!

“I was alone, in one of the sandy ravines which make that part of the desert a tortuous labyrinth. Strangely enough, I did not at first realize the gravity of my situation. I only endeavoured to ascertain what had happened to me. It was but too clear.



“A cry of despair was forced from me.”

“My camel, being the last on the march, had availed itself of a bend in the road to kneel down and wait for death. The negroes, no doubt, had not missed it until too late. Sir Thomas and Magloire, being occupied in the front of the long caravan, had not been informed, and—then I understood it all! Would they retrace their steps? If they came back, were they sure to follow the same route in this inextricable maze? Would they find me?

“My first idea was to force my camel to rise, and to get him into the track, along which I could still trace here and

there the passage of the caravan. I took one of the sticks which supported my canvas cover, and rained blows on the wretched animal ; but it responded only by shrieks of pain. I had no time for pity ; my own fate seemed hardly better than the camel's, and in despair of reviving it by a mere stick, I drew my knife and ran the blade into the poor brute's shoulder. It made a last effort, rose half-way to its feet, then fell prone with a dismal groan, and moved no more.

“I had only myself to rely upon for my escape, if indeed there were yet time, from the terrible danger with which I was threatened ! Inevitable death in the midst of this dreadful desert ! Death by hunger and thirst, for I had only a very small quantity of provisions, some biscuits, a little rice, and half a gourd full of water, so hot that it was almost undrinkable.

“Something must be done.

“The caravan was a day's journey in advance of me, but by walking all night I might yet rejoin it. The prospect of this forced march terrified me almost as much as the death with which I was threatened. And then, where was I to find the caravan ?

“The traces which I had made out were already effaced by the slow continuous movement of the sand, which resembles that of the sea. I must make for the south. Yes, but amid these narrow crevasses the direction of the road changes perpetually. I should run the risk of losing myself by leaving the spot at which my camel had fallen, and whither my friends might, perhaps, come to look for me.

“I made up my mind, then, to remain where I was, even if death should overtake me there. But I thought it well to make a last effort to ascertain the nature of the surrounding ground, and to examine the horizon. Perhaps I might perceive a drift of smoke, or a glimmer of light ; perhaps I might hear a sound ; it might be that I was still within hearing of the caravan. I climbed with some diffi-

culty one of the sand-hills by which I was surrounded ; but so far as the eye could reach there was nothing to be seen but sand-hills like the one I stood on. It seemed to me that I was gazing upon a vast expanse of yellowish sea, suddenly solidified, while the waves retained their size and form.

“ I shouted with all the strength of my lungs ; but my



“ It seemed to me that I was gazing upon a vast expanse of yellowish sea.”

voice was lost in the mysterious depths of the desert. I listened, but nothing was to be heard ; not a sound, not a breath ! And the night was coming !—the night had come !

“ In despair I came down from the sand-hill. Had nobody perceived my absence ? or, terrible to think of, had Sir Thomas, being short of provisions and water, been obliged in consideration of the general interest, to abstain

from lengthening that perilous journey by one day? He had abandoned me! The great anguish which the conviction carried with it, made me aware that I valued life more highly than I believed myself to value it. I made a last attempt to rouse my poor camel from its immobility: a vain effort, indeed, for the creature was dead.

“I was seized with a convulsive trembling. I was afraid. Tears came to my eyes—I don’t think there is any shame in confessing this—and then I fell into a lethargic slumber. From time to time hallucinations came to me; strange forms arose and danced about me. My pulses beat madly; I heard the sound of my blood in my temples, my heart, all over my body! It was like the blows of a hammer, and became more and more painful every moment. Death was coming very near!

“With my last ray of reason I had commended my soul to God, and made confession to Him of my sins, when it seemed to me that I heard a voice in the distance cry,—

“‘ Doctor!’

“Was I dreaming?

“I tried to answer. Impossible!

“‘If I am not dreaming,’ I thought, ‘I am saved! They are looking for me! They are near! But I cannot raise my voice, they will pass by without seeing me!’”

“While this dreadful apprehension was in my mind, I heard a shot. Impossible to reply to it! I had not a gun. And if I had had—

“Of all the tortures I have suffered since I entered upon this series of incredible adventures, this was the most agonizing. To have only to utter a cry in order to save my life, and to be unable to get out a sound!

“I made a last, a supreme effort, and instead of the cry which I strove to utter, I heard two! One proceeded from Magloire, the other from Sir Thomas Nicholl.

“‘ He!’

“‘ It is he!’

“I could not have believed that in so few days friend-

ship could have struck such deep roots in men's hearts. They rejoiced over me as though we had lived side by side for twenty years. Ah! in those vast solitudes men realize the value of a word exchanged, of a hand-grip, or a smile, as they never can realize it in towns. They hoisted me up on a camel, and settled me comfortably. By the evening we had rejoined the caravan.

. . . . "I feel better ; my head is less confused. Ma-



" I made a last, a supreme effort, and instead of the cry which I strove to utter, I heard two ! "

gloire's care has been rewarded with success. I don't know what he made me take. He is an invaluable fellow, and it is a great pity that his head is a little— The first words of his that I heard distinctly were: 'It is not at Saint-Pignon that Monsieur would have experienced such emotions! Ah, travel is a fine thing!' Such a sentiment could not emanate from a sane mind.

" Travel! Oh, the horrors of travel!

" I greatly regret, however, that my disastrous fortune

should have prevented me from taking some notes upon the configuration of the ground and the atmospheric phenomena while crossing the desert. I shall be obliged to rely upon the numerous documents dealing with these matters which are no doubt in existence. Besides, I have the consolation of knowing that to-morrow we enter upon an explored region. Sir Thomas, who continues to be all that is kind and good, and whom I regard as an old friend, tells me that we are to cross the Soudan from the north-west to the south-east.

“It is my intention to take copious and exact notes from every point of view, in order to associate my name with the history of the African continent.”

We are reluctantly obliged to relate that the doctor was unable to carry out this intention. On the day after his deplorable adventure he was taken so seriously ill that for a while Sir Thomas and Magloire despaired of his recovery. For six weeks poor Quiès lay in his bed, delirious; but he was fortunately one of those persons who live to be a hundred, and he did not die.

He was, indeed, destined to further trials, which will form the subject of the next chapter and several of its successors.



## CHAPTER XXI.

SHOWS THAT IF CRIME IS SOMETIMES PUNISHED, VIRTUE  
IS NOT INVARIABLY REWARDED.

ALTHOUGH Sir Thomas Nicholl had discharged some of his camel-drivers on emerging from the desert, properly so called, and retained only the actually necessary attendants, there were still four strong negroes at the service of Quiès. They carried him on a litter, and thus the second portion of his involuntary pilgrimage was, notwithstanding his illness, much less fatiguing than the first.

From the beginning of December his condition improved, but it was not until the end of the month that he recovered the full possession of his senses.

One morning he opened his eyes, looked at Sir Thomas Nicholl and Magloire, who were sitting by his bed, and said in a faint voice,—

“We have arrived?”

“Not quite yet, doctor,” answered Magloire.

No doubt this reply made itself very plain and clear to his intelligence, and revived all the recollections of his past misfortunes, for he closed his eyes once more, lay down again, and never stirred for forty-eight hours. Health was, however, coming back to him, and with health a more reasonable perception of things. He reflected that science had a claim upon him, and he regarded it as a duty to get up. He had passed the greater part of his convalescence in his bed, and on the first day was able to remain up for some hours. The following day his smiling face had recovered the florid

tints of former times, and his intellect all its lucidity. He might now resume the course of his studies without any danger to his health, and go on with those interesting notes of which we have given a sample.

The little troop had reached the White Nile, a few leagues above Khartoum, and were travelling along the left bank of the river through a forest of reeds of extraordinary height, in which both men and animals were completely hidden.

Quiès decided that the moment was not favourable to a personal exploration. He would evidently be in danger of losing his way. Perhaps, owing to his habitual laziness, he was not ill-pleased ; all the more that by standing on tiptoe he could see, beyond the dense forest they were in, a second forest equally dense, from whence the roar of wild beasts in general, and of lions in particular, proceeded.

Owing to the vicinity of these forests, and especially to the proximity of the river, he suffered much less from the heat, and began to put sundry questions to Sir Thomas, who, having attained his object and laid out his plans, was willing to listen to him.

Hence, greater precision and more detail in the doctor's notes, as any one who reads his great book on Central Africa may observe—that is to say, if he has published it.

After a long day's march among the reeds, the aspect of the country changed. The little caravan moved under a verdant canopy, in the midst of profuse vegetation untouched by the axe. All the wonders of the botanical world seemed to be represented there ; lianas of every kind were twined, like huge serpents, around prodigious trees, whose interlaced branches were mingled in a lavish profusion so far as the eye could see. The sun, stealing into these perfumed depths, amid which strange bright birds called to each other, cast almost fantastic gleams upon them.

This time the lazy doctor almost failed to resist the

temptation, when Sir Thomas and Magloire proposed to him to make an expedition into those vast solitudes. It was, as a matter of fact, only a question of an excursion of a few hours' duration, and that was, to say the least of it, a very slight sacrifice to make to the demands of his future fame. He equipped himself with a gun, a revolver, and a hatchet, weapons with which he was not familiar, but which he might find himself obliged to use. He also took a geologist's hammer, a botanical case—or rather *the* botanical case—and a travelling-bag, which he owed to the generosity of Sir Thomas. It was with a deep sigh that he said,—

“I am ready.”

“Let us start, then,” replied Magloire and Sir Thomas simultaneously.

But he had not gone twenty steps from the camp before he was seized with cramps of unheard-of severity in his legs, and strange stings in the soles of his feet. He declared that these were the results of his illness, and declined to proceed. Magloire shrugged his shoulders disdainfully, muttering,—

“The doctor is jesting. It is impossible that a traveller of the doctor's stamp should stop short for so little.”

Sir Thomas merely held out his hand to Quiès.

“As you please, my dear doctor. Take care of the baggage, and keep your eye on the niggers. They are a thieving crew, and it is well to mistrust them?”

This speech, had he been capable of hesitation, would have made Quiès resolve to stay behind. His presence at the camp seemed to him to be absolutely indispensable to the general safety. He turned to the right, and regained the thicket in which the camels and their drivers were sleeping, while Sir Thomas Nicholl and Magloire disappeared in the depths of the forest.

The spot was a propitious one for repose and quiet meditation. Situated on the edge of the forest, close to the river, from which it was separated only by a wide strip

of sand, it afforded a secure shelter from the rays of the sun, without concealing the vast expanse of wooded country on the other side of the Nile.

Quiès, who was delighted to have capitulated with his conscience in a way for which nobody could blame him, lay down in the delicious shade, with his head on a package, and his hands folded placidly upon his stomach, fell asleep and dreamed that he was a pasha, lord and master of a splendid palace. He was dressed in a rich oriental costume, wore a turban, and lay upon soft cushions ; on his right was Anthime Bonamy, who filled the onerous office of Prime Minister to his Highness ; on his left was Gertrude, on whom the administration of the household devolved ; and behind him, his cousin Ragot and her six daughters, who were dressed as odalisques, and formed the *corps de ballet*.

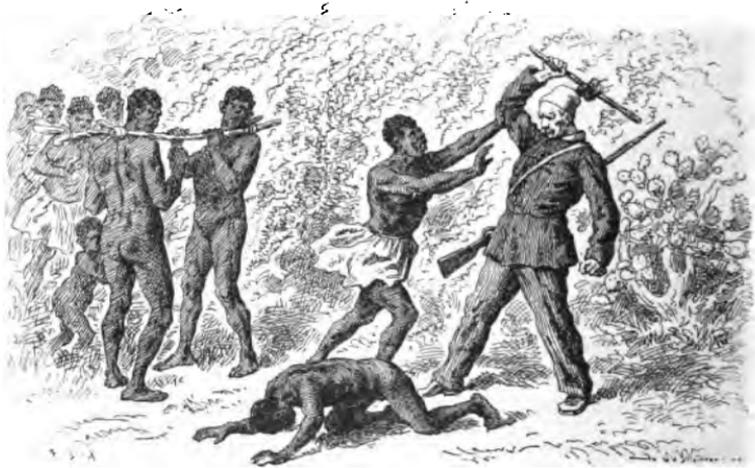
Loud cries awoke him from this vision of bliss. He arose in all haste, and mechanically laid hold of his gun, ready to face the impending danger as well as he could. To his great surprise, he found himself surrounded by Sir Thomas's negroes, who were kneeling on the ground, beating their breasts, kissing the ground, and uttering heart-rending cries.

J. B. Quiès, albeit a member of several learned societies, was not acquainted with a single one of the fourteen thousand seven hundred and eighty-five languages that are spoken from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope, and consequently was totally unable to question these poor fellows ; he could only follow the gaze of their wild, despairing eyes. That, however, was enough to make him understand to some extent the cause of their cries and gestures.

Hardly fifty paces away, on the strip of sand that bordered the Nile, he beheld a man in the uniform of the regular troops of the Viceroy of Egypt. This individual was escorting a convoy, consisting of a dozen negroes and negresses, manacled one to the other, and kept one behind

the other by means of long sticks in the shape of pronged forks which held them by the neck.

These unfortunate creatures were evidently exhausted with fatigue, and their bodies, wasted by privation and ill-treatment, were streaked with blood. Behind them walked four youths who had not been tied together, and at the moment when Quiès turned his eyes in its direction the convoy halted. The youths refused to go on, in spite of the blows of the kurbash which their driver showered upon them. A woman, who was fastened into the yoke



And flung herself upon the brutal soldier.

just before them, their mother, no doubt, uttered a howl of rage and grief at each blow that fell upon their shrinking flesh, and her cries were echoed by Sir Thomas Nicholl's negroes.

Who were these wretched creatures? By what right did that man drag them along in this horrible manner? Were they malefactors? What had they done to justify such vile treatment? While putting these questions to himself, Quiès had come out of his verdant shelter, gun in hand, and he walked up to the soldier and addressed him.

“ Sir,” said he, “ whoever may have placed you in charge of these poor negroes, he cannot have authorized you to treat them thus cruelly. The eternal laws of humanity forbid you to do so. You are behaving like a—”

He could not find the right word ; disgust and indignation almost choked him. It would be a great mistake for any one to imagine that Dr. J. B. Quiès, with all his apparent egoism, was impervious to humane and generous sentiments.



Dr. Quiès, in a transport of rage, put his rifle to his shoulder and fired.

We cannot say so much for the soldier in charge of the convoy of black prisoners. He flung a half-scornful, half-indifferent glance at the doctor, and raising the stock of his gun, he brought it down with such violence upon one of the boys that it split his skull. This time the mother uttered no cry ; with a desperate effort she burst the withes which bound her to the forked yoke, and flung herself upon the brutal soldier, who threw her off in a moment with a blow in the chest. He raised his weapon ; he was about to strike ; the fate of the mother would have been

the same as that of the child, when Dr. Quiès, in a transport of rage, put his rifle to his shoulder and fired. The soldier dropped upon the sand, struggled for a moment, and then moved no more.

On the instant Sir Thomas's negroes dashed out of the forest, and having loosened the bonds of their captive brethren with incredible rapidity, began to dance wildly with them, uttering loud cries of joy. Quiès was in their eyes a god. The prisoners, notwithstanding their fatigue, were about to plunge into the trackless forest, where death in its most terrible shape would probably await them, when a white man suddenly appeared on the scene, and with a flourish of the whip which he carried made them lie down. He then tranquilly tied them all up again, and administered to each a terrific flogging with his kurbash.

This done, he turned his attention to the soldier, lifted up his head, and, seeing that he was dead, took a revolver out of his belt, and would no doubt have used it to the great detriment of our friend Quiès, if Magloire, arriving in the nick of time, had not struck up the weapon.

"Bei Gott!" exclaimed the unknown, and coolly extended his arm with intent to fire again. But Magloire did not give him time; he seized him, and wrenched the revolver from his grasp. The white man, enraged at having found his master, made his formidable whip resound upon the ribs of the unhappy negroes, and drove them on before him.

The convoy had just disappeared when Sir Thomas rejoined Magloire and the doctor.

"What has happened?" he asked.

In a few words the situation was explained to him.

"It is very fortunate," said he, "that these impassable woods refused us passage through them, and that we were obliged to give up our excursion. You ran the risk, my dear sir, of passing an extremely unpleasant quarter of an hour with that worthy trader of the White Nile!"

"Trader?"

“Yes, indeed; and I do not conceal from you that it may prove unfortunate that you yielded to your legitimate impulse of anger and pity.”

“What! You regret that—”

“Yes, I do; and you will understand why. The largest



Magloire, arriving in the nick of time, struck up the weapon.

gains of the Nile traders proceed from the sale of negroes whom they send into the Mohammedan countries. Their ostensible trade is in ivory only, and they keep their abominable traffic secret. The functionaries at Khartoum know all about it. Their duty would be to put an end to it, if the Khedive's Government gave them orders to do so ;

but they make a much better thing of pocketing the money which they receive from the dealers on each sale than of reckoning on salaries paid with the utmost irregularity. Therefore they secretly protect the persons whom they ought to hunt out and prosecute. Don't you now see that it would have been better if you had let this batch of negroes pass without meddling with it; more especially as you have killed a soldier of the regular army."

"But you acknowledge yourself that he—"

"Ought to have fought for and not against you. Quite true; but you will not find in all Khartoum an official who will blame, or who would have punished him."

"That is abominable."

"I entirely agree with you. But so it is, and I only hope that we shall not get into trouble about the matter. Fortunately, I am an English subject, and my Consul—"

"I am a Frenchman, Sir Thomas, and mine—"

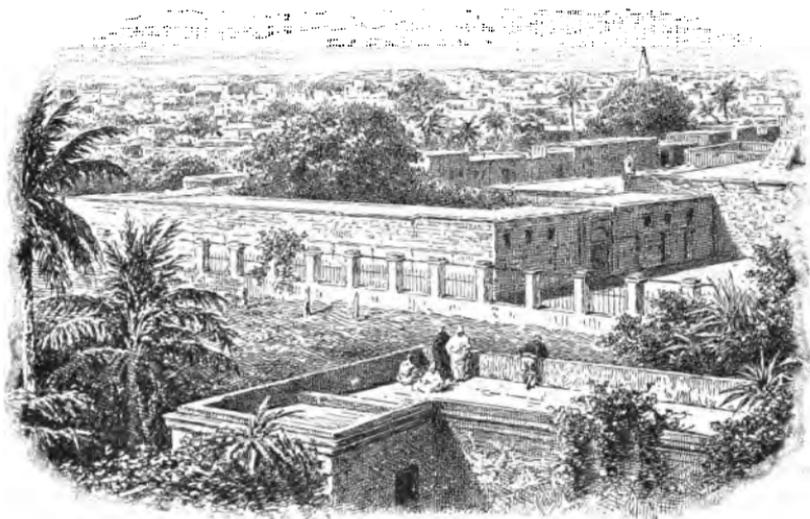
"I advise you to inform him of the facts immediately on our arrival."

Let us record, to the doctor's credit, that apprehension of the possible consequences of his act did not inspire him with the slightest remorse. His only regret was that he had not been able to rescue the unhappy slaves whom an adventurer was about to sell like beasts of burden, in defiance of laws human and divine. He was also suffering from great fatigue, arising from his violent exertions and expenditure of strength; so that immediately after the evening meal, he lay down peacefully, and slept the sleep of the just until sunrise.

Two days afterwards he was at Khartoum. The capital of the Egyptian Soudan hardly deserved at that time the name of a town. Like many more or less important settlements on the Nile, it consisted—with the exception of the three or four buildings occupied by the consuls—of an assemblage of little square houses with such small apertures that from a distance they had the appearance of gigantic paving-stones with slits cut in them. But under the

dazzling light of the eternally blue sky, and fronting the mighty Nile which rolls majestically beneath it, Khartoum looked fair and lovely, like a swan upon the water's edge.

Besides, the traveller is also disposed to admiration when, after a long journey in the desert, he is suddenly confronted by a group of houses, however ugly they may be, because there comes with the sight of them the hope of finding human beings to talk to. Not that the people of



Khartoum.

Khartoum, when closely observed, are greatly superior to the houses, as Dr. Quiès had good reason to know.

Immediately on the arrival of the party at Khartoum, the doctor, acting on the advice of Sir Thomas, went to the French Consulate, but failed to see the Consul, who was absent, and not expected to return until the following day. Quiès, notwithstanding the remarks of his travelling companions, thought himself safe in the midst of a town inhabited by people from all countries, Egyptians, Europeans, Arabs, &c., and was confident that if any accident

should arise, he would have the assistance of persons of his own colour. In this pleasantly-trustful mood he proceeded to walk about the town on leaving the Consulate and before rejoining Sir Thomas, in search of subjects for his note-book.

He had just remarked a particularly interesting fact, and was in the act of taking out his pencil, when he found himself face to face with the German man-stealer who had threatened him with his revolver two days previously. Quiès made a very wry face, and turned aside, but the German put himself across his path, and laid hold of him by the lapel of his jacket. The doctor tried unsuccessfully to throw off his hold, and was promptly dragged by his captor, who did not utter a single word, to the door of a large building not far off. The German forced his captive to enter, and followed him into the palace—we will use that word so as to avoid giving offence—of Biboul Bey, Governor-General of the Egyptian Soudan.

It is possible that on the closest investigation of the archives of his Highness the Khedive the name of Biboul Bey will no more be found there than the name of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes will be found on the map of France. The fact is that we are desirous to avoid giving rise to contention, and therefore withhold the real name of the personage whom we are about to introduce. The Eastern Question, which has already lasted two thousand four hundred and twenty years, seven months, twelve days and several minutes, is still in suspense, and it would be a source of lasting remorse to us if we were to arouse the sleeping dog. So far as we are concerned it shall be let lie.

Biboul Bey was, then, a functionary who took his functions seriously, so long as it was not his interest to take them otherwise. Now, as Herr Popp, the German dealer in ivory, who contrived to realize several hundred thousand francs every twelve months by the sale of four elephants' tusks in the year, regularly paid him a premium of

twelve thousand francs, no sooner was Herr Popp in question than the said Biboul Bey forgot that he was in the service of his Highness the Khedive, and acted accordingly.

Biboul was a stout, common-looking little man, with thin lips, a quick eye, and a short black beard. He cut so mean a figure on horseback that he never visited the outlying parts of the territory under his rule, but contented himself with administering justice in his palace at Khartoum.

He was an effendi (or learned person) in the full acceptation of the word. He spoke French, German, Russian, Romaic, Italian, Spanish, and several other languages, almost fluently. We say "almost," because, as he knew only a few words of those languages, he spoke them all at once, and this lent to his conversation a charming originality which, however, we are, to our great regret, obliged to suppress, in order to render the examination of Dr. J. B. Quiès by this high and mighty personage intelligible.

"Sir," said he, "it is stated by Herr Popp, here present, one of the richest merchants of this city, that you have taken the life of one of his Highness's soldiers."

"Allow me, sir. In a moment of anger, which I regret—"

"You regret it? That is not enough. If the uniform of his Highness's soldiers does not protect them against Europeans, the natives, it stands to reason—"

"The soldier—"

"The soldier, sir, was he, or was he not, in uniform?"

"Yes, sir; but he threatened me."

"Since he was in uniform I do not require to know anything more. He was accountable to his superiors only for his acts. Now, since you have killed him, I cannot question him."

"I killed him, sir, because—"

"You admit it, then?"

"I have never denied it."

"Since you admit the fact, an examination is superfluous."

"Nevertheless, sir—"

"The laws of a civilized country, as you ought to



Four soldiers entered.

know, are made for everybody ; and you who are a Frenchman—"

"Yes, sir, a Frenchman," said Quiès, drawing himself up, "and the French Consul—"

"The French Consul has never lent his support to murderers."

"I am very glad to hear it. But I think, when he is aware of the facts, which I intend to explain to him—"

"The French Consul is absent. Justice has not time to wait, sir; and I am obliged to proceed at once."

So speaking, the upright Biboul Bey made a signal, which was immediately obeyed. Four soldiers entered, two of them took up a position in front of Quiès, and two behind him; the latter drove him on before them, and in this order they marched him off, without re-entering the town, to a place where a caravan destined for Cairo was preparing to start.

The doctor endeavoured to protest, then tried to escape. Both attempts were equally vain.

That same evening, ere Sir Thomas Nicholl, who had been apprised of his fresh misfortune, could come to his aid, the unhappy doctor was on his way to the capital of Egypt; but before reaching Cairo he would have to cross the terrible desert of Korosko.



## CHAPTER XXII.

## C 3 D.

IT was not without a good reason that Biboul Bey had expedited the departure of his prisoner. He reckoned upon the doctor's not arriving safe and sound at the end of his journey. The desert has many secrets committed every year to its keeping, which nobody asks it to render up.

Now, Biboul Bey had a great secret on his conscience. His transactions with Herr Popp were of a nature to bring about his immediate dismissal.

The best means to avoid this was to render all inquiry impossible by suppressing the chief witness in the present case. It was true that what Quiès could not tell, Sir Thomas Nicholl could; but Biboul Bey, who was much more cunning than he looked, had counted upon the national selfishness of the English, who never willingly act except for a fellow-countryman. Quiès was a Frenchman. Sir Thomas could not have any interest of his own to serve by meddling in the doctor's affairs, and would proceed on his journey without troubling himself about so trifling an incident. In this calculation Biboul Bey was egregiously mistaken. Not only had Sir Thomas Nicholl become sincerely attached to the doctor, but the title of "savant" was equivalent in his eyes to a certificate of cosmopolitanism. Aid and protection were due to its bearer. Therefore, as Quiès did not make his appearance, Sir Thomas, scenting some mischief on the part of Popp and the Egyptian authorities, immediately

invoked the aid of the French and English Consuls, who placed themselves at his disposal, and at once summoned Biboul Bey to give up his prisoner.

Biboul entrenched himself behind the self-evident truth that it was impossible for him to give up that which he had not retained. He made no difficulty about admitting that he had sent the subject of this peremptory demand to Cairo by slow stages. He made voluble excuses and protestations of regret, which did not impose upon



From Khartoum to Cairo.

either Sir Thomas or the consuls, and declared his ardent desire to repair the unfortunate error into which he had fallen. An official note, in which his declarations were repeated, and the immediate liberation of the person who had been arrested by his order was demanded, was exacted from the estimable functionary, and Sir Thomas, having warmly thanked the consuls, and taken a frigid leave of Biboul, made all haste to depart, furnished with the precious document. His object was to arrive at Cairo before the caravan if possible, so as to save the unfortunate

doctor from the evils which might befall him, in consequence of the depositions of the soldiers in charge of him.

Although the route was lengthened quite a third by following the windings of the Nile, Sir Thomas hoped to gain upon the caravan, slowly toiling through the desert of Korosko, by his light craft. He therefore freighted a dozen small boats, and started on his river voyage two days after the doctor's departure.

He had lost one whole day—all his preparations being made—in seeking his servant Magloire, who had disappeared.

Biboul Bey, being questioned respecting the man, had sworn on every chapter in the Koran that he knew nothing of him, that the servant of the honourable Sir Thomas had been neither molested nor arrested, and that he, Biboul, could give no information whatever on the subject. This was perhaps the first occasion in his life on which General Biboul Bey did not lie, a circumstance which lent such firmness and assurance to his manner that Sir Thomas was convinced of his sincerity, and made up his mind to start without having found Magloire.

It is unnecessary to follow the course of Sir Thomas Nicholl's monotonous voyage. His long experience of travel made it as easy to him as an excursion to Bougival would be to a Parisian. It is enough to say that he did the distance in twenty-two days.

The soldiers in charge of Dr. J. B. Quiès had no doubt been instructed not to make any haste, in order that their prisoner should be exposed to as much heat and fatigue as possible; for the caravan had not yet reached Cairo when Sir Thomas arrived there. He had, therefore, plenty of time to communicate with the consuls and the Egyptian authorities, and his proceedings were fully successful.

Before the detachment from Khartoum was signalled, another caravan was dispatched to bring back the pri-

soner, and to forward Biboul Bey's dismissal to him in due form.

This, however, did not prevent Biboul Bey from governing the Egyptian Soudan for three or four years longer. The persons who had dismissed him doubtless forgot all about it, and as he had no interest to serve by jogging their memory, he adopted the wise course of forgetting it also.

The caravan had not much trouble about the second and more important part of its mission, for Quiès and his escort entered Cairo just as it was leaving the city.

Sir Thomas, who had been anxiously awaiting this happy moment, warmly greeted the doctor, who replied to his hearty welcome in an almost tranquil tone, with the words :—

“In truth, Sir Thomas, I am very happy to see you again.”

“And I am delighted to recover you living. I hardly hoped I ever should. So painful a journey, under conditions—”

“Which were excellent.”

“What do you tell me? The emissaries of Biboul Bey—”

“Took all possible care of me.”

“You don't say so?”

“You know that the movement of the camel always tired me very much. Well, these fine fellows made a sort of palanquin, covered it with good sound canvas, and carried me—yes—they carried me! I was not aware that I was travelling! Every morning they came to bid me good-day, and to take my orders, and I should have nothing to regret in this excursion, however opposed to my tastes it was, if I could only have taken some notes. But the heat was so great that I was unable to stir out of my shelter. I shall be obliged to have recourse to the works of my predecessors. It is much to be regretted.”

Sir Thomas listened to Quiès, open-mouthed with astonishment, seriously suspecting that the sun of the desert of Korosko had affected his mind.

No doubt Sir Thomas's impression was betrayed by his features, for the doctor said to him with a smile,—

"I am not mad, Sir Thomas. I am perfectly in my senses."

"Then will you explain to me—"

"Readily. Magloire, the good, the brave, the excellent Magloire, who was informed I know not how, of my mishap, left Khartoum with me."

"No?"

"Yes. Nobody suspected him. He cleverly contrived to empty a wicker camel-basket, and hid himself in it."

"Impossible!"

"It was not until we were a day's march from Khartoum that he left his hiding-place and came to me, as I sat on my camel waiting for death. I had passed the whole day exposed to the sun! He made me get down, and as the escort interfered to prevent him from fulfilling his charitable purpose, he then and there before my eyes punished them so severely with his feet, his fists, and his whip, that several of them spat blood, and the others cried for mercy."

"And their arms?"

"Magloire had carefully possessed himself of them beforehand; revolver in hand, he constituted himself chief of the caravan, and—"

"I understand the rest."

At this moment Magloire drew near, looking confused, and as though he would fain avoid the praise which must inevitably be awarded to his gallant deeds.

"I double your wages, Magloire," said Sir Thomas, so soon as he was within speaking distance.

"Thank you, sir," replied Magloire.

"You are a brave man and a good servant."

"Monsieur is too good."

“And here is my hand, as a proof of my esteem. I do not give it to everybody.”

Magloire touched the hand which Sir Thomas held out to him with his finger-tips, and said, as he awkwardly pulled a front lock of his hair,—

“I am confused by your kindness and your generous offers, and I don't know how to say that—”

“Go on, Magloire.”

“That I leave your service, sir.”

“Ah!”

“You will forgive me, I hope. But I am French, and owe a duty to my country. I enter the service of Dr. J. B. Quiès.”

“But I have not said—” interrupted the doctor.

“That does not signify. You know, sir, that I am ready to serve you, who are the Livingstone of France, without wages. I could not endure that any one else should have the honour of blacking your boots, of taking your orders, and of following you to—”

“But—”

“I know that you have not reached the end of your travels yet, sir.”

“I beg your pardon, I—”

“Do you not owe a duty to science, sir—to humanity? Perhaps, some day, as a reward for my fidelity, you will deign to inscribe my name together with your own in one of the works which are to immortalize you. Oh, travel! travel!”

In his secret soul, Quiès was but little disposed to put up with the perpetual presence of a too zealous servant, whose strange mania was to invest him with a character which did not belong to him. But how is one to repel the advances of a man who styles one the Livingstone of France, and sets his heart on having the honour of blacking one's boots, who undertakes to serve one without wages, and, lastly, who has just saved one's life and given proof of unbounded devotedness and self-abnegation?

After he had vainly endeavoured to make Magloire understand that he was guilty of ingratitude to Sir Thomas, Quiès resigned himself, having exhausted all the arguments he could muster,—he entered the service of Magloire. Well did he know, poor Quiès, that in the presence of that indomitable domestic he could not avow his weakness and yield to the sweets of *far niente*. Magloire at his side was the angel commissioned by God to utter to the Wandering Jew that dread command, “On, on!”

Now what Quiès wanted was not to go on any more. Indeed, he was so firmly resolved not to do so, that, without saying a word to Magloire, whose ridicule, remonstrances, or reproaches he dreaded, he began to make preparations for finally settling down at Cairo.

The city of Cairo is, to a great extent, European. One may live there on tolerably easy terms, provided that one has not to submit to the extortion of the hotel-keepers, who speculate too mercilessly upon the passing traveller, and treat his complaints with complete indifference.

Quiès made an exact calculation of his resources; set to work to find a house for sale; informed himself of the price of all the necessaries of life, and arrived at the delightful conclusion that he could live at Cairo like a fighting-cock without denying himself anything, and at the same time lay by a respectable sum for the benefit of the six daughters of his cousin Ragot.

There was, however, an obstacle in the way. Quiès had not a sou. To apply at the Consulate or to bankers, and to offer security, would be to expose himself to refusal and to renew his former unpleasant experiences. He fortunately remembered the offer which Sir Thomas Nicholl had made him.

“Of course,” answered the latter; “I am entirely at your service.”

“Thanks.”

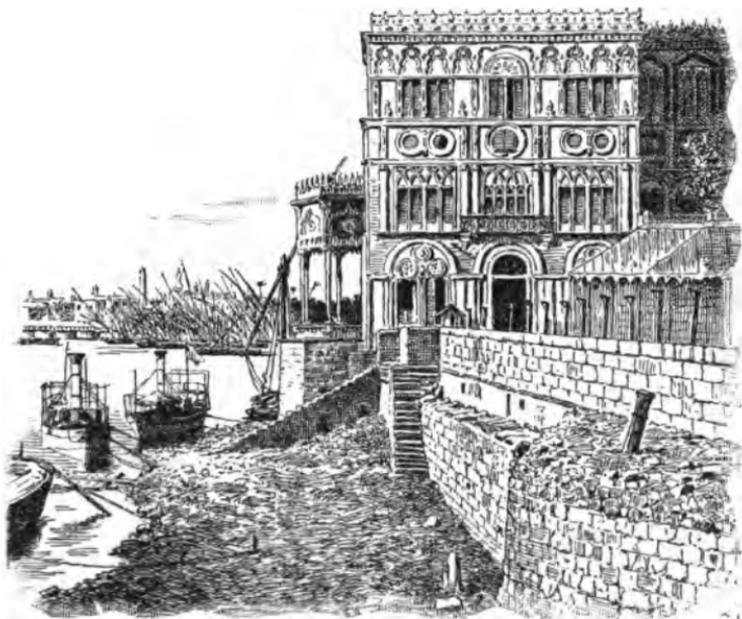
“ But the only funds I have are drafts on Alexandria, where I embark to-morrow.”

“ That is unfortunate.”

“ Come with me this evening.”

Quiès made an expressive grimace.

“ If you wish to settle down in Egypt, you will be best off at Alexandria.”



Alexandria.

“ But then I—”

“ It is only a few hours by rail. Besides, I should be hurt if you did not come with me to the steamer.”

It will be admitted on all hands that Dr. J. B. Quiès could not refuse so small a boon to the man who had done so much for him, without failing in the simplest elements of good breeding.

He bore this last portion of his journey very well. He

was not greatly tired, but reached Alexandria in good health and spirits, went with Sir Thomas to his banker's, pocketed 25,000 francs, which he was to repay by a draft on London, and accompanied his generous friend to the place of embarkation.

When he had waved a last adieu to Sir Thomas, he returned to the town, and immediately provided himself with clothes, linen, and the other indispensable articles of which he had been destitute for so long. This done, he repaired to the hotel which he had selected as his temporary abode, and indited a long letter to Maitre Grimblot, at Saint-Pignon, enjoining the said Grimblot to realize his fortune, and transmit to him the entire amount in drafts to his order upon Bo. rsicotte Brothers, Alexandria.

In order to guard against all errors and accidents, he made a duplicate copy of this letter, for dispatch to the same address by the English route.

He had made sure of the future, and he fell asleep that night with a feeling approaching to security against the tricks of chance.

"When does Monsieur leave Alexandria?" asked Magloire, as he opened the windows on the following morning.

"I don't know—we shall see."

"Monsieur is not thinking of remaining here?"

Quiès hesitated for a moment before he answered.

"Well, well," he said at length, "it will only be the same thing over again every day. It is better to have done with it at once."

"I intend," said he, suddenly, "to remain here until the end of my days."

"Monsieur is joking."

"Not in the least. I would not encounter the danger and fatigue of crossing the sea for an empire! I need rest. My health is greatly impaired. It is a miracle that I have outlived such shocks."

“Oh, I know how it will be ; Monsieur will be satisfied here for a fortnight, or perhaps less. In a week, I daresay, you will not be able to keep quiet ! I am just like that myself ; there are times when I should like to live quietly in a cottage ; but it does not last. When one has a passion for travel, as Monsieur has, it is incurable.”

“We shall see,” returned Quiès quietly ; but he said to himself, “This fellow worries me ; I shall give him notice.”

His apprehensions were, however, only imperfectly assuaged by this rather tardy resolution. Magloire was quite capable of refusing the notice. After all the trials he had undergone, Quiès was not to be disturbed by such a consideration for very long ; he terminated the interview with Magloire abruptly, and went out of the hotel, pursuing a train of thought which was not without its bitterness, although the future was already decked in less sombre colours.

A sudden bump recalled his attention to external things, and a hard, shrill voice addressed him,—

“Now then, look out, will you !”

This sentence, though spoken in French, was uttered in an accent which revealed a foreigner, and Quiès stared at the speaker with his big projecting eyes, like a sleeper suddenly awakened.

He beheld a short, thin man, whose hard red complexion bespoke long exposure to the sun. This personage wore his hair short and had little thin whiskers cut straight across below the ear. His low-crowned, wide-leaved hat, placed very far back on his head, his white jacket and the red woollen sash tied round his body, would have informed the least observant that he was a sailor.

He did not look particularly agreeable, and although his light hair did not indicate a southern origin, a first sight of him suggested the defects—which do not exclude the qualities—of the quick and irascible races of the south.

Quiès, still shocked by the man’s rough address, stood stock still, looking at him.

"Well," said the stranger, "what are you looking at me as if I were a penguin for? What do you want? Do you know whom you're staring at? It is not difficult to find out. Poggenbeck, contractor, of Haarlem! Is that enough for you?"

Quiès literally jumped.



Captain Poggenbeck.

"Poggenbeck," he cried; "you are Captain Poggenbeck?"

"Of Haarlem. Yes; what then?"

"My last move is: D 7 R. What do you play?"

"Dr. Quiès," said Poggenbeck, suddenly assuming a gracious air, "of Saint-Pignon."

"Les Girouettes, my dear sir."

"I am delighted to see you."

"And I to make your acquaintance."

Poggenbeck took the doctor's arm and walked on with him.

"I was very uneasy about you. When, on my last trip to Haarlem, I did not find your reply in due

order, I regarded the match as off."

"Off!" cried the doctor; "what an idea!"

Then, in order to convince Mynheer Poggenbeck that he had not relinquished the hope of beating him on this pacific battle-field, he recapitulated one by one all the moves in the game, and astonished the captain by the lucidity of his memory. The fact is that he was made seven or eight months younger by his meeting with Poggenbeck, and had slipped in an instant, so to speak, into the skin of the former J. B. Quiès. He was restored to his old self; his mind returned to its previous projects, and to its former mood of mild and tranquil contemplation. It seemed to him that his essay on the early history

of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes was lying on the table, awaiting only the finishing paragraphs ; his geraniums and his fuchsias glowed in the flower-beds, and smiled at him through the open window ; he heard the voice of Gertrude. The blue sky of Alexandria was flecked with clouds that swept the spire of the familiar belfry of his natal town in their flight, and he fancied himself treading the pavement of Saint-Pignon on the arm of an old friend. It was indeed a great joy to Quiès to have recovered Mynheer Poggenbeck—whom he had never seen.

“It is very provoking,” said the latter, “that I have to sail in two hours. We might have finished this match.”

“Never mind,” said Quiès, “I will play a little more quickly. And in two hours—”

“Yes, doctor.”

“Well, in two hours you will have lost the game.”

“Then, doctor, I double the stake.”

“All right ! and if we had a chessboard—”

“Mine is at hand. If you will have the goodness to come with me.”

“Is it far ?”

“Close by—on board the *Marsouin*.”

“H’m, h’m.”

“There’s no h’m, h’m, about it, doctor. A fine brig, a sailing vessel, it is true, but she does her ten knots an hour and holds her own, I can tell you.”

“I don’t gainsay all that, but we can get a chessboard at the hotel.”

“I can’t go there. I shall have to give my final orders while we play. Come along.”

“You see, I—”

“Nonsense. I shall not carry you off against your will. My second officer will look after that.”

“Yes—but—I might be seasick.”

“Seasick on an oil-pond ! You will be no more shaken on board my ship than in your own bed ! And then, two

hours ; only two hours. You will beat me in two hours ! You said so yourself."

"Yes, and I say so again."

"Very well, then, let us be off."

In a very short time Mynheer Poggenbeck had succeeded in transferring Dr. J. B. Quiès from the quay to the deck of the *Marsouin*, and from the deck to the captain's cabin, where they found the chessboard set with all its pieces.

Those who have known only the mild pleasures of loto and other minor games, cannot form even an approximate idea of the fascination which those little bits of wood called chessmen exercise over a skilled player. The world might fall into ruins around the Café de la Régence, where the chess-players congregate, and not one of them would seem to be aware of the occurrence.

Poggenbeck and Quiès took their seats opposite to each other. Quiès had played D. 7 R. Poggenbeck planted his elbows on the table, took his head between his hands, and gazed fixedly at the chessboard. Quiès watched him with blinking eyes and a covert smile, which seemed to say,—

"Get out of that if you can !"

For these two, nothing outside that little square of wood with the chequers on it, had any existence. Had the stake been a fortune or the fate of an empire, they could not have been more absorbed and immovable.

After half an hour's profound reflection, Poggenbeck put out his hand, almost touched the queen, but not quite, slowly scratched his forehead and resumed his position. Quiès, who had been about to say, "You have lost," kept silence on seeing that the captain hesitated. A second half-hour passed away. Poggenbeck repeated the same action, and Quiès remained perfectly acquiescent. Patience is the most indispensable of all virtues to a chess-player. One's adversary may be kept waiting four hours or more. The player who complains is a man condemned ; he is held for ever unworthy to in-

scribe his name on the golden roll of the Labourdonnays and the Philidors.

Quiès respected the science too profoundly to interrupt the captain by even the briefest interjection. He seemed to be following all the moves that were planned, abandoned, and resumed in his adversary's head. He shared his emotions, his perplexities, and so fixed was his attention upon the results of the long mental struggle, that he had



“Captain, we are raising the anchor.”

reached the stage at which a chess-player hears and sees nothing external to the game, quite as fully as Poggenbeck ; so that when the second officer opened the door of the cabin and said, loudly, “Captain, we are raising the anchor,” both the captain and the doctor remained as motionless as mummies two thousand years old.

It was half-past twelve when the two adversaries sat down at the cabin table ; at ten minutes past three the captain suddenly moved a pawn, and played P. *pr.* P.

The doctor moved rapidly T. 3 R.

"C. 3 D. Checkmate!" cried Quiès in triumph.

"Beaten!" grumbled Poggenbeck. "You will give me my revenge?"

"Whenever you please. In the meantime allow me to say farewell and go ashore."

"Of course, my dear doctor."

The two adversaries shook hands across the table with great cordiality. Quiès rose, opened the cabin door, set foot upon the deck, and uttered a groan of despair.

The *Marsouin* was on the high seas! The land was already a mere line on the horizon. The doctor's first impulse was to fling himself over the bulwarks. Poggenbeck was just in time to catch him by the skirt of his coat, and to call out,—

"None of that! Come, come, none of that"

Quiès dropped upon the deck, and, not daring to stir, looked at Poggenbeck so imploringly, so despairingly, that the latter was moved to pity.

"If you take it so ill as all that," said he, "a boat can put you ashore in a few hours"

Wonderful to say, Quiès refused.

An involuntary pleasure had mingled, quick as a flash of lightning, with the misery caused by this fresh trick of fate; pleasure so great that if the *Marsouin* had touched at an Egyptian port a quarter of an hour afterwards, Quiès would not have left the ship. And why? Ah, it was because he had seen with his mind's eye, behind that pale blue line which shut in the horizon, the dear, lovely little town of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, on its green height, and his own slate-roofed house, all that he had loved, all that he still loved. For the first time in his life Quiès allowed himself to be borne away without crying,—

"Stop! I will not go any farther."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## A SHOT IN AN ANT-HILL.

WE must now go back for a while, and relate as briefly as possible the proceedings of the various personages whom we have left at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

Mdme. Ragot had grown six years younger since the marriage of her daughters—a year for each. The generous bargain made by Anthime had enabled her to replenish her wardrobe, and this, no doubt, had its share in her renewal of youth. And besides, nothing is so sovereign a recipe for good looks as peace of mind, and the widowed cousin of J. B. Quiès had never been happier in her life.

The memory of the good doctor—whom she called her “dear benefactor”—gained by this. Not a day passed but Mdme. Ragot put some additional touch to the renown of the deceased. It was cousin Quiès here! It was cousin Quiès there! Poor, dear Quiès! His praises grew and multiplied as the days went on. Contrary to all ordinary rules there seemed to be no oblivion for Quiès.

This apparent anomaly was easy of explanation. Each day that passed brought additional security to the Anthime-Ragot firm. The chances of the reappearance of Quiès were diminished by just so much; and of all the misfortunes that M. Anthime Bonamy and Mdme. Ragot could have to dread, that one was the most formidable.

Nobody at Saint-Pignon, except those two, took such an eventuality into contemplation. Everybody accepted the doctor's death as certain. His funeral sermon had

been solemnly preached ; the sum required for the execution of the statue had been fully subscribed, and the commission had been given to a sculptor of renown, who had set to work without delay. The forehead was coming out very well, the eyes were expressive, the nose was all it



A sculptor was set to work.

should be. Beyond a doubt, the work would be widely celebrated, and would bring crowds of visitors to Saint-Pignon. It was, however, arranged that the inauguration of the effigy of the doctor should not take place until the 15th of April in the following year, the anniversary of his birth ; and it was now early in November, the leaves were only begin-

ning to fall. M. de Préchafoin had ample time to prepare his speech, and Mdme. Ragot to make ready her costume for the great occasion.

The good town of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes was, then, in a state of perfect tranquillity, when, one fine morning, three of the municipal authorities happened to be in the Café de la Comédie—so called in order to convey the idea that there was, or had been, a theatre in the place—and one of them was reading the *Journal Officiel*. This individual suddenly uttered a portentous “Oh !” and hastened across the floor to show the newspaper to the second

of the three, who was concocting a "grog" at a table opposite. The second of the three uttered a no less portentous "Oh!" forgot his sugar and his lemon, and rushed towards the third, who exclaimed, "It is not possible," and, snatching the paper, eagerly pointed out a certain

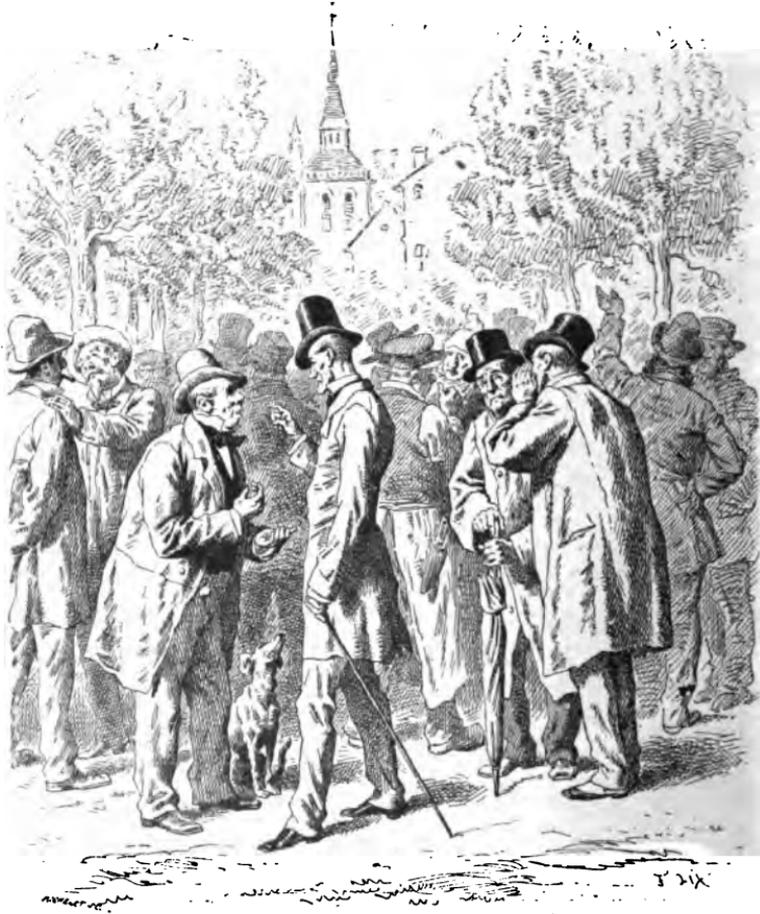


Reading the despatch of Quiès at the Café de la Comédie.

paragraph to his right-hand neighbour. In short, five minutes afterwards the café was empty; every man had gone out with hands uplifted in astonishment.

The paragraph which had produced this remarkable effect was the following:—

"The *Times* of the 15th instant announces that Sir Thomas Nicholl, whose departure for Central Africa we recently recorded, has transmitted to that journal, by



The great news was spread throughout the town.

carrier-pigeon, the accompanying message, which reaches us after a delay of three weeks. 'All goes well. Met the French explorer, J. B. Quiès. Travels with me. Sends regards to fellow-citizens at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.'

If you have ever fired a shot into one of those heaps of clay and twigs which the ants build up in the woods, you know with what impetuosity the intelligent little creatures come out of their dwelling and crowd together, questioning each other respecting the disaster that has befallen them. No less was the excitement that prevailed at Saint-Pignon when the great news was spread throughout the town. In ten minutes the whole population was assembled in the market-place.

“You have read it?”

“It is miraculous!”

“He is travelling in Africa!”

“Would you have believed it?”

“I? I always said so. I said it only yesterday.”

Nothing ever occurs here below but it has been predicted by some one. On the other hand there are always people who don't believe it.

The *Times'* statement was received with incredulity by several persons at Saint-Pignon. The English traveller has mistaken some other person for Quiès. If the doctor were living he would have written, and signed his message himself, &c., &c.

It is hardly necessary to say that Mdme. Ragot very naturally placed herself at the head of the sceptical party. If Quiès were living, her position must needs be an exceedingly critical one. Anthime could demand the annulment of the contract and the immediate repayment of the sum of 300,000 francs, which she no longer possessed. It was, therefore, with the utmost ardour, energy, and earnestness, that she protested:—

“It is absurd! I cannot conceive how reasonable people can listen to such fables, even for an instant. Quiès in Africa! The explorer Quiès! Ha, ha, ha! As if we did not know him! Quiès! A feeble, gouty creature, who could hardly put one foot before the other. A snail who never stirred out of his shell. He, an explorer! They might as well tell you I—I, who am speaking to you—had

gone up to the moon and come down again. And where does the story come from? From England, from a Thomas Nigaud that nobody knows anything about. Very likely there is no such person. I tell you what it is, there's a trick in this, and I can see farther into it than some folks imagine! There are certain people—I don't wish to name any one in particular—but there *are* certain people who were not best pleased to see my daughters settled in life! Ha, ha! let us go and play Mdme. Ragot a good trick; let us get a rise out of her! And rubbish like this, is to be believed, and spread about, indeed!"

Mdme. Ragot jerked her head, her arms, and her legs, all the time she was talking, as if she had St. Vitus's dance. Her false hair tumbled off, and lay neglected on the field of battle. But, in order to convince others, one must be a believer in one's self, and the unfortunate woman made all this noise to convince herself. Notwithstanding all the excellent reasons she had assigned for incredulity, she was sore afraid that the hour of restitution was about to strike. Her fear was well founded, for on re-entering her house she beheld M. Bonamy, who was awaiting her arrival with a grave countenance, in a black coat and a white cravat—in short, in ceremonial attire.

"Ah! it is you!" said she, holding out both hands to him. "You are my ally! You are not a fool like the rest of them! You know how to treat these ridiculous rumours!"

"Ridiculous? H'm, h'm."

"You believe them?"

"I believe, and I don't believe. There is a doubt; everything is possible."

"Even the absurd?"

"Especially the absurd; and then, you understand, if Quiès really is living, if Quiès comes back—"

"He will not come back! He has no right to come back."

"Granted. But if he does?"

"That will not be my fault."

"No doubt. But he will resume possession of his property."

"Naturally."

"What becomes of my 3000 francs a year in that case?"

"They are not lost, I suppose. I have surrendered all my rights to you. At his death—"

"His death! Quiès may live fifteen years at least."

"Well, what then?"

"How! What then? I shall have lived on 6000 francs a year for fifteen years. I shall have paid 300,000 francs in capital and 300,000 francs in interest, that is to say, 600,000 francs for a fortune probably considerably diminished, and which will represent only a third of the sum disbursed by me. Admit, my dear madam, that the bargain is none of the best."

"Good bargains are not made every day."

"You, at all events, have made a profitable one."

"Are you reproaching me?"

"I have a right to do so."

"Have you, indeed? Did I take your money from you by force? When we made this bargain, it was for you to weigh the chances. If you agreed—"

"It was to oblige you. I did not like to let you be in beggary any longer."

"In beggary, I in beggary! You might at least remember, sir, that I am a woman, and not come here to insult me grossly in my own house."

"If you take that tone with me, any amicable arrangement will be impossible."

"What do you mean by an amicable arrangement?"

"I mean the restitution of a portion of the sum."

"You shall not have a sou, not a sou!"

And Mdme. Ragot, who was almost beside herself with fear and anger, pushed Anthime towards the door, repeating,—

“Not a sou, not a sou!”

No sooner had she got rid of him than she repaired in haste to Maître Grimblot, in order to ascertain the truth about the validity of her rights. Now, as fate would have it, the same idea had occurred to M. Bonamy, and the two entered the notary's office at the same time, but by different doors.

Maître Grimblot who had drawn up the deed of surrender, was acquainted with the whole affair; but that fact did not hinder M. Bonamy from explaining it to him from first to last in the fullest detail. When he had concluded his statement, Mdme. Ragot began and went over it all again, interpolating many sharp remarks, offensive allusions, and recriminating corrections. At length, however, the time came for Grimblot to speak, and he pronounced, without hesitation, in favour of Mdme. Ragot. According to him the validity of the deed could not be contested, were it only because it had been drawn up and signed in his office.

The notary's decision was received by Anthime with the angry exclamation,—

“Maître Grimblot, you are nothing but an ass!”

“Sir!”

“Unless, indeed, you are the voluntary accomplice of a swindle.”

At the word “swindle” Mdme Ragot jumped up, with her eyes aflame, and, seizing a large portfolio which lay within her reach, she flung it at Anthime's head. He dodged the blow, and, picking up a roll of papers from the floor, threw it straight in the face of Mdme. Ragot. She in her turn ducked her head and evaded the missile; but Grimblot, who was, unfortunately for him, just behind her, was struck in the chest by it, and such was his exasperation at this unexpected shock that he caught up papers, books, inkstands, everything he could lay his hands on, and flung himself into the fray. It is to be regretted that Homer has been for some years dead; he only would have

been capable of describing such a conflict. For a month to come it was the talk of the town.

Mdme. Ragot had to take to her bed ; Anthime was in the doctor's hands for a week, and it was necessary to apply leeches to Grimblot's contusions.



At the word "swindle" Madame Ragot jumped up.

When the three combatants were restored to a presentable condition, the presiding judge of the town undertook the office of mediator, at the combined request of their three families. In the first instance he made it clear to

Mdme. Ragot that she had everything to gain by conciliating M. Bonamy. If a lawsuit were to be instituted the issue of it would be by no means certain. Her wisest plan was to gain time, and win over her opponent by civility.

He took the same ground with Anthime. The matter was a difficult and a delicate one; the suit would be tedious and it would be time enough to resort to the law, if Quiès should prove to be living and should make his appearance at Saint-Pignon. In the meantime it seemed to him that the disputants would do well to go on quietly, and live on good terms with each other. He succeeded so well that one fine day M. Bonamy took Mdme. Ragot, leaning on his arm, to Grimblot's house, and they jointly made an apology which was indisputably due to the worthy notary.

By degrees the remembrance of the violent shock which had shaken all the high life of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes to its innermost centre grew faint and died out. Time went on; Quiès did not return. No second message from Sir Thomas Nicholl or from the doctor was recorded in the newspapers.

New-Year's Day came round, and was celebrated as usual; everybody made everybody else the customary presents. Quiès had not sent his card to anybody. The general belief was there had been a mistake or a hoax in the matter.

The six sons-in-law of Madame Ragot, who had been greatly alarmed at the possible consequences of the doctor's resurrection, took heart again, and once more sang with her the praises of the much lamented J. B. Quiès.

When the middle of January had been reached without alarms, that is to say, three months after the deplorable incident which we have just narrated, M. Bonamy regarded the investment of his 300,000 francs as a perfectly safe transaction. He had renewed his friendship with Mdme. Ragot,

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and was pursuing the course of his scientific labours with zeal which would assuredly secure to him in the end a reputation at least equal to that of Dr. J. B. Quiès, who was no longer there to dispute it with him. Confidence in the future, full, entire, absolute confidence, had been restored to him, when one evening, after dinner, he received a letter of convocation from M. de Préchafoin, perpetual President of the Geographical, Numismatical, and Archæological Society of Saint-Pignon.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH DR. J. B. QUIÈS INFINITELY REGRETS THAT HE HAD NOT ARRIVED A WEEK LATER AT SAINT-PIGNON LES GIROUETTES.

“SIR, AND DEAR COLLEAGUE,—Important intelligence which has reached me from abroad, obliges me to summon you for to-morrow at ten o'clock to our usual place of meeting. I reckon upon your punctual attendance, and beg you to accept the assurance of my distinguished consideration.”

M. Bonany had received more than one official communication of this kind from M. de Préchafoin ; nevertheless the present summons made him shiver with apprehension. News from abroad ! The spectre of Quiès arose before him.

It was with a trembling hand that he adjusted his white cravat next morning, and with unsteady gait that he repaired to the Mairie, where almost all the members of the learned society of Saint-Pignon were already assembled. These were generally punctual in their attendance, because, in their capacity as savants, they could not with any propriety show themselves indifferent to the interests of science ; but more especially because M. de Préchafoin had allotted, with the assent of the committee, a fee of five francs for attendance to each member.

The room was well filled when the president took his seat, rang his bell, and addressed the meeting as follows :—

“Gentlemen, and dear colleagues, the interest with

which scientific matters are regarded is the characteristic mark of our epoch. From all parts of the world come the indefatigable pioneers of science who explore the vast field of the unknown, on which many, alas! find death.

“The worthiest and the most esteemed among us has set this magnificent example to humanity of self-devotion and self-sacrifice. (Prolonged applause.)

“It is not only in France, in England, in Germany, in Russia, that this great movement of the human intellect manifests itself; but even those nations who are placed in the lower rank by their geographical and political position vie with us in treading that honourable path. Certain among them seem desirous of getting in advance of us Moldavia, Wallachia, Bulgaria, and Servia have for some years past furnished soldiers to the great army of science who will one day be illustrious. Our duty is not only to applaud their exertions, but to extend the support of our resources and our intelligence to them. (Cheers.)

“I have, therefore, thought it necessary, gentlemen, to take particular notice of a communication which has been made to me in the name of the Society of Bucharest.

“The President of that Society informs me that a scientific congress will be held on the 14th of the present month of February at Turn-Severin in Wallachia, on the left bank of the Danube.

“The principal learned societies of Europe are invited to send one or several representatives to this congress, and it is no small honour for us that the name of the Geographical, Numismatical, and Archæological Society of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes figures in the list. (Cheers.)

“Convinced as I am that we should all heartily desire the favour of representing French science at Turn-Severin, I have taken it upon myself to designate that person among us who, since the lamented disappearance of our esteemed colleague, Dr. Quiès, has given the most important proofs of his great ability and his indefatigable zeal. I have nominated M. Anthime Bonamy.” (Cheers.)

Anthime, although he was flattered by the applause with which his name had been received, could not repress a grimace which said only too plainly, "I could readily have dispensed with the honour."

He added mentally, "If Quiès were but here now, what a splendid opportunity I should have of getting rid of him!"

"Gentlemen," continued the president, "it is not without serious sacrifices that a society like ours can maintain the position which it has acquired. From the funds at our disposal we shall have to allot the sum of—"

At that point the voice of the worthy president was suddenly drowned in an indescribable tumult. The door had opened and given admission to Dr. J. B. Quiès in person. The members sitting at the end of the room had risen at the sight of him and rushed towards him, overturning everything that came in their way in their eagerness to welcome and embrace him; hence the commotion, which M. de Préchafoin vainly endeavoured to allay by ringing his bell.

Quiès, breathless, panting, bewildered, as red as a peony, and with eyes starting out of his head, succeeded at length in crossing the hall and reaching the platform on which the president sat. At sight of him M. de Préchafoin dropped his bell, overturned the table, sprang at him, and, clasping him in his arms, exclaimed,—

"Alive! he is alive!"

A similar exclamation, but uttered in a far different tone, escaped from the lips of M. Anthime Bonamy, who fell back in his chair, as pale as death saying to himself, "I am ruined."

Nevertheless, he could not do otherwise than put out a welcoming hand to the doctor, over whose return the whole meeting rejoiced. What did not the effort cost him? Quiès, however, was too strongly moved to read the expression of his countenance aright, and the members of the society looked at no one but the illustrious explorer Quiès.

Anthime was utterly forgotten in a moment. The members wanted the doctor to give them a narrative of his travels and the adventures that had befallen him,



“ Alive ! he is alive ! ”

then and there Questions were rained upon his devoted head like hail in March. He did not know whom to listen to, he could not answer, and he would have been stifled under the avalanche had not the president's bell

recalled the curious and the indiscreet to their places and their good manners.

"My dear colleagues," said M. de Préchafoin, in an agitated voice, "the unexpected return of Dr. J. B. Quiès is a great happiness to us, and my own especial pleasure in the joyful event is doubled by the fact that I am enabled to give him a fresh proof of my admiration and sympathy. Our esteemed colleague, M. Anthime Bonamy, will no doubt forgive me for imposing upon him in the interests of our dear friend so happily restored to us, a sacrifice which he himself would have been the first to make. One individual only among us seems to me to be worthy of representing the learned Society of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes in Wallachia; that individual is Dr. J. B. Quiès." (Cheers.)

"Pardon me, my dear friend," stammered Quiès, "I cannot—"

"We know that your modesty would lead you to decline such an honour, but you must accept it; for we ask you to do so in the name of science."

Quiès was about to speak, and would, no doubt, have assigned excellent reasons in justification of his refusal, when a new-comer burst through the crowd, and impetuously exclaimed,—

"We accept. Yes, gentlemen, we accept"

It was Magloire.

The doctor was so astounded that the words he was about to utter stuck in his throat.

"In my master's name," continued Magloire, "I accept. I know him. He will contradict me, perhaps, but it is only from the teeth out. I have been with him in all his travels; I know what he can do. He will stick at nothing. We will set out when you please."

"When you please!" said Quiès, in the midst of the noise. "Pardon me! My good friend, Anthime—"

"Quite right," said M. de Préchafoin, interrupting him, and then, turning to M. Bonamy, he asked him formally,—

“Do you relinquish the honour of fulfilling this fresh mission to Dr. Quiès, of your own free will?”

“With all my heart,” exclaimed Anthime.

He had not the least notion of refusing. The departure of Quiès might mean the rescue of his three hundred thousand francs. Anthime did not desire the doctor's death. No, no, of course he did not, any more than Mdme. Ragot desired it. One does not admit anything of that kind; but if Quiès should happen to be smashed in a railway accident anywhere between Saint-Pignon les Girouettes and Turn-Severin—

The doctor, however, who held that after the tribulations he had undergone, repose was no less indispensable than due to him, objected.

“Anthime has a prior claim,” said he; “I will not go.”

“Very well, then,” said M. de Préchafoin. “If our esteemed colleagues are prepared to make a small pecuniary sacrifice on this occasion—”

“Yes, yes,” was the response on all sides.

“I have the honour to propose the following resolution to the meeting, in order to satisfy the perhaps exaggerated scruples of our dear doctor:—

“A deputation composed of two members is to be sent to the Scientific Congress of Turn-Severin by the Geographical, Numismatical, and Archæological Society of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes. These two members are Dr. J. B. Quiès and M. Anthime Bonamy.”

It was unnecessary to proceed to the vote: prolonged cheering bore ample testimony to the unanimity of consent by the meeting.

Quiès, terribly troubled at finding himself again entrapped, vainly strove to obtain a hearing. The meeting broke up amid tumultuous excitement, and each member went off to talk over Dr. J. B. Quiès, the illustrious explorer of Central Africa, to all the town.

What had brought Quiès to the Mairie at all? Why had he not gone straight home?

Our answer to these questions is that he had gone straight home, but, finding the door shut, he had rung the bell at M<sup>de</sup>. Ragot's. As, however, his summons was not attended to, and he saw a number of people about the door of the Mairie, he approached the group, was recognized, welcomed, cheered, and pushed, in spite of himself, into the room where the business of the learned society was in course of transaction, and whence he now came forth, crimson with rage, and escorted by Magloire, whom he saluted with,—

“The devil take you!”

“Monsieur is too good.”

“What brings you here? Who told you where I was? Why did you not stay at Alexandria?”

“Monsieur evidently rates fidelity and intelligence very low. Why, sir, I saw you talking with Captain Poggenbeck, and observed that you went on board his ship. You did not come back, and the brig sailed, so I concluded you had forgotten me. Oh, I don't owe you any grudge for that. It's all right for a savant to forget anybody and anything. You would not be a savant if your head was not a little— However, I took passage on board the steam-packet, in order to rejoin my master, in the capacity of cook's assistant. At Marseilles I received my wages, got into the train, and came here direct, feeling sure that Monsieur would require two or three hours at home before setting out again.”

“Magloire!”

“Monsieur?”

“I dismiss you.”

“No, sir, you do not dismiss me. You cannot deprive yourself of a servant like me. You might go all round the world, and not meet my match by a long way.”

Quiès stopped his ears to shut out the sound of that odious voice. Of a surety Magloire was a demon sent to beset him by that malignant genius who had thrust him upon a terrible course in which he could not stop himself.

A deep sigh upheaved his manly bosom at this fatal thought, and tears of helpless anger rose to his eyes. Nothing resembles the tears of tenderness so closely as those of vexation, and Gertrude, who had returned to the house in all haste, being apprised by public rumour of her master's return, took the doctor's tears for a mark of affection, and threw herself into his arms with sobs of gratitude and joy.

The sight of Gertrude, the living image of the calm and



Gertrude threw herself into his arms.

repose of former days, acted like a balm upon the wounds of poor Quiès. The repast, which she served up to him as she had always done heretofore, completed his cure.

When evening came, and he was seated before his bureau, which he found precisely as he had left it, he no longer remembered that M. de Préchafoin had conferred a scientific mission upon him ; but in a happy mood, contented with his lot, he thanked God for the protection that had been extended to him during his prolonged trials.

To appreciate the blessing of a well-made bed—one's

"own" bed – one must have slept at an inn. We acknowledge that we are incapable of analyzing the delightful sensations with which our hero slid between the sheets, and drew his eiderdown coverlet over him, for the first time after an absence of more than six months. For him the past no longer existed, and all he asked from the future was that he might thus retire to rest every night betimes, and rise next morning as late as possible. .

In three days he thought not at all of the fresh danger that menaced him. He had not time. The whole town of Saint-Pignon came to visit him during those three days. In thirty-six hours he received two hundred and twenty-seven persons, all equally animated by curiosity, and recommenced the narrative of his adventures two hundred and twenty-seven times. Let us remark, in parenthesis, that he had revised, corrected, and considerably modified those adventures for this purpose.

Ah, well, what would you have! One does not lightly relinquish the title of "illustrious explorer of Central Africa." And then his hearers were inclined to accept all that he said with the most absolute confidence. Not one among them allowed himself to entertain a shadow of doubt. The words of Dr. J. B. Quiès were articles of faith.

Mdme. Ragot formed the only exception to this unanimity of belief. Her perception was sharpened by her acute disappointment at the doctor's return (he was still wholly unsuspecting of her feelings), and she detected certain trifling contradictions and some hesitation in his narrative. These were sufficient to convince her that he had only escaped by a miracle from the consequences of the fatigue and misery he had undergone in the distant travel into which he had been dragged against his will. The discovery was a ray of light for her. She went off post haste to Anthime.

"When does he set out again?" she asked.

"When? Do you imagine that he will go?"

"Certainly."

“ He is going to refuse positively.”

“ He must not refuse.”

“ How can—”

“ Hasten the time of starting. Get up a manifestation. Do you think he will venture to acknowledge his weakness publicly ? ”

“ And then ? ”

“ Then ? You go with him ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ You need only take care not to give him breathing time. Hurry on his journey.”

“ Cousin, cousin ; you are giving me terrible advice.”

“ What do you mean ? ”

“ It would be murder ! If he succumb to the fatigue, if he—but no, no, I will have nothing to say to such a plan as that.”

“ Nor I either,” replied Mdme. Ragot drily. The fact was that Anthime had misinterpreted her words.

“ I don't understand you, then ? ”

“ Don't you understand that, worn out as he is, and completely unable for any more fatigue, he will be the first to make a bargain with you ; that he will gladly purchase his own repose and your silence ? ”

“ At such a price ? ”

“ He has thirty thousand francs a year, and never spends six thousand.”

“ H'm ! It's a good idea ; but it would be a delicate matter.”

Mdme. Ragot cast upon him so disdainful a look that he did not venture to urge his objection. Nevertheless he could not regard the proposed course of action with complacency. Anthime, like many other people, was easily accessible to evil thoughts, but he instinctively recoiled from wicked actions. Nevertheless, he followed the advice of Mdme. Ragot by hurrying on the departure of the deputation from Saint-Pignon, and urging that exceptional honour should be paid to its members.

Three hundred thousand francs! One could make up one's mind to quarrel with Dame Conscience for such a sum as that.

The results of the steps taken by Anthime was that one morning the fire brigade of Saint-Pignon, headed by the captain, took up a position in a double line before the door of Dr. Quiès. A moment later the whole of the learned Society arrived, in white cravats, and were speedily followed by all the public functionaries, also in full dress, and escorted by a considerable portion of the population, bent on bestowing a parting cheer on the dauntless explorer.

The dauntless explorer was sleeping sweetly. The drums awoke him, he hurriedly dressed himself, and without removing the knotted handkerchief that he wore as a nightcap, he advanced to the threshold of his dwelling in order to ascertain the meaning of the noise and the crowd.

"What!" cried Anthime, who had just arrived in a hired carriage, "not ready yet!"

"Ready! Ready for what?"

"Why, to start for Turn-Severin, of course."

"To start?"

"Certainly, and this very morning. What have you been thinking about? Have you forgotten the honourable mission that has been entrusted to us?"

Quiès, trembling all over, looked with half-dazed dread at the crowd who were shouting, gesticulating, and waving handkerchiefs, at the firemen who presented arms, and at the drummers, who kept up a perpetual roll on their imposing instruments. He concluded that he was the victim of an hallucination.

It was as we have said; he had forgotten!

"But, my dear friend," he stammered feebly, "my trunks are not packed."

"Oh, yes, they are, sir! yes they are!" cried Magloire, who suddenly made his appearance. "See!"

He dragged two boxes behind him with one hand, and

held in the other an umbrella, three canes, a field-glass, a travelling-bag, and a number of small parcels, thus affording abundant proof of the zealous care with which he had



Quiès looked with half-dazed dread at the crowd.

been making preparations for departure during the last three days.

“This fellow again! Always this fellow!” sighed Quiès.

Taken unawares, and brought to bay, he vainly strove to shield himself from the violence thus done to his tastes and feelings. He was obliged to go and don a travelling costume. In ten minutes he reappeared, and was greeted by the town band with a flourish of trumpets egregiously out of tune. M. de Préchafoin spoke a few well-chosen words on the auspicious occasion, which were received with enthusiastic cheers. The ceremony of leave-taking began. Quiès was solemnly embraced by M<sup>me</sup>. Ragot and Gertrude, who declared that she "would not have believed it of him," by the members of the learned society of Saint-Pignon, by officials, relations, and the captain of the fire brigade; then, with cheeks tingling unpleasantly from these caresses, he got into the carriage with Anthime and Magloire.

The band began to play again, a last hurrah was raised, the driver whipped up his horse, and Dr. J. B. Quiès had started on this second involuntary journey, which was to lead to consequences a thousand times more terrible than those of his preceding peregrinations.



## CHAPTER XXV.

SHOWING HOW DR. J. B. QUIÈS, HAVING SLEPT FROM PARIS TO VIENNA, AND FROM VIENNA TO PESTH, SNORED FROM PESTH TO TURN-SEVERIN.

“ARE you quite sure of what you tell me?” asked Anthime.

“Absolutely certain, sir,” replied Magloire. “I never left my master for a moment from the day when I found him in the desert. With him I travelled through Nigritia, the Egyptian Soudan, the desert of Korosko, and Lower Egypt.”

“It is incredible! And the doctor, of his own free will, has—”

“Ah, sir, you don't know him. He cannot remain in one place. Each time that he halts he says, ‘I will go no farther.’ But that is all fudge; two days after he will insist on setting out again. And I understand that perfectly—space, adventure, the unknown! Ah, that is life!”

While Magloire went off, radiant, to register the luggage, repeating, “that is life,” Anthime was reflecting on what he had said.

“So then,” he thought, “Cousin Ragot will be left just where she is, after all her fond imaginings, and I stand to lose my three hundred thousand francs, without taking into account that I shall have the journey to Wallachia, and probably incur life-long rheumatism, in the cause of science.”

The conversation which we have recorded took place in a

waiting-room at the station from which our travellers were to start by the express for Vienna.

From Vienna to Pesth is a mere nothing. Once at Pesth, it is only child's-play to go down the Danube, and indeed such an expedition would be regarded as a pleasure trip by anybody except Dr. J. B. Quiès. To him, however, we need hardly repeat, it was unmingled suffering. He had left the taking of the tickets to Anthime, and the responsibility of looking after the trunks to Magloire, and all alone in his wretchedness he walked to and fro, with his arms crossed upon his breast, in the attitude of a martyr who has nothing more to expect except the descent of the executioner's sword. Magloire's voice came suddenly to remind him that he was not in the arena, and that the only wild beasts about him were travellers.

"It is all right," said Magloire.

Quiès raised his eyes, looked at him as if he had not understood him, and led him towards a pillar.

"Have you," he asked sternly, "sounded the intentions of our travelling companion?"

"Sounded, sir?"

"Yes. Do you know whether he has a passion for travelling—whether his love of science may impel him to risk his health, his life, in a distant exploration?"

"He!" replied Magloire disdainfully; "he is not a patch upon you, sir."

"Ah!"

"I am much afraid that before two days are over we shall be obliged to leave him behind. He does not burn with the sacred fire, like my master."

"He sticks to it," said Quiès to himself.

"Never will his name be famous like the name of my master."

"Ah! very well, Magloire, that will do. Thank you."

Magloire's judgment passed upon our two savants had a two-fold result.

Anthime, being convinced that Dr. Quiès was in reality

an indefatigable traveller, and that he had formerly hidden his hand solely for the purpose of securing an unshared renown, considered it useless to give the wheel a push, and relinquished Mme. Ragot's plan, provisionally.

Quiès, on his side, being convinced that Anthime had set out on this journey against his inclination, and, being as little adventurous as himself, would soon cry off, thought that he could not do better than play the part which had been thrust upon him by Magloire's strange whim. He would thereby save his own reputation, and throw the onus of the failure of their enterprise upon his companion. He accordingly assumed such an off-hand air on entering the waiting-room that Anthime was profoundly astonished, and said to himself,—

“Magloire tells the truth ; he would go to the other end of the world.”

At the same moment Quiès was thinking, “Magloire is right ; this fellow will cry off before twenty-four hours are over.”

The twenty-four hours elapsed, but Anthime did not display the least wish to stop or to return. The travellers reached Vienna, and again took train for Buda-Pesth. Anthime did not exhibit the slightest symptom of giving in.

“He has more ‘go’ in him than I thought,” sighed Quiès.

“He is made of iron,” growled Anthime.

The truth was they were both exhausted, and it would be hard to tell which of the two longed most ardently for his bed.

We should have been glad to give some details of the journey from Paris to Vienna, from consideration for those among our readers who are curious to know something of the countries through which our travellers passed. But, in addition to its being well known that one travels by rail in order not to see, but to arrive, it would be a difficult task to supply information upon the subject, as

Dr. Quiès's notes, which we have consulted, contain the following observations only :—

"*Epernay*.—Took a bouillon; paid for a wing of chicken, which I had not time to eat. Magloire is radiant. I cannot bear the fellow's face.

"*The Frontier*.—Our luggage has been searched, and three of the instruments entrusted to us by the Society of Saint-Pignon have been broken. I am too ill to care.



"The beer at the refreshment-room is very good."

not attempt any description. Arrived at four o'clock in the afternoon."

Once at Pesth, Quiès considered that he had come quite far enough from Saint-Pignon, and, taking the return journey into account, had given amply sufficient proof of his zeal and intrepidity.

He believed, too, that Anthime did not really desire to go any farther. If he did not say so, it was simply because he was afraid to take the initiative, and it would be the act

Took a glass of kirsch, and am better. My legs can hardly carry me. Anthime does not appear to suffer at all. The beer at the refreshment-room is very good.

"*Vienna*.—I have slept for twenty hours, and am still quite bewildered. I regret that I have not been able to cast a glance upon the country we have passed through. Anthime will undertake that portion of the narrative of our journey. We alight at the Hotel of the Three Emperors.

"*Buda-Pesth*.—I have suffered so severely in my head and limbs that I can-

of a good friend and comrade to come to his aid and get him to confess the truth. Once agreed upon the main point—that they did not wish to go on—they could easily bring their united strength of will to bear upon the resistance of Magloire. As for his discretion, that would be merely a matter of money.

Quiès, while maturing this project, was scaling the heights of the old Hungarian city of Buda, whither he had been dragged by Anthime and Mag'oire, who were curious to behold the magnificent panorama of the two cities, the Danube which divides, and the iron bridge which reunites them.

Dead tired, and deeply preoccupied as he was, he could not entirely free himself from a sensation of admiration when, having reached the foot of the citadel, he turned round and cast his eyes upon the horizon.

Beneath him, the river, wrapped in a thin transparent haze, spread out its immense sheet of water, flecked with little islands, and dotted over with various kinds of craft. The city of Pesth glittered in the sun in its modern European garb, and seemed to smile on Buda, its elder sister, so sombre, so full of the memory of the mother country. But good Dr. Quiès had seen too much; his enthusiasm lasted for no longer time than a shooting star takes to appear and disappear. He was waiting for a favourable opportunity of inducing Anthime to unbosom himself, when the latter, placing his hand on the doctor's arm, said,—

“You see that city, Quiès?”—he pointed to Buda—  
“Attila halted there.”

“Attila! Ah! ah!”

“Yes, Attila, on whom you have written such a fine essay.”

“My dear friend, how do you know that?”

“Why, it was read at a meeting.”

“Where?”

“At Saint-Pignon.”

"You don't say so! It was not finished."

"Gertrude handed it over just as it was."

"She was very wrong; but servants are never to be trusted."

"Why should you complain? You owe one of the greatest triumphs of your life to that essay. Whatever the journey we have undertaken may bring to us—"

"Oh," said Quiès negligently, "I don't reckon much on its results."

"Ah!"

"No, indeed. What shall we find at this congress? Fourth-rate savants, and no more. A congress at Turn-Severin! In Wallachia! I put it to you! We shall hear some insignificant speeches on questions of purely local interest. It is a great deal of fatigue for very little. Don't you think so?"

"What is he driving at?" said Anthime to himself; but he answered aloud,—

"Yes, certainly."

"Don't you think with me," continued Quiès, "that it would be a very good thing to refrain from throwing away the Society's money for such poor results?"

"Hum! ha!"

"No doubt we ought to have placed these considerations before M. de Préchafoin before starting on this ill-judged expedition; it is, however, never too late to acknowledge that one has been mistaken."

Taking Anthime's ejaculatory utterances for tokens of assent, Quiès went on:—

"I think, then, that the wisest plan is to go no farther."

"In fact, you don't care to do so?"

"You are right. My prolonged exploration in Africa has tired me more than I was aware of, and—"

"And you are going to sacrifice the interests of science to this momentary weakness?" said M. Bonamy severely.

"What?"

"You are going to throw away all the renown you have gained? How are you to show your face to our colleagues? How can you confess to them?"

"We can allege that from information gained on the way we were convinced that—"

"Surely you don't think of such a thing?" exclaimed Anthime. "As for me, I certainly shall not violate my conscience."

"Ah! ah!"

"My duty is to go on to the end. I shall go. My duty is to state hereafter to the Society of Saint-Pignon that you have betrayed its confidence."

"Oh! oh!"

"I shall state the fact."

Anthime expected that Quiès would quail at this; he hoped the present would turn out to be that opportunity for the sale of his silence which Mdme. Ragot had foreseen. To his great surprise Quiès quietly settled his spectacles on his nose, and replied, dwelling ironically on his words,—

"You—will—state—the—fact! Very well, my good friend. Just as you please."

He had burned his boats! Little cared he about the results of that impulsive action. His only object was to avoid going on.

Anthime, on finding that threats and severity had failed, endeavoured by gentler methods to induce Quiès to relinquish a decision which upset all his plans.

"No, no!" he answered; "I am tired! I stop at this point!"

"But—"

"I will not go a step farther."

"Reflect! Remember that I am going alone to gather the fruit—"

"I do not dispute it with you."

"You will allow me to go on alone?"

“Without the very slightest hesitation.”

“Tut, tut! Let Monsieur alone!” cried Magloire, briskly approaching them. “I know the doctor. The boat for Turn-Severin starts to-morrow morning at day-break. I lay you a wager that the doctor will be aboard before we shall.”

Quiès hummed the familiar song, “*J’ai du tabac dans ma tabatière* ;” and, turning to Anthime, said,—

“My dear friend, I confide Magloire to you. Indeed, I give him to you. He is a valuable servant ;” and then he added, very low, so as not to be heard, “of whom I am heartily glad to be rid.”

He shook Anthime by the hand, and came down from the citadel of Buda much more briskly than he had gone up. Re-entering the city, he crossed the Danube, got his valise at the Ungaria Hotel, and repaired to the station with the firm intention of taking his ticket for France, Paris, and Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

Ever since Dr. J. B. Quiès had attained the age of reason, railway-stations, diligence-offices, and all places whatever generally affected to the purposes of locomotion, rapid or slow, had produced a most painful impression upon him. He had, however, entered the station, and had taken out his purse, when he was startled by the shrill whistle of the locomotive.

Then did the terrible recollection of his past travels recur to him more acutely than ever. He began to think that it was very far from Pesth to Paris ; that Pesth is an exceedingly comfortable city, beautifully situated upon a magnificent river ; that the climate of Hungary is remarkably healthy ; that the people are hospitable and sympathetic ; in a word, that one might live as happily there as in any other place in the world.

He replaced his purse in his pocket, walked out of the railway-station, re-entered the Hotel Ungaria, and went up to the room he had recently vacated. There he wrote the following letter to Maître Grimblot :—

“MY DEAR GRIMBLOT,—You will have the goodness, on receipt of this letter, and counting from to-day until you receive further instructions, to forward the amount of my income to Pesth (Hungary) through the house of Jacobsheim and Co.—I am, &c., &c.”

He put this letter in the post with his own hand, and immediately set about finding a suitable abode.

“It happens, fortunately,” said the hotel-keeper, to whom he applied in the first instance, “that one of our customers has a house to let, which, I should think, would be the very thing for you. He is a very accommodating person.”

“Kindly give me his address.”

“I need not, sir; here he comes.”

“The hotel-keeper pointed out to Quiès a tall, stout man, with a merry face, who, although he was a Hungarian, looked remarkably like a Frenchman. He did not wear the tight-fitting breeches, the tasselled boots, the furred cap, the aigrette, or in short any of the articles of costume that belong distinctively to Hungarians. He was dressed in thick cloth paletot and a pair of grey trousers, which must have been bought at La Belle Jardinière.

Quiès went up to him. At the first words which he uttered his future landlord exclaimed,—

“Sir, you are French!”

“I am, sir, at your service. J. B. Quiès, Doctor of Sciences, Member of the Geogr—”

“Shake hands! French! The French are our friends, sir. I myself am Hungarian! Hungarian of the old stock! You may ransack the genealogy of my family; you will not find a *schwarzgelbe* (black or yellow; that is to say, Austrian) alliance in it. We are thought to be conquered, sir; we are thought to be dead, but no, Hungary is not dead!”

“I do not assert, sir; I have never asserted—”

“No more is France, sir! France is the sister of Hungary! I am forty-five years old; but when the day

comes for drawing the sword, I shall be ready! I, Karl Brünner."

"Cattle-breeder?"

"Yes, sir, cattle-breeder. And in all the Purzla you will find no herds equal to mine."

"I know them!" said Quiès with a sigh.

"You know them?"

"Alas!"

"How, alas! Grand beasts!"

"They played me an ill trick, however."



Karl Brünner.

Herr Brünner's curiosity triumphed for a while over his patriotism and his conceit, and he listened greedily to the narrative which Dr. Quiès gave (in a much abridged form) of his deplorable journey from Melun to Marseilles, and from Marseilles to the far end of the Mediterranean.

Touched, even to tears, by the doctor's piteous tale, Herr Karl grasped both his hands so heartily as to cause him considerable discomfort, and protested that, Hungary and France being sisters, the Hungarian should make reparation to the Frenchman for the involuntary wrong which he

had done him.

In the opinion of Herr Karl Brünner, who had disposed of a very good breakfast, the best means of doing this was by a still better dinner. He ordered then and there a banquet for the doctor and himself which would have made five or six ordinary diners-out stare. Quiès did not think it right to decline this patriotic invitation, and took his place with a cheerful countenance. While they were waiting for the soup, Herr Brünner had ordered some seltzer-water and several bottles of a white wine, much esteemed in

Hungary. At the fourth tumbler of this insinuating beverage, the doctor felt his head unusually hot, and thought it necessary to drink, in order to dispel a curious dimness that had come over his sight. At the end of the first

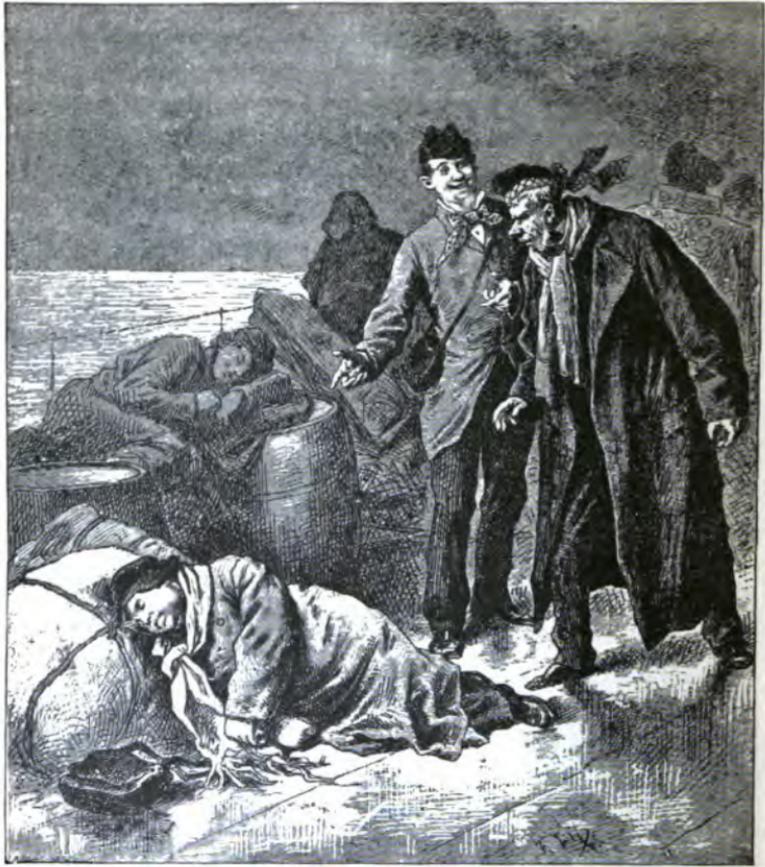


He stood up on a chair, and, with eyes aflame, addressed the company.

course he was drinking glass for glass with Brünner, and shouting "France and Hungary!" at the top of his voice.

At dessert, he maintained lustily that he, Quiès, was at heart a Magyar, and that he deeply regretted his having

been born at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes; a declaration which elicited from all the Hungarians present in the hotel dining-room loud and endless "Vivats!" and shouts of "Franczia barátom" (Frenchman-friend).



He fell soundly asleep.

Quiès began to see all the lights of the vast dining-room dancing about him, as well as the exotic flowers in a conservatory off the vestibule. Indeed he seemed to be dancing himself.

A group of gipsy musicians suddenly struck up one of those strange, wild strains which have so powerful an effect upon the poetic imagination of the Hungarians. At the conclusion of the air, all the persons present joined in a patriotic song with the chorus "Forward! onwards!" accompanied by the gipsies, and this put the finishing stroke to the doctor's condition, depriving him of the last glimmer of reason.

He stood up on a chair, and with eyes aflame, like the ancient Pythoness upon her tripod, addressed the company. What did he say? Many things; but amongst the rest that he was a member of the French Society of Saint-Pignon, that he was on his way to the Congress at Turn-Severin, that the renown of his future works would be reflected upon his friends then present, and that he dedicated his next treatise by anticipation to the Hungarian fatherland! From that moment the enthusiasm of his hearers rose to frenzy. It was then about midnight. At two o'clock in the morning, by torchlight, and escorted by the gipsy musicians playing the *Racoczy* march, Dr. J. B. Quiès was carried in triumph on board the fine steamer *Nagy-Sandor*, where he fell so soundly asleep that he heard neither the noise of the start, nor the voice of Magloire, who said to Anthime as he showed him the sleeping form of his travelling companion,—

"I should have been much astonished had I not found my master on board. I would bet that he was here before us."

"I cannot get over it! He is sleeping as if he were in his own bed!"

## CHAPTER XXVI.

SHOWING IN WHAT MANNER DR. J. B. QUIÈS AND M. BONAMY HAD IT PROVED TO THEM, TO THEIR COST, THAT IT IS SOMETIMES WELL TO BE MODEST.

IT must be admitted that Dr. J. B. Quiès' notes regarding the course of the Danube from Pesth to Belgrade are very incomplete. This deficiency, which is much to be regretted, may, however, be sufficiently explained by the fact that during the river-voyage the doctor was sound asleep. Indeed, if he had been awake he might have found it difficult to record anything more than the existence of the fog which shrouds the river and its course at that period of the year. At most he could only have seen the sand-hills, marshes, interminable plains, and innumerable islets, which have to be passed before this monotonous passage gives place to a region in which mountains stand like inaccessible citadels on the edge of their wide-spreading moat always full of water.

The weather was favourable, and the voyage was in all respects prosperous, up to the hour at which Dr. Quiès awoke, yawned, stretched his arms, and rubbed his eyes.

Having ascertained the average speed of the steamboats upon the Danube, it will be easy to calculate the duration of the doctor's sleep, when we know that he awoke just as the *Nagy-Sandor* was passing the famous "Iron Gates," as the once formidable, but now insignificant rocks and rapids, two hours' journey above Turn-Severin, are called.

When Dr. Quiès had fully recovered his consciousness and self-command he made the calculation above-mentioned, with sufficient exactness to comprehend that he was very far from his point of departure. This discovery plunged him into the deepest despondency, rapidly succeeded by such an ebullition of wrath, that he received Anthime Bonamy, who offered him his hand, and Magloire, who saluted him respectfully, with a torrent of abusive epithets.

“This is infamous treachery!” he exclaimed. “I had declared that I would not listen to a word more about the ridiculous Congress at Turn-Severin; that I would not go there!”

“My dear colleague—”

“I have been given a narcotic, and placed on this detestable engine of locomotion in my sleep!”

“Oh, doctor—”

“Hold your tongue! And now, where am I? When shall I come to a stop?”

Quiès was striding to and fro upon the deck of the steamboat, while he repeated, “Where am I? When shall I come to a stop?” He pulled his hair, struck his head with his clenched hands, and, in short, displayed strong symptoms of mental alienation. The passengers began to take notice of him, and asked each other what could be the cause of his vehement emotion, which was incomprehensible to them.

Magloire, being very tenacious of his master's dignity and the honour of the learned body of Saint-Pignon, was alarmed lest there should be among the passengers some learned delegate to the Congress at Turn-Severin, upon whom the doctor's incoherent words might produce a painful effect. He therefore thought proper to announce, in a loud voice and in the German language, that there was no cause for uneasiness respecting his manner, and as Quiès did not grow calmer, he explained that the doctor had just lost an almost priceless article, an instru-

ment of extraordinary precision, indispensable to the calculations which he intended to make at the Congress of Turn-Severin.



They all set to work, bent double, to seek for the lost instrument.

The Servians, the Wallachians, and the Hungarians, with whom the deck of the steamboat was crowded, were

evidently very good-natured people, for Magloire had hardly concluded his explanation when they all set to work, bent double, to seek on all sides of them for the lost instrument, as eagerly as though they were looking for the crown jewels of Hungary.

The doctor, who was, as we have often said, the most good-natured man in the world, seeing all these people stooping down and busily seeking for something, naturally supposed that one of them had just lost an article of importance. His anger gave place to the instinctive desire to oblige one of his companions in misfortune, and, without knowing what they were looking for, he also doubled himself nearly in two, and went searching about the deck like the others, to the unspeakable amusement of Magloire, who laughed until he fairly cried. On board a French steamer his laughter would inevitably have betrayed the jester and brought him into trouble; but, on the Danube, Magloire was allowed to laugh without being questioned as to the case of his hilarity. Several passengers, more patient and obstinate than the others, were still looking for the lost instrument when the boat touched the landing-place.

Tourists who seek local colour in their travels ought not to go to Turn-Severin. There they will find nothing but a modern city of the European type, and as everybody has seen it just because it is that sort of place, we are fortunately dispensed from the obligation of describing it.

The only monument that at first attracts attention is a tower, now in ruins, which was built at the time of the Roman rule in Mœsia, by a certain Severinus, governor of the said province. Hence the strange name of Turn-Severin bestowed upon the town by its founders.

A crowd, which might be called considerable, was collected to witness the landing of the delegate members of the Society of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, France.

Who was the indiscreet person that had announced their arrival?

There is grave reason for suspecting Magloire. At all events, if it were not he, it assuredly was not Dr. Quiès, for the poor doctor responded more than languidly to the enthusiastic demonstrations with which he was received. He would have been much better pleased to be allowed to go quietly to his hotel and have his dinner as quickly as might be. He was, on the contrary, obliged to walk for the distance of two kilometers on the bank of the Danube in the company of Anthime and Magloire, and escorted by the crowd, before he reached the ruins of Trajan's bridge, the place selected for the interesting labours of the Congress.

One of the principal questions to be discussed had reference to these ruins.

The point to be debated was whether it was at this spot that the gigantic bridge, nine hundred feet in width, with twenty arches, each not less than one hundred and fifty feet in height and sixty in span, had been constructed by Apollodorus, of Damascus, at the command of Trajan. It was agreed that nothing short of the erudition of Dr. J. B. Quiès and M. Anthime Bonamy would suffice to solve this problem.

Such was the sense of the discourse addressed to our two savants by the president of the Congress, in the Roumanian tongue. Quiès, not knowing one single word of Roumanian, replied in French to the president's allocution, which he had not understood, and was enthusiastically cheered by the audience, who did not understand his answer.

Observe, this happens in Wallachia! We are ready to give the flattest contradiction to any one who may venture to assert that a similar thing may happen elsewhere, and that a number of Frenchmen assemble every year at the Sorbonne, to applaud a Latin discourse of which they do not understand a word.

A speech, whether it be intelligible or not, is a painful thing, and wearisome to the ear of a famished hearer.

The president's address, although it lasted for only an hour and a quarter, seemed mortally long to Dr. Quiès, who concluded his own brief reply by begging for a few hours' rest. This boon was granted him, thanks to Magloire, who knew how to say in every language,—

“I am hungry! I am thirsty! I want to sleep!

Only for Magloire his unfortunate master would have had to submit to three or four more speeches that day.

The question of the authenticity of the ruins of Trajan's bridge was not the only one which was to be studied by the Congress at Turn-Severin. For that alone, a building which had cost a considerable sum, would not have been built, and hung with four hundred flags; nor would savants, journalists, and even photographers, have been induced to come from the four quarters of the world. Many other points were to be considered more or less exhaustively. All the branches of science were to be handled, and were handled, as the papers read at a public meeting on the following day proved:—

1. By the Russian delegate, M. Poporoskoff, on Russia at the time of the Sarmatians, of the Roxclans, and of the Agathyrses.

2. By the Swedish delegate, on the electro-chemical properties of iridium.

3. By the Italian delegate, on the Customs' law of Lapland.

4. By the German delegate, on molecular attraction to the surface of the moon.

5. By the Dutch delegate, on the physical constitution of infusoria.

6. By the Spanish delegate, on refraction in the upper strata of the atmosphere.

7. By the Austrian delegate, on the lowering of temperature at different altitudes.

(The names of these six delegates have not been transmitted to us.)

8. Finally, by the French delegate, on the personal

merit of Dr. J. B. Quiès, and the works which he proposed to produce.

In matters scientific, however, it is not enough to talk; action is indispensable. Experiments of the most interesting kind were to be made upon questions No. 6 and 7 by the authors of the papers upon them. Those gentlemen were to ascend in a balloon to the height of 7000 yards, so as to confirm their statements upon refraction and the lowering of the temperature beyond risk of refutation.

The results of this costly operation seemed, however, to offer less of absolute certainty than might have been desired. As Quiès had correctly foreseen, there were several amateur savants at Turn-Severin, but real savants had stayed away.

That circumstance had, as we shall presently see, a lamentable influence on our hero's destiny.

The "Capricorn," so the balloon was named, which had been lying flat on the ground on the day of the doctor's arrival at Turn-Severin, had been inflated during the night, and was swaying about, secured by long ropes, in the middle of a boarded enclosure, when they came out of the place of meeting.

"Just to think," said Quiès to Anthime, pointing to the bobbing monster, "that there are fools for such follies!"

"You would not feel any curiosity to—"

"I!"

Never in his life had the doctor heard so preposterous a question. He could not make any answer to it except that "I!" but the exclamation had more in it than all the papers which had just been read at the Congress.

Magloire, always greedy for novelty and excitement, looked at the balloon with a sigh. Most willingly would he have foregone six months' wages if thereby he could have procured for Dr. Quiès the renown of having ascended 7000 yards above the level of the sea, and its reflection upon himself.

The next day at noon—the hour fixed for the ascent—

the sky was clear, the temperature was comparatively cool, the sun made the river shine like silver, and the vast globe of the balloon like a dome of gold.

The two delegates from Spain and Austria were superintending the final preparations for the ascent, when Quiès, Anthime, and Magloire entered the enclosure reserved for the members of the Congress. It was clear that there was something wrong, for they consulted together with evident anxiety from minute to minute, and five or six of their colleagues who were busy about them, seemed to say,—

“How is this to be got over?”

They were to have begun the ascent at noon; at two o'clock they were still there.

“What is the cause of this delay?” inquired Quiès of one of his colleagues who, unfortunately, spoke French.

“Ah, my dear sir, I may tell you, in confidence—”

“Rest assured that—”

“This infernal balloon was made at Pesth and rigged by an English engineer. The apparatus is no doubt a new invention. The delegates do not know how to manage it, and the ascent is therefore useless.”

“What apparatus do you mean?”

“I don't rightly know, but I believe it is spectroscopes—spectrometers—something of that kind—”

“Oh, that does not signify,” said Quiès, smiling, “I will examine the apparatus, and shall be able to tell these gentlemen all about it in a few minutes. My esteemed colleague, M. Anthime Bonamy, places himself, with me, at their disposal.”

The news that the French delegates would be able to remove the obstacles that retarded the ascent of the balloon, spread rapidly, and Quiès and his companions were loudly cheered.

The crowd made way for them, and they came close to the car, which was vacated and left free to their investigation. They mounted into it at once, Anthime installed himself on the right, Quiès on the left, and they entered

on a conscientious examination, after having directed that the signal for departure was not to be given.

Now that signal had been impatiently expected by the crowd, and also by the sixty Wallachian peasants who had to hold the balloon in its position. They had, however, been well instructed ; neither want of skill nor ill-will was to be apprehended from them, and Quiès, seeing them motionless and impassive at their post, set to work with a tranquil mind.

“ You see,” said he to Anthime, “ it is just as I thought ! What trumpery savants ! A pitiful lot.”

“ We need not complain, my dear colleague, for it gives us an opportunity of showing what we are.”

“ And what we are worth, that is true.”

“ These instruments are in excellent order, admirably constructed.”

“ And very easy to handle.”

“ Certainly.”

They examined the instruments one by one, working the wheels, the valves, and the screws, partly to acquit themselves honourably of their mission, and partly to give themselves additional importance in the eyes of the members of the Congress, who were grouped around the “ Capricorn,” and followed all their movements with respectful attention.

During this time, Magloire, who was standing up between his two masters, and full of pride and delight, did his best to associate himself with their important task. He tried the ropes of the balloon one by one to make sure of their strength, refastened a buckle here, and tucked in a scrap of the wickerwork there — in short, played the part of the fly on the wheel in the twenty square feet of the balloon-car. Then the idea occurred to him—an unlucky idea if ever there was one—to look over the instruments in his turn. A monkey in a laboratory would not have been more out of place. Magloire had never in his life handled a barometer, a spectrometer, or a manometer.

He had taken up and put down again four or five instruments whose very names he did not know, when as chance would have it, he laid his hand on one of those horns which



Magloire put the horn mechanically to his lips.

are blown on French railways to give notice of the passing of a train.

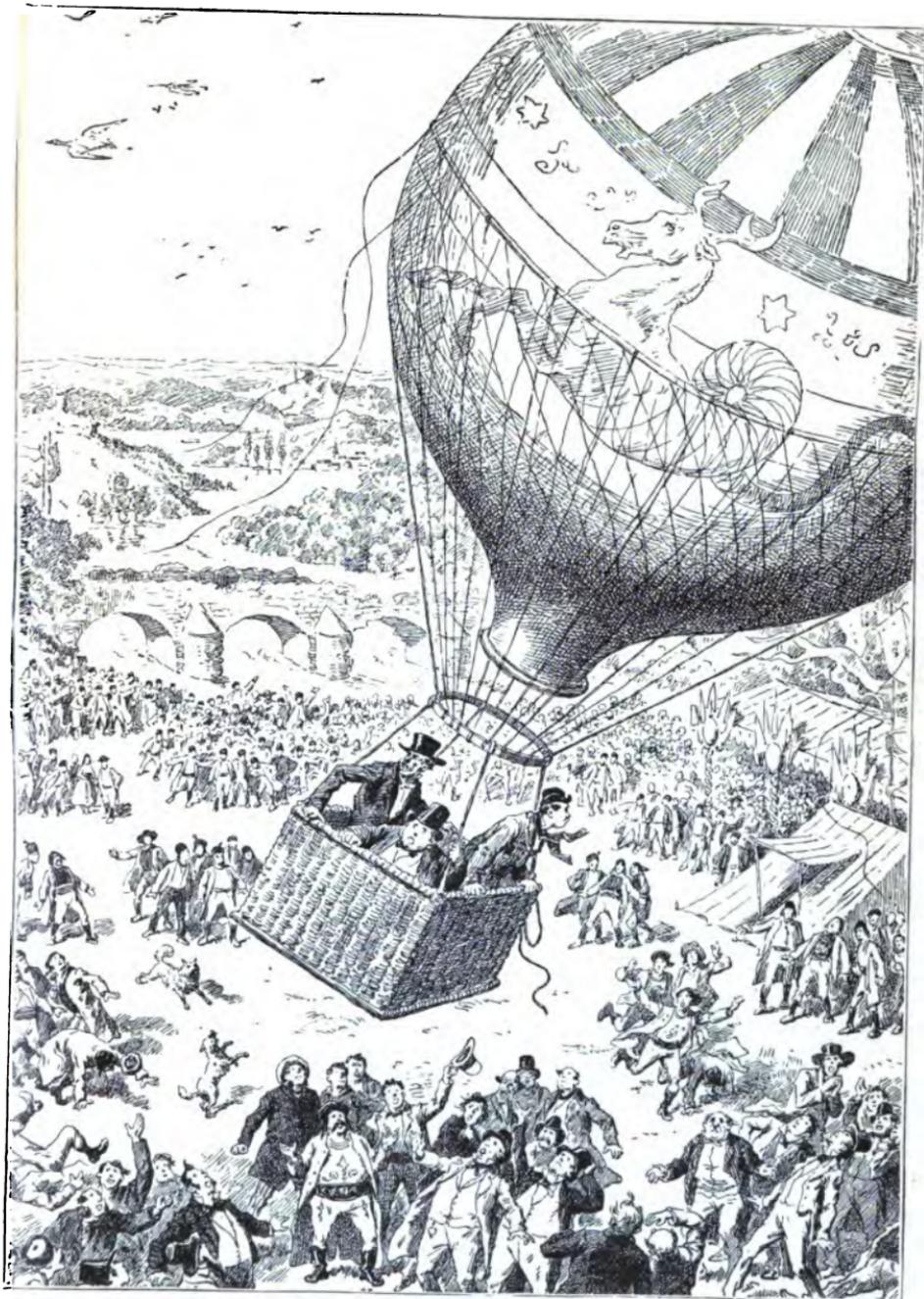
While wondering how this horn came to be there, and what possible use could be made of it in a balloon ascent, Magloire put it mechanically to his lips, and, to make sure

that he had not made a mistake as to the nature of the instrument, he blew into it with all his strength.

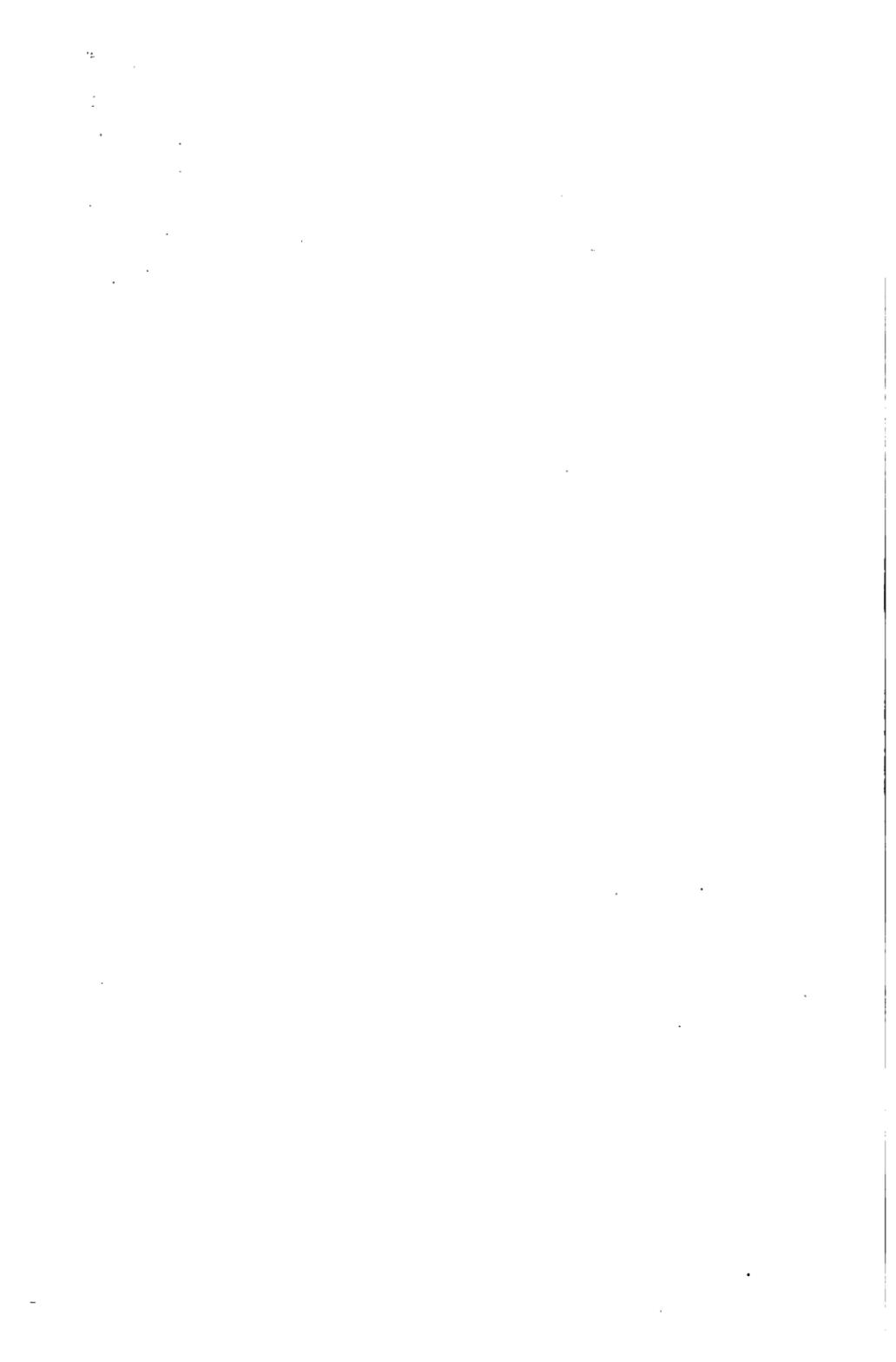
✓ The last vibration of the sound had not died out of the air ere the Wallachian peasants had let go their hold on the ropes.

A blast on the horn was the appointed signal!

The "Capricorn," left to itself, soared towards the clouds with bewildering rapidity, carrying the unfortunate Dr. J. B. Quiès and his companions into the realms of ether.



The "Capricorn" abandoned to itself.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

TREATS OF THE IMPRUDENCE OF ANGER, AND THE  
UTILITY OF BITS OF STRING.

NOBODY will be surprised to learn that the sinking of the firm earth from beneath their feet threw our three involuntary æronauts into a state of stupefaction.

Anthime stood for more than a minute with his mouth open, and his eyes staring wide. Magloire himself, the intrepid, the adventurous Magloire, remained mute and discomfited for the same space of time. Fortunately, however, he was not a man to be easily disconcerted. He speedily recovered his self-possession, and was able to regard the adventure in a light which made it redound largely to the credit of the illustrious savants whom he had the honour to serve.

Anthime, although less prone to enthusiasm, was speedily restored to composure by reflecting that many of his fellow-men had already gone up in balloons, and had come down again in safety.

As for Quiès, he was utterly prostrate. This blow seemed to be the very last that could be inflicted upon him. Such an adventure went beyond the bounds of all that he had conceived to be possible. He looked at his two companions in utter bewilderment, while they bent over him and endeavoured to recall him to his senses.

“Courage, courage, my dear colleague,” said Anthime. “After all, it’s only a little trip, and we can shorten it at our pleasure. This balloon is as tractable as a boat on the sea. Look! it ascends, it descends!”

So saying he threw out some ballast, and worked the valve, but Dr. Quiès remained entirely unmoved by these operations.

"Think of the future, sir," said Magloire. "You will write three or four octavo volumes upon this ascent, which will surely bring you to the Institute."

"The fact is," resumed M. Bonamy, "that chance is doing you a very good turn."

Quiès understood, for he raised his eyes to heaven.

"Yes," continued Anthime, encouraged by this expressive pantomime, "you owe a good deal of your celebrity to chance, and just think what you are again about to owe to it. All Europe will soon be talking of our aerial expedition. The newspapers will carry your name and mine to the four corners of the globe; and all this without our having had even the trouble of intending it."

Quiès, instead of answering, raised his clenched fists to heaven, and then brought them suddenly down under M. Bonamy's nose.

"Quiès, Quiès," said the latter, "you make a great mistake by being angry with me! It is to me you owe the best part of your renown."

Quiès looked at him in amazement.

"There's no doubt about that," continued Anthime. "You must admit that it would never have come into your head to travel in Africa and gain the title of "illustrious explorer," with which we are pestered, if I, Anthime Bonamy, had not started you off, without your knowledge, in the Marseilles train."

"When did that happen?"

"When? Why on our return from Le Plessis, after the baptism of your godson, Baptistin Vernet, called La Carriole."

"Ah! It is you who—"

"Certainly, my dear colleague, it is I."

"It is you!"

As he uttered these words, Quiès started up. An-

thime's revelations, throwing a sudden light upon the past, sent all the fury and gall that had filled the unhappy



“ You want to bring about my death ! ”

doctor's heart during his five months' wanderings and sufferings, straight to his head. He was seized with terrible

anger, one of those sudden storms of passion which make men mad and blind, and it swept his will before it.

"It is you two who dragged me into this idiotic expedition. It is you who suggested the fatal idea of it to M. de Préchafoin ; you who drugged me at Pesth, and had me put on board the boat. It is you who have shut me up with yourself in this wicker-basket ! You want to bring about my death !"

"Don't think, Quiès—"

"Don't deny it. You are resolved upon it ! Well then, so be it, wretch that you are ! But I will not die alone ! I have my vengeance at hand ! You have taken me up into the air with you ; I am going to hurl you down to the earth with me !"

Dr. Quiès had entirely lost his head. He seized the rope which governed the valve, and, the gas escaping freely from the upper part, the balloon began to descend with terrific rapidity.

"Quick, Magloire," cried Anthime, "quick ! Throw out ballast !"

Magloire, who had been endeavouring to overpower the doctor, but in vain, for the violent passion of Quiès had redoubled his strength, thought it better to obey. He laid hold of the ballast-bags, and emptied them one after the other, actively assisted by Anthime.

"Throw it out ! throw it out !" shouted Quiès, "we are going down ! We are falling ! In another moment we shall strike the earth ! Throw out ballast, my good friends ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! Throw out ballast ! But I pull the rope ! I pull the rope, and I shall not let it go !"

He was not pulling it ; he was hanging on it with all his weight, and only treading the bottom of the car with his toes. Notwithstanding his misadventures, the doctor weighed at that moment precisely 115 kilograms. It needs a strong rope to resist such a strain, augmented by the muscular efforts of a man insane with rage.

Quiès exerted himself so effectually that the rope broke,

and fell into space, while he tumbled back into the bottom of the car.

During this time Anthime and Magloire were throwing out ballast without an instant's pause, and the balloon was rising more quickly than it had descended. Being easy on



Quiès exerted himself so effectually that the rope broke.

this point, they turned round to look after Quiès, and saw him lying at the bottom of the car, insensible, and with his face a deep purple. Magloire rubbed his hands, Anthime blew on his temples, and, after a full half-hour of this treatment, the doctor sneezed—a sure sign that he was not dead.

He opened his eyes, looked vacantly at his companions, burst into tears, and held out a hand each to Anthime and Magloire.

This spontaneous movement, a logical reaction from the fearful agitation which he had just undergone, was taken by M. Bonamy for a free pardon of the past. He had now only to guard against the possibilities of the future.

"Anthime, where are we?" asked Quiès faintly.

"At 6000 yards, my dear friend."

"In the air?"

"Of course."

"Ah! in what direction?"

"I don't know."

"What is our speed?"

"Prodigious! unheard of! incredible!"

"Ah!"

"No doubt we are being carried along by a whirlwind above the lower atmosphere."

"Ah!"

"Do you not feel occasional shocks?"

"Yes, I do."

"Just as if the balloon were striking itself against obstacles in its way? That is caused by the conflict between the current by which we are driven and opposing currents."

"Are we ascending?"

"No, but this current—"

"But," interposed Magloire, who was beginning to feel very uneasy on his own account, "there is a very simple way out of all this, it is just to descend. My opinion is that we have remained quite long enough up in the air for the honour and glory of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes! It is getting dark, and—"

"Let us descend," said Anthime; "I don't ask better. Pull the rope, Magloire."

"The rope, sir?" said Magloire, searching for it everywhere, "the rope—but I can't find it."

"What?"

"Look for it yourself, sir."

"No, don't look, Anthime," said Quiès; "don't look, Magloire. I broke the rope!"

"Good heaven! we are lost!"

At these terrible words Quiès, recognizing the gravity of his deed of anger, again burst into tears, and Anthime and Magloire wept with him, as men might well do who felt that their last hour was at hand.

Their situation was becoming more and more critical. If they could not succeed in making the valve act, their only resource would be to burst the balloon—a slender chance indeed! But to begin at the altitude of 6000 yards a descent which must be accelerated with each second of its duration was a serious matter.

By common consent they resolved not to resort to this tremendous expedient except as a last chance. The valve must be made to work by some means.

"If I had enough rope," said Magloire, "I am sure I could manage to hitch myself up to the side of this infernal balloon, and join the two ends."

Unfortunately Anthime and he had cut all the ropes that held the ballast bags. To take one of those by which the car was kept in its place would be to endanger the whole apparatus, and could not be thought of.

In the car itself there remained only some bits of cord, much too short and too slight for the purpose required.

And the "Capricorn" was sweeping through space at the rate of forty leagues an hour! Such speed ought to have suffocated the unhappy aeronauts, but they were not aware of it. The air which surrounded them, travelling with them, kept them apparently motionless. Nothing could be attempted until the sun should have risen again. For twelve hours they would have to abandon themselves to the blind whirlwind; for twelve hours they would have to suffer from cold, hunger, and suspense. If, indeed, they

were ever again to behold the earth, in what a state should they revisit it!

Darkness had come down almost around them; darkness deeper than we ever know. The lightless stars showed only like silver specks upon the black dome of the sky. It was truly sepulchral!

Quiès crouched down in one corner of the car, Anthime in another, and without exchanging a word, or even a pressure of the hand, they shut their eyes, not in sleep, but in the effort to shut out the consciousness of their appalling situation.

Magloire would not give way to despair. All night long he ruminated upon a plan which he began to put in execution so soon as morning broke.

We could not say what was the country over which the "Capricorn" was then passing. It is, however, beyond a doubt that the balloon had travelled an immense distance from its point of departure, and was destined to increase that distance considerably before Magloire should have accomplished his purpose.

Out of the pieces of cord which he found in the car he proposed to make a rope as nearly as possible similar to that of the valve, and to join the two ends, if there remained enough of the piece attached to the upper part of the balloon to enable him to catch hold of it. He climbed up by the net far enough to make sure that the rope might be reached. All hope was not lost, and he set to work bravely.

Anthime and Quiès looked on at what he was doing without seeing it, without taking the slightest interest in his exertions. Since the previous day they had not stirred from the bottom of the car, but had cowered there with their heads bent down to their knees, waiting for death. For them it was merely a question of time and manner. Were they to die of hunger and exhaustion? Were they to be asphyxiated? Or if they were flung down upon the earth by the possible explosion of the balloon, would they

be dashed to atoms? In vain did Magloire endeavour to inspire them with hope; they did not listen to him.

As a matter of fact they were beyond caring. They had reached a pitch of exhaustion at which the mind ceases to perceive the sufferings that are inflicted upon the body. Occasionally, however, a ray of reason seemed to light up their eyes like the flicker of an expiring lamp. Many thoughts, although it is true that they were vague, passed in a kind of whirl through their minds. The remembrance of the past contended with their vanished hopes.

For them the past was Saint-Pignon, the pretty town crowning the green slope, the friends whom they were never more to see, the beloved voices which they were never more to hear.

There is reason to believe that in the great crises of life souls hold involuntary communion, and that individuals understand each other without speech. Anthime and Quiès had not exchanged a word; yet their thoughts, having the same goal, had travelled in such complete accord that at the same moment the remembrance of a last duty to be fulfilled came to each.

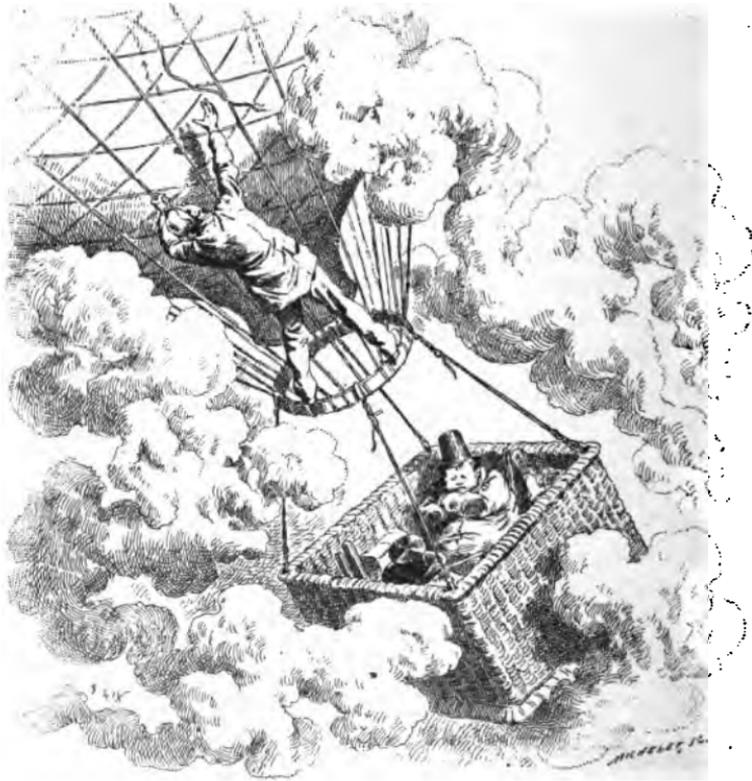
Quiès tore a leaf out of his pocket-book, and wrote with a pencil and a shaking hand the following words:—

“In the face of a certain death I leave this farewell to all whom I have loved. At the same time I ratify my existing testamentary dispositions in favour of M<sup>de</sup>. Ragot (widow), requesting her to give some article that has belonged to me, as a remembrance, to each of the under-named persons: Henri de Malleville, M. de Malleville, Commandant La Carriole, M. de Préchafoin, Gertrude. May all those whom I have involuntarily offended pardon my faults!”

Anthime wrote as follows:—

“Being at the point of death I address an eternal adieu to all those who have loved me. At the same time I ratify my existing testamentary dispositions entrusted to M<sup>aitre</sup> Grimblot. May all those whom I have injured pardon me!”

After they had signed these important documents, Anthime and Quiès placed them, one in the case of an aneroid barometer, the other in that of a differential thermometer ; then each refolded his arms and threw himself back into his corner



He succeeded in fastening the rope.

Magloire worked on steadily at his task ; but the job was a laborious one, and it was evening once more before he had completed it.

Still the balloon, swept on by the hurricane, pursued its dizzy course. Sometimes it oscillated, whirled round, and twisted itself about under the action of the wind, as though

it were striving to escape from the clutches of the invisible demon that held it fast. Anon, weary of the useless conflict, it desisted, and, being again caught by the current, rushed onward in space. This lasted all night, and for half the following day. Magloire had not slept, he had gone on with his work in the dark, feeling the cords with his fingers. When day dawned he had made eight yards of good strong rope ; by midday his task was finished. Then, without uttering a word, he took the rope between his teeth, hoisted himself up to the hoop of the balloon, got his feet into the meshes of the net, and, holding on now by the right, now by the left hand, he succeeded, after half an hour of severe continuous exertion, in fastening the rope that he had twisted to the end of the broken rope which remained above. This done, he let himself down carefully and pulled the rope.

The valve worked ! The balloon descended ! Such was his joy that he sang and danced in the car. Anthime and Quiès thought he had gone mad, and looked at him in terror.

“ Saved ! Doctor, we are saved ! ” he cried. “ Saved ! ”

They got on their feet mechanically.

“ Look,” continued Magloire, “ we are descending ”—he pulled the rope—“ we are descending ! ”

It was true ; they could already dimly discern the earth beneath them.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

SHOWS THAT WHAT DID HAPPEN WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED IF DR. QUIÈS HAD WEIGHED FIFTY POUNDS LESS.

To say that they discerned the earth is perhaps too much ; they divined it rather. On the grey immensity beneath the balloon a spot stood out in black, curiously indented, like a stain of ink upon a sheet of blotting-paper.

Was that land ? Around it was there fog, or water ? It was difficult to say ; but slowly, steadily, without jerk or jolt, the balloon still descended, and soon Magloire was able to exclaim for the second time,—

“ We are saved ! ”

Yes, this was land, or at least a tongue of dry, stony ground, with a few green patches upon its surface here and there. Not a tree, not a house was in sight. On one side a vast stretch of blue water could be plainly distinguished ; on the other the mist made it impossible to ascertain whether it was a continent or an island that the balloon was approaching. That, however, was a point totally unimportant to Dr. Quiès and his companions at the moment. It was land, that is to say, it was almost the certainty of not dying of hunger, unless, by a final freak of chance, the wind should have borne them to a barren, uninhabited island, without culture and without vegetation. They never thought of that ; their sole anxiety was to avoid injury on reaching the ground, or to escape being carried away again before they reached it.

Magloire, who was leaning over the edge of the car and working the machinery, suddenly uttered an exclamation.

"What's the matter?" asked M. Bonamy.

"It moves, sir."

"What? What is it that moves?"

"The two white specks."



He peered downwards at the two natives.

For some minutes he had been gazing at two white specks on the land beneath, and endeavouring to make out what they could be. The discovery that these specks were human beings was an unspeakable relief. It afforded a full and undeniable proof that the country was not uninhabited, and that on setting foot on land they should find immediate succour, food, beds. Beds! The mere idea sent a delightful thrill through the nerves



The "Capricorn" rose suddenly into the air.

of Dr. Quiès. At that moment a bed represented to him the acme of civilization. If the reader will put himself in the doctor's place for a moment, the sentiment will not strike him as exaggerated.

Magloire had the balloon-anchors ready, and while awaiting the exact moment for casting them, he peered downwards at the two natives, who seemed to scrutinize the enormous descending machine with lively curiosity. The two men were dressed in European costume, consisting of a shirt and blue trousers, and, by another happy chance, their caps and jackets, which lay on the stones beside them, proved them to be sailors. Men who were accustomed to handle the

gear of a ship ought to be able to handle that of a balloon; and, therefore, so soon as he was near enough to make them hear, Magloire called to them as he flung out his anchors,—

“Catch hold, and don’t let go.”

M. Bonamy, on chance, repeated the same instructions in Italian. The doctor reiterated them in Spanish, Latin, and ancient Greek, although, to judge from appearances, he was not addressing contemporaries of Themistocles. But he was carried away by his zeal.

The two men, however, did not wait for the last injunction; on hearing the first they seized the irons, and drew the “Capricorn” towards them with a steady and practised pull.

In five minutes the car touched the ground.

“Don’t let go,” cried Magloire, as he promptly opened the door, and stepped off the wicker flooring on the firm earth with evident satisfaction. Anthime followed him, and it must be said for both that they came out first not so much from a selfish impulse as because they wished to render poor Quiès what they considered indispensable assistance. This was an unfortunate error, as we shall soon see. His first contact with the crust of the earth had restored to Dr. Quiès the control of his mind and the elasticity of his limbs as if by a miracle, and without bestowing a thought upon the instruments that had been entrusted to him, without taking Magloire’s hand, or saying a word to either of them, he stepped out after his companions.

But the doctor was, as we know, a heavy man. The “Capricorn,” which had hitherto been perfectly docile and obedient, and seemed hardly to strain upon the anchor at all, was no sooner set free from the last remaining weight of 115 kilograms, than it rose suddenly into the air with such buoyancy that the two poor men whose aid had been so freely given had not time to let go the ropes, but found themselves dangling at a height of 300 feet above

the ground in less time than it takes to describe the occurrence.

Anthime, Dr. Quiès, and Magloire uttered simultaneous cries of surprise and terror. A catastrophe seemed inevitable; but they presently saw the two men, who were agile and hardy fellows, climb up like cats, and take refuge in the car. For the moment they were safe and sound; it was but a substitution of persons, and it might be hoped that with the aid of Providence they would escape the terrible fate with which they were threatened. And so, after they had wasted a sigh in the direction of the "Capricorn," which presently vanished in space, Dr. Quiès and his companions considered themselves entitled to direct their attention exclusively to their own concerns.

"My dear Quiès," said M. Bonamy. The doctor started as if a snake had stung him.

"Your—dear—Quiès!" he repeated, dividing the words.

"But—"

"There is no 'dear Quiès' in the case, sir, any longer! There are two men face to face, one of whom has mortally injured the other!"

"I thought—"

"You were wrong in so thinking, sir, and now that heaven has permitted us to touch earth again, the hour of retribution has struck!"

The phrase was bombastic, but the look which accompanied it showed clearly that at least the doctor was not disposed, for the moment, to overlook the treachery which had been practised towards him. Perhaps he would have exacted the reparation that he considered due to him, then and there, had not Magloire observed with indisputable truth that before proceeding to settle accounts with the past, it would be well to consider the necessities of the present. Now there was none more urgent than that of eating and drinking.

Upon this Dr. Quiès perceived or remembered that he

was dying of hunger, and broke off the interview with a gesture which signified,—

“This is not ended. Let us dine.”

Dine! Yes, certainly; but the country seemed to be very ill-supplied with hotels, inns, taverns, or analogous establishments, and almost equally poor in native edibles. Magloire set off to reconnoitre in the neighbourhood, but presently returned in consternation to inform the doctor and Anthime that so far as he could see, not a tree, a house, or a spot of cultivated or arable land was to be seen. He had not come across so much as an edible root in all his perquisitions. There was nothing, nothing, except a little spring of water at the distance of a few feet from them. The doctor and M. Bonamy crawled to the spring and revived themselves with a draught of water; then a council was held.

From the place where they were, our three shipwrecked friends beheld the sea at a short distance, and on the sandy shore there was a number of sea-gulls and other aquatic birds. But there was no means of killing or capturing any of these for dinner. The only resource was shell-fish, and, however unwillingly, the party had to trudge down to the edge of the sea and search for oysters, mussels, shrimps, or other amphibious creatures which had found a home in the hollows of the sand. The search was long, and its results were meagre. Dr. J. B. Quiès dined that evening on three dozen raw mussels, and this pitiful meal was not calculated to dispel his resentment, or make him forget his past sufferings. The amply-justified dread of fresh miseries to come, wrung from him at dessert (consisting of one last mussel) the bitter cry of—

“And it is to you, sir, that I owe this!”

“Ah—” muttered Anthime.

“Don’t try to excuse yourself,” resumed Dr. Quiès imperiously and majestically. “A mean jealousy has impelled you to the most abominable of all crimes!”

“I did not think—”

"You have disturbed my repose, endangered my health, broken up my life. Here I am, thanks to you, condemned to perish miserably upon an unknown shore."

"And am I less surely condemned than you?"

"That is not enough for me, sir."

"What more do you want?"

"I have already told you—reparation. One of us two,



Dr. J. B. Quies dined on three dozen raw mussels.

sir, is one too many. God, who is just, will punish the guilty and avenge the innocent."

"Then it is a duel you want?"

"Yes, sir, a duel, a mortal encounter."

It was plain that the despair caused by his latest misfortune had obscured the good doctor's reason.

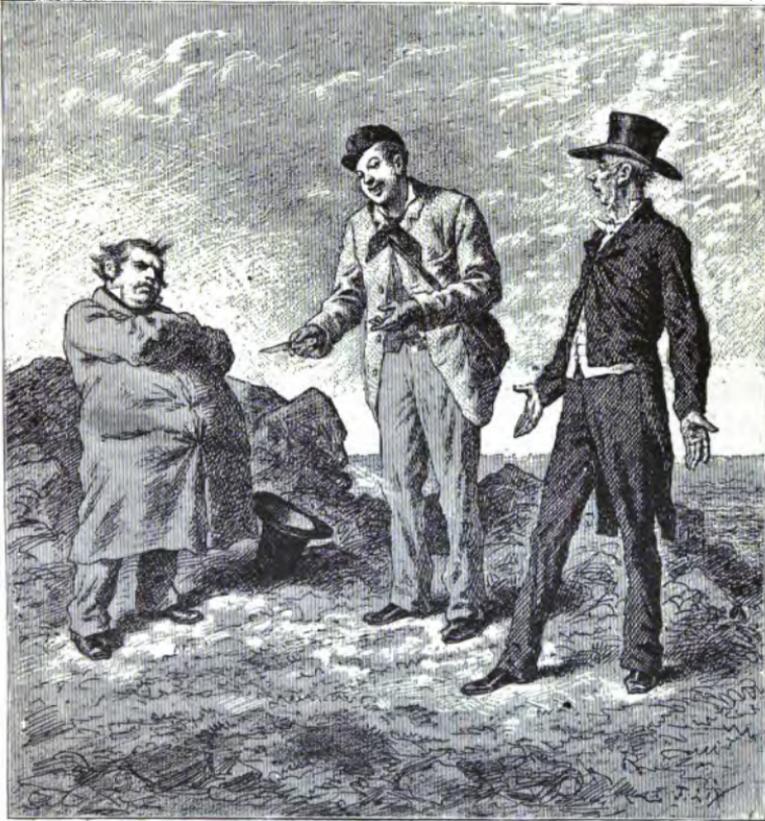
"But, is it not a fact," remonstrated M. Bonamy, "that in the car of that accursed balloon yesterday, you threw yourself into my arms with tears?"

"A passing weakness, for which I blush, sir. I thought myself lost; my reason forsook me, I was mad."

"And you are so still. Just think—"

"I will think of nothing, sir, but my vengeance."

Dr. Quiès was standing on his toes, his face was purple,



"Very well, then," said Bonamy, losing patience.

his eyes shot out lightnings. Such an attitude on his part was phenomenal. Vainly did Magloire endeavour to quiet him down. A duel, a deadly encounter, he would have, and he stuck manfully to his point.

"Very well, then," said Bonamy, losing patience.

"At last!" exclaimed the doctor, folding his arms majestically, and assuming the attitude of Napoleon on the field of battle; "At last!"

But "there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." When it came to regulating the conditions of the combat, the adversaries perceived that they had neither swords, pistols, cutlasses, nor indeed any weapon except Magloire's knife. One knife between two antagonists! Unless they were to use it in turn, what was to be done? The duel was postponed; there was no help for the delay.

Anthime and Magloire were perfectly satisfied that the deadly encounter being delayed would be heard of no more. But it is always a mistake to affirm anything, when the fact is not an accomplished, indisputable, plain fact. Nothing is more fallacious than moral certainty.

Magloire and M. Bonamy would only have had to look at the doctor in order to doubt his future mildness. His attitude and his eyes said plainly enough, "I shall have you yet!"

In the meantime it was necessary to find shelter during the night from the cold and from dangerous beasts, if there were any. Magloire found an almost agreeable bedroom in the hollow of a rock, and Dr. Quiès, now quite worn out, slept profoundly in it. On awaking, his anger seemed to be appeased, but his resentment was as strong as ever. He took no notice of Anthime's advances beyond a glance of disdain, and made his meaning additionally plain by giving his hand to Magloire.

"Ah, sir," said the latter, "what an escape we have had! But I should have been very sorry to have missed making that ascent. It will be a famous page in your life, doctor."

The doctor replied by a significant grimace.

"There is only one thing that troubles me," said Magloire. "I should like to know where we are."

"We are in Europe, Magloire."

"If you say so, sir—"

"The costume of the two poor fellows who have taken our place in the balloon is a proof of that."

"If I might remark to you, sir—"

"And the sea, Magloire; that blue, tideless sea—no ebb, no flow."

"You have observed that, sir?"

"It is, beyond a doubt, the Mediterranean."

"Ah, sir, science is a fine thing!"

For once the doctor received an indirect tribute of admiration coldly.



Dr. Quiès, now quite worn out, slept profoundly.

"Everything leads me to believe," he continued "that we are on the continent, and that within a short distance we ought to find dwellings and inhabitants."

"Let us set out then, sir."

"Set out, Magloire? Could not you go and explore in the first instance? Walking tires me, as you know. Go so far as the nearest village, and bring me back a horse or a mule that will carry me, or better still, a carriage of some sort."

“As you please, sir.”

Magloire set off gaily, leaving M. Bonamy and the doctor face to face. They breakfasted on mussels; they dined on mussels; and from the rising of the sun, until the going down thereof, they did not exchange a single word.

In the evening Magloire returned, dead tired.

“Well?” asked the doctor eagerly.

“We are in an island, sir,” answered Magloire with a smile.

“Uninhabited?”

“Yes, sir.”

This final blow finished Dr. Quiès; he let his head drop upon his hands, and groaned,—

“It is all over.”

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## DE PROFUNDIS CLAMAVI AD TE, DÓMINI.

SIX weeks had elapsed since the departure of Dr. Quiès and his companions, and his Majesty King Spring had made his solemn re-entry into the good town of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes.

The glad sunshine of April speckled the slate roofs with gold, and all the gardens with emerald. The swallows had come back, and the tomtits and chaffinches were making their nests and twittering on every side.

The inhabitants greeted the new season gladly, like the birds and the plants. Faces were more good-humoured eyes were brighter than at other times, and all small differences seemed to be laid aside, for the moment at all events. There was no law business ; there were no police cases ; never had the tranquillity of Saint-Pignon been more profound. All the inhabitants were quietly attending to their ordinary business. M. de Préchafoin was watching over the interests of the Society, the mayor over the administration of the commune, and Mdmè. Ragot over the welfare of her six daughters, whose six husbands—a rare thing to relate—had not given her any cause of complaint.

Unfortunately, there is no horizon without a black speck. Dr. J. B. Quiès was, at the present moment, the black speck of his birthplace. No news of him had reached Saint-Pignon since the day of his departure. And yet that is not an absolutely correct statement, for M. de Pré-

chafoin had received a brief telegram from his correspondent at Turn-Severin, to the following effect :—

“ J. B. Quiès and Anthime Bonamy gone up in the ‘Capricorn.’ No news of the balloon.”

M. de Préchafoin’s previous experience of the danger of allowing such serious news, which might be contradicted between one day and the next, to get out, induced him to conceal the fact that he had been apprised of the catastrophe, until it should have received confirmation.

The prolonged silence caused much uneasiness to those who were interested in the doctor, and, as we know, their number was large. The only person who could have rejoiced in the probability of the final disappearance of Quiès was Mdme. Ragot, whose chances of fortune were augmented with each day’s delay. Strange to say, she was, quite sincerely, more anxious than any other person respecting the fate of her good cousin! This was because she could not shake off the remembrance of the evil counsel which her cupidity had inspired; perhaps Anthime had acted upon it; perhaps he had been the victim of it together with Quiès! In that case she had two deaths on her conscience! Now, hardened though she was by selfishness, Mdme. Ragot felt that such a load was more than she could bear.

These few words will explain how and why she fainted away stone-dead on the day when the Mayor of Saint-Pignon communicated to her the following letter which he had just received :—

“ Consulate of France at Parga (Turkey in Europe).

“ SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that two Frenchmen, belonging to your town, have been buried in the Christian cemetery at Gallipoli, in the presence of respectable witnesses who have formally identified them. I forward to you herewith, in confirmation, various articles of a nature to establish the identity of the deceased persons. The certificates of death have been made out by my direction, I subjoin them, as also two testamentary acts, dated and signed, of which I have kept copies.”

Dead! Anthime and Quiès both dead! Doubt was no longer possible.

M. de Préchafoin then resolved to make known the infor-



The wreck of the "Capricorn."

mation which he had received from Turn-Severin. The letter from the French Consul at Parga was only a sad sequel. It was not, then, in order to ascer'ain the certainty

of a misfortune which was, alas! only too certain, but for the purpose of learning all its details, that the mayor, at the instance of M. de Préchafoin, begged to have an exact report of the event and the circumstances under which it had taken place furnished to him from Parga.

We give this document in its entirety, as it was forwarded from the Consulate:—

“On the morning of the 22nd February of this year, in stormy weather, a balloon in distress was observed, two miles out to sea, floating on the crest of the waves. From



The balloon floated upon the waves.

the ships in harbour two men could be distinctly made out, striving in desperation to lighten the car. Two life-boats were immediately sent to their aid. One capsized, its crew were happily saved; the other was forced to abandon the attempt and re-enter the port. We could do no more, and remained spectators of this drama whose terrible conclusion seemed inevitable. In fact, the car was speedily submerged; the balloon, beaten by the waves, and burst open, floated upon the waves like the fragment of a sail.

“The wind having fallen towards evening, other boats were again sent out to search, and these returned, bringing

with them the remains of the balloon. On its cover the name "Capricorn" was made out, while underneath it the name of the builder at Pesth (Hungary) was to be deciphered readily.

"The papers found in the car, consisting of letters, visiting cards, and two writings in the form of wills, proved that the victims of the accident were of French nationality, and steps were immediately taken by the Consul to ascertain their identity.

"The builder of the balloon stated that the 'Capricorn' had been despatched to Turn-Severin on the occasion of the Scientific Congress recently held there. The Consul immediately inquired at Turn-Severin the names of the aeronauts who had gone up in the 'Capricorn,' and received for answer that they were Dr. J. B. Quiès and M. Anthime Bonamy : these names corresponded with the papers found in the car.

"On the 25th, three days after this lamentable catastrophe, the bodies of the victims were washed ashore, and the Consul requested that two of the members of the Congress should repair with all possible speed to Parga, in order to identify them. The bodies, having been exposed to the fury of the waves and beaten against the rocks on the coast for upwards of sixty hours, were almost naked, and much disfigured ; nevertheless MM. Poporoskoff and Galeotti, the Russian and Italian delegates to the Congress of Turn-Severin, declared that they recognized them, one on account of the unusual height of the individual, the other on account of his obesity. In their opinion doubt was not possible.

"This statement being corroborated by the papers in our possession, and by the circumstances of the terrible occurrence which had been witnessed by a large number of people, the Consul thought it right to draw up the death certificates of MM. J. B. Quiès and Anthime Bonamy, and to have their bodies interred in the Christian cemetery at Parga, in the presence of the under-named."

Everybody had evidently acted with simple good faith in this matter. The two delegates had recognized, or believed that they recognized, the two disfigured bodies. It could not have entered their imagination that the "Capricorn" had changed its passengers as a hackney-coach might have done.

And so, henceforth, in the belief of everybody, Dr. J. B. Quiès and M. Anthime Bonamy were dead and buried!

Two such renowned savants could not disappear from the town which they had adorned without having public homage done to their memory. M. de Préchafoin summoned his esteemed colleagues, and delivered two funeral addresses, which began with, "Standing by this hardly-closed grave," and ended with, "Adieu, Quiès; Anthime Bonamy, adieu!"

The meeting then proceeded to pass two important resolutions. It was resolved that the statue of Dr. J. B. Quiès should be solemnly inaugurated on the Grande Place; it was also resolved that an application should be made to the Municipal Council for the purpose of obtaining permission to have the bodies of the two savants brought back from Gallipoli, and buried with great pomp at Saint-Pignon, all at the expense of the commune.

The applications having been made on the same day, the Municipal Council granted all that was asked, and two of the members of the society set out immediately, their mission being to bring back to France the mortal remains of the doctor and his companion.

The formal certificates of death having been transcribed upon the registers, the two wills were handed over to Maître Grimblot, who pushed forward the settlement of affairs vigorously, seeing that the property in question was important in amount, and that his own pickings in the business would be considerable.

After the short delay required by law, Mdme. Ragot was put into possession of the goods of her cousin, Dr. J. B. Quiès.

In virtue of the deed executed by her for the benefit of

M. Bonamy, and by which the reversionary interest of three-fourths of the property was reserved to her, one-fourth only was assigned to Anthime's heirs, with whom we have nothing to do.

The surplus sufficed to make Mdme. Ragot very well off, and she at once became one of the most important personages of the town. The enjoyment of her new position could not, however, stifle her remorse. As an act of penance she went to see Gertrude, who was in profound grief for her master's death (the more especially as she was not mentioned in his will), and settled an annuity of six hundred francs upon her. She also retained her as house-keeper, saying that she intended to live in the doctor's house without making any change, in order to keep the memory of her excellent cousin constantly alive and present.

This act of contrition—at the cost of twelve thousand francs—did not calm her restless spirit. Being dissatisfied with herself, Mdme. Ragot soon became dissatisfied with everybody and anything, and with her general discontent and trouble came a great longing to divert her thoughts. She scandalized Saint-Pignon by parading her grief in a carriage and pair, drying her tears with embroidered handkerchiefs, at four hundred francs apiece, and, in a word, setting a lamentable example of levity and extravagance at forty-five. The proceeds of a fortune placed in land being necessarily insufficient for such a style of living, Mdme. Ragot realized a portion of the property and bought shares in the Company of the Galileons of Vera-Cruz, which offered its shareholders the chances of a lottery with a chief prize of six hundred thousand francs, in addition to yearly interest at six per cent., and twenty-five per cent. dividend. M. de Préchafoin considered it his duty to make certain observations in her own interest respecting this.

“It is no business of yours,” was the curt reply of Mdme. Ragot.

Maitre Grimblot also remonstrated, and she answered, —  
“ Let me alone ! ”

Mdme. Ragot had evidently lost her head, and was only temporarily recalled to reason by the return of the two members of the Geographical Society, who brought back to Saint-Pignon the mortal remains of the two illustrious martyrs of science. Never was there a more imposing ceremony. The fire brigade, in full uniform, lined the route, with crape on their arms, their guns, their flag, and their drums. A roll of the latter instruments announced each stage of the approach of the funeral procession, headed by a detachment of the National Guard. The pall-bearers were M. de Préchafoin, Maitre Grimblot, with two delegates of the learned societies of the department for Dr. J. B. Quiès, and four members of the Society of Saint-Pignon for Anthime.

The two coffins were followed by the public functionaries and chief personages of the town, maintaining a solemn and serious demeanour, and with bare heads. They were followed by the entire population. Among the crowd, weeping, but unobserved, were M. de Malleville, his wife, and Henri. Real grief seeks no display.

The church had been hung with black. Two catafalques were placed in the middle, surrounded with wax torches, and cressets in which a greenish flame burned, with a strange and striking effect. The organ was played by an artist engaged expressly from Paris, the *Dies Iræ* was chanted by an opera-singer, and the *De Profundis* by the choral society of the department.

To the present day that magnificent funeral service is talked of at Saint-Pignon. The minutest details of it were given in all the local journals.

On the conclusion of the service in the church, the bodies were taken with the same ceremonial to the cemetery. M. de Préchafoin began to deliver a funeral address, but was unable to finish it. He wept so profusely that he was obliged to remove and dry his gold-rimmed spectacles,

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which he did not remember to have taken off for twenty-five years previously.

On the following day, of all the pomp which had cost fifteen thousand francs to the town of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, nothing remained.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## FROM THREE TAKE ONE—TWO REMAIN.

IF Dr. Quiès had indeed died, we know that it was not in the car of the "Capricorn." In the document transmitted by the authorities at Parga there was an error, both of identity and fact; for—we do not mind letting it be known at once—the doctor was not dead. Perhaps, however, he might as well have been.

We are about to state how and why.

On learning the terrible result of Magloire's exploration, his energies collapsed, as we have seen, and he let himself fall flat on his face on the ground, his head in his hands. His reason had forsaken him. Wild ideas without any connection whirled through his brain; he called upon death to deliver him.

We may nevertheless conjecture that if death had taken him at his word, he would have asked leave to reflect, seeing that when he awoke next morning he contrived to eat a dozen mussels and to drink some water. Poor though it was, this meal restored him to some extent, and enabled him to perceive that he was alone at table.

Alone! His companions had left him to his wretched fate. There was nothing surprising in this on the part of Anthime, but Magloire! so faithful and devoted a servant.

"Oh! human selfishness," he groaned, in the bitterness of his soul; and once more he lay down flat on his face with his head in his hands, that he might see nothing and forget everything while awaiting the inevitable outcome

of this last device of fate. He had been lying thus for six hours and a half, when a well-known voice made him start up,—

“We are saved, doctor!” cried Magloire, “we are saved!”

The doctor hardly understood him.

“You say—” he stammered.

“I say, sir, that we are saved. This morning, M. Bonamy—”

The doctor frowned on hearing the detested name.

“Pointed out to me,” continued Magloire, “that the men who were in the island when we reached it could only have come there in a boat, and that as they went away in a balloon, their boat must have been left somewhere on the coast.”

“Well, and the boat?”

“Ah, sir, we all go far afield in search of what is under our hand. We have just found it, not fifty yards from this spot. Come, sir, come.”

“And our provisions?”

Dr. Quiès, it will be seen, did not mean to die.

“We shall not want any, sir. I have made out a coast on the east-north-east. We shall be there before night.”

While speaking, he had led his master to a little creek, where a boat, with all its gear complete, sails, oars, rudder, &c., was swaying gracefully upon the water. They had only to cast it loose and head it for the line of coast visible on the horizon.

M. Bonamy was about to embark, when Dr. Quiès stopped him.

“One moment—” said he.

“Certainly,” replied Anthime, “to you the first place.”

But Dr. Quiès stood stock-still, and merely shook his head.

“Then,” said M. Bonamy, “I shall get in.”

For the second time Quiès checked him.

“There is not room for three in that boat,” said he in a grave, almost lugubrious tone.

"Are you mad, Quiès? The boat would hold ten easily."

"Perhaps so, sir; but it cannot hold you and me!"

The "you" and "me" were accompanied by a fierce look, and its meaning did not escape M. Bonamy.

"What absurd notion are you taking up again?" he asked.

"One of us two, sir, shall not leave this place."

"Then you may stay if you please, my dear Quiès. As for me, I don't care to do so."

"Nevertheless, sir, you will remain here, if such be the decree of fate."

"Do you mean that—"

"I mean, sir, that I shall play you for this boat."

"At billiards?" asked M. Bonamy, ironically.

"No, sir, at tosspenny," answered Quiès, passing disdainfully over the insolence of the jest.

"What a capital idea!" cried Magloire, clapping his hands. "Oh, sir, if you might only lose!"

"How? what?" said Quiès, by no means pleased at the prospect.

"Thinking of what an ignorant man like Robinson Crusoe contrived to do in his desert island, I am curious to know what a learned man, like you, sir, could do under the same conditions. It would make such a fine book for the future!"

Was Magloire in earnest? There is every reason to believe he was.

M. Bonamy, however, took this observation only for a mild quizzing of Dr. Quiès; and although he could not bring himself to regard his rival's strange proposal seriously, he thought it well to humour his folly by saying,—

"Just as you like."

The doctor took out a sou, and throwing it up in the air, said,—

"Call."

"Head!" cried Bonamy.

"You have won!" said Magloire, stooping over the coin which had fallen on the ground.

Dr. Quiès lifted up his hands and eyes, and, without a word to M. Bonamy or to Magloire, hurried away almost at



Magloire gave the boat a vigorous push.

a run, fleeing from the sight of the boat in which there was safety, but which he could not enter.

"Quiès!" cried M. Bonamy, "you are mad!"

The doctor was already too far off to hear him.

"Magloire," said he, "run, bring him back!"

"No, sir, no."

"What?"

"The destiny of a savant must not be thwarted."

"But the poor wretch will perish here, miserably, without aid—"

"I am here, sir."

"You remain, then, Magloire?"

"Yes, sir."

"So," growled M. Bonamy, "through the obstinacy of these two madmen, I am to be forced to stay here, a prisoner on this rock, without food, without shelter—"

"You, sir? but you are quite free to go away. The land is not far off, and the sail is set."

M. Bonamy was visibly a prey to painful hesitation, and this ought to be recorded to his praise. Nevertheless, he had got into the boat. He would not, however, have abandoned Dr. Quèrès to his fate if Magloire had not given the boat a vigorous push, and shoved it off some feet from the shore, when it instantly scudded before the wind.

Anthime was a very poor mariner. Magloire could see him, for a few minutes, making great efforts to regain the island, but the wind blew freshly and filled the sail; the boat was going at fifteen knots. At the end of an hour it had become an almost imperceptible speck on the sea. A quarter of an hour more, and it had entirely disappeared.

Then Magloire went in search of his master, whom he found at some distance inland in a state of profound dejection.

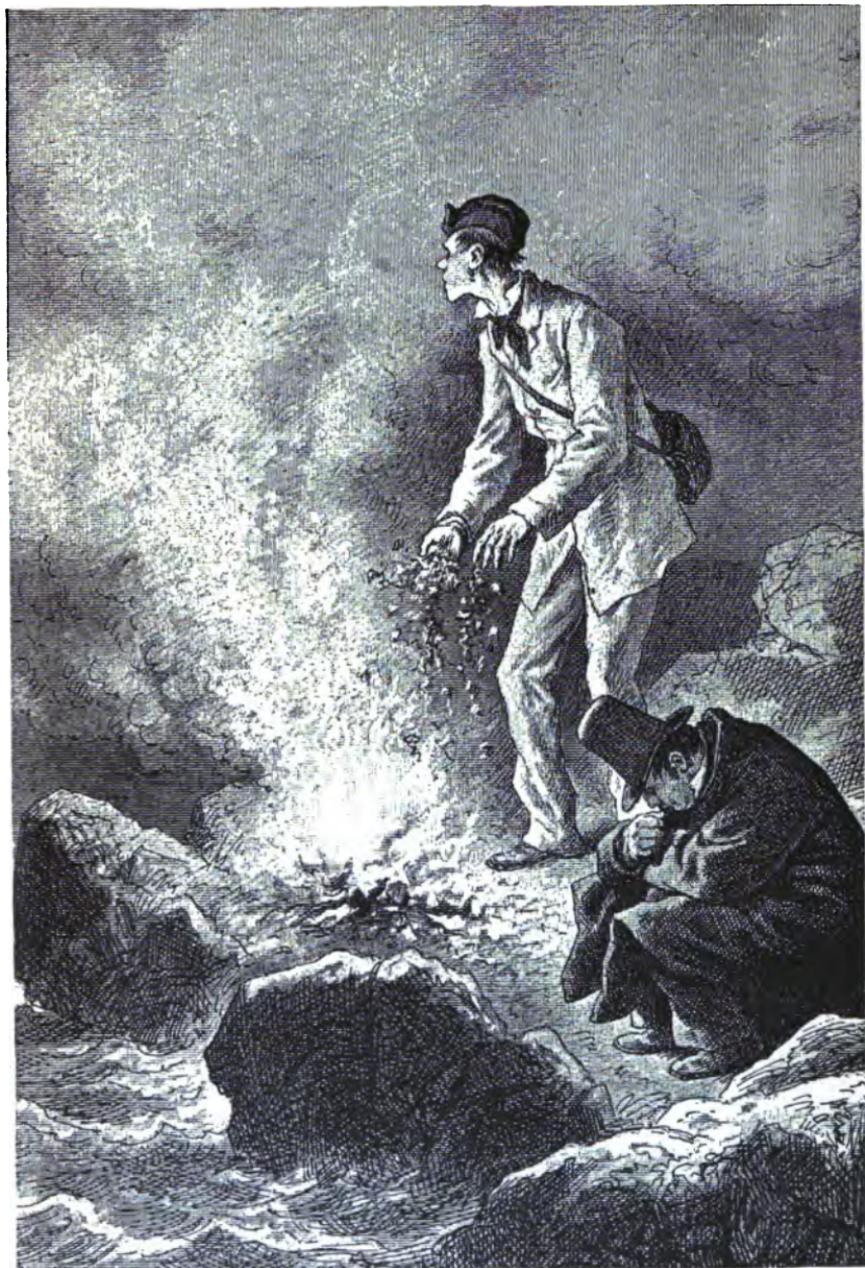
"Gone?" asked the poor doctor.

"Yes, sir," answered Magloire, rubbing his hands.

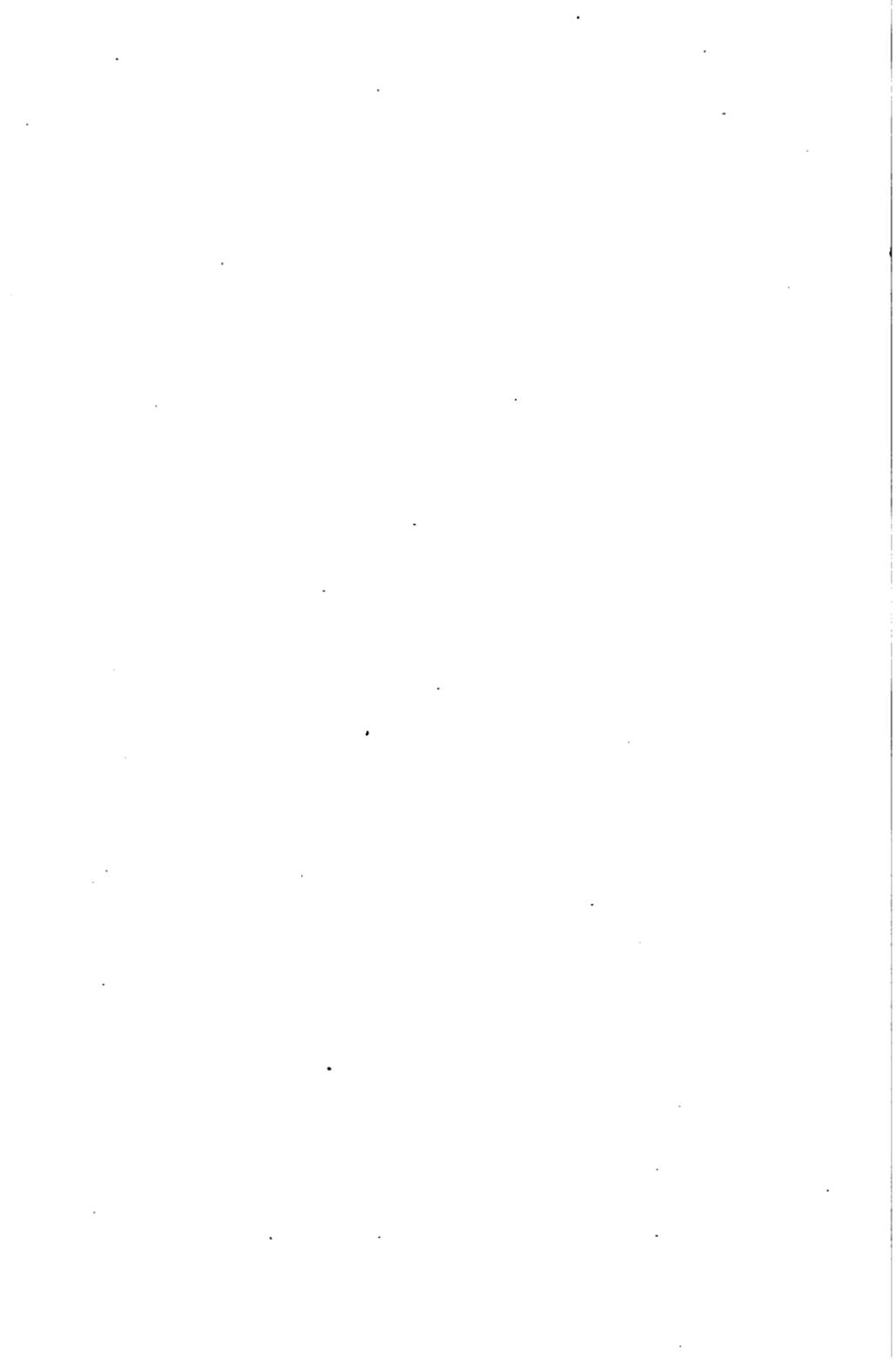
"And you have not forsaken me, Magloire?"

"Oh, sir!"

The doctor's eye was moistened by a tear; he would probably have saved it up for a better occasion, had he been aware of the fresh trick that his servant had played him in his intemperate zeal. Perhaps, also, he might have yielded to a fit of anger equally legitimate and useless.



**Magloire summoned up strength to light a fire.**



When wine is poured out it must be drunk.

Alas! they had not even the thinnest of wine; and, in deference to the claims of truth, it must be acknowledged that when forty-eight hours had elapsed, bringing home to Magloire the conviction that his master, although a member of fifty learned societies, was inferior to Robinson, he repented him that he had played so bold a game. When three days had elapsed, his regret had deepened into remorse, and at the end of a week he would have given his right hand for M. Bonamy's boat. The island proved to be more barren than he had supposed. No food of any kind except mussels was to be found there. Now, mussels form a dainty article of diet, but—to eat them, and nothing else, at every meal, without salt, and without bread! The doctor and Magloire himself could no longer swallow more of them than barely sufficed to still the pangs of hunger.

Nevertheless the doctor became hardly at all thinner. Probably it was not in his nature to do so; but his health failed daily, his mental faculties seemed weakened. He no longer spoke, except very rarely, and then his words were vague and unconnected. Such a trial as this, was, seemingly, beyond his endurance.

Magloire, although a stronger man, was very little better than his master after five weeks of this unfortunate experience. He wasted away to a skeleton, and his high spirits disappeared. He sat all day huddled-up on the shore, searching the horizon with his eyes, and only summoned up strength in the evening to light a big fire of weeds and brushwood, as a signal of distress which a passing ship might perceive and understand.

In the morning the fire was extinct, the island was still desert, the horizon showed no sail. But all this did not prevent him from doing the same thing the next evening. He clung to life, and even in this deplorable extremity he preserved a ray of hope, while the unhappy doctor no longer entertained the least spark. Without will, without

strength, and entirely prostrate, he was like a mussel among the mussels on which he went on feeding mechanically. Were we not correct in saying at the beginning of this chapter, that although he was not dead, he might as well have been ?

But God is all-powerful, and the designs of His providence are past finding out.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

IN WHICH DR. J. B. QUIÈS ARRIVES JUST IN TIME TO REAP THE FRUITS OF HIS REMARKABLE ADVENTURES.

IT would be natural to conclude, from the foregoing, that while poor Quiès, suffering all the tortures of hunger and exhaustion, was counting, or believed himself to be counting, his last hours, M. Anthime Bonamy had been safely restored to Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, and that his return was already an old story.

Nothing of the sort! Even at three weeks' later date he had not reappeared, and it is not he whom we meet on a fine afternoon in April, at the foot of the gentle hill on which the white houses of the pretty little town and their gardens, all abloom with spring flowers, are ranged in symmetrical lines.

It is not he! it is the doctor in person, accompanied by his faithful servant Magloire.

"Ah, my good friend," says the doctor, "how my heart beats! I have never in my life felt so sweet and yet so poignant an emotion."

"I understand you, sir," answered Magloire, "and I will not conceal that I myself—"

"That is not your church-spire, nevertheless." The doctor pointed to the glittering vane upon the hill-top.

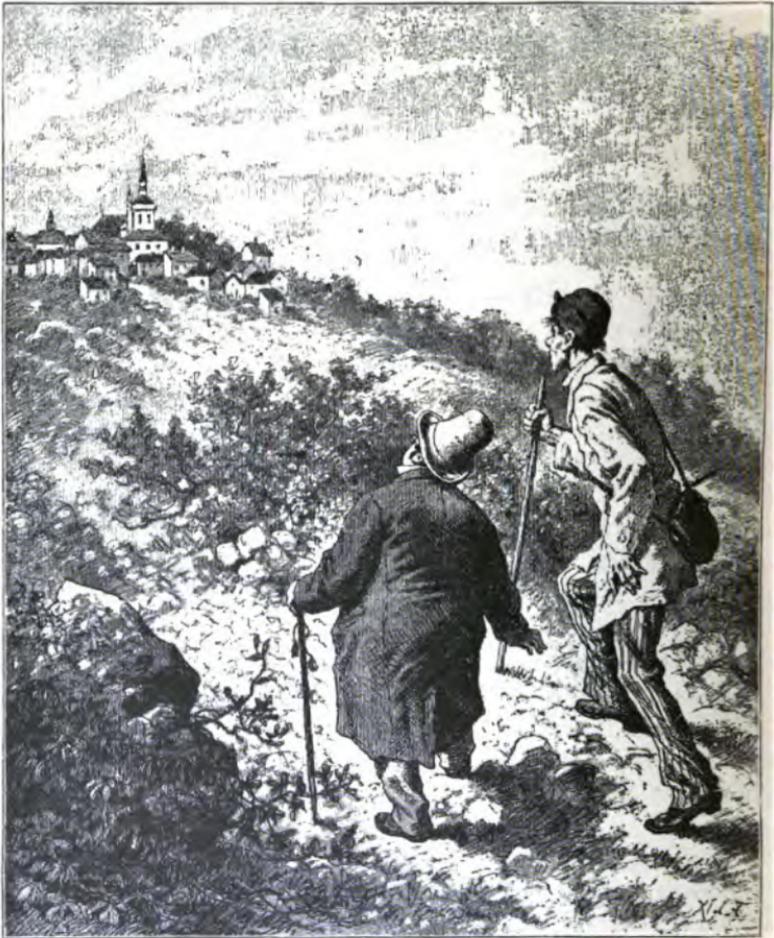
"No, sir, but is a church spire."

"Ah, ah, I take your meaning."

"Yes, sir, I acknowledge it. We have seen death so near."

“Are you quite sure, Magloire, that we were not dead when that fishing-boat put in at our island?”

“I think so, sir, since the boat took us to Rhodes, from

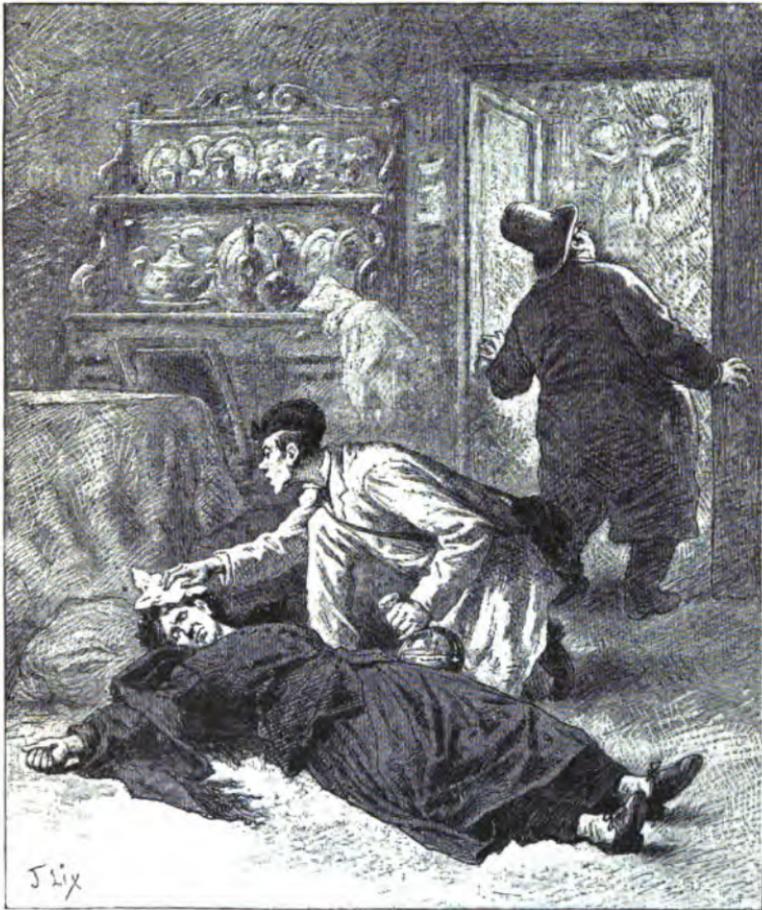


Arrival of Dr. Quiès and Magloire at Saint-Pignon.

whence we came back to Marseilles in a Government ship, and here we are at Saint-Pignon.”

“It seems to me that I have either come to life again,

or been merely dreaming. Would you believe it, Magloire, I feel no enmity at all against my rival, notwithstanding the incredible selfishness of his conduct ?”



Gertrude fell into a swoon.

“ Ah, sir, you may forgive him, for if it had not been for me—”

“ What do you mean, Magloire ?”

“Ah, sir, if it were to be done over again! However, I have been sufficiently punished for my fault.”

The doctor was too much moved, too happy to be severe. He pressed the suppliant hand which Magloire held out to him, and quickened his steps.

Five minutes later, he entered the town. He expected to be recognized, and welcomed on all sides. At that hour, soon after midday, and when the sun was shining so brightly, every door ought to have been open.

It was a very odd thing; but every door was shut! Not a soul was to be seen at the windows; the streets were empty; the houses were to all appearance forsaken. Quiès repaired to his own house. The door was not shut; he went in, and knocked up against Gertrude, who was just coming out in all her Sunday finery. He stretched out his arms to embrace her, but he had not time to do so; for Gertrude, at sight of her master, threw up her hands, opened her mouth to utter a cry, but could not produce a sound, and fell at full length upon the floor of the dining-room in a swoon.

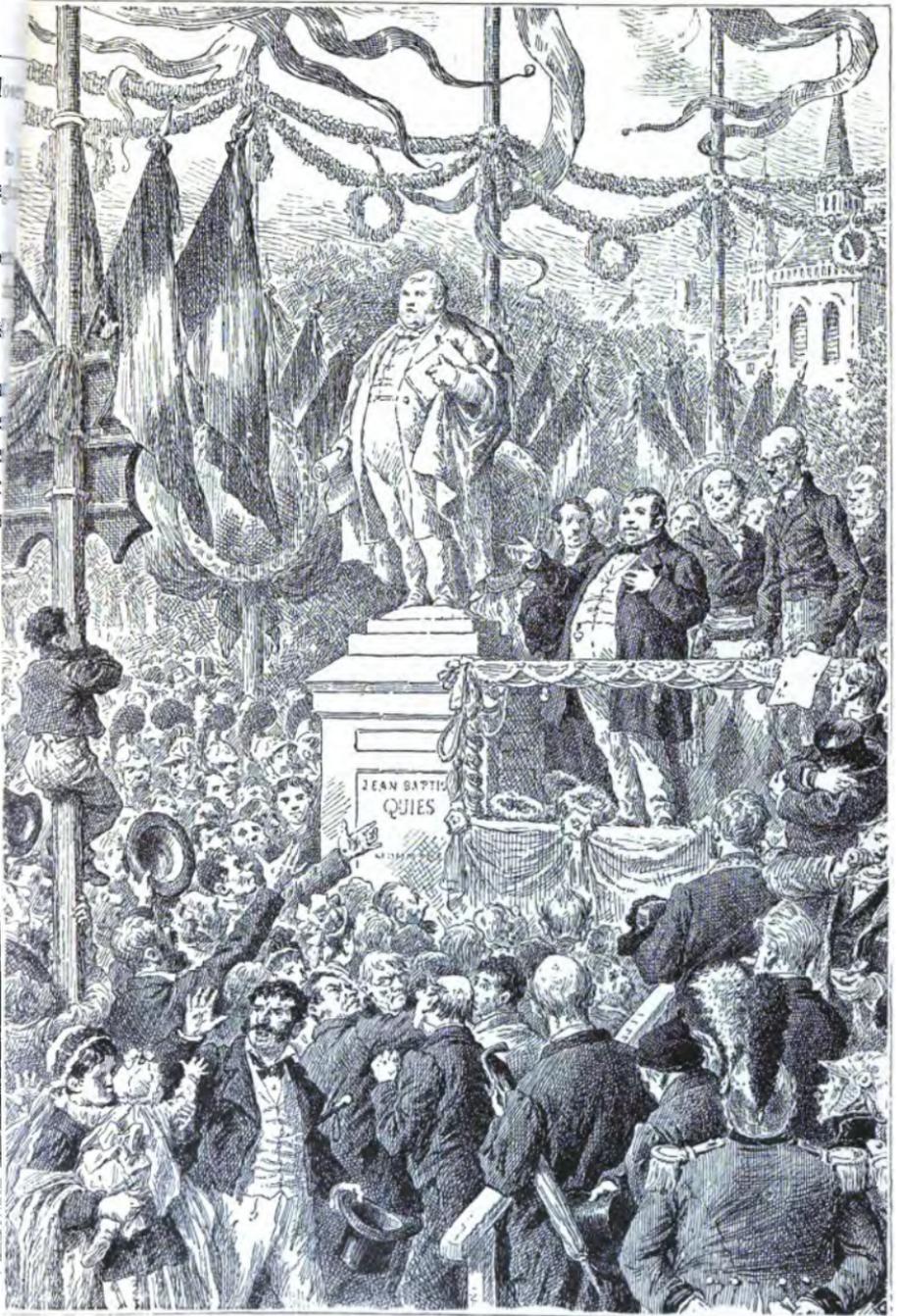
Magloire applied himself to the task of reviving her, while the doctor went impatiently over the whole of that dear abode in which he had passed the early years of his life so peacefully, and whither he had been permitted by the Almighty to return for its later period. All was in order; everything was in its former place; his collections, his books, his boxes, and his papers. One thing only surprised him very much, an enormous quantity of petticoats, gowns, and general feminine gear was amassed in his bedroom.

He was meditating deeply upon this astonishing discovery, when Magloire reappeared, and said,—

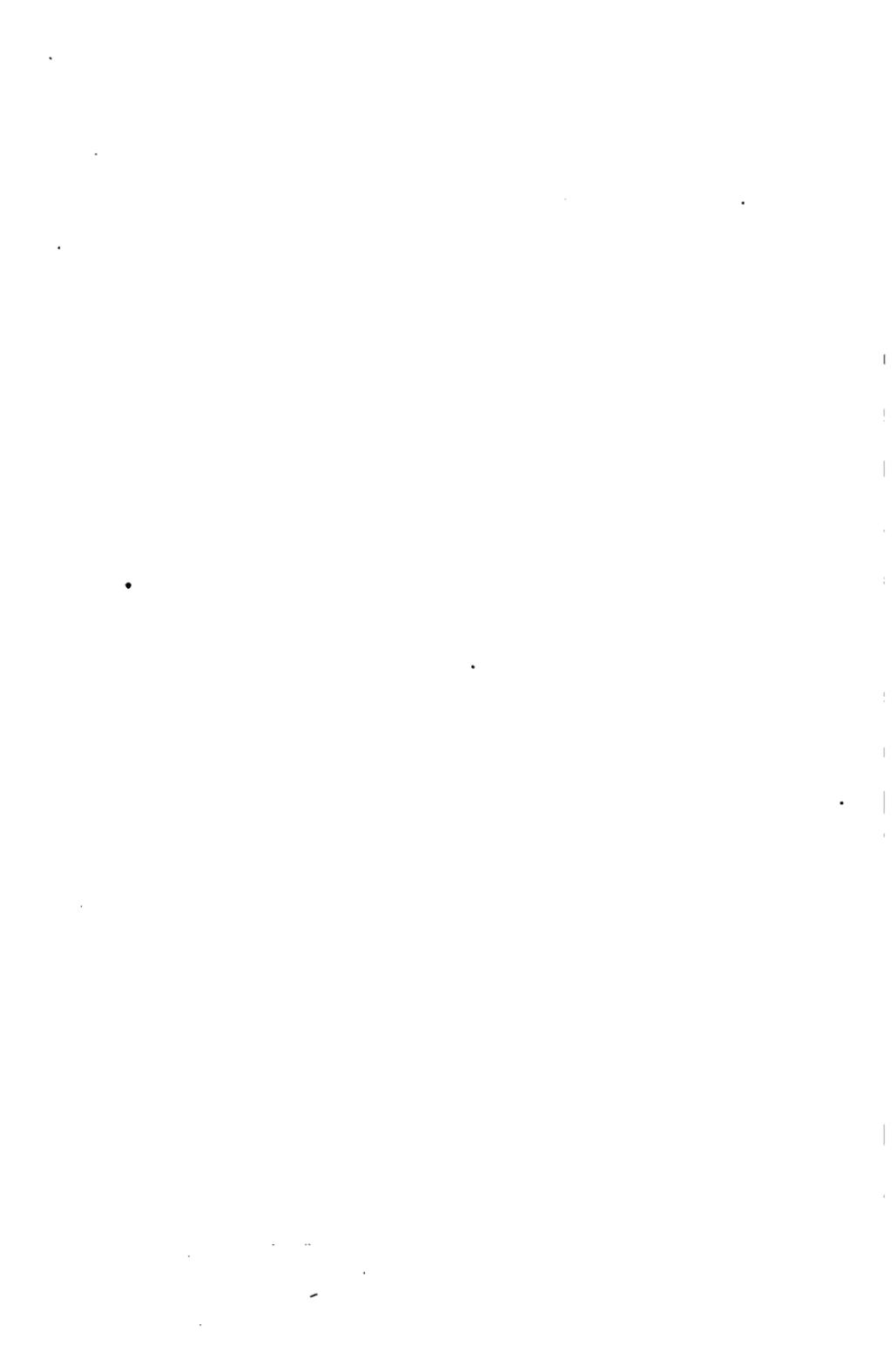
“You ought to go into town, sir, and let your friends see you.”

“You are right,” said Quiès, “let us go.”

They set out; but had only reached the end of the main street, when they were stopped by a considerable



Dr. Quiès speaks in person.



crowd. All the town in gala attire was assembled upon the Grande Place. Quiès was endeavouring to ascertain the cause of this manifestation, when he was recognized by the mayor, who was late in arriving, and who uttered so loud an exclamation that the whole town turned round at once.

“Living ! Quiès living !”

The words rose like a rocket, and shot out in all directions.

We shall not try to describe the tumult that ensued. Quiès was pushed, pulled, bandied about, and lifted in scores of arms. At length, not knowing how he came there, he found himself hoisted up on a pedestal by the side of a gentleman—in marble—as much like himself as one drop of water is like another.

His statue !

Quiès had actually arrived at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes on the very day of the inauguration of his statue in the Grande Place ! This was a splendid opportunity for M. de Préchafoin, who had already begun his speech with the words : “ Standing beside the hardly-closed grave ”—he had got no farther when the voice of the mayor was heard, proclaiming the glad tidings, and it was Dr. J. B. Quiès in person who displaced him, in order to thank his fellow-townsmen for the warm welcome which he was receiving. He was genuinely affected, and emotion supplied the place of eloquence. We regret that the absence of a reporter prevents us from giving a summary of his speech.

When he had been well stared at, well shouted at, and applauded to the echo, he was taken down from his pedestal, and escorted to his own house with military honours, the band heading the procession.

Gertrude had recovered consciousness, and was waiting for him ; with her were the De Mallevilles. These good people had come to Saint-Pignon to do homage to their dead friend, and were not a little rejoiced to be able to embrace him in the flesh. Quiès, therefore, was, as he

would have wished to be, surrounded by all whom he loved—all—except indeed his cousin, Mdme. Ragot, who had also fallen into a swoon, like Gertrude, but had not yet come to herself.

As for Magloire, he seemed to be as proud as if his master's fame were reflected upon him. He had, indeed,



Except his cousin, Mdme. Ragot, who had also fallen into a swoon.

good reason to be satisfied; for when he had helped the panting doctor up the three steps in front of the house, his master said to him,—

“Magloire, if it had not been for you, I should never again have seen my birth-place. From this day, I will settle an annuity upon you, which will place you above want. I impose on you one condition only.”

“What is it, sir?”

“That for the future you never mention travelling.”

The rest of the day was, naturally, devoted to the questions, explanations, and narrations which the circumstances demanded. If Quiès astonished his hearers by relating all, or a part of his adventures, they surprised him none the less by informing him that he was dead and buried; that his property had devolved upon his heirs; that, legally, he had no right to be alive, and above all, that his colleague, M. Bonamy, had not reappeared at Saint-Pignon. Quiès entertained no doubt that poor Anthime had perished at sea, in that boat which he had so foolishly disputed with him. The doctor's joy at being restored to his home was slightly overcast by his regret on this account. Nevertheless he was anxious to ascertain his own position as quickly as possible. He discovered that it was very precarious.

Mdme. Ragot's extravagance had made a serious hole in his fortune. The galleons of Vera-Cruz had gone to the bottom irrevocably. The little that remained of his yearly income of thirty thousand francs, was placed in a sound enterprise with good security, but it could not be realized without a loss of two-thirds, and, besides, a lawsuit between the heirs of M. Bonamy on the one side, and Mdme. Ragot on the other, seemed inevitable.

The case demanded consideration.

After mature reflection, Dr. J. B. Quiès arrived at the conclusion that if two moves are as bad as a fire, a lawsuit is as bad as ten moves; that “it is better to hold than to hunt;” and, lastly, that it would be cruel to reduce his heirs to the last extremity, considering that they were victims of an error, in the highest degree satisfactory to himself, but which they would probably regret if they had to pay for it.

Accordingly he relinquished one hundred thousand francs—their legal share in the supposed inheritance—to Anthime's heirs, for an annual payment of three thousand

francs. This was not the only advantage gained by his own heirs. Mdme. Ragot was also in luck; for Quiès, being persuaded by Maître Grimblot (who was not unwilling to make his own profit out of the transaction),  
✓ actually made up his mind to—yes—to marry her, rather than risk a lawsuit!

That made a great noise, but everything passes in this world.

The little town of Saint-Pignon les Girouettes soon resumed its customary aspect, and by degrees the events which had agitated it so violently were forgotten.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

## CONCLUSION.

THREE months after the doctor's marriage, Commandant La Carriole set out with his family for Algeria. M. de Malleville had generously offered to associate him with himself in his enterprise, and the Commandant had gladly accepted his friend's proposal. Shortly after his arrival he let Quiès know that all was going on well. Henri was still the excellent fellow he had always been, Baptistin was growing visibly, and as for La Carriole himself, he had nothing to desire, except that Quiès should make up his mind to come out and join them. Instead of the answer which he expected, the Commandant received the following :—

“ Dr. J. B. Quiès has the honour to inform you of the grievous loss which he has just sustained in the person of Mdme. Prudence Eleanor Lechaudé, (widow) Ragot, his wife, who died in his house at Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, in her fifty-sixth year. Pray for her ! ”

La Carriole was too good a Christian to neglect this injunction, but we do not venture to affirm that he was deeply grieved by the occasion of it. Mdme. Ragot-Quiès had given but little to others during her lifetime, and she was given but little after her death. The affliction caused by that event was only moderate ; as moderate as the joy with which, one fine day, Saint-Pignon learned that M. Anthime Bonamy had reappeared. He had been cast upon the coast of Asia Minor, and had experienced great difficulty in getting back to his native country.

These two events would, no doubt, have seriously disturbed the doctor's peace had they not occurred in

immediate succession. But the joyfulness of one neutralized the grievousness of the other, and the balance was restored.

He bore his widowhood with resignation, and stoically resumed the course of his labours. In less than two years he had published eleven volumes :—

*Algiers before the Conquest of 1830.*

*French Colonization in Algeria.*

*Algerian Flora and Fauna.*

*Remarks on the Aboriginal Populations of Algeria.*

*A brief Geographical Account of the Region of the Sahara.*

*Ethnology of Central Africa.*

*A Traveller's Notes on Nubia.*

*Slavery regarded with reference to European Governments.*

*Reflections on the Commercial Future of Upper Egypt.*

*Hungary and its Inhabitants.*

*From Pesth to Belgrade by the Danube.*

Those whom chance may lead to Saint-Pignon les Girouettes, will certainly find the above-mentioned works at the bookshop kept by M. Samuel Colmet in the said town, unless indeed the tenth and last edition has been exhausted—good fortune that rarely befalls a book, and which we earnestly pray heaven to grant to ours. Amen.

