

## "MILES CHRISTI."

LOUIS GASTON DE SONIS,

Carmelite Tertiary.

[Reprinted by permission from "The Life of General de Sonis"—From His Papers and Correspondence, by Mgr Baunard. Translated by Lady Herbert. Art and Book Company, London and Leamington.]

### CHAPTER IV.

THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN. MAY—AUGUST, 1859.

The voyage—Genoa—De Sonis' political anxieties—The battle of Montebello—Skirmish at Voghera—The ambulance—The battle-field—The regimental march—The field of Magenta—Entry into Milan—De Sonis reconnoitring—Rapid Communion—God in his heart—The preparations for the battle of Solferino—The battle—He directs the charge of his squadron—The continual presence of God—Acts of thanksgiving—The carnage—Souls—De Sonis at the ambulance—De Sonis decorated—Armistice—Italian Revolution.



ON the 10th of May, 1859, the 1st Chasseurs d'Afrique left the harbor of Algiers. Three hundred men and two hundred and twenty horses had been embarked in a bad steamer, called "*La Serre*," the engines of which were in such a miserable state that they were obliged to sail almost all the way. The weather was bad, the sea rough, and the passage very slow; so that it was not till the 16th that they entered the bay of Genoa, where they landed on the 17th. Their arrival at Genoa was greeted by the Italians with enthusiasm. The Emperor had already crossed the Alps to put himself at the head of the army. Whilst the soldiers and officers thronged the Cafes, de Sonis went up to the sanctu-

ary of Notre-Dame-de-Carignan, and there prayed for his family and France.

After a day spent at Coregliono, which had become the depot for the troops, the regiment pushed on towards the north. On the 19th they arrived at Ronco in pouring rain; but they marched gaily on, the object being to join the other army corps, so as to concentrate the whole force, before the Austrians had time to intercept them.

In spite of his grave preoccupations, de Sonis kept up the spirit of his men by his unaffected gaiety. "Do you remember," he wrote later to a naval officer, "the day you came to wish me good-bye, and brought me a little case of Madeira, which really saved the life of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, who was ill, and whose stomach could not bear the wretched wine and food of a fourth-rate inn, where we were, besides being soaked through by the pouring rain. I brought out your Madeira with great pomp, and all pres-