

Simplon, in Domo d'Ossola, the uncle went to Rome. His roguish nephew had grown up in happy idleness and the grossest ignorance.

Appointed almoner of François de Bernis, the Archbishop of Albi, the uncle took up his residence in Florence. There he endeavored to make something of Anthelme.

He provided a writing-master for him, and sent him regularly to the convent to take lessons in church music. This was what the worthy man considered a complete education.

When the Concordat again raised the altars in France, and the exiles once more found a home there, the two returned to Belley. Anthelme was, by common accord, recognized as the most ignorant fellow who had ever assisted in a mass.

Another uncle, a military officer, decided that the only means of making a man of this great boy—then nearly sixteen years old—was to put him into the army. This uncle commanded a battalion, and succeeded in having his sad nephew admitted to the military school.

Arriving at Prytanée, as the military school was then termed, Anthelme Collet found a protector in an old friend of his uncle's, a M. de Saint Germain, a retired officer. At the end of the second month Collet was a corporal; the fifth month he was a serjeant. At the expiration of ten months at the school, he passed an examination, and left as a second lieutenant, leaving the others struggling for the place which he had so rapidly attained.

The new lieutenant was assigned to the 110th Regiment of the Line, stationed at Brescia. Joining the corps, he showed himself to be, what he had always been from his youth, an incorrigible idler. Military life wearied him, and the remembrance of the happy *far niente* of his childhood inspired him with an ardent longing for an ecclesiastical career; a black robe meant to him nothing to do and plenty to eat. These regrets and these desires caused him to frequent a convent of the Capuchins of Saint Joseph, whose Superior he gained over by his hypocritical pretensions. He found there, in the leisure moments of his military life, a kind reception and a good

table. The *Capuchin Officer* was the name given to Collet, in his regiment.

But his pleasures were brought to an unexpected end by an order to depart to Boulogne. Up to this time his only experience of military life had been in a garrison. He was ordered to Fondi, a little village in the Neapolitan States, and near the town of Gaëte, which the French army was then besieging. There, for the first time in his life, he was under fire, and this first experience resulted in a slight wound, from a shell, in his right side. Collet, who, since the thrashings administered by his grandfather, had conceived for violence the hatred of a Quaker, began to reflect seriously upon his profession, whose most evident profits seemed to be holes in the body. He philosophized so long and so well as he lay upon his bed in the hospital, that he decided to quit at once this brutal employment. He exaggerated his sufferings to such an extent that they were obliged to leave him in the hospital of Saint Jacques, at Naples, when the evacuation took place.

In the recollections of his life, given by Collet himself, dates do not abound; but it is easy to determine that of his sojourn in Naples. It must have been during the first year of the reign of Joseph Bonaparte, that is, in the year 1806, the year of the siege of Gaëte. So, at this time, Collet was twenty-one years old. Twenty-one, and an officer! Under Napoleon! This was glory; it was life! For Collet it was fatigue and danger. The man thought only of means of deserting. Seized with a sudden return of his longings for a religious life, he made known his scruples to an honest Dominican, the chaplain of the hospital, and so worked upon him by his mummeries that the good man resolved to assist him in escaping from this damnable occupation. "Recover rapidly," said the priest, "and I will undertake to rescue you, quietly, from this unworthy profession."

Recovery was not difficult; but Collet could not carry out his desires without means. Chance provided them. In the same chamber with the saintly Anthelme, a commander of a battalion, who had been wounded at the siege of Gaëte, lay dying.