

"MILES CHRISTI."

LOUIS GASTON DE SONIS,

Carmelite Tertiary.

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CHAPTER III.

ALGERIA. KABYLIA. 1854-1859.

Africa and his military life—A life of sacrifice—Phases of the French occupation of Algeria—Immolation and spiritual training—The population of Algiers—Immorality—Mgr. Pavy—The Lazarist Missioners—The Jesuits—Orphanage at Bouffarick—Ambition of de Sonis to Christianise the army—The cholera—Fever—In danger of death—Solitude and Sadness—His life with God—Retreat at La Trappe, Staoueli—Love of Jesus Christ—He establishes the nocturnal adoration at Algiers—His interior troubles—God alone and his family—His family join him at Milianah—Birth of a fourth child—De Sonis de Blidah—The move—*Deo gratias*—Catechism with his children—Return to Mustapha—Noble poverty—Sacrifices—Arabic studies—Expedition in Kabylia—His family return to France—The camp of Tizi-Ouzou—End of the campaign—His fifth child—His wish for the Arab Bureau—Disinterestedness—His dream of a life of peace, piety and friendship—Campaign of 1857—Great Kabylia—Fort National—The attack of El-Amiz—Submission of the Beni-Raten—De Sonis at Orleansville—He passes to the 1st Chasseurs d'Afrique—Return to Mustapha—His discreet apostolate—He is ordered to the Italian campaign—Duty above all—A letter of Turenne.



It was in Africa that almost all the military life of M. de Sonis was to be spent. He passed twenty years in Algeria. This country with its constant dangers and surprises suited this "child of the islands," as he called himself, and there he found what existed in no other part of the world for a French soldier—active service and a real soldier's life.

The country at that moment was under the command of General de Randon, who had been appointed Governor. In his Memoirs he writes :

"From 1830 to 1841 nine Commanders-in-Chief or Governors-General succeeded one another in Algiers. The army was admirable, and accomplished marvels with small means, like the taking of Constantine. But the home government seemed rather alarmed than pleased at these successes. From 1841 to 1847, Marshal Bugeaud devoted himself, not only to the conquest but to the colonisation of the country. He remained six and a half years in