

the virtues—the defects too—of his state. One thing in particular was a source of edification among his comrades—our sergeant, whether in camp or in his room, never went to bed without kneeling and praying for just one minute, neither more nor less. Inflexible in the matter of discipline, he fulfilled conscientiously all his duties. He was none too lenient to the conscripts, sufficiently dry with his equals, and stiff as a pike towards his chiefs who were continually on the watch to catch him in fault, without succeeding.

He was surnamed *Oremus* on account of the prayer he said with the supremest indifference to raillery, morning and night, even when, with permission he remained out till midnight and came back to the barracks gayer than usual.

One day the colonel, who was in good humor, began to banter him.

"They say you are religious, Sergeant Catel."

"That's a mistake, Colonel. I wish I were, but I'm not."

"But you mumble when you get up and go to bed."

"Certainly, it's not forbidden. Hence it is permitted."

"Are you not afraid they'll tease you?"

"Not at all, Colonel. You have heard of Bayard, surnamed 'the knight without fear and without reproach?'"

"Yes, but what about him?"

"Well, Colonel, this Bayard, by what I've learned, won as many battles as the first Emperor, or nearly as many. And when he was dying, from a bullet or a cannon ball, I'm not quite sure which, he called out 'Jesus, my God, take my soul.' Since Bayard prayed, I can pray."

"Of course you can, Sergeant."

And the Colonel, laughing in his sleeve, went off to relate his adventure to the General who was dining at the mess with the officers of his brigade.

The General who was called "jolly but frivolous" wanted to chat with "Oremus," and finding him in the barracks, one day, asked him the same questions as the Colonel. The Sergeant, somewhat astonished at this meddling with matters having no reference to discipline, but respectful as before, gave the same answers.