

near Orleans. It froze hard that night. Five men in Paul Ovenbeck's company were found dead where they lay next morning. Paul wondered to see himself alive; but he rose and stretched himself, and found out that he was not even frost-bitten. At daybreak they were on the march again. Paul walked on till the sounds of bells came to them over the frosty air, and then he staggered and fell.

They lifted him up and carried him by turns till the troops marched into Orleans. A sorry sight they were, blood-stained and travelworn. There was a train of ambulance carts following in the wake of the soldiers, but it was not worth while carrying Paul Ovenbeck back to it; they were too near the town; and, besides, there was sure not to be a vacant place in one of them. The town itself was like a great ambulance, with sheds run up in every direction and filled with the wounded and with fever patients.

"Is there a bed for our comrade?" enquired two soldiers, carrying in what seemed to be a lifeless body to one of these impromptu hospitals.

"Not room for a dog to lie down," was the answer; it was given in a tone of despair, and the surgeon came out to see what the case was.

"He is not wounded, and he has no fever," said one of the bearers, as the medical man took the patient's hand to feel his pulse; "he is dying of exhaustion. If you can find him a bed for a few hours, M. le Docteur, he will not keep it longer, I warrant you."

"Come here, ma soeur," said the doctor, calling to a Sister of Charity, who was busy gliding from pallet to pallet amongst the sufferers all round her.

She came at once, and drew a little memorandum from the huge pocket of her gray-blue habit.

"The name of his regiment, monsieur?"

"Fifty-second line."

"Do you know his name?"

"Paul Ovenbeck."

She wrote down the name.

"Where does he come from?"

"From the town of St. Louis in Alsace."

The Sister of Charity—Soeur Jeanne

was her name—took down the answers to her questions, and replaced the little book in her pocket.

"There is a bed vacant; come with me," she said.

The soldiers followed her to a low shed that stood close to the great ambulance. There was a bed on the ground, and on the wall above it a black crucifix. This was Soeur Jeanne's cell.

"Lay him down there," she said, moving a little table that stood in the way. The soldiers were advancing when a voice behind them called out:

"Halte la! I can't allow this, ma soeur. Your life is too valuable to be sacrificed for any one, were he even a marshal of France."

"Don't be afraid doctor, I shall take care of myself. You know I always do," said Soeur Jeanne good-humoredly, and, without paying the slightest heed to the doctor's prohibition, she uncovered the bed, assisted the soldiers to stretch their comrade on it, and then wrapped him up in what clothes there were.

"Now I must go and fetch hot bricks, and something hot for him to drink when he comes to," she said, and hurried out of the tent.

The doctor drew near, and, kneeling down placed his ear to Paul Ovenbeck's heart. "Done for!" he muttered, shaking his head.

"Is he dead? Will he not wake at all?" enquired the soldiers, who stood watching, anxious and expectant.

"He may wake; Soeur Jeanne will probably bring him to; but it won't be for long," said the medical man, and he left the tent.

—Soeur Jeanne came back with her arms full of restoratives. But she was not alone. A Franciscan father stood at the door, and looked in to see if there was room for him in the tiny box, where the soldiers were barely able to stand up right.

"Ha! he opens his eyes!" cried Soeur Jeanne in delight. "Don't go yet a moment, mes amis; it is well that he should see you near him when he comes to."

One of the soldiers knelt down by the bedside, and took Paul Ovenbeck's hand and chafed it gently.

"Allons! . . . En marche!" murmured