

cided to send an expeditionary corps to avenge this attack, under the orders of General Martimprey, who was Commander-in-Chief of the forces of Algeria. This corps consisted of two divisions of Infantry, and one of Cavalry, commanded by General Desvaux, to which de Sonis belonged. The Colonel of the 1st Chasseurs, M. de Salignac-Fenelon, had been made a General, so that Lieutenant-Colonel Fenin took the temporary command of the corps. On the 30th of September they left Algiers with the cry of "Vive la France!" Their route was towards Oran by the great military road which follows the course of the Chelif, and Oran was reached on the 15th of October. There the new Colonel was presented to the regiment, M. Arthur de Montlembert, the brother of the great Catholic author and orator. He also had had to leave his young wife (who was a Mademoiselle Rochechouart), and five little children, so that he and de Sonis were in the same dispositions both as regarded their hearts and their faith. Everything, in fact, tended to draw these two men together; but it was death rather than life which was to unite them more closely.

The march was continued to Tlemcen by mountain roads, on an arid soil and under a sky of brass. All the rivers were dry; not a drop of rain had fallen for weeks. The Cavalry followed in the track of the Infantry, and were dismayed at seeing the number of dead or dying mules on the road, and commissariat waggons empty and abandoned. When they arrived at Tlemcen, these gloomy forebodings were confirmed. General Desvaux was alarmed at the death-rate among the men, four or five per hundred falling out each day; and Lieu-

tenant Bailloeuil could not help showing some anxiety before Captain de Sonis. He was astonished at his quiet resignation. "But, after all, my dear Captain, we are not immortal," he exclaimed. "That is quite true," replied de Sonis. "But it will always be as God wills. Let us do our duty first; and, as for the rest, may God's will be done!"

The next day, while going through the town of Nedroma, they found that the Agha had died that very day of an epidemic which was ravaging the country. It was the cholera! The army was confronted by a far more dangerous enemy than the Arabs. On the 23rd of October, they passed the Kis, a river which marks the boundary between Algeria and Morocco, and rain fell for the first time since leaving Algiers. As soon as the troops found themselves on hostile territory they were ordered to shoulder arms, so as to be ready for any unforeseen attack. But the enemy were nowhere to be seen. Thus they arrived at the great bivouac of Kis, which was to be the point of concentration for the forces, which amounted to between 12,000 and 15,000 men, all in perfect order and with first-rate officers. But the real enemy had already sown its seed in the camp, and mowed down the men without mercy. In vain skirmishers were sent in every direction; the Arabs had disappeared. "After these useless reconnaissances," wrote one of the officers, "we were always obliged to return to this terrible camp, where the cholera carried off a hundred men a day."

Death, in fact, spared no one; the officers fell by the side of the soldiers. One of the first victims was General Thomas, and his funeral added to the general sadness and discouragement