

"Ah! you don't know him," interrupted the old woman. "You don't know Thanase Soupalot, my little grandson, his mother La Soupalotte is my daughter, Virginie Belletaille."

"And this boy, Athanase Soupalot, is in my regiment? Why, certainly, otherwise I would not have come to you."

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The colonel listened kindly to the old woman. Behind that rough exterior he saw that despite her years, her heart was still soft and tender. He might have to hear one of those heart breaking tales that seem to be the everlasting story of life. How many visits he had received from saddened mothers. How many naive and ardent petitions had been presented to him. And this Colonel whose thundering voice would shake the walls of the barracks, now spoke in gentle tones.

"And what can I do for you, my good woman?"

"Just this, she replied, I have come to see you about my little boy's Easter duties. Next Sunday is the feast of the Good Shepherd and I have not yet seen my boy. Tell me is that reasonable?"

"But Madam."

"Oh, no, it is not reasonable. I will soon be ninety, my chief. I have come to beg of you not to prevent my boy being a good Christian."

"Oh! but I do not prevent him."

"You do not prevent him! Then why do you not give him leave of absence for it is printed in the papers that the soldiers shall have ten days to allow them to attend to their paschal duties. You cannot deny that, it is printed here. As she spoke, she pulled from her pocket, a paper which she held towards the Colonel, who after looking at it asked:

"Then Madam your grandson is an Israélite?"

"What is that you ask!"

"Israelite?"

"What is that?"

"Israelite — that is a Jew."

"Jew — my boy a Jew. Sir, my Thanase has been baptized like you?"