

to go to Confession and Communion. But his religious feelings did not hinder his delight at St.-Cyr. and its studies and exercises, which accorded so well with his naturally chivalrous temperament. His companions were not slow to find it out. "*Eloge d'Elite*" was the name they gave him, and his promotion was speedy and brilliant. In consequence of the high place he quickly won, he was appointed to serve in the cavalry. Nothing could have suited his taste better. His passion for horses was proverbial, and on the 1st of October, 1846, he entered the school of cavalry at Saumur. There he distinguished himself above all the rest by his great proficiency, and left it with the reputation of being the best cavalry officer in the college.

The only recollection he has preserved of his life at Saumur is an account he has given us of a visit to the abbey of Solesmes. "It is more than thirty years ago," he wrote in 1875 to a friend who had become a Benedictine, "that I went from the training college at Saumur to Solesmes, with a friend who has also become one of your Religious, M. Ezechiele Demarest. That day is one of the pleasantest recollections of my life. I was most kindly received by them all, and I remember towards the evening a young monk, Dom Leduc, saying to me, 'Why do you not stop with us for good?' I have often felt the echo of those words in my heart, and yet I felt convinced that I had not in me the stuff to make a good Benedictine. God drove my bark into other waters, probably more in accordance with my nature, and I thank Him for it, although I have always preserved the highest idea of the monastic life, for which I ever had a secret leaning."

Is it there that de Sonis made that

vow of fidelity to which he refers in a letter from Africa in 1869? "I know that God has led me by the hand," he writes, "through many dangers; but before running such risks, I had promised my Divine Master that, aided by His grace, *I never would refuse Him anything*. It does not become me to praise myself; but I feel that one cannot *marelander avec Dieu!*"

The year 1848 had scarcely begun when the February Revolution broke out at Paris, followed by events which determined the Provisional Government to break up the school of cavalry before the end of the term. On the 26th of April, de Sonis left Saumur, having got his commission as Sub-Lieutenant of the 5th Hussars. His regiment was quartered in the town of Castres, where he arrived towards the end of the summer of that year.

The arrival of a fresh regiment is always a great event in a small town, and all the world was at their windows to watch the entrance of the Hussars. Sonis rode in front with the advanced guard. An officer, who had remained behind to give up the command, told him about the principal inhabitants, and especially about one family with a charming daughter, living in one of the best houses. Suddenly this young lady herself appeared on the balcony. De Sonis was struck by her from the very first moment, and she also had remarked this young and distinguished-looking officer, whom soon after she met at the house of a mutual friend. Her name was Anais Roger, and she was the daughter of a lawyer living at Castres. Very soon they began to understand each other. "Our feelings were pure and simple," she wrote, "and we only asked that God might bless our union." But Mademoiselle Roger was only seventeen, and Gastou