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THE COLONEL'S IDEAS.

"Ma foe!" exclaimed Col. Laporte, am old, I've got the gout, my legs are stiff as gate-posts; and still if a woman -; eye of a needle, I believe I'd leas And I'll feel that way till I die; it's a the blood! I'm an old galautin, I am; a veteran of the old school. The sight of woman, a pretty woman, just stirs me all through, right down to my boots.

little that way in France. We are still knights anyhow-knights of love and hazard-though they have suppressed the church in this country, and we used to be

suppress : can't tear her out of our hearts. She's there; and she's going to stay there. We still love her ; we'll always love her, and we'll do all kinds of crazy things for her just as long as France has a place on the map of Europe. And even if they could wipe France out of existence, there would always be Frenchmen, you know.

"I—before the eyes of a woman, a pretty woman—I feel able to do anything. Sacristi! when I feel her look enter into me, her look, that sacre-nom look of hers that fills your veins with fire, I feel as if I wanted to do I don't know what to fight wanted to do I don't know what, to fight, to wrestle, to smash up the furniture, just to show that I am the strongest, the bravest, the boldest, and the most devoted

"But I'm not the only one—no, indeed—why the whole French army feels like I do—I swear to you they do! From the commonest soldier—from the pioupiou to the general we'll go in any time, and we'll risk anything in the world for the sake of a woman, a pretty woman. Remember what Joan of Arc made us do long ago. that if a woman, a pretty woman, had taken command of the army on the eye of Sedan, when Marshal McMahon was we'd have gone through those lines—sacrebleu!—and drank ch other's health among their cannons, "It wasn't a Trochu we wanted at Paris

car war which will show you how we are capable of anything, in the presence of a

"I was captain, then—just a simple captain; and I was commanding a detachment of scouts, retreating through a part of the country invaded by Prussians. We were surrounded, pursued, fagged-out, stupefied with cold, dying of hunger and fatigue." Now, we had either to reach Bar-sur

"Now, we had either to reach Bar-sur-Tain before next day, or we were gone up—cut off and cut to pieces, too. How we had been able to escape as long as we had, I can't possibly imagine. And we had to make twelve leagues that night, twelve leagues over the snow and under the snow, with empty stomachs. I kept thinking to myself: 'It's all up with us; my poor devils will never be able to pull through! "We hadn't had a bite to eat since the wening before. All day long we had been

"We hadn't had a bite to eat since the evening before. All day long we had been hiding in a barn, crowding close together, so as to try to keep from freezing to death, incapable of moving or speaking, falling asleep and waking up by fits and starts, like men always do who are played out with fatigue.

"At 5 o'clock it was already night—a manufactured with the accuracy of sight."

"At 5 o'clock it was already night—a wan sort of night—a regular snow night. I shook my men to rouse them. Many did not want to get up; couldn't move or keep on their feet, they were so stiffened with cold and fatigue.

"Before us was a plain—a great, beast-ly naked plain, with snow pouring down on.it. It kept falling, falling, like a curtain—snowflakes hiding everything as if a huge frozen mantle were thrown over it, stiff and heavy—or a woolen nattress made of ice. Just looked like the end of the world.

the world.
"Come now!" I said, 'En route, les "But they kept looking at the white powder pouring down from above; and they seemed to be thinking. ""We've had enough of this—might as well die here and be done with it!"

"Then I pulled out my revolver, and "First one flinches, I'll blow the top of

"And off they marched, but very slowly,

like men whose legs were worn out. "I sent four men to scout for us, about three hundred yards ahead—then the rest followed after all pell-mell, in a mass, keeping step or otherwise, just as they were more or less fatigued or more or less able to stretch their legs. I put the strongest men in the rear, with orders to

hurry up laggards by keeping the points of their bayonets to their backs.

"It seemed as if the snow was going to bury us alive; it powdered our kepis and our cloaks without melting on them—turned us into phantoms—made us look like ghosts of dead soldiers, and very tired

ghosts, too!
"I kept saying to mysielf, 'Nothing but
a miracle can get us out of this scrape.
"Sometimes we'd have to stop for a but the rustling, the faint rustling sound of the snow, that almost indistinguishable sound made by the mingling and rubbing together of the falling flakes.

"Some men would shake themselves.

Others never budged.

Others never budged.

"Then I'd give the order to start, and the rifles would be shouldered, and we'd step out with the weariest kind of a step.
"Suddenly the sharp shooters fell back. Something alarmed them. They had heard voices ahead. I sent on six men and a sergeant. And I waited.

"All suddenly a sharp cry, the cry of a woman, pierced the heavy silence of the anows; and a few minutes later two prisoners were brought before me, an old man and a young girl. Others never budged.

They were fleeing from the Prussians who had quartered in their house the evening before, and who had managed to get drunk there. The father was frightened on account of his daughter, and without even theoreting the servants they had both run

away in the night.
"I saw at once that they were well-to

do people-bourgeois, or even superior to You will come with us,' I said. "We started off again. As the old man knew the country he guided us, "The snow ceased falling; the stars snone

out and the cold became terrible.

"The young girl, who leaned on her father's arm, walked with a limping step, a step of one in pain. Several times she murmured: "I cannot feel my feet any more;"—me—I suffered more than she, just to see the poor little woman dragging herself through the snew in that way,

"All at once she stopped:

"" Ma foi, I believe I swore with pleasure.
"Nom d'un nom! that's genteel, that's ice, my boys. And I'm going to do my hare of the carrying."
"We could faintly distinguish in the arkness, on our right, the trees of a little wood. Some of the men went off that way, and soon came back with a lot of branches lashed together in the form of a litter.
"'Now, who's going to lend his cloak,"

this young lady, or else we're not French men, nom d'un chien!

brothers.

"And ten cloaks were thrown in a heap at his feet. In a second the young girl was nicely wrapped up in the warm cloaks and lifted upon the shoulders of six soldiers. I took my place in front, on the right; and, ma foi! I was proud of my load.

"Off we went again as if we had all had a good drink of wine—livelier and jollier. I even heard the boys joking. You see it only needs a woman to electrify us Frenchmen.

"The soldiers had almost formed ranks again—reanimated and warmed up. An old franc tireur who had followed the litter, waiting his turn to take the place of the first comrade who might break down, whispered to his neighbor—but not so low that I didn't hear him:

"'I'm not so young any more, me; but ore coquin! the sex!—there's nothing like that to slam some grit into a man, eh?'
"We marched on almost without a halt "We marched on almost without a halt until 3 o'clock that morning. Then, all at once, the sharp shooters fell back again; and in a moment the whole detachment, lying flat down on the snow, only made a sort of pale shadow on the white ground. "I gave orders in whispers; and I heard behind me the dry metallic clicking of rifles being cocked." "Far away in front of us right in the

"Far away in front of us, right in the middle of the plain, something queer was moving. In the distance it looked like some immense long animal running over the snow, which would stretch itself out like a serpent one minute, and gather it-self up into a ball the next, making sudden

self up into a ball the next, making sudden turns to right and left, stopping a moment and then going on again.

"Then the wandering thing approached us; and I saw, coming at a quick trot, one after the other, twelve Unlans who had lost their way, and were trying to find the road.

"They came so close that I could distinctly hear the hoarse breathing of the horses, the clinking of sabres, and even the crackling of the leather saddles.

"I yelled:

"And fifty rifle-shots burst upon the silence of the night. Four or five detonations followed, then one shot all by itself; and when the fiery powder-cloud had cleared away we saw that the whole twelve men and nine of the horses had fallen. Three animals were running away at a furious gallop, and one of them was dragging after, it the corpse of its rider, whose foot remained in the stirrup, the body bounding and rebounding terribly on the ground.

"A soldier behind me laughed with a terrible laugh. Another said:

"There's widows"

terrible laugh. Another said : "'There's widows!' "Perhaps he was married himself. A third added:

Then a little head was poked out of he litter.
""What's the matter, she asked, 'are

snow became clear, luminous, glittering and a rosy light spread itself through the east.

"A far-off voice cried:

"Qui vive?"

"Att the detachment halted; and I ad vanced alone to make ourselves known.
"We had reached the French lines.

"We had reached the French lines.

"As my men were defiling by the post, a mounted general, whom I was making my report to, cried out in a sonorous voice, as he saw the litter going by:

"What have you got in there?"

"Then a little blonde head showed itself—a little blonde head all uncombed, and smiling, which answered:

"It's me, Monsieur!"

"A laugh went up from all the rank of men, and merriment filled every heart.

"Then Pratique, who was marching beside the litter, waved his cap and shouted—'Vive la France!"

"And, I don's know why, but I felt quite stirred up—so nice and gallant that seemed to me!

"It seemed to me as if we had saved the country, as if we had done something that

country, as if we had done something that no other man would have done—something

no other man would have done—something simple but truly patriotic.

"That little face, I tell you—that little face, I'll never forget it; and if I had to give my advice about suppressing drums and bugles, I'd vote to replace them by one pretty girl in each regiment. That would be far better than playing the Marseillaise, Nom d'un nom! What vim that would put into the troops—to see a medonna like that, a living madonna, beadonna like that, a living madonna, b side the colonel.

He paused a second and then resumed with an air of conviction, shaking his head as he spoke:
"Well, it's all the same, we love the
women a great deal, we Frenchmen."

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murmured: 'I cannot feel my feet any more;'—me—I suffered more than she, just to see the poor little woman dragging herself through the snow in that way.

"All at once she stopped:
"'Father,' she said, 'I am too tired; I can't go any further.'
"The o'd man wanted to carry her; but he couldn't so much as lift her; and she sank down on the ground with a great sigh."

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sigh.

"We formed a circle round them, As for me, I was stamping around there—not knowing what to do, and really unable to make up my mind to abandon that man and that child in such a condition.

"Ail of a sudden one of my soldiers, a Parisian, whom the boys had nicknamed 'Pratique,' cried out:

"Come, camaraux, we've got to carry 'Un grande vache de plaine: lit.—"A great have not had an attack of it since,"

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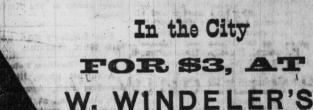
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