TARTARIN OF TARASCON

DY ALPHONSE DAUDET 1840-1897

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When Daudet surprised France with this book renchmen hardly knew whether to laugh or rage. The people of Gascony soon decided in favor of the latter. Quite unconsolously, they perpetrated extravagances of action and language that gave on added and delightful touch to the written story. They debated seriously about the feasibility of going in bodies to Paris and punishing "that They shook their fists in the air on The streets when his name was mentioned. Booksellers of the south of France refused to sell his books. But they could only increase its sale. It is one of the jokes of modern literature.

THE intrepid Tartarin of Tarascon lived in a house that was outwardly just like all the other quiet, respectable houses of Tarascon; but inwardly it showed the heroic nature of its

In the garden grew nothing but exotic plants - cocoa, mangoes, bananas, cact! and, greater than all, the famous baobab of India, the glant tree. It is true that the baobab was not of full growth, being in fact easily accommodated in a small flower pot, while the other plants were equally lacking in size, but notwithstanding it was a true baobab and the town felt

In his study he had all the weapons of the whole world—carbines, rifles, Malay zizz! bang! boom! out of the windows at creeses, Hottentot clubs, everything. These | the Tartars! were all labeled with little cards saying, "Poisoned arrows! Do not touch!" and "Loaded! Take care, please!"

Cook and James Fenimore Cooper, stories much discussed that at last the people of of hunting bears and elephants and lions. Tarascon got to believe that he had gone a man between forty and forty-five, short, tions about China. Deeply read, Tartarin stout, thick set, ruddy, with flaming eyes furnished full particulars, and it would and a strong, stubby beard. When he happen most naturally that he should add read the exciting stories of wild deeds he the story of the attack by the Tartars and pouted out his lower lip in a terrifying describe how he made his men take up way, which gave an impression of noble arms and then zizz! bang! boom! out of derocity to the countenance of this great | the windows at the Tartars! man, the dreadless, incomparable Tartarin

of Tarascon-Tarascon, where everybody deceived. They live in a mirage. shoots. No Sunday ever passed without It was that which made of the boabab hunting parties that comprised the whole sprout a giant fig tree in Tarascon, and of of the male population. All the dogs of a man who had not gone to Shanghai, one Tarascon, a hurly-burly of barks, bays, who had been and returned with glory. cracking of whips, blowing of dog whis- It was that which made the hunters gathtles and hunting horns, an army with ered in Costecalde's shop exchange silent, game bags and fowling pieces-that was impulsive grips of the hand when they Tarascon on a Sunday

an absolute dearth. So far as known, as if the beast were already crou only one animal left in the fore their guns. country all around, an old bare on M. Tartarin was engaged at the time in Bompard's farm, which had doubled, even explaining the working of the needle gun, trebled in value as a result. But he was a then a novelty. Blanched and agitated,

mple supplies and atter transfer open Captain—in the Government of the calmin and Thereupon every hunter threw his cap into the air and shot at it with all his stand, "Let's go and have a look at him." skill. The man who lodged the most the menagerie followed by Commandant who is the man who longed the mind the menagerie followed by community back the hunt and conducted triumphantly back the lion's cage he stopped, rested his the lion's cage he stopped, rested his end of his gun barrel.

As a marksman at caps Tartarin never had his match. The loft at Baobab Villa beast. was full of these glorious trophies. There-fore he was a great judge for all sporting hollowly, threw his fearful jaws wide open problems that arose in Tarascen. Every and emitted a deafening roar of Costecalde, the gunsmith, surrounded by wrangling hunters, who laid their disputes before him.

Yet all this glory did not content him. For his wild, adventurous spirit, which was Tartarin of Tarascon, undaunted, creamed of battles, races across the pampas, tigers and elephants, it was not enough to go out every Sunday and pop again, they heard him mutter: "Now at caps. His Hottentot clubs and Malay this is something like a hunt!" creeses shouted "Battle! Battle!" to him Many times, when he was reading under his blades and points, the poor man would arm. Flourishing it, he would bellow:

"Now, only let 'em come!" 'Them!" Who were "they?"

"They" were all that attacks and fights, yells Sloux, grizziles, Algerian bandits,

It was to no avail that the fearless Tarasconer called for and defled them. Never flid they come. What would they have come to Tarascon for?

Nevertheless, Tartarin always expected to run against them, particularly some evening going to his club. He always was right he carried a sword cane. In his left pocket lay a life preserver. In the right lay a revolver. On his chest, between outer and inner garments, reposed a Ma-

Thus armed, he strolled through his garden leisurely and coolly, prepared for all. gun, on the lookout behind his boabab. slammed it violently against the outer people saw a mysterious figure lurking and rich, for a diary. Next he ordered It they would have been jam. Then he habituating himself to hear without would go dauntlessly through the dark tremor the roaring of the lion in the night. stantly, sea boots, umbrellas, blue spec- and dressed again. Hurriedly he armed, the road. Reaching the club, he would Tartarin was thus preparing himself. The and apparel. cast one last flaming look of deflance into ladies fought for him, to hear from his the night and mutter wrathfully: "Noth- own lips all about the great lions of the ing! There never is nothing!" Only a Atlas. At dinner parties the guests could

reached the age of 45 years without once feroclous Bedouins, and, most of all, the having slept outside of his own room. He immense maned ilons. that's not far from Tarascon, there being till everybody turned pale merely the bridge to go over. Unfortu- Meantime, Tarbarin did not start. nately this rascally bridge is so long and

advantage of being favored with occasional onslaughts of the Tartars. Then the doors would be shut, the clerks flew to arms, up ran the consular flag, and

Tartarin clutched this proposition with immense enthusiasm. In the end it came to nothing; but there was much talk in the On a table were the books of Captain town about it. Tartarin's journey was so The owner of all this terrifying array was and returned. They used to ask him ques-

That Provence is the Lucifer's own coun try, where the sun transforms and magni-It was not for nothing that he had this fies everything stupendously. The people alarming arsenal. He was the king shot of the South are not deceivers. They are

learned that a menagerie had arrived in Unfortunately there was a lack of game, town with a real African lion. They felt

willain of a hare whom nobody could lay with the deadly arm gripped tightly, he low, and finally only two or three invet- prooded when he heard the exciting news. erate sportsmen bothered themselves Suddenly with one convulsive movement The rest went into the country with brave Commandant Bravida (formerly ample supplies and after luncheon the Captain—in the Government Clothing Fachands on his gun barrel and gazed resolutely into the yellow eyes of the huge

With a yell of fright Tarascon precipitated itself toward the exit, bearing in its very front the brave commandant himself. Only one human being remained. It gazing at the lion with lightning in his

When the other sportsmen drew near

The next day there was nothing else Through the twigs of his talked of in town except the approaching baobab blew the tempest of great voyages. departure of Tartarin for Algeria to hunt lions. Tartarin himself was surprised at the news. But he could not bear to deny dash down his book and unbook a deadly it. So he replied: "Aha! We shall see!" to the first few hundred inquiries, and to the next he said: "Very likely." And by afternoon he answered: "It's certain!" all that bites, scratches, scalps, whoops or the club he was feted and could not resist That night at Costecalde's and later at the temptation of explaining his plans in full. They took him home with torches and huzzas.

The next morning Tartarin decided that the start need not be immediate. Besides, he had to read up on lions. From his favorite authors he learned that the great hunters of big game hardened themselves ready for "them." In his left hand he bore he lived on water and broth, and to train himself for long marches he began to trot around the town with his elbows well set against his body and a couple of white for it takes time to prepare for a lion pebbles in his mouth, according to the an- hunt in Algeria.

tique usage. Every dusk he went into his garden and stayed there till 10 or 11, alone with his opened the heavy iron door and And as long as the menagerie tarried the outside of the tent. It was Tartarin, from Marseilles tinned foods, pemmican, Cap-shooting actually stopped while double negation could do justice to his hardly wait for the coffee to be brought that they might ask questions. Then he Yet with all this mania for adventure, would tell of the moonless nights when this fierce determination, Tartarin had he would lie in wait the scorpions, the

had not even taken that obligatory trip to Heated with his recital he would bound Marsellies which every sound provencal to his feet, imitate the roar of a lion and makes upon coming of age. The most of crack! bang! the report of the rifle, overhis knowledge included Beaucaire, and yet setting the chairs, gesticulating, shouting.

Still, it might have redounded as much frail and the Rhone has such a width at to his glory as the Chinese expedition, had on top of all sat a huge red fez with a this point that the game was not worth it not been for an infamous person. This long blue tassel the candle. Tartarin, therefore, remained was Costecale, the gunsmith. He repre- He had one heavy gun on each shoulder Seried a type rare in Tarascon. He was a a broad hunting knife in his sash, a Once he did almost start out on a great man yellow with chronic, constitutional, bandoller across his chest and a revolver managership of one of their branches in disease of which he was proud, as other were hidden by blue goggles. the interior there. This branch had the people are of other diseases. With his fine "Hip, hip, hurrah!" eried

Tarasconic temperament, he used to say: The great man smiled, but did not salute. versed in lion lore to atempt the mad task "You do not know how bad it is!"

coming off?" people asked Tartarin when- calde and all the sportsmen of Tarascon. he dashed it down and went to sleep on ever he appeared on the street. Judge ing it sung, though at a safe distance.

"He is game!" he persisted in saying.

"Tartarin," said he authoritatively, "Tartarin, you'll have to go!" Tartarin looked around him at his cosy

Then, advancing to his brave friend, he said stolcally: "I am going, Bravida."

And go he did; not at once, of course,

He had to order two immense brassbound cases, inscribed: Tartarin of Tarascon

Firearms, etc. He also ordered a noble album, gilded a wonderful tent that would open out intacles, a medicine chest and ammunition attached the shelter tent with its long pole charms. Between them they kept the paws.

At last all the preparations were completed and Tarascon gathered all its life waited before the door, and the sportsmen of Tarascon proudly explained to the populace what the cases contained as they were brought out of the house. Finally Tartarin himself appeared, hailed by a

universal "Ah!" He wore full Algerian costume white trousers, a small tight vest with metal buttons, a red sash two feet wide, the neck bare and the forehead shaven, while

woyage, A firm in China offered him the ever-present envy. With him it was a swinging on his hip. His undaunted eyes "Hip, hip, hurrah!" eried the people.

The firearms hindered him, and, moreover, of tracing his victim before daylight. So "This is going to turn out like the he knew now on what the favor of the he decided to spread his patent tent. But Shanghai expedition," said Costecaide, people depends. Calm and proud, though the tent proved to be of so very ingenious the patent tent and saucepans and foods. him. smalling bitterly, after three months had a little pale, he started toward the rail- a construction that he could not open it, The Arabs suggested donkeys, but Tar- Tartarin affected not to know the anipassed. It was a winged sentence. It flew road station, followed by the brave Com- though he toiled an hour over it. At last, tarin's soul rebelled at anything so un- mal, but Captain Barbassou was so afthrough the town. "When is that trip mandant Bravida, Judge Ladevosze, Coste- fairly exhausted from struggling with it, Oriental.

CALM AND PROUD, THOUGH

A LITTLE PALE HE STARTED

TOWARD THE RAILROAD STATION

was not a common man.

hero of Tarascon in Algiers through two

months of inglorious languor. It also

betray her to her high-born and flerce

What could Tartarin do, what would

cause nothing had been heard from him

Prance! Prance! You do me proud!"

While they were waiting for the train top of it, swearing the favorite Tarasco-Ladevose wrote a poem about it. Tartarin his friends put down their names in his nian oath, "Tar, rar, rar, rar!" had the humiliating experience of hear- memorandum bock for a lion skin each. He spoke to them simply, affably. The the morning he rubbed them with surprise. He was aware that Tarascon was slip- sportsmen felt tears coming. Even Coste- Instead of finding himself in a desert, he ping out of his grasp. Only Bravida, the calde was stung with remorse. It was well found himself in a kitchen garden. His brave soldier (of the Government cloth- that the train came in before they broke African plants of the night before became for days. But there were no lions, Every again at Marseilles and breathed freely

Tartarin made an immense sensation in At last, however, the public clamor grew Marseilles. He would have made an even been there. On a cabbage he found the At last, nowever, the public clamor grew Marselles. He would have made an even too hot even for his faithful spirit. One greater one on the Algerian mail steam- brute's blood. Bending to the trail, with that he heard that wondrous roaring to out of the car windows. That confounded day he buttoned himself up to the ears, ship had he not unhappily succumbed to his revolver ready, he followed slowly, which he had so often listened behind the most military manner, went sternly to he set his foot on deck of the Zouave, Cap- a disappointment awaited him. It was The dogs began to how!. "Quick! Quick!" pression only when at last he escaped from the accursed ship and landed in Alglers.

> There, indeed, he became the object of all eyes. Somewhat to his surprise, he found himself the only Turk in the place. Gentlemen and ladies dressed in European costume were everywhere, and everywhere on his way to the hotel they followed him with respectful admiration, noting his guns, his knife and his revolver.

In the hotel he was received with the same enthusiastic interest, but he was determined to waste, no time in basking in public favor, but to go to bed at once, that he might sally forth into the desert

upright to his back and descended to the He walked out of the city until he came cost him money. The Moorish lady needed much of it to bribe her dependents not to before the house of the boabab. Roofs into a waste place bristling with odd Afriand windows were crowded. People came can plants. On the right loomed a dark even from Beaucaire. Two great trucks mountain. On the left the invisible sea rolled heavily. It was just the place for of cash, owing to the absence of mind a lion. Tartarin laid one gun down before natural with aristocrats. him and with the other ready for imme-

> walted. He waited an hour, two hours. Nothing appeared. Then he remembered that the great lion slayers never went out without a goat or a kid along to attract the beasts. Not having any goat, Tartarin set to work crying in a somewhat shaky votes

He had hardly "ba-a-a-ed" thrice before a gigantic black thing appeared in front and that his admirers feared that he had piteously. of him. Up went his gun. Bang! Bang! and the deed was done.

The lion raced off with a scream that

room and incommoded the prim old gentleman, who showed his annoyance. hunting with only an umbrella. "Lion hunting," said the old gentleman the coach hire to return to Algiers. "Tartarin of Tarascon, lion killer!" passenger, "I have heard that Monsieur ting him by a yard. Bombonnel---'

hunting."

He saluted and got out. "Guard," said Tartarin, "who is that

poor little manikin?" "That?" said the guard. "Why, that's Monsieur Bombonnel, the panther hunter." not like the stage coach after his misadwith his tawny mane gleaming in the sun. Even Tartarin could not resist the im- in it.

armed with staves. the Montenegrin prince, who had followed back with me." h'm, bent, as he declared, on keeping the

fled Tartarin could utter.

had not gone a mile before he was as sea- the entire trip, not because of the sick-When the lion-slayer opened his eyes in sick as he had been on the Zouave. ness of the sea this time but because the "Prance, Prance," he gasped, "I must get camel justed on showing him the most off or I shall disgrace France!"

night Tartarin went into ambush for three when he got into the railway carriage. Nevertheless, he knew that a lion had or four hours; but no lions.

menagerie. The camel began to tremble, train. Tartarin shut his eyes in horror. said Tartarin. "To the ambush!" Common men might have been dis-

couraged by such a first adventure, es- to the prince his pocketbook full of bank Scarcely had the train come to a stop in was, by the infuriated female of the foared might get torn by the lion's talons trembled to the shouts: "Tartarin forif they got to close quarters. Then he re- ever!" "Long life to Tartarin, the liondonkey's owner, who was an Alsatian paired to a clump of laurel, with one knee slayer!" And forth burst the winding of peasant woman and collected 200 francs on the ground, his rifle ready and his hunting horns and the choruses of the hunting knife stuck in the sand in front of him.

All Tarascon was there, Behold the tribute besides the beating. But Tartarin him. Having inquired, and discovering that

There were a thousand mysterious sounds lions did not dwell in the suburbs of Alin that African thicket. Roving creatures pressed glers, but might be found in the south, he glers, but might be found in the south, he cried, "On to the South!"

Not at once, you understand. There was a Prince of Montenegro who was of the south of the street.

Not at once, you understand. There was a Prince of Montenegro who was of the south of the street. The hide of the billed lion sent to Bravida was the cause of all this riot. With the street was the cause of all this riot. With the street was the cause of all this riot. With the street was the cause of all this riot. the most charming affability. And in addition a Moorish lady of radiant beauty ism has its limits. He heard the rolling of pebbles and the soft sound of great it. A drama had been invented had succumbed to the hunter's manly

paws.

Terror lifted him off the ground. He fired both barrels into the night and retreated as fast as his legs would carry him.

not merely a single lion which Tartarin had slain, but ten, nay twenty—pooh! a herd of lions had been made into marmalade.

Then came the climax of the pride and joy of Tarasson, when a fancifully shaped

"Help!" cried he. "This way, Prance relatives; and the Prince was often short The lion is on me!" The prince was not there. On the white. moonlit sands the camel alone oast its dragon had flown down into the town.

But Tartarin set his fellow citizens at

diate work he went down on one knee and the Tartarin of Tarascon do in such cir- Prince of Montenegro had vanished tocumstances but tender his purse with a gether. Tartarin waited in vain till morning. It was Barbassou, captain of the Then, assured that the prince would not Then he took the same of Then Zouave, who roused him from his un- return, he doubted for the first timemanly luxury. He came upon Tartarin doubted montenegro, friendship, glory, and one day and showed him a Marsellles even lions. Reflecting over his plight, aban-

change, he broke down and blubbered

succumbed to one of the monsters which At that moment the thicket opposite him he had set forth to hunt so intrepidly. parted and a gigantic lion appeared not At this Tartarin was ashamed of himten paces away. It thrust out its enortold the hunter's practiced ear that it had self. He would have wept had he not mous head and roared till the very palms been fatally wounded. He was too well been a hero. He leaped up and thundered: seemed to shake.

Furiously the Tarasconian, who had just been cursing lions with all his soul, jumped to his feet, lifted his rifle and fired two bullets into the brute's ye'low head. It was done. For a moment on the flery; background of African morning sky there was a dreadful display of scattered brains, smoking blood and tawny hair. Then Tartarian perceived two giant negroes with cudgels coming toward him. They were his two acquaintances of Milianah! He had killed their tame lion.

They would surely have beaten him to pulp had a gensdarme not arrived at the moment, being drawn to the scene by the noise of the cannonade. Peacefully, with the majesty of law, this useful emissary ordered the remains of the lion to be loaded on a camel and took Tartarin, camel, lion and negroes to the nearest town. Then ensued a long and alarming case.

Lawyers, judges, attorneys, witnesses, swarmed around Tartarin. For a month they dragged him from court to court. "The lion! The lion! Down with him!" Then they let him off after paying 2,500 The next day saw Tartarin of Tarascon francs damages, cost not included. in a stage, lumbering to the south, to the Having no money, the unfortunate lion llons, to glory, perchance to death. At slayer was reduced to selling his guns, his Blidah a little old gentleman, dry and daggers, his revolvers, his Malay creeses, wrinkled and formal, in a brown frock his drugs, his patent foods, even his big

coat, the very picture of a village notary, boots and the shelter tent. It was well got in. Tartarin's shelter tent, revolvers, that he had come provided with an arseguns and knives took up a great deal of nal. When everything was paid for only the lion's skin and the camel remained to him. Tartarin felt the necessity of impressing He had the lion hide packed and shipped on him the fact that one does not go lion to the brave Commandant Bravida. The camel he intended to sell in order to get

with a bland smile. "You are Monsieur But no one wanted a camel. At last he was forced to start on foot. In this affliction the camel did not forsake him. The "Yours must be a terrible profession," strange animal had taken a fancy to him said a photographer who was a fellow and followed him steadfastly, never quit-

At first Tartarin found this touching, "Oh, yes, the panther killer," said Tar- especially as the creature fed himself on tarin disdainfully. "We have hunted nothing. But after a few days he was twenty times together. But panther kill- worried to find the glum beast always at ing is only for pastime. It is not lion his heels. He pondered on shaking his companion off. He tried to outrun the The coach stopped just then and the animal, but in vain. He threw stones at little old gentleman got up. "Let me give it, but the camel forgave him. It was not you a bit of advice, Monsieur Tartarin," until he reached Algiers, after eight tersaid he. "You are wasting your time here. rible days, that he saw a chance to es-There are some panthers left, but as for cape by jumping into a ditch and then lien hunting, that's all over. My friend taking a sidepath. In a minute or two he was relieved by seeing the camel fly ing along with immense strides and

stretching its neck with a wistful air. Tartarin made his way at once to the house of his Moorish charmer. Surely she At Milianah Tartarin alighted. He did would succor him till funds arrived from Tarascon. But what did he find when he venture with Bombonnel. He walked up reached the house? Captain Barbassou the street and suddenly found himself face haughty Moorish lady sang a naughty French song, with the latest French slang

pulse to leap back. He cried out, and the The infamous Barbassou only laughed lion, hearing the noise, took up a small harder when he saw Tartarin. "Of course, wooden bowl in his great jaws and held she is not a Moorish lady," cried he. it out humbly. A passing Arab tossed a "She is a French girl and only had her copper into it, and Tartarin saw that it joke with you. And your Montenegrin was a poor, tame, blind lion which was Prince has just gone to spend five years in being led through the town by two negroes prison for investigating another man's pocket. But never mind, my poor Tar-Besides the lion Tartarin found another tarin. Though your money is gone, the unexpected creature in Millanah. It was Zouave sails to-morrow, and you shall go

"Then they are all scamps in this counillustrious Tartarin company in lion kill- try!" howled Tartarin. After that he embraced the good captain. Next morning "Oh, Prance, Prance!" was all the grati- he embarked in the small boat with his The next day they sallied forth and land before a camel appeared on the quay, bought a camel to bear their arsenal and jumped into the water and swam after

fected by its fidelity that he had it hauled He mounted the beast and made a most aboard the ship. The result was that Tarsuccessful and impressive start; but they tarin had to remain in his cabin through

Deceptive security! Hardly had they gone What kind of a triumphal entry would this be? Not a sou, not a lion, nothing

brave Cammandant Bravida. the armorer; the judge, the chemist, the whole noble army of cap-shooters! They pressed around him and carried him in

Tarascon feared for an instant that a

faithful shadow, The pocketbook and the faithful shadow, The pocketbook and the "This is my camel," he said, simply. Already feeling the influence of the splendid sun of Tarascon, he added:
"It is a noble beast! It saw me kill all

by the sportsmen, acclaimed by all the populace, he placidly proceeded toward the baobab villa; and on the march, thus began the scount of his claim. "Tarascon" told of the sorrow there be-

hunting:
"Once upon an evening you are imagine that out in the depths of t