

I have found here a very nice Government House, furnished by the State; so that I hope my dear wife and children will soon be settled here, and that we shall be allowed to remain for a few years in peace." He ends his letter with the words: "The longer I live the more I cling to our holy religion. I cannot do much for God, but I have the most earnest will and the firmest resolution to lead a Christian life. It seems to me that all the world is conspiring against our Divine Master and His holy Church. Ought not their hatred to be the measure of our love?"

The state of things in Italy at that time filled him with sorrow, and especially the occupation of the Legations by the Piedmontese. Delighted as he was to see men like Pimodan and Lamoricieri enrol themselves under the Pope's banner, he felt bitterly his inability to join them. In all his letters at that time, he speaks of his intense anxiety to give his life for the defence of Pius IX., and his sorrow at the duty to his family which kept him in Africa at such a moment. His wife and children joined him in May, and he then set to work seriously to see what he could do for the civilization of the Arab tribes in his province. Thanks to his intimate knowledge of their language, he had no difficulty in dealing with them. Quite unexpectedly he would appear in their tents, hear their complaints, and see that justice was done to them in all cases of dispute. His disinterestedness struck them most of all. Never would he accept the smallest present or reward for his services. His earnest religious habits also excited their admiration. Frankly and simply, he said his prayers and his Rosary, fasted, and knelt morning and night while offering his usual devotions; and the Arabs would look at one another

and say: "We have at last got a good Governor,—*iaraf Rebbi*; for he recognizes the power of God!" But it seemed as if he were never to be left more than a few months anywhere. An imperial decree of the 24th of November, 1860, having suppressed the civil government of Algiers in order to substitute a military one, Marshall Pelissier was appointed Governor, and M. de Sonis was sent to take command of the province of Laghouat. This place is on the confines of the desert, and is the most advanced of all the French posts. It was, therefore, an important position, and de Sonis, flattered at the confidence of his superiors, started gladly from Tenez for Algiers, and from thence by slow stages to his new destination.

"From Algiers, to Blidah," wrote Madame de Sonis, "and even to Boghar, our journey was not difficult. But after that there was no road. The great sandy plain was only broken here and there by a caravansary, where we stopped to breakfast or to take a little rest." The life of the poor people who inhabited these wastes filled de Sonis with compassion, for they had no means of attending to their religious duties. Only one poor woman, who had been a *cantiniere* (sutler), showed them a little oratory, which she had arranged at the back of her house, with a poor altar ornamented with some coloured prints. "It was such a blessing," he wrote, "to find one soul in this desert who remembered God."

Laghouat is a little town of 3,000 or 4,000 souls, situated in an oasis of date-palms, watered by a little river which issues from a spring, but only runs for about a mile. In the centre are two little hills, on one of which is built the hospital, and on the other an unfinished Mosque. Below are the tents and