

strangling all, respecting neither age nor sex. It was horrible ! Yet no officer dreamed of repressing such carnage. The regiment slowly advanced, sowing death and destruction in its wake.

In the midst of the faint agonizing moans continually echoing in our ears rose the clarion cry, "Help, comrades !" With one impulse, my regiment faced round to answer the appeal. They saw about twenty monks ignominiously expelling from their church some soldiers eager to lay their hands on fabled monastic treasures. This audacious sight so exasperated my men that they fired shot after shot at the white-robed monks, not desisting until the last lay low a victim of their unbridled anger. Then walking over the corpses of the valiant defenders, we found easy access to the church and boldly entered the holy place.

In the distance burned a few candles. Before the Madonna's shrine were innumerable little lamps, whose flickering light dimly outlined and enhanced the unearthly beauty and infinite pathos and tenderness of that Virgin most peaceful. At the main altar, a white-haired monk was saying his mass without apparently taking the slightest notice of the tumult. The sight of this venerable old pontiff, so courageous in face of imminent danger, impressed us forcibly and so appealed to our warrior blood that a moment of hesitancy seized us. Nevertheless, we scoffed at all this church mummary, we, the soldiers of Napoleon, the conquerors of the Pope.

An officer more hardened than the rest scornfully sneered at our involuntary admiration for the white-crowned monk and commanded us to fire on him. No one stirred. His angry oath alone broke the silence. The monk, always with the same serenity which had so impressed us, took the Blessed Sacrament and — Mass finished — turned towards us. With the ostensorium he formed the sign of the cross and without a tremor, sweetly repeated the words of the blessing : "*Benedicite vos omnipotens Deus.*" We retreated. Instantly, the fierce voice commanded anew — with an awful oath, "Fire !" A coward if there was ever one pressed the trigger of his gun, the brave monk staggered and paled but with undaunted courage continued, "*Pater et Filius,*" and