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FOR THE REVIEW.

THE SNIDER.

BY WILLIAM PITTMAN LETT.

With sling and stone, did Jesse's son
Go forth to glorious battle,
And made the giant's quaking bones
Within his armor rattle.
His sling he drew, the missile flew,
With wonderful precision,
And knocked Goliath into smash,
Despite his proud derision.

In days of yore, on Tiber's shore
The stalwart ancient Roman
With javelin and shield in hand
Stood forth afraid of no man;
With flashing sword, through many a hord
He cut his path to glory,
And handed down, with proud renown
A name that lives in story!

The English too, with stubborn yew,
And cloth-yard shaft drawn tightly,
Through shirt of mail, made foeman quail,
And did the slaughter rightly.
It was no fun, but cut and run
Where e'er that death-storm rattled,
In many a fray, they turned the day
Where brave old England battled.

Then came frown Less, who made a mess
Of every ancient system;
Her mighty roar, threw terror o'er
The foe e'en when she missed 'em.
She held the day, and made good play
On many a field of slaughter,
Until the twisted groove was born,
Her last and youngest daughter.

Then for a space, the killing place
Was by the Enfield taken;
But science gave, her dictum gave,
And muzzles all were shaken.
Invention tried, both far and wide,
To find a true death-guider,
At length it came, the gun of fame,
Rip! from the hand of Snider.

In British hands, let hostile bands
Beware of how they trifle,
They're sure to catch, more than their match
Before the Snider Rifle.
Fire at both ends, its bolt it sends
Quick as the lightning's flashes;
And deadlier are the wounds it rents
Than sword or javelin gashes.

Then let us cheer! and never fear,
For Canada's brave yeomen
Will scarify, both hip and thigh
All lawless bands of foemen.
Let every scamp, who dares to tramp
Across our peaceful border
Remember that our Snider guns
Are all in killing order.

Ottawa, January 8th, 1868.

AN ACT OF TERRIBLE JUSTICE.

CHAPTER II.

My position in the midst of the general indifference was hard to bear! my silence weighed upon me like remorse. The sight of Lieut. Castagnac filled me with indignation,—a sort of insurmountable repulsion: the wan look, the ironical smile of the man, froze my blood. I was sure, too, that he watched me from a distance, as if to read my inmost thoughts; and these furtive looks of his did not at all tend to reassure me as to my personal safety.

"He suspects something," I said to myself; "if he were sure, I should be lost; for he is a man that would stick at nothing."

These ideas imposed on me an intolerable restraint; my labours suffered from it, and I resolved to free myself from my state of incertitude at any price. But how? Providence came to my aid. I was leaving the hospital one afternoon about three o'clock, when the corporal-nurse came to me with a small sheet of paper which he had found in Raymond's tunic.

"It's a letter from a woman called Fatima," said the man; "it appears that the creature had some sort of liking for Lieut. Dutertre, and I thought you would like to see this letter."

The reading of this letter filled me with astonishment; it was very brief, and did little more than indicate the hour and the place of a proposed meeting; but what a revelation was in the signature!

"So then," I said to myself, "this woman, whose name Castagnac has called out so often in his delirium, really lives,—and loves Dutertre! Who knows? it was to meet her, possibly, that Raymond wanted me to give him permission to leave the hospital. Yes! the letter is dated the 3rd July. It must be so! Poor fellow! not being able to leave the hospital during the day, he ventured, during the night, along that terrible path,—and there Castagnac awaited him!"

While these thoughts were passing in my mind, I descended to the base of the rock on which the hospital was built, and found myself in front of a low vault of brick, open to the wind, according to the Oriental usage.

At the back of this vault, a certain Sidi Houmaïum, armed with a long wooden ladle, and gravely seated on his haunches, was stirring into an earthen vessel full of boiling water the perfumed powder of Moka. It is only right that I should tell you that I had cured Sidi Houmaïum of a malignant skin disease, against which the doctors of his country had vainly employed all their panaceas and amulets. The good fellow showed me real gratitude in return. All round his *boteqa*, or coffee-shop, there was a divan covered with cushions, on which were seated five Moors, wearing the red fez with a tassel of blue silk; all sitting with crossed legs and half-closed eyes, the *chibouk* in their lips, tasting in silence the aroma of the tobacco of Turkey and the bean of Tonquin.

I cannot tell you why the idea had suddenly come into my mind of consulting Sidi Houmaïum. It was one of those strange impulses that are not to be explained, the causes of which are untraceable. I entered the *boteqa* with a solemn step, to the great bewilderment of its occupants, and took my place on the divan. Sidi Houmaïum, without appearing to recognise me, came and presented me with a *chibouk* and a cup of boiling-hot coffee. I sipped the beverage, puffed at the *chibouk*; time moved slowly, and towards six o'clock the sanctified voice of the *muezzin* called the faithful to prayer. All rose, passing their hands over their beards, and took their way to the mosque. At last I was alone.

Sidi Houmaïum cast an uneasy look around him, then came to me, bowed himself, and kissed my hand. "What brings my lord the doctor to my humble dwelling?" he said. "What can I do to be of service to him?" "I want you to introduce me to Fatima," I replied.

"Fatima, the Moor?"
"Yes."
"My lord, in the name of your mother, do not go near this woman!"

"Why not?"
"Because she is the perdition of the faithful and of the infidel—of all who approach her! Do not see her!"

"Sidi Houmaïum, my resolution is unshakeable. If Fatima possesses a charm that destroys, I possess one that preserves; if hers gives death, mine gives life, youth, and beauty. Tell her that, Sidi Houmaïum. Tell her that the wrinkles of age vanish at my approach; tell her that were she old, ugly as a witch, I could charm away her ugliness, and make her as fair and fresh to look upon as the new-blown lily, her lips rosy and perfumed as the queen of flowers, her teeth as pearly as those of the young jackall."