

MY FRIEND'S STORY.

(Continued.)

He follows the figur. dreamily with his eye around and around in flowering convolutions until in the centre is a bright copper N. That is a curious design. Now the moon wheels along as he dreams, and at last one long beam ends on the glittering copper N. It is strange, but somehow it fixes his attention. It looks familiar. It dawns upon him. His heart beats tumultuously, and on his knees he creeps to it. He touches it with a reverent, trembling hand, and then says in a gasping tone:

"Across the room is another pattern of this arabesque, and in its centre is another copper N."

What a sight! The bloody, disheveled wretch, the rich floor covered with ornament, the wheeling beam of light! Square across the room he creeps, and, measuring the distance with his eye, lies down and gropes with his hand.

"Here it is. Another copper N!" And his head whirls in a mad waltz, and again he becomes unconscious. How long he lies thus he never knows, but as the moon sank and the dull dark precedes the light he stands shivering on the pavement and looking up at the smoldering ruins of a palace. The wind whistles through the open casements, and dully, from time to time, is heard the fall of loosened blocks of stone or masses of brick.

"I shall know it again if I live," he says, with chattering teeth, and creeps away.

He passes a group of night-hawks with haggard eyes, and as they see his smeared face and wrapping of tapestry, they merely shout to him as he passes: "Down with the Aristocrats!"

He shouts a hoarse reply and passes on. They find him asleep on the steps of the American Legation, and the servants are about to call for *gendarme* to carry him away, when I recognize him.

"For Heaven's sake, Smith, what is the matter?"

"The Commune," he whispers, and faints again.

Aimee comes in during the morning, and then we have a time. She must wash his bruised head. He must be cared for in a royal manner, and, sobbing and singing, the girl manages to work herself more intensely in love than ever; and Smith—well, he acts as though he would be willing to pass through a worse siege if he might have the same nurse. She even attempts to console him by humming his favorite air, and makes of it a cross between the "Marseillaise" and a waltz. This was a strange scene for a staid respectable office of an American Minister, and I confess I regarded it with some doubt. On my sofa the sorrowful victim of the Commune; in an office-chair at his side Mademoiselle Aimee. But war and siege and the Commune produce strange scenes. But was thrown into confusion by the announcement that the Marquis Larue asked instant audience of me. I received him at the door all smiles and suavity, and he said in a friendly tone:

"Ah, I perceive here my niece, Mademoiselle Aimee. I came instantly to the Quartier St. Germain when I heard of the lamentable end of Lieutenant Boh. Aimee, my child, come home with me. I extend my arms; my heart is open;" and with a sigh he drew out his snowy cambric handkerchief and applied it to his eyes.

Aimee arose and glared upon him with anger flashing from her eyes.

"Monsieur, the American is my friend. It was the wish of my father. I remain here."

"Ah, Aimee, but the world will talk. You must remember your birth. You must trust your uncle;" and he tried to look friendly and compassionate.

"Never!" said Aimee. "I will never trust you. I say no more now. Leave me in peace."

"Perhaps Monsieur the American can show by what right he detains my niece? He will have a chance to explain it at the Palais de Justice;" and he grinned with anger.

"Monsieur," said I, "I had strict orders from Lieutenant Boh to care for his daughter if he should die. In particular he warned me to beware of Marquis Larue. You perceive this is the office of the American Minister, and under the Stars and Stripes all shall be protected alike. I will make no explanation unless it be to a government which puts a demand in legal form."

"I see," he hissed in answer. "Well, adieu, Mademoiselle. Wait until the *canaille* is put down. Wait until a better class come into power, and then we will see who will govern my niece. Remember, Mademoiselle, I wanted to be your friend. If I be your enemy it is because you choose it." And he left us white with anger.

CHAPTER VIII.

When Napoleon Smith returned to his company a pleasant surprise awaited him. After he had explained his sorry appearance and torn uniform, he was instantly installed as the hero of the hour. He had lived through a raid of the Commune and had come out alive, and it was a miracle. But at the regimental parade in the afternoon, when he had been rehabilitated and shone in a new uniform and white cross-belts, he was startled to hear his name read aloud in a general order. What was to come now? A trial for desertion, or a drumming from the ranks for his absence of a few days while under the gentle treatment of Aimee at the Consulate? At last he was called to the front, and, with a half-dozen others, was right and left faced and marched to the centre in front of the gorgeous Adjutant. "Now for it," he thought. Then the Adjutant advanced and fixed in his

button-hole the Ribbon of the Legion of Honor, and placed in his hands a commission as Lieutenant. He heard read something about the sortie of the 20th and the spiking of two siege-guns, and then the tears blurred his vision and his heart swelled tumultuously. Ah! how well these French know how to make soldiers fight. Pity that they had not had leaders to wisely organize them and lead them to victory in 1870 as in other years. Other honors were conferred on the rest of the files of men at his side, and, then, outward face, march, and he was in his place in the ranks. When the companies broke ranks in the company streets, the French enthusiasm broke loose. Howls and yells, with cries of "*Viva la Americaine!*" filled the air. Our hero was flushed with happiness, and his last franc went down to the nearest cafe for wine and cigars for the merry comrades.

The next morning he was summoned to the presence of General Trochu. After passing the guards at the door he reached the office of the great General, who was only to hold Paris by the bravest defence man ever made, and at last yield to the inevitable and surrender. But in that short, decisive campaign he was fated to be the leader who should make French valor show once more at its brightest. As our hero entered he noticed the look of weariness on the commander's face as he bent over a map of Paris and its fortifications. Hopeless despair was written in every careworn wrinkle on his face, but it was the dangerous despair of the feline race, which shows in spasmodically working claws and gleaming teeth. A dozen subordinate officers stood about him, respectfully waiting for orders. With a hasty word and deprecating motion of the hand he dismissed them all from the room. When he was alone with his visitor he turned his chair and faced him. He looked with wonder for a time and then said:

"You are Napoleon Smith?" "Yes, General."

"Ha, Smith, do you know who you resemble in features?"

"Yes, General."

"Was it for that they called you Napoleon Smith?"

"No, General; I was named so in infancy."

"Will you tell me why?"

"It is a long story, General, and I would rather not. I am not ashamed of the name, and, so far, the name has not been ashamed of me."

"I have heard so, and it is for that reason I send for you. You were in the American army in the last great war?"

"I was, General."

"And I saw you in the sortie of the 20th, in front of Mont Rouge?"

"Yes, General."

"Well, come here and look at this map. Do you see here at this point the works of the enemy are very near. At this point the line is yet far away. In this space between the lines Uhlans burn cottages and put villages to ransom. In this open space have formed bands of robbers who rob the living and dead. It is the advantage of the German to thus terrify the people and make them miserable, but to allow it is the shame of France. Behold here, too, are spots from which Paris may be shelled and destroyed. You are intelligent and may be trusted. I wish you to take a detail of ten men and make reconnoissance as secretly as possible along the St. Denis road, and as far as possible between the lines, and discover for me if any advance is prepared for, and if possible discover the parties of irresponsible persons who rob and torment the people. I could trust my own people to fight, but see—to-day a Frenchman is an Orleanist, to-morrow an Imperialist, and, bah! next day a Communist. Curse the Commune!" and his lips trembled with anger.

"But my American friend, am I asking too much if I tell you to watch and see if you cannot find the villain and traitor who carries to the Germans the news of preparation for every sortie I make, so that I shed French blood like water in vain?" And he sighed.

"General," said Smith, "it is what we call in America a roving commission. Give me a furlough for a week and a pass through every line of our army, and I will try to bring you some news; or if I do not come back you will know I have died in good company with my detail of French soldiers."

"Said like an American! And see, I have written in the pass, 'Captain Smith will pass to and fro as he may wish through every arm of the service, and all guards, until further orders.—TROCHU, General.'"

"Lieutenant Smith, not Captain," said our hero, blushing. "It may make comment, and cause delay if the guards see the mistake."

"My friend, if I write it Captain, it will be Captain. It is no mistake;" and the general swung around in his chair and resumed his study of the map. Napoleon Smith saluted and went out.

The terrors of legitimate warfare are always supplemented by the lawless acts of mercenary wretches who hang on the outskirts of an army to enrich themselves by the blood and suffering of patriots who lay all on the altar of their country. What is left by the tax-collector who gathers money to support the army is gathered up by the camp-follower or the wild, dashing cavalry of the enemy. The guerilla, like the jackall, follows to lick the bones left by the lions of the army. The old men and children and weak women fall victims to the cowardice which hides from the face of the soldier, but is brave in the presence of the weak and unprotected. The scourge of the peasantry of France was the Uhlans. If we condemn the British for invoking the aid of savage Indian hordes in our own revolution, or the same nation for arming the Sepoys in India, what shall we say of the half-savage Uhlans used by Germany in the Franco-Prussian war? They fell upon France like locusts. Every scene of rural felicity was marred by these screaming, shouting savages. They rode like Centaurs, and had roving commissions to levy tribute and frighten France into subjection. Vineyards were forgotten with their vintage, and grain was trampled into the earth. Smoke went up from burning villages where some drunken Uhlans had met his death, or the village was ransomed by the paying of its last franc as the price of indemnity from destruction. Added to this list of