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SACKVILLE, N. B., THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 1877.

WHOLE NO. 362.

LITERATURE.

AN HISTORICAL JEAN VALJEAN.

THE ILL-LUCK THAT PURSUED FRANCOIS DUBOIS, HERO AND CONVICT, FOR FORTY YEARS.

This is the story of Francois Dubois, hero and galley-slave, as it is written in the police archives, the army records, and the Gazette des Tribunaux:

Towards the close of 1818 he presented himself to the commandant of Wessel, Prussia, haggard and in rags, saying that he belonged to the chasseur, and had been dismounted during the retreat and compelled to skulk slowly after the army, and asked to be forwarded to his regiment. In those terrible days men were precious, and officers were not surprised to discover veterans in ragged skeletons. Dubois was sent to the Hussars regiment attached to the Marshal Martier's army, where he soon became the talk of the corps. He never was known to laugh, spoke but rarely, and fought with a reckless daring uncommon even in those times. At Bar-sur-Aube, when the Hussars charged the guns, and falling in with Berserk rage on the cannoniers of one piece killed, wounded and dispersed them, and had taken the gun single-handed before the squadron could seize the others. The Marshal had sent the battery carried, and sending for Dubois, praised him highly and promised him the Cross.

Not long after, the Marshal had occasion to send a despatch from Troyes to the Emperor, then at Pine, on the Brienne road, and selected the Hussar as his messenger. The country was thick with hostile pickets and scouts; he was fired upon several times but by good luck and good management, now fighting, now running, now hiding, he made his way in safety to Marmont's outposts, and was conducted to the Emperor. Napoleon gave him a brief written reply, instructing him in the presence of his staff to conceal it in his boot-leg. Dubois had made his way back as far as the mill of Sancier, near La Belle-Epine, when he found himself hemmed in on all sides by a squad of Cossacks. He rode resolutely at the thinnest part of the line and tried to cut his way through, but after a desperate fight, was unhorsed, disarmed and led to the headquarters of the Russian Emperor.

"What orders were you carrying?" "Verbal orders." "That's a lie. Search the lining of his left boot," replied the Russian. The guard did so—who had betrayed the Emperor from his own headquarters?—and the paper was found. Dubois was looked up, a prisoner, with Lieutenant Auger of the Lancers of the Guard, and Auguste Bernard, one of the Emperor's couriers. Two days later, at St. Mare, he and Auger escaped and re-joined the French army. The Duke de Trevis welcomed him warmly and rewarded him for his services. At Bergers, Dubois was severely wounded while fighting with his headlong bravery. Napoleon was forced back on Paris, stubbornly though he resisted. March 27, 1814, at Bondy, Dubois, his wounds not yet healed, attached to the commissariat staff, was just about to enter the headquarters of Count Millot, who had proposed his name for the Cross, when three of Vidocq's agents arrested him as a fugitive galley-slave!

At the police office he was identified and ordered aside to be returned to the galleys. He gave up to the police a sum of 4000 francs belonging to the regimental chest, with which he had been intrusted to make some purchases at Bondy. Brincart, the Colonel of his regiment, made the most earnest attempts to secure his release, but all in vain. The mighty fabric of the First Empire was falling to pieces, and officials had something more important to think about than the case of a private soldier—an escaped convict.

Dubois was born at Prantbois, in Upper Marne; he was sent to school at Brienne at the age of twelve; in 1790 his father placed him among the students of Mars. At Robespierre's downfall Dubois was returning home when, at Bar-sur-Seine, he fell in with a soldier of the Fourteenth Dragons. They be-

came friends, visited the different places of the town together, and dined with much jollity at the Crown, a public-house kept by one Chevrelat. At dinner the dragon stole three silver spoons, which a couple of days later, as they were about to separate, he sold to Dubois at a low price saying that they were his own. Meanwhile, the landlord, missing his silverware, suspected them and followed them to St. Mare, where they were arrested. The dragon escaped from the gendarmes, the spoons were found on Dubois, and he, being only twenty years of age, was sentenced to eight years' hard labor as an accessory to the theft.

He was first sent to the galleys of Toulon, whence, Jan. 21, 1796, he escaped, enlisting in the Seventh Chasseurs. He was sent to the Army of Italy, where he served with marked courage, receiving several wounds, notably one in the face from an Austrian sabre at Marengo. Being honorably discharged he went to work at Ancerville; one of his men identified him as a convict and he had to fly to Troyes. Here, too, after a considerable interval spent in labor, he was recognized, betrayed to the police and sent back to the galleys. Fortunately his services in the army pleaded for him, and as an act of grace the time he had served was deducted from his sentence, and eleven months later he was set at liberty.

Going on his release, to La Villotte, Dubois had lived there peacefully and industriously for something more than a year, when he was arrested and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for escaping from the galleys in 1786! This time he was sent to Cherbourg, whence he escaped in 1809, fleeing to Paris and enlisting in the cavalry. He served in Spain as in Italy, with marked heroism and faithfulness and won the confidence of G. L. Laverdiere, diere who made him his orderly and selected him to attend him in the Russian campaign. Passing by Chalons on his road to the front, Dubois could not resist the temptation to visit his family. His brother-in-law denounced him to the authorities, and Dubois was sentenced to twenty-four years at the galleys. They sent him to Anvers, whence, in 1813, he escaped to rejoin the army, as we have already said, and vainly seek death.

Retaken in 1814 by Vidocq, the prisoner was sent to Rochefort. After seven or eight years he was pardoned. A miserable thing was a freed convict in those days. For ten years he was condemned to police surveillance; his yellow-ticket of leave announced his disgrace to every one. He could find no employment, nor even shelter. They hunted him from place to place like a wild beast or a leper. He tried to shoot himself—and failed. Refused to purchase bread, he stole the means to purchase a meal. The court only looked at his record of escapes and sentences; counsel were assigned him too dull to see the magnificent opening such a case presented, and the poor devil got ten years more.

For thirty years now he had been convict and soldier, but he had not lost strength—possibly even some hope survived in him that the luck would turn. At any rate, he broke jail again—he had been confined at Dijon—and made his way to Paris, where, August 10, 1823, a detective recognized him on the Rue St. Martin, and hailed him before the Commissioner of the Second Division, M. Henry. It was before M. Henry that Dubois had been taken when he was arrested at Bondy in 1814; to him the soldier had entrusted the 4,000 francs placed in his hands from the regimental chest; he knew all about his case. To his indelible disgrace the official only recalled that Dubois had been before him on a previous occasion, and that he had been sent to Bicetre.

Bicetre and La Force were then literal hells. There was no classification of prisoners; the strongest and most brutal ruled the ward, without interference by the keeper. The prison swarmed with vermin and reeked with malaria, and a prisoner who could not bribe the turnkeys ran an imminent risk of dying of hunger. Dubois remained there four years, sinking slowly in health and spirits. Justice seemed to have forgotten him, when he was taken back to Dijon. He had been condemned

in contumacia for his escape in 1822. The prison-doors opened for him again as inexorably as ever, this time Mont St. Michel being his destination. On his way thither, while passing Prezen-Pail, he escaped again.

He was subsequently asked why he had so frequently escaped, and answered: "I had lost all hope. I began to believe that I was destined to end my day under the lock and key, and I sought to escape because every day of liberty was a day saved from inevitable captivity. It had been for more than thirty years my luck to be rearrested and committed, and since it had to be so, I tried when I could to cheat it."

Yes. It was his luck. Nov. 25, 1831, he was entering the diligence, Rue de Boulogne, when a hand was laid on his shoulder. It was the inevitable police officer. For the first time, gaining strength and eloquence from his desperation, Dubois resolved to plead his own case. He told his story, insisted on his innocence of the original crime laid to his charge, recounted his honorable service in three armies of France, showed his scars. The Court heard him partly through, yawned and sent him back to Bicetre.

Small wonder he gave up for a while and abandoned himself to despair. He was almost sixty, and luck had run cruelly with him for nearly forty years under the Republic, the Consulate, the Empire, the Hundred Days, two Restorations and one revolution. He was destined to Mont St. Michel, most horrible of the prisons of the day. The monarchy of July was then in its first flush and inclined to be merciful, and as a last hope he wrote out the whole history of his life from the time that he entered the school at Brienne. He did not omit an incident, his escapes, the petty theft he committed after vainly attempting suicide.

What did it all in the Gazette des Tribunaux of the time. It concludes thus: "Advanced in age my strength is falling. There remains to me but one hope and the sorrow of never seeing an end to my evils. Still the sovereign's mercy is great. I have never committed a crime which should make me despair of pardon. I cannot survive the hardships of the fearful route from Paris to Mont St. Michel. I beg, therefore, that my position may be ameliorated, by sparing me that terrible journey and severe treatment, and that I may be sent to a place of detention nearer Paris, as Poissy or Melun, where my brother, who will give security for me, can find me work at my trade and I can wait patiently the moment when Your Majesty will design to take pity on my misfortunes."

The plea he sent to Queen Amelia, most pious and venerable of sovereigns. And now with a tender hearted woman, and she a Queen, on his side Dubois' luck turned. The Queen had the whole story hunted out. It was all true! The regimental records attested the bravery and scrupulous honesty of Francois Dubois. Old Marshal Martier told how the Hussar had ridden first and headlong into the battery of Bout-de-Lain.

The Duke de Trevis bore witness before the Queen of the Hussar's repeated gallantry and of his services to France as dispatch-carrier, interceded warmly for him. The Prefecture of Police itself could not only report that the worst offence against Dubois was his jail-breaking; it was for this he had been so relentlessly pursued and so often arrested; there was no reason why he should not be pardoned.

He was, for the next week's Gazette des Tribunaux contained this announcement: "We have the satisfaction of announcing that the unfortunate prisoner has been liberated, and that her Majesty the Queen has presented him with a sum of money sufficient to prevent him for the rest of his days from again falling into misery." We have never heard of Dubois after this, and it is pleasant to think that at least he found rest, peace and comfort.

That is the Francois Dubois, hero and galley-slave, as it is written in the police archives, the army records, and the Gazette des Tribunaux, how the blind fury of the law hunted him for forty years, and to the verge of grave, for an offence he never committed.

The late Fire in St. John.

From the St. John Daily News.

The flames licked up the dry old shanties greedily, and the blustering wind caught the burning fragments and buried them high in air, where they whizzed around fantastically, gyrated gleefully, and descended, a hail of fire, on houses near and far. The fire soon made a flank movement up Union street and then made a wild leap for Smyth and Dock streets, passing down both of them with great fury, taking the front and rear of the buildings in its destructive progress.

The firemen, who had been early on the scene, and had been reinforced by the Portland force, worked nobly to resist the enemy. They drew lines among buildings, and, with a vigorous stroke to confine the fire within them; but it broke through the lines, leaping the barriers, and suddenly turned the flanks of the opposing forces. While the men were throwing water on one building, a structure across the way would catch fire, flame up viciously, threaten the firemen's communications, and force a change of base. While the men were drenching the front of an exposed building, a fire brand leaped over it, lodged craftily in a crevice in the rear, and flamed up fiercely.

The flames rushed restlessly into the tall warehouses of Nelson street, Robertson Place and Dock street, spreading from Chipman's Hill to the harbor. Nothing seemed to check their progress. Brick buildings had wooden cornices, wooden sashes, unprotected by iron shutters, or wooden outhouses attached, afforded an easy entrance to the fire, and when once within, the flames were sucked up the fuel-like spaces between the bricks and plaster, made openings for themselves at the top, and then roared madly as they fed on lath and beam.

One volley of fiery particles, higher and of longer range than the others, struck Mr. John E. Turnbull's factory and beautiful house at Lower Cove, more than a mile out, and quickly wrapt them in flames. So quickly did Mr. Turnbull's stone house succumb that little or nothing was saved, and Mrs. Turnbull had to be taken out of the second story window; her escape by the stairs having been the only one. This was the centre of another fire radiator, and the surrounding buildings were soon aflame, there being no engine to interfere with the progress of the devouring element.

The northern end of Prince Wm. street being on fire, and Canterbury street, with the fine building of J. R. Jones and the North British Insurance Company, and the Daily Express building, having with a suddenness resembling spontaneity, sprung into flame, while the fire had run down Germain street, from the Victoria Hotel, until it reached the Lower Cove fire area, Prince Wm. st. was isolated from the rest of the town, walled in by fire on one hand and water on the other. At first many ran the blockade by the way of Queen street and the shore below the Battery, but these routes soon grew too hot for safety, and already numbers took refuge on Reed's Point wharves and the Ballast wharf, the position of the latter growing momentarily more dangerous.

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deaths are rumored, but it is difficult to ascertain the correctness or falsity of the rumors, as it is very difficult to find even a well-known citizen who formerly resided in the burnt district.

INCENDIARISM. The Orange Terrace, from which the fire was kept with great difficulty, was made the object of an attempt at incendiarism. In one of the unoccupied houses a fire, which had evidently been set, was discovered in a small room.

ROBBERY. Robbery was carried on by many rascals in the boldest and most unblushing manner, while others pursued their rascally work under the pretence of aiding to save goods. Some went around, both with and without lanterns, and groped up anything they fancied, boldly saying, "All right" when interfered with, and marching off with their spoils, if not prevented. Others were seen emptying the pockets of clothes; and pilfering from drawers and trunks, while appearing to be working very earnestly to save goods. But there were no arrests. Sometime before the flames reached the Centenary parsonage, Mrs. Sprague found three young rascals engaged in lighting a fire on the kitchen floor.

HOW THEY TOOK TROUBLE. Some strong, hard-headed men buried their heads at the sight of their burning homes, some stood and looked on at the wreck of rescued matter and the crush of carrying carts with listless stupefaction, and some danced around like crazy men, throwing pier-glasses out of second story windows and carrying mattresses down the stairs, while nervous and delicate ladies, whom one would not have supposed strong enough to face such an ordeal at all, superintended the removal of their goods with the skill of a general, and the complacency of a philosopher, and then gazed at the burning homes they loved, as only a woman can love a home, and smilingly suggested consolation, making the best of a very bad business, without a word of complaint, without the utterance of a vain regret, with no more sorrowful word than an expression of pity for the poor cat who plunged into the confusion of outer darkness instead of trusting to her mistletoe for security.

Relief committees were organized for both sides of the Harbor, and these set to work with such a will that last night many homeless and penniless beings forgot their troubles in sleep. These people had lost their homes, their household goods, and in some cases friends and relations. Among the latter were Mrs. Holmes, a sailor's widow, living near Reed's Point. Her condition is lamentable in the extreme. But recently she lost her husband at sea; and she has had every year since of her property swept from before her eyes; Wednesday night her eldest son, spoken of as a very worthy young man, was drowned while crossing the harbor. One son is left to her—too young to realize that she has lost her only child. The poor woman is almost crazed.

The story told by these poor creatures is pitiable in the extreme, but there is a courage sustaining them and a sympathy for others that is remarkable. If you have comfort and charity to bestow give it to her. One poor woman said she removed her furniture from her house and as the fire followed her up she moved her little stock nine times, then to see it overtake and burned by the devouring element. Another woman had lost all her property, and one of her children was missing. A woman living on the west side of Queen Square, returned to her home to find it in flames and her four children, she knew not where, nor to yesterday afternoon had she discovered any trace of them. "Ah," almost shrieked a woman in reply to a question as to whether she was insured. "How are the poor to pay for insurance?" This is the story of hundreds—no insurance—homeless, penniless, and without hope for the future. Surely here is ample opportunity for active benevolence.

In the chamber of the Turkish parliament there are Mohammedans, Greek Unitarians, Bulgarian Sectarians, Roman Catholics, Armenian Unitarians, Chaldean and Syrian Sectarians, Jews, Protestants, Maronites and Druses. Among the devotees three days per week are sacrificed as Sabbaths—Friday by the Mohammedans, Saturday by the Jews and Sunday by the others.

The Pacific coast is coming forward conspicuously in the canning business. It is estimated that in Oregon alone there are 600,000 cases of canned fish and 650,000 of canned fruit put up annually. The business is constantly increasing, and the increase for the present year, it is said, will be 50 per cent over last year.

WHERE IT FAILS.—A woman will insist that the fashionable dress does not return locomotion, but she steps on a garter snake, and then she utters a brief but fervent petition for the untrammelled freedom of the contrepoe in a circuit tent.

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