

LOVE.

What is love?

A trust to prove Each heart by pain and loss and gain. Through words and wrong or shame or song The joys and tears of faith and fears That make life fair the precious share That both endure and will make sure Of peace and rest—the soul's life quest.

AFAR IN THE DESERT.

In our times, France's great African colonies are subdued forever; but in other days, during the attempts of a laborious conquest, every moment held a danger. Skirmishes were incessant, real combats were frequent, and each post of the extreme vanguard had its romantic episodes, to be related later. Here is one of them.

Soft and wavering the wind blew up off the scorched desert. The air freshened suddenly, and suddenly the night fell. Like a barrier upon the horizon the ascending hills gradually took on tints of gray or lilac; to the right and to the left stretched the plain of reddish sand, traversed irregularly by ravines of less or greater darkness, according to their depth, and by strange palm groves, dusty, yellow, sunburned. Twilight is unknown in Africa; darkness falls there with a push, like a curtain, and this swiftness of change of setting is accentuated correspondingly as the dry country is reached, in the heart of the desert, in the unexplored lands. Here, past the High Plains, beyond Saïda, Ain-Seffra, almost into Morocco, on the borders of the mysterious Fighig, at the farthest point whither the exploring columns have penetrated, this natural phenomenon is profoundly noticeable: the shades invade the earth in the briefest moment, and change and darken it with their clouds as ink darkens water.

A bugle sounded within the circle of tents: the horses of the pickets lifted their heads, and the chasseurs, in their wide blouses and trousers of linen, went to form in line slowly for the evening roll call. The bugle call, loud and shrill, was prolonged indefinitely, carried by the sonorous swells to the foot of the tranquil mountains, where the sound died out. The squadron was formed on the right. Cabarousse, captain commanding, and his two lieutenants, Peyralte and Vaudras, all drowsy, regarded the maneuver carefully, without uttering a word, with their arms drooping, and all about, far, near, above, everywhere, there reigned a silence so great that it seemed religious, sacred, full of august mysteries.

The roll call was begun. After each name followed the same brief, monotonous answers, as each day at that hour, with the apathetic indifference of mechanical exertion. The adjutant did not even pause before passing from one name to another.

"Present!—esent!—esent!" "Hanrion!" No one answered. The adjutant, surprised, lifted his gaze from his roll book and repeated: "Hanrion?"

"Nothing." "Well, are you deaf, you Hanrion?" No answer.

A soldier was missing. His companions of the ranks spread their hands and gesticulated in token that they knew nothing, comprehended nothing. Cabarousse came forward.

"Let us see! Who was the last man to see Hanrion? Where was it? When was it? Speak up now!"

In the morning, at roll call, none had seen him since.

"Finish the roll call! Break—ranks!"

So there was a soldier missing. In the neighborhood of a city, Cabarousse would have shrugged his shoulders, saying simply: "A hair thrown to the wind!" but here in this complete solitude, twenty leagues from the last advanced post, an absent man might as well be counted dead at once. And in a squadron alone there, isolated, lost, and entirely dependent upon itself, a call without response was enough to chill the boldest. In the desert, ranks are inevitably narrowed, and individualities are allied; no one is unknown, all are comrades, and one of these comrades had disappeared. In every group, whether the sleeves were blank or braided, that disappearance was discussed passionately, with the instinctive horror of the thought—"If it were I!" For human selfishness is never lost completely; all solidarity rests on personal considerations.

The country here was not, however, openly dangerous, not avowedly hostile; the bands of nomad Arabs had been repulsed, driven back to the mountains, and only a Kabyle village had its huts a short distance away. But the Kabyles are sedentary, of lazy habits, and they regard with indifference the foreign troops defiling past them in clouds of golden dust, and strike not, unless they are attacked in their own dwellings, under their roofs of mud and stone.

And yet, nevertheless, Cabarousse, suspicious, twisting his mustaches, looked obstinately to that side where lay the Kabyle village. There, he was convinced, lay the solution of the mystery. Suddenly he strode toward the groups of soldiers.

"Here! let us see about this! no more trifling! Does any one know anything?—there must be a woman in this business—a Kabyle woman, eh? Answer—one or another, or all at once! But answer! or else!"

"A woman—or more than one! it is the same thing," let slip a soldier, slunk-

ing his head knowingly.

"Here, you! come forward, and tell what you know!"

The soldier advanced and spoke out, finally. He was a barracks gossip, a swaggerer, and he spoke after his kind. "Well, this is about it, my captain: one is not made of wood, you see, and the desert is wide, and six months is a long time. It is very hard—not to see a woman for that long." Then he went on to say that the Kabyle girls went to go to wash their bright colored rags at a rill at no great distance from the camp, and "The devil one gets a twist in both eyes when one sees their brown, round ankles, as they go down to the gully. But that is all! as to their heads, they are so toggled out that one sees only their eyes. But such eyes! That scamp Hanrion liked to go to watch them wash—a fancy like any other. He declared that the tallest and the shortest of them winked at him sidewise as they passed by him; and that always pleases a man, wherever he may be, my captain!"

"That is enough!" said Cabarousse, and he gave the order to saddle the horses.

Thirty men were left in charge of the tents. The others were galloping in the bright moonlight, and by the clear rays horses and riders projected gigantic shadows, scattered by the haste of march, but equal in their dimensions, the lines being maintained strictly. The thirst for battle and the joy of vengeance impelled the squadron; besides, any excitement is welcome which comes to break the monotony of long days of idleness. Then forward! Uprose and fled from the road the marauding jackals, whose shrill squeals insult from afar their natural enemy, man, once he is safely past them. Now and then a saber sounded against a stirrup, or a horse which left his place was by force of hand returned thither; but always the troop continued advancing with spectral aspect, forging an ever retreating picture.

The soldiers were content with the expedition, perceiving that the death of one among them was not to be passed over indifferently, and that all bloody memories would find prompt vengeance. Little by little, a sparse vegetation spread beneath the feet of the horses; then the way was streaked by the silhouettes of palm trees; farther yet, and the Kabyle village stood confusedly out from the earth, with its mud hovels, low, narrow windowed, whose doors were too small for human stature; and round about the inclosures for cattle, now vacant.

At a brief word of command, the squadron halted. No light shone, all was dark; no one moved, nor anything whatever. Only a few vagabond dogs, scenting the strangers, barked upon the dung heaps. The troop surrounded, at a walk, the village, still silent, still dark. Dismount! They entered the first hut, and it was vacant; vacant, too, the second; the third vacant; all were vacant—the inhabitants had fled, taking their effects and weapons. This was their guilty confession. More than that all farther search was now useless and without purpose.

But what was that? Lying across a doorway, with its face in a heap of filth, was the body of a man, with its throat cut, its face bathed in blood. It was Hanrion. Then, on the vast night, arose a clamor of rage, which presently sinks into grief—a tone of unspeakable sadness, of supreme pity. Afar stretch the undulating plains; and the imperturbable chain of hills, black now, seemed insolently to bar the way to reprisals.

Stiff upon his horse, gloomy and forbidding in the clear night, Cabarousse shook his clenched hand at the invisible as one who dreams of vengeance.

"Lieutenant!" he cried, at last, "take fifty men and crush that brood of mangots until not two are left living! Oh, that I must stay at my post that I might go with you!"

When the ranks were formed, the sub-lieutenant, Philippe Vaudras, saluted and started with his fifty men toward the Unknown before them, while Cabarousse and his squad returned at a foot pace, in their own despite, to the camp, with heads bent, with hearts saddened, bearing, laid across two horses, the bloody body of the murdered Hanrion.

Tall, slender, a leonine blonde, with clear blue eyes, when he left the military school, Philippe Vaudras had chosen Africa as a field for adventure, and, in a year of camp life, he had made himself noted for his bravery, and this in a wild squadron where every man was valiant. Because of his white hands, his sweet voice, and his youth, the soldiers called him "The Little One," "Mlle. Vaudras," or else "My Lady Sub-Lieutenant;" but, when he charged across the plain, that "little one" gladdened the heart: his horse had splendid legs and was always first in the combat; and—what a powerful fist had "my lady sub-lieutenant!" His soldiers were fain to follow Vaudras, since they could never get before him; and they followed him with enthusiasm, drunken with his wildness, and, above all, so that nothing of ill should befall him. He seemed precisely the chief necessary for that romantic expedition, for that tragic night, for that setting extraordinarily tragic; after him his troops would follow blindly.

At the head of the vanguard and on the flanks of the squads, the guides, the explorers, the pathfinders bent over their pomells, with their gaze fixed on the ground, directing their course by tracks almost invisible by the pale light. Across a width of forty yards there appeared in the sand deep marks, footprints of men and beasts, whose wide spaces attracted

the tumultuous fight, the disorder of defeat, beneath the furious lashes of the Kabyle drivers, terrified by that corpse they left behind them.

The horses of the pursuers were panting. "Halt!" commanded Vaudras. The chasseurs camped as well as they could; they lay down to sleep with an arm through the bridle, and in spite of the jerks and pulls of the animals their sleep was deep and dreamless. At last a faint white streak appeared on the horizon; dawn was breaking; and suddenly a growing light dispelled the shadows and discovered distant objects. Then on the flank of the hills appeared the tribe they were pursuing, a long, gray line of men, women and children, of sheep and oxen, climbing the heights in haste, and the air conveyed to them like a call the lowing of the oxen and the bleating of the sheep.

With one simultaneous shout the riders spurred to a gallop, but if they saw they were seen also, and the Kabyles, abandoning already the heaviest of their luggage, ran up the steeps in a revolt of confusion. They were lost to sight in the chaos of gigantic boulders; one by one, as ants bury themselves in the earth, they were hidden to the last one in the hollows of the mountain. All that remained in sight were a few oxen, uneasy, turning toward the plain, lowing sadly, with necks stretched, muzzle thrust out and nostrils flaring.

An hour later Vaudras and his troopers found themselves all at once within a hundred yards of the enemy, having arrived thither by means of literal goat paths. The Kabyles had made front and were awaiting them. The situation explained their audacity. Between the fugitive tribe and the blue and red chasseurs, the only path open was an extremely narrow pass which joined two level spaces. This pass ran along the side of the mountain like a forbidding balcony hung over a gorge of immense depth. It was not wide enough for two horsemen abreast, and that beneath the unerring fire of the Kabyles on the heights. The least slip, the first false step, would send one rolling into infinite space. Vaudras saw this conformation, and, understanding its horror, his face blanched and he shut his eyes. The troopers paused in astonishment and the smoking horses panted heavily and recoiled, necks thrust over cruppers. Evidently the Kabyles had known of that natural redoubt; the women and children were hidden behind the rocks in the rear, and the men were on their knees or on their breasts, sheltered from balls by great blocks of granite. They held the mountain and could fire at their pleasure upon the soldiers in the open. Moreover, there was the ravine, the threatening fall.

The French soldiers thrust their heads forward to gaze at the abyss, saying by their grimaces: "If we were birds, now!"

Suddenly, the bugler, a little scamp of 20 years old at the utmost, spurred his horse forward in bravado and sounded the charge. The signal was given, the horses started of their own accord, and along the whole extent of the menacing pass, heads flush with tails before them, the first squad dashed splendidly, under a furious fusillade. Only one man, restraining his horse with both hands—only one man rigid as if petrified in his saddle, remained behind it as rear guard. It was Vaudras.

One, two, four, five, twenty; the troopers thundered past him, shaking their heads under that hurricane of balls, but laughing and encouraging one another with shouts. The sub-lieutenant remained immovable, with his eyes fixed on the summit, a cold sweat running off his temples.

Vaudras was smitten with vertigo. To be attacked by vertigo is almost as bad as to go mad outright. The horror of it suffocates and paralyzes; and the man predisposed by temperament to that mysterious potency of empty space, to that magnetic attraction from abysses, loses all consciousness of himself and all will power; he pales, he trembles, he recoils, and flies from the mute summons of the invisible death awaiting him in the air.

Vaudras was afraid. Ah! the battle! there is the powder which laughs, the lead which whistles, the steel which darts, the blood which flows, the splendid shocks, the noisy death at will! But that great mouth, silent, terrific, waiting to suck one in—not—not—no! impossible! never!

Thirty men had passed, had taken the lead of Vaudras. They fancied that their officer, for the best of reasons, doubtless, watched their tragic defile, and would follow to place himself at their head again. None noted his appearance, none suspected his anguish. The "little one" afraid! Bah! "Mademoiselle" Vaudras nervous! Indeed, that is enough to terrify. What is the matter? "My lady sub-lieutenant is crying!"

Forty men had gone forward; the balls whistled harshly, scratching the granite walls with terrible rebounds. The Kabyles were firing volleys, continual discharges, sure that they were lost if the charging foe should reach them. Vaudras was exposing himself as a target uselessly.

All the fifty men had passed by him. He remained alone. He dismounted, meaning to try the pass on foot. His horse broke from him and hurled itself after the others. At a quarter the length of the trail its shoes slipped on the rock, it lost its footing and was whirled into the abyss, its four hoofs turned upward. Vaudras screamed, his eyes starting from their sockets. He threw himself upon his knees, he dragged himself upon his stomach, but brute instinct drew him

backward. He could not go on.

At that moment he saw his men surrounded on all sides by the Kabyles, three times their number, rendered desperate by their danger. The women and children sallied from their rock crannies and hung themselves from the bridles; they plunged knives into the bellies of the horses, they scratched, they bit, they threw stones. In that warning of the horde, that entanglement, that furious grasp of the raving multitude, the chasseurs, suffocated, dragged down, felt their limbs grow numb. Their bleeding bodies were drenching the earth with red, and their leader was not there to inspire them, to ordain a victory.

It was faring ill with them. Their long sabers, dulled and bent, were withdrawn with difficulty from their thrusts into the masses. Their arms were weak and broken. They were powder burned—at such close range were the Kabyles firing. They were deafened by the yells of the dogs, excited by that combat; they were deafened by the shrieks of the children, by the howls of the women, by the roars of the men; cut, bitten, bleeding, scorched on all sides, the little troop melted slowly before the multitude which assailed unceasingly. Sally, ambuscade, be the attack of what ilk it might, it meant defeat and death to the French cavalymen.

Vaudras once more started to run forward, and with his mouth foaming he fell back once more—the last time. From afar he gazed with an infinite tenderness upon his men, dying there without him—but, ah! in dying they were fighting bravely—slaying gallantly. He drew his pistol from his belt, he held it against his temple, he pressed the trigger, and the last convulsions of the death agony precipitated his corpse into that bottomless abyss which had brought upon him the accursed vertigo.—Translated for The Argonaut from the French of Maurice Montegut by Y. H. Addis.

Not Hard to Hit.

The following anecdote admits of wide and varied application. Most of us can apply it to ourselves if we will. It was a story of a minister who, preaching in the pulpit of a brother clergyman, said some strong things about racing and fast horses.

He was told after the sermon that he had touched one of their best members at a tender point.

"Well," said the preacher, "I cannot change my sermon for him." In the evening the man was introduced to the minister, who said, "I understand that what I said touched one of your weaknesses. I assure you that I was altogether unconscious of the weakness when I said it."

"Oh, never mind," said the man. "It is a poor sermon that does not hit me somewhere."—Youth's Companion.

To Save Drowning Men.

A United States navy officer has invented a life saving device for the dreaded emergency of "man overboard" which promises to be of value. A raft buoy of sufficient size to support a man is attached to the vessel by a long and strong but light wire rope. The buoy is stocked with a small supply of provisions, and is furnished with a potassium compound which upon contact with the water ignites and burns brilliantly for twenty minutes. If the drowning man, aided by the flame, succeeds in reaching the raft he can be drawn to the vessel without the necessity of lowering boats. Should the rope break and his own vessel lose track of him, he has, with the provisions, a chance of sustaining life until picked up by others.—Frank Leslie's.

An African "Wake."

According to news from the west coast of Africa there have been some human sacrifices in consequence of the death of a son of the king of Grand Jack. Selected victims were obliged to drink "saw water," a poisonous liquor, and were then pitched into the surf on the seashore. When the rollers dashed them ashore men, women and children cut at them with knives until they were dead. The chief of the tribe flies the British flag, and the captain of a trading vessel remunerated with him in vain.—London Standard.

The Editor's Insomnia.

Patient—I wish you would prescribe for me, doctor. I am nervous and restless and my sleep is disturbed by nightmares hideous enough for delirium tremens.

Doctor—Possibly your heart is diseased. Do you lie on the right side?

Patient—Great Scott, doctor! I thought you knew that I am running an independent newspaper and have to lie on all sides.—Detroit Free Press.

A Disconsolate Wife.

"I don't believe in these secret societies," said one Austin lady to another.

"That's very singular," replied the other; "your husband is a Forester, a Knight of Pythias, and a Knight of Honor, and you will have at least \$10,000 when he dies."

"But what good does all that do me?" was the tearful response, "when he never dies" and the poor creature burst into tears.—Texas Siftings.

Knew When to Stop.

A New England man has beaten the green goods sawdust men at their own game. He got one of their circulars, and in reply asked for a sample of their goods. They sent him a genuine \$1 bill, and the gentleman stopped the correspondence then and there.—New York Sun.

A Judge's Advice.

Judge Hare, of Philadelphia, recently gave this advice to a wife beater who was discharged upon the appeal of the abused wife: "When you find yourself getting angry again, fill your mouth with water and keep it shut till you cool off."—Chicago Herald.

"I hear young Pastleigh has been painting the town red since his uncle left him a quarter of a million." "Why, anybody could paint the town red with a quart of vermilion."—Life.

There are in England 347 female blacksmiths who actually swing heavy hammers, and 9,133 women employed in making.

ALL KINDS OF SPOTTERS.

THE WAY IN WHICH WORKMEN ARE WATCHED DAY AND NIGHT.

A Suspicion of Dishonesty Prompts One Man to Watch Another—The Rich and Poor Alike Are Constantly Under Surveillance—The Police No Exception.

In one of the police courts the other day a young man giving an assumed name was arraigned on a charge of loitering, and a suggestion of "suspicious character" was also made to the judge, who imposed a fine of \$10 upon learning that the young man was employed by one of the big surface railway companies as a "spotter," and he claimed that loitering on street corners was a part of his unenviable calling.

The hatred displayed by the conductors for these monitors in their affairs needs little provocation, and is only equaled by the anger of a bartender when the proprietor of a saloon buys one of those automatic check writers and registering machines. As a rule the conductors get to know the men who are watching them, and they are mighty careful to ring up every fare received when the spy is around, and they generally keep well posted regarding their movements, one conductor telling another of the proximity of the dreaded individual as he moves along the line.

ON THE STREET CARS.

The spotter who appeared at court a prisoner was searched, and in one of his pockets was found a number of blanks on which he keeps his memoranda. The spaces to be filled in report the day of the month, year and the exact time of the day at which a car is boarded and in which direction the car is going. Then follow the number of fares recorded by the dial in the car and the number of fares received by the conductor in his presence. The report goes on further to state: Was the conductor polite? Was he careless? Was he watchful as to assisting ladies and children on and off of his car? Was the driver careful with his team?

The simple mention of the word spotter is enough to bring out a storm of indignation from the ordinary railway employe. "Every time I hear of one of these fellows," said a conductor of a cross town car the other day, "it makes me think that my employers think that we are all dishonest. The bell punch is looked upon by the conductors as a badge of dishonor, and, as far as beating the punch, why it is just as easy to forget to ring it as it is to fail to pull the strap on the big dial indicator."

"If a man wants to be dishonest no bell punch or dial can prevent him from doing so. I could point out spotters, any number of them, who are laughed at by the men on this road. Some of the dirty work is done by women who pretend to be reading a book, but who, in reality, are 'keeping cases' on the unsuspecting conductor. If a man in our business is disposed to be dishonest and is not a fool, all the spotters in Christendom can't catch him. The crowded cars are his best field, for who can tell whether he rings up for every passenger or slips one here and there. At night he will have a few more nickels in his jeans than he is obliged to turn in, but the company is none the worse for it."

"I've run on this road now for two years," said another conductor on the same line, "and I think in that time I have seen about fifty different spotters. I know them the minute they get on the car. The first thing they do is to size you up; and every time you pull the strap they look at the dial to see if it registers correctly. They are unlike the ordinary passenger, inasmuch as they wear an air of assumption that gives them 'dead away.'"

The "L" roads have "spotters" also, but not to watch the train bands. These persons are called "inspectors," and they prow around from station to station at the most unseemly hours, just to catch the drowsy agent or ticket chopper asleep on his post, or neglecting his business in any way.

EVERYBODY WATCHING.

The policeman dreads his roundsman, for he knows that officer is appointed to spy upon him and report any failure to perform his duty. And yet what would the police force amount to if there was no such officer to watch the policeman? The hallways would be the sleeping place for some and the drinking saloons the rendezvous for others.

"No man who is honest at heart," said a well known police official the other day, "needs any watching. A policeman ought to be the last man to object to being watched, for he is in turn only having done to him what he does to the public—looking for delinquents. In the one case he is looking for lawbreakers; in the other he is being watched so that he will not commit a breach of police rules. And so it is in all cases where one man is employed to watch another."

"It is not our desire to be good in many cases that keeps us from doing wrong, but our fear of punishment either by fines, imprisonment or the dread of hell fire. If we don't have some one over us to remind us of this punishment occasionally we poor weak mortals are liable to err."

The day laborer is hourly under the eye of the "boss," the boss is watched by the contractor, the contractor by the architect and the whole crowd by the