

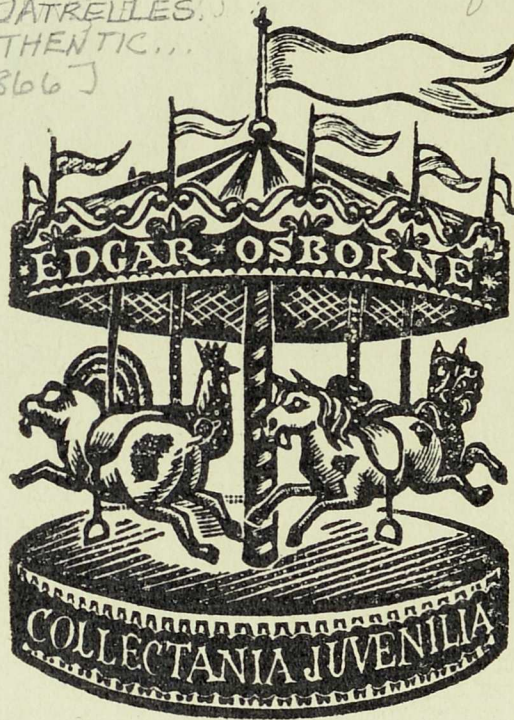
# CAPTAIN CASTAGNETTE



W. G. & S. BENTON 248 STRAID VICK

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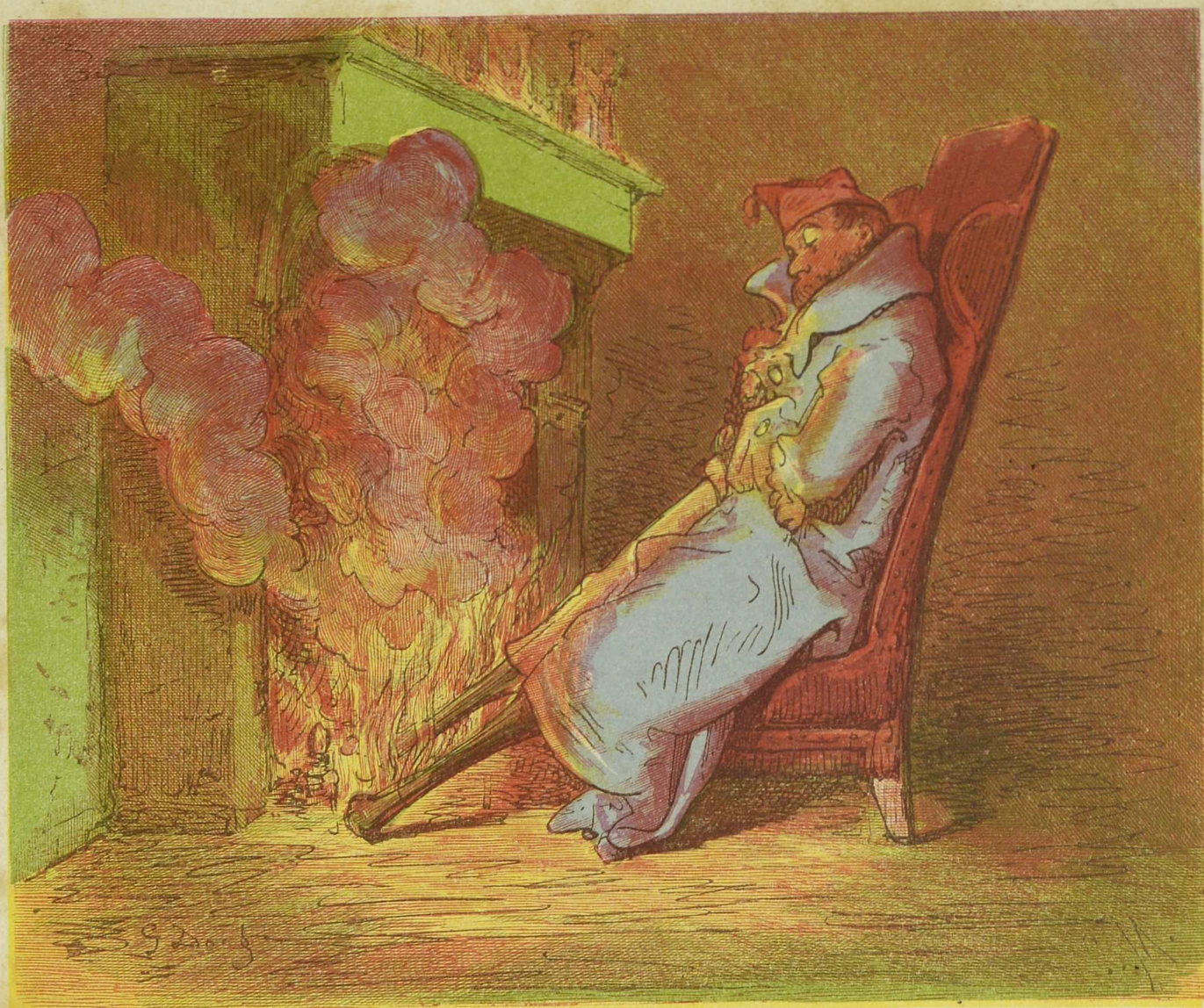
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# CAPTAIN CASTAGNETTE :

HIS SURPRISING,  
ALMOST INCREDIBLE  
ADVENTURES.



LONDON :  
S. O. BEETON, 248 STRAND, W.C.

(TEN DOORS FROM TEMPLE BAR.)



THE  
AUTHENTIC HISTORY OF CAPTAIN CASTAGNETTE.





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OF  
CAPTAIN CASTAGNETTE,

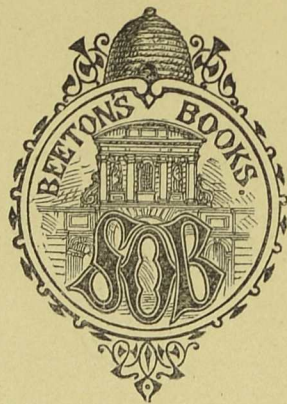
NEPHEW OF THE

“MAN WITH THE WOODEN HEAD.”

*From the French of Maunel.*

ILLUSTRATED WITH FORTY-THREE PICTURES BY GUSTAVE DORÉ.

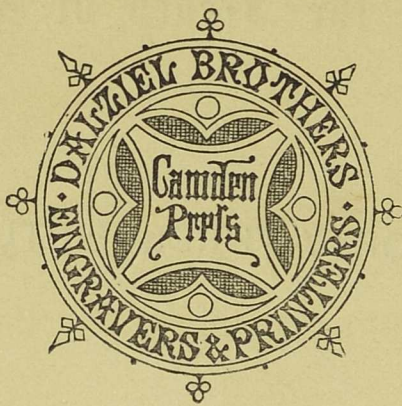
“OF ARMS AND LEGS, NOSE, EAR AND EYE,  
RELENTLESS MARS BEREFT HIM,—  
MAIMED EVERY PART EXCEPT HIS HEART,  
AND THAT THE WAR-GOD LEFT HIM.”



LONDON:

S. O. BEETON, 248 STRAND, W.C.

(TEN DOORS FROM TEMPLE BAR.)



TO  
A. D. AND G. C. D.,  
THIS VERSION  
OF A VERACIOUS HISTORY  
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
BY  
THE TRANSLATOR.



## PREFACE.

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*Beside this exceptional Worthy with the Wooden Head, our brave Captain Castagnette has many celebrated relatives. Notably, the noble old madman of La Mancha; notably, also, the doughty Scotch Lieutenant, Lismahago. He is, too, let us add, very closely of kin to a certain veracious German Baron, who shall be nameless; and, broadly speaking, to all the wide crowd who hold that a story must, of necessity, be a falsehood.*

*Much of the racy French military spirit, much of M. MANUEL'S grave and yet witty terseness, has, of course, been lost in this hopeless "gathering of dew-drops" which we name a Translation. Nevertheless, the present copy, like its French original, comes supported by the designs of one who may be justly reckoned as the most facile, fertile, and gifted book illustrator of this or any previous time. If, therefore, in an English dress, Captain Castagnette manages to command his company of followers, the effort will sufficiently realize the best expectations of both its Publisher and its Translator.*





## INTRODUCTION.

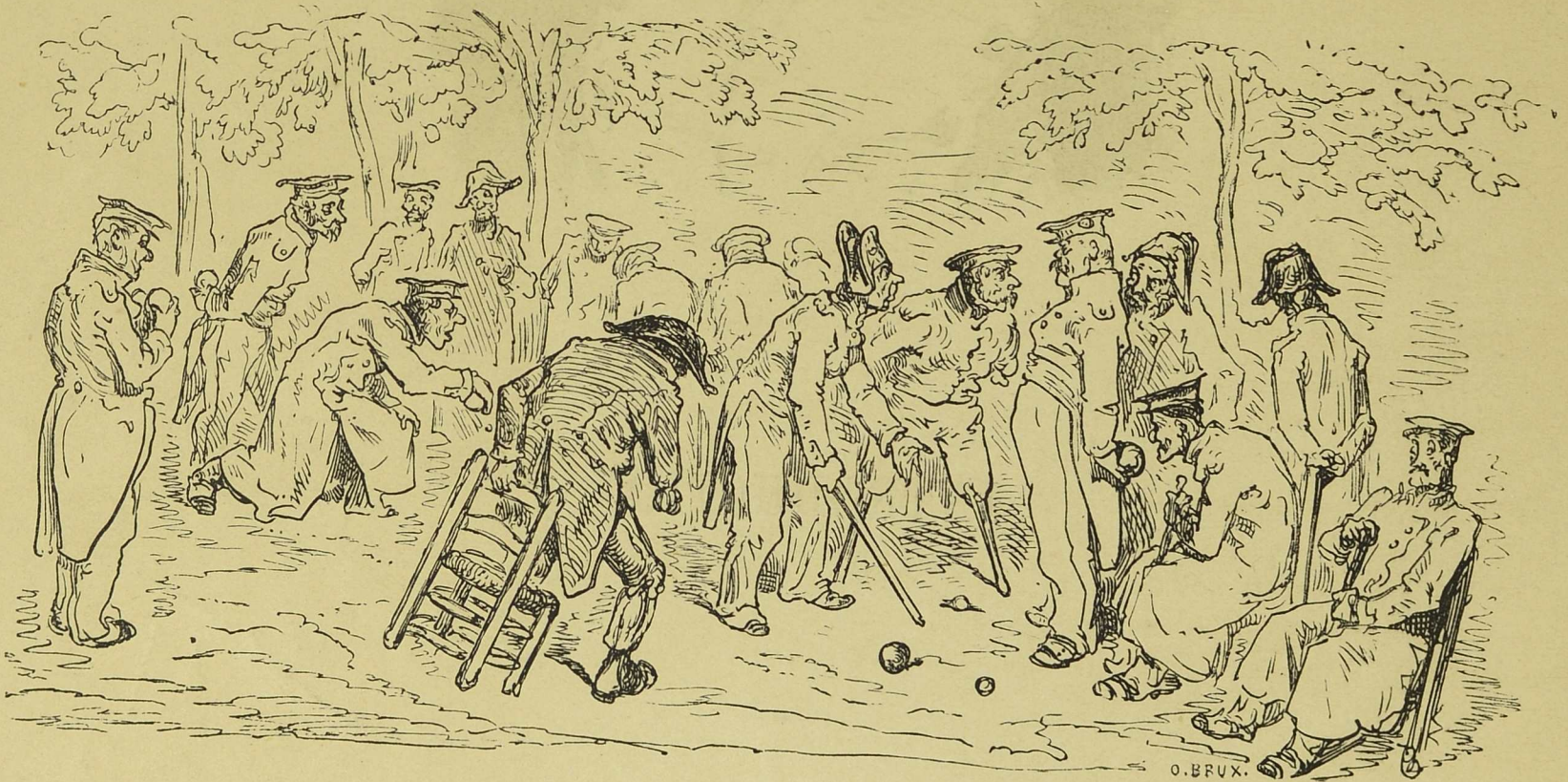
—♦—

**M**OST of you, my friends, have heard something of the “Man with the Wooden Head.” Several times, in my youthful days, I went to the *Invalides* to see this “bravest of the brave;” but, as my ill luck would have it, was never fortunate enough to meet him.

## *Introduction.*

Rumour says that this wooden-headed man was a most hot-headed old fellow. He was passionately fond of the game of bowls, and you might almost always see him on the esplanade quarrelling with his ancient brethren-in-arms. This circumstance, doubtless, induced him at his death to bequeath to them his valuable head, with a request that they would use it in memory of him. He wished, by this means, even after he was under ground, to take a part in his favourite pastime.

'Tis the history of this man's nephew, the brave Captain Castagnette, that I propose to relate to you.





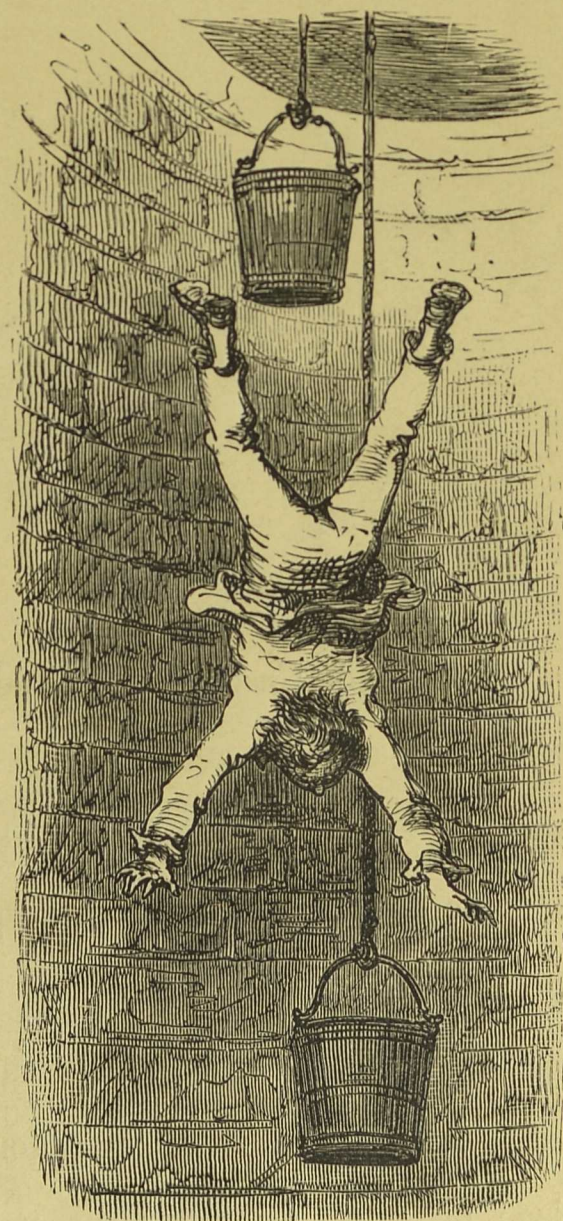
## CHAPTER I.

### Early Years of the Hero.

1770—1793.

PAUL-MATHURIN CASTAGNETTE was born at Paris on the 15th of August, 1770, exactly a year after the child who, later, became the Emperor Napoleon I. He was a near spectator of all the sanguinary scenes of the Revolution—a circumstance which rendered him singularly philosophical. He had seen so much suffering that he finally got used to everything. Not that luck favoured him by any means: at fifteen he had three times fallen out of window, twice into a well, and four times into the river. A comrade knocked out his eye with a blow of his fist because he refused to throw stones at Marie Antoinette on her way to the scaffold (16th of October, 1793).

“Humph!” said he, as he returned home with an eye the less, “I squinted when I had a pair. I shan’t squint any more now, that’s very certain.”





## CHAPTER II.

### The Siege of Toulon.

1793.

IN 1793, Castagnette, tired with the sanguinary scenes of the Republic, resolved to become a soldier, and to join his uncle, then serving in the famous regiment of *Sans-culottes*. Don't think for an instant that the *Sans-culottes* were Scotch. No; this was a name given to the most desperate republicans, by reason of a certain negligence that they affected in their dress.

Castagnette set off for Toulon, and presented himself to General Bonaparte, who admitted him into the battalion of the *Côte-d'Or*. On the 17th of December, at the siege of Little Gibraltar, he performed prodigies of valour, exposing himself in such a daring manner, that an English ball carried away his left arm. Passing by the ambulance where the poor conscript lay, General Bonaparte noticed his new recruit.

*The Siege of Toulon.*

“What! past fighting already?”

“Not yet, General; while I can hold a gun, I shall serve my country.”

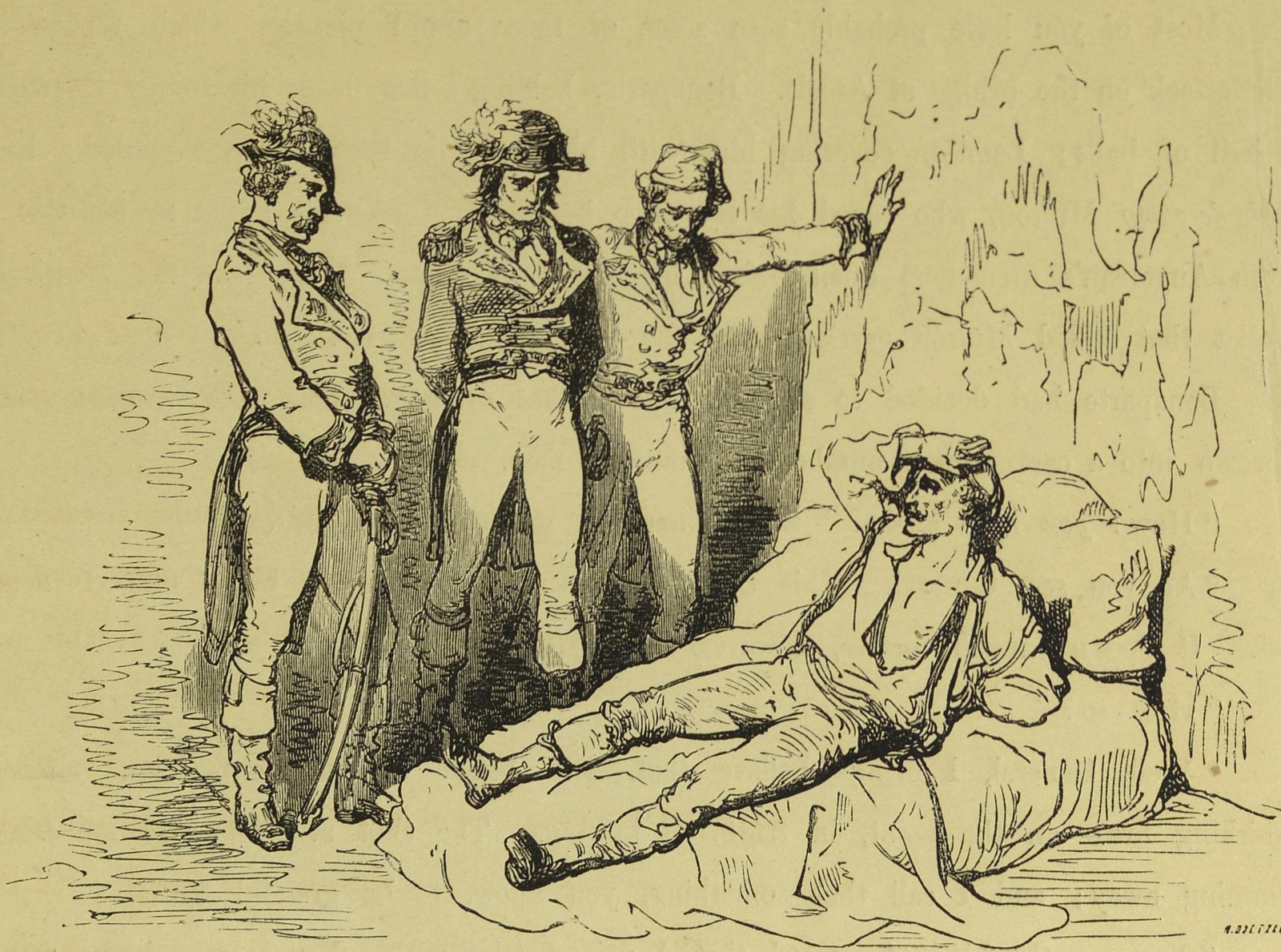
“How old are you?”

“Twenty-three.”

“I am sorry from my heart to see you so mutilated.”

“It’s very good of you, General; but you needn’t pity me so much. I had an accursed rheumatism in this left arm, and the ball has quite cured that, you see.”

“Captain,” said Bonaparte, turning to an *aide-de-camp*, “let the sergeant’s stripes be sewn to this brave fellow’s sleeve. They will suit him better than a plaster.”



## CHAPTER III.

### Arcole.

15TH, 16TH, AND 17TH NOVEMBER, 1796.

THREE years later, at Arcole, Castagnette was again noticed by his General-in-Chief.

Most of you have probably seen some of those grand pictures which represent the attack on the bridge at Arcole. Bonaparte, holding a flag, leads his troops through a hail of balls; Lannes, covering him with his body, is three times wounded; his *aide-de-camp* Muiron, who saved his life once before at Toulon, is killed at his side; even Augereau's grenadiers quail before the storm of grape. Well, here the identical bullet that killed Muiron carried away the legs of Castagnette.

Bonaparte had decided to evacuate Arcole that evening. Our poor sergeant was thrown into a cart with a number of wounded men.

"How! *you* here again?" said Bonaparte, making the rounds.

"As you see, General. This time 't is the legs: a thieving bullet carried them off. It does n't much matter, however. Everything has its good side."

"How so?"

"Well, General, I firmly believe that, just before this accident, I was almost shirking fire—on the point, in truth, of bolting. The shot at least kept me from running away; and I call that something, you know, to be grateful for."

"You are the kind of coward that I gain battles with. You seem a brave man, and it is a pity that I did not promote you. Now, of course, you must leave the service."

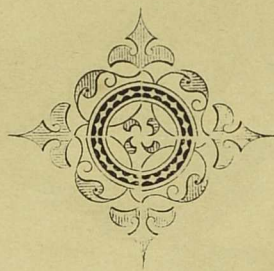


*Arcole.*

“I leave the service! Not at all, General! You don't know me. With your permission, I'll make the campaign on horseback, with two wooden legs.”

“You are a splendid fellow! When you are out of danger, come and ask me for an epaulette, and I'll give it to you.”

Three months after Castagnette was *plus* a silver epaulette, and *minus* an eye, an arm, and a pair of legs.



## CHAPTER IV.

### The Veronese Vespers.\*

MAY, 1797.

AFTER the Massacres at Verona, Castagnette was left for dead upon the field. When he was picked up some hours later, he was only to be recognized by his wooden legs. A sabre-cut had sliced away his face: nothing of forehead, eyes, nose,



\* On this occasion four hundred wounded French soldiers were massacred in the hospitals by the inhabitants of Verona. This act of cruelty was named the *Vépres Véronèses*.

*The Veronese Vespers.*

cheeks, lips, or chin was left to him; and when, after a few days' nursing, he saw himself in the glass, he could not help laughing.

“Well, I must confess that I look exceedingly queer. Destiny quite overpowers me with blessings. I squinted: out goes my eye. I had the rheumatism in my left shoulder: bang! off goes my arm. I was going to be a coward: the grape-shot carries away my legs, prevents my running away, and makes me a hero against my will. I was miserable because I was only five feet four: here I am, perched on a pair of regulation stilts that make me six feet high. Finally, my nose was hooked, my mouth absurd, my chin deformed: wish! comes a sabre-cut, and takes away all my ugliness at once. I can now order a face to please myself, and, what's more, I needn't shave any longer.”

A short time after, Castagnette had a face of wax, which made him look like a youth of twenty; and he set out for Egypt.





## CHAPTER V.

### The Campaign in Egypt.

1798—1799.

FOR a little time Fortune seemed to have abandoned our brave lieutenant. He did not receive a single wound, and the only piece of luck he had was that, in crossing the desert, his waxen face melted. In this state of defacement Bonaparte encountered him.

“Is that you, my poor Castagnette? Why, what a figure you are!”

The unfortunate man related his mishap to the general.

“Very well. If we both of us get to Cairo, I will give you enough to buy a silver face.”

Upon the 25th of July the army entered Cairo. Upon the 26th Castagnette knocked at Bonaparte’s door.

“General, I am come for the head you were good enough to promise me.”

“You shall have it, and a better one than you think. But it will take some little time to make. In a few days I will present it to you.”



## *The Campaign in Egypt.*

A fortnight after Bonaparte held a grand review.

“My friend there seems to have forgotten his promise,” thought Castagnette to himself. “My face has been packed away in the Bag of Bygones.”

You shall see whether our lieutenant was right or not.

A roll of drums gave notice that the general was about to speak. There were ten thousand men there, yet you might have heard a fly sneeze.

“Lieutenant, you have made yourself remarked for bravery, which was not an easy thing, surrounded as you are. Your comrades, desiring to give you a token of their affectionate admiration, have asked me to present you with this *face of honour*, which will replace the one that the sun of Egypt has melted for you. Advance!”

Castagnette felt his wooden legs tremble under him like a pair of drum-sticks beating the roll, and he would have fallen on his nose if he had possessed one to fall on, and if he had not been on horseback.

Amid the cheers of the entire army, the brave officer received a magnificent face in frosted silver. Upon the forehead were written these words:

FROM  
THE ARMY OF EGYPT  
TO  
CASTAGNETTE.

The lips of the face were of rose-coloured coral, the eyes of sapphire, the nose was sprinkled with rubies, the teeth were of the finest pearls, and upon the cheeks were inscribed, in letters of gold, the names of the various battles to the glory of which Castagnette had contributed by losing various bits of his body.

But judge of his surprise when the drums beat once more, and he saw his colonel step out and pronounce these words:

“In the name of the Republic, you will henceforth recognize Lieutenant Castagnette as a captain in your regiment.”

When our hero heard this, he grew as pale as a girl going to confession for the first time. He was obliged to get off his horse: it was the happiest day of his life.



## CHAPTER VI.

### The Plague at Jaffa.

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1799.

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AT the hospital at Jaffa we again meet with Castagnette. The plague is making dreadful havoc: the army is sadly thinned by the terrible scourge, which seems to have assumed the task of avenging the Turks. Where the grape-shot failed the plague triumphs, striking like an unseen enemy on every side at once. It is a painful sight, this same too-celebrated hospital of Jaffa, and one must have more than courage to enter it.

Notwithstanding, Bonaparte, accompanied by his Generals Berthier and Bessières, the *Ordonnateur* Daure and the Physician-in-Chief Desgenettes, speaks to the patients, touching their sores and cheering them.

He saw Castagnette, and came up to him.

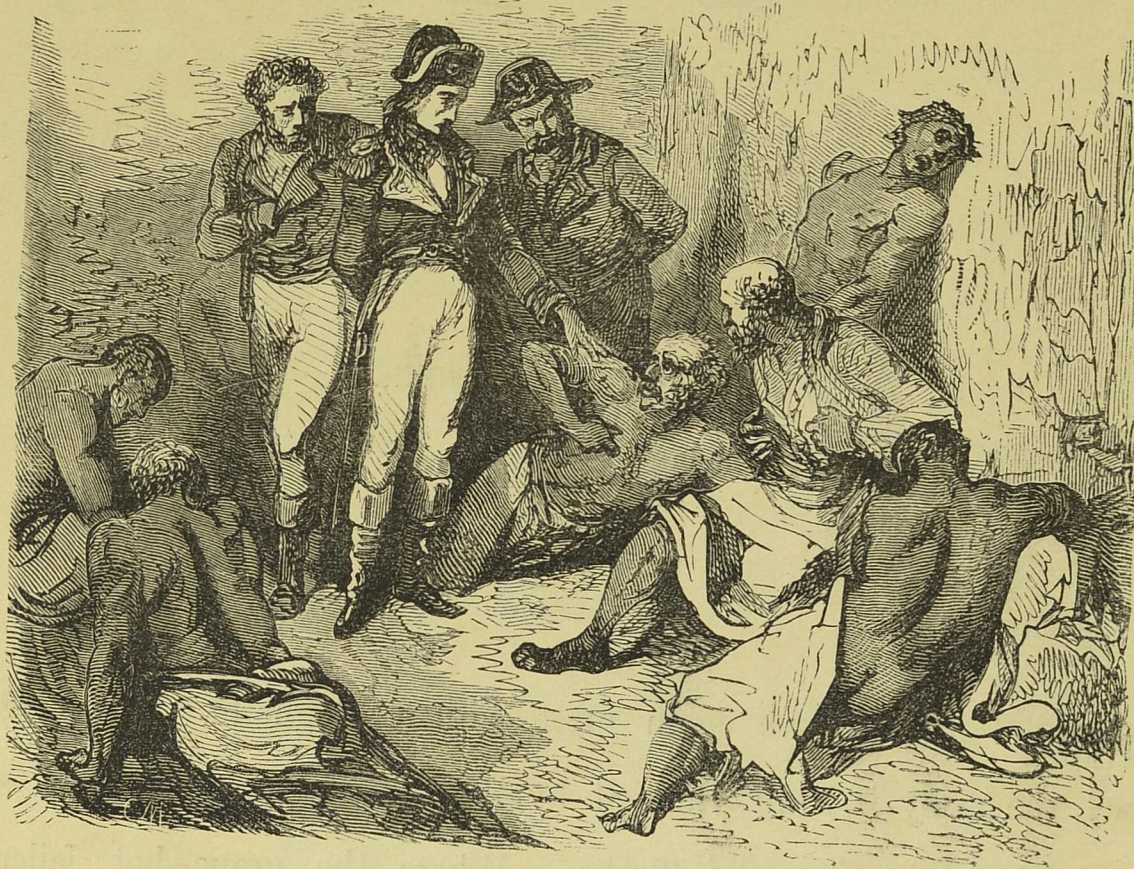
*The Plague at Jaffa.*

“How is this, my poor fellow? Am I to find you in all the ambulances? You seem to me seriously affected.”

“Faith, General! I think that I *have* got my discharge this time. 'Tis melancholy, nevertheless, after losing one's limbs on more than one battle-field, to die in hospital like a civilian.”

“Desgenettes,” said Bonaparte to the Physician-in-Chief, who was standing near him, “do everything that you can to save this man: he is one of my bravest officers, and I value him. Do you understand?”

And Bonaparte passed on, after shaking the sick man's hand.



An hour afterwards Desgenettes came back to Castagnette, and said,

“I should be wrong to hide from you, my good fellow, that you have but a short time to live. You have just one chance of being saved, and that will necessitate an operation which would stagger the bravest.”

“What is it? Tell me.”

“You will have to change your stomach for another.”

*The Plague at Jaffa.*

“Is that all? Begin at once, then, Doctor. The rascal has given me too much trouble already.”

“You are quite sure?”

“Quite sure.”

“Very well, we will laugh at it, then,” returned Desgenettes, bringing out his case, and calling his assistants. The sight alone of the bistouries, scalpels, saws, lancets, and the rest, which the doctor spread out before him, would have been enough to frighten the most resolute. But Castagnette took it quite coolly, and received the first cut of the bistoury whistling the *Marseillaise*. An hour later his stomach was lined with leather, and he was saved!



## CHAPTER VII.

### Return of Bonaparte to France.

1799.

ON the 22nd of August Bonaparte announced to his army, by proclamation, that he should return to France, and give up the command to General Kleber. Castagnette's consternation was great at learning the departure of his favourite hero. It seemed that France was lost to him; and therefore he applied for leave to accompany Bonaparte, alleging as a plea the state of his health, which had been a little shaken by his numerous wounds and varied treatment. Bonaparte consented, and, on the 9th of October (17th *Vendémiaire*, Year VIII.), the vessels which brought them home dropped anchor at Fréjus, after a voyage of forty-one days through seas swarming with the enemy's craft. On the 16th Castagnette arrived at Paris, after having assisted at the triumphal reception given to the general at Aix, Avignon, Valence, and, above all, at Lyons. Everywhere the resplendent face of our captain attracted universal admiration, and on several occasions Berthier, the chief of the staff, could not help feeling rather jealous of his popular subordinate.

Bonaparte found, on arriving at Paris, that the mass of the people were enthusiastic in his favour, but that the Government was hostile to him. He decided, therefore, to return to the retired life which he had adopted after the siege of Toulon and the Treaty of Campo Formio. He saw none but learned men, and some few intimates who were devoted to him body and soul, among whom our friend Castagnette naturally stood prominent.

The poor captain gave himself up entirely to the man whom he looked upon as the future master of the world. No sacrifice was too great that would insure the success of his hero; and so discreetly did he press his services, that he seemed to

*Return of Bonaparte to France.*

be the obliged, instead of the obliging, person. Our brave friend was by no means rich. One by one he sold the pearls from his jaws, and replaced them by a set of false ones. When Bonaparte questioned him concerning these secret resources, Castagnette spoke of remittances made to him by his family, when in reality he himself was sustaining his relatives by his economies and deprivations. Thus he took part in the great events which foreran the Empire, bringing his grain of sand to the edifice which his hero was building up.

On the 18th *Brumaire* he accompanied Murat when, at the head of his grenadiers, he cleared the room of the Five Hundred; and, whilst covering Bonaparte with his body, he received a violent stab in the stomach, and found, on going to bed, that the blade had broken in his waistcoat.



For some time our friend felt nothing more serious than a slight difficulty in breathing; but, little by little, he grew worse. A chill gradually stole over him; then a kind of prolonged whistling was heard—the unfortunate man had an escape in his stomach!

Another person would have lost his head; but Castagnette never gave up for so

*Return of Bonaparte to France.*

little — he was of another mould. He placed his handkerchief in the aperture, to prevent any further exit of air, and then repaired to one of his friends, a shoemaker, who lodged at the sign of the *Botte Secrète*, of whom he purchased a piece of flesh-coloured leather, then much in vogue, which he caused to be sewn over the hole. How he blessed Desgenettes when he felt himself completely relieved! He suffered little from that wound again, excepting later in life, when he had grown old, and the weather was stormy.

It was not until some months after, that Bonaparte, now become Consul, learned the sacrifices that our captain had made, and the devotion of which he had shown proof, and by which he had so nearly lost his life.

“How is it, Castagnette, that you have never asked me for anything? On all sides I discount devotions which are dearly paid, whilst you have given me your flesh and blood and narrow means without seeming to want a reward.”

“The truth is, General, that you are a sort of god for me, and I think it simply fair that I should pay the expenses of the worship. A shake of the hand from you makes me happier than all the ranks and titles you could give me. Besides, a fine colonel I should make, i' faith! Can't you imagine me at the head of a regiment with my mask and my wooden legs?”

“Then I can do nothing for you?”

“Well, you *can*, if you like, make me very happy, General. Promise never to strike me off the active list of the army, however impotent I may become. Allow poor Castagnette to die for you on some field of battle. Take away my epaulettes if I am no longer fit for the command, but let me continue to follow you, not in the palaces which will become your ordinary dwellings, but on the battle-fields, where I shall always be good for something, even if it be only to stop the ball which might have carried away another, more active and more useful than your poor Castagnette.”

Bonaparte was touched. He quitted our friend, asking himself if anything was impossible to the leader of men like these.





## CHAPTER VIII.

Marengo; Hohenlinden; Ulm; Austerlitz; Jena; Eylau; Friedland.

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14TH JUNE, 1800; 3RD DECEMBER, 1800; 17TH OCTOBER, 1805; 2ND DECEMBER, 1805;  
14TH OCTOBER, 1806; 8TH FEBRUARY, 1807; 14TH JUNE, 1807.

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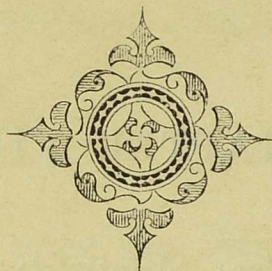
I AM sorry to say that Bonaparte never saw his foul-weather friend again until the foul weather had again commenced. Not that he was forgetful: we know him to have been the reverse; but he was absorbed in the cares of government, and, the more powerful he became, the more Castagnette kept his distance.

Our friend distinguished himself at Marengo, at Hohenlinden, and at Ulm, where

*Austerlitz ; Jéna ; Eylau ; Friedland.*

he had a horse killed under him. It was he who prepared for his old commander, the night before the battle of Austerlitz, the since-famous reception which was made to him by the Grenadiers of the Guard, and it was he who first put the torch to the fires of straw which lighted that triumphal procession.

At Austerlitz he performed prodigies of valour ; but his dying enemies alone witnessed and appreciated his great deeds, which he himself considered not worth the speaking of. Everywhere—at Jéna, Eylau, and Friedland—he made war like a hunter—for the love of the sport.





## CHAPTER IX.

### Uncle Barnaby's Courtship.

It is now time to tell you how Barnaby Castagnette, called the "Man with the Wooden Head," obtained the nickname by which he grew so famous.

"How's this, uncle?" said the captain to him one day: "you are growing visibly thinner: you look as melancholy as a cuckoo. If it continues, you'll go off in a decline. Come, tell me what's the matter with you."

"Only little trifles that you won't understand."

*Uncle Barnaby's Courtship.*

"Nonsense! Trifles don't make a man as lean as you are. Is it because you are only a sergeant after all your exploits?"

"I only did my duty—we needn't talk of that."

"Are your wounds annoying you?"

"Do I worry myself for so little? No. But the fact is, if you must have it, I have been courting a little chit, who won't have anything to say to me, because, forsooth, I have some six sabre-cuts on my face, and you can't tell exactly what shape my nose was!"

"But that's all very glorious, you know."

"Possibly; but not pretty, it appears. Moreover, she declares she will only marry a fair man, and my hair is as grey as the tail of my horse."

Castagnette became very thoughtful at the recital of his uncle's troubles. He loved him dearly, and would have shunned no sacrifice to insure his happiness; so one morning he called upon Desgenettes, and said to him,

"Doctor, you managed me splendidly. Don't you think you could patch my uncle up a bit?"

"What is the matter with your uncle?"

"Six sabre-cuts on the face, one eye gone, and grey hair."

"Well?"

"He wishes to be twenty-five, to have red lips, fair hair, and moustaches with the ends turned up. The truth is, he wants to marry a little person who, just at present, thinks him far too ugly."

"What you want is rather difficult," returned Desgenettes, "but I have done harder things. Only, I don't know what you must take me for, when you ask me to patch up your uncle. Do you know that I am not a cobbler? Everything I make is new: understand that. Tell your uncle that I can give him a *new* head, but as to patching up his old one, that's not my business at all."

"Would it be very dear?"

"It depends. In silver, tell him, it would come to about six thousand francs—

*Uncle Barnaby's Courtship.*

costly, and rather heavy. I should recommend box: for five hundred francs you could have a very respectable head, with silk hair, eyes in enamel, and hippopotamus teeth."

"With fair hair?"

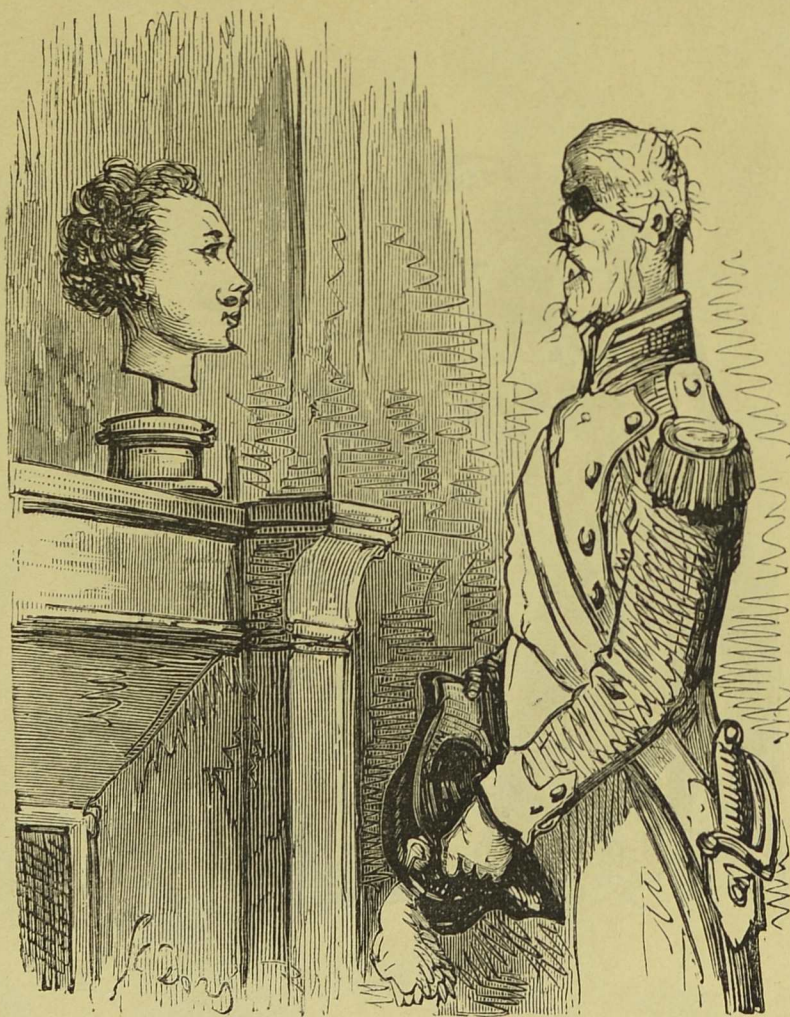
"If he wishes it."

"Will he have little moustaches for that?"

"With the ends turned up."

"And he will look twenty-five?"

"Fourteen if he likes: the price is the same."



"Very well, then. Get him a head ready by Thursday week. I promise to bring him. Do it, please, as if you were doing it for me."

"Never fear!" returned Desgenettes.

And the good captain, as pleased as Punch, went straight off to a jeweller's, who bought his left eye for five hundred francs, giving him a false sapphire in its place.

Then he went to look for his uncle.

*Uncle Barnaby's Courtship.*

"You may grow fat now, uncle, for you will marry your flame."

"How so?"

"In eight days you will be twenty-five!"

"Fifty-five, you mean."

"I mean what I say;—and, moreover, you will have fair hair."

"Fair hair?"

"—With red lips, and little moustaches with the ends turned up. You must merely have your head cut off, that's all."



"Oh, ho! I must think over that item."

"But your head is ordered, and the day is fixed—to-morrow week."

So, on the Thursday following, both uncle and nephew repaired to the doctor's house at the appointed time. The new head stood upon the chimneypiece, smiling out of such a forest of flaxen curls as might bring envy into the heart even of a Swede. Barnaby, who had hung fire a little in coming to the surgeon, was entirely conquered by the sight of such a masterpiece. He hesitated no longer.



*Uncle Barnaby's Courtship.*

“This head may in reality be mine?”

“For ever and ever!”

“Well, then, make haste, Doctor, and get rid of the horrible thing on my shoulders. I am in a hurry to be five and twenty.”

You must not suppose that I intend to describe the surgical operation that Barnaby had to undergo. Besides, it was performed so quickly that the patient barely perceived it. Just time enough was taken to saw the skull, lift off the top like the cover of a pie, transfer the brains with a spoon from one head to the other; to cut the neck, fit on the head of box, to sew all up, knock in a silver nail here, a silver nail there—and the whole thing was done, in less time than it takes to relate.

When Barnaby saw himself in the glass, he gave a cry of pleasure.

“Now, no imprudence, mind,” said Desgenettes. “Wear a comforter for a day, or you will inevitably have a sore throat and a terrible tooth-ache.”

Exactly a month afterwards, Barnaby married the woman he loved, and Castagnette, decked out with ribbons like a maypole, said to his new aunt,

“Be sure you don't make him lose his head again. That sort of operation does n't *always* succeed, you must know.”



## CHAPTER X.

### Essling and Wagram.

22ND MAY AND 6TH JULY, 1809.

At Essling, on the second day at sunrise, the Archduke Charles directs the desperate efforts of the Austrian forces. Although they are infinitely inferior in numbers, the French resist with as much firmness and courage as they had shown the day before. Napoleon takes the offensive, and breaks the centre of the enemy's line. The Austrian generalissimo seizes the flag of Zach's regiment, and rushes into the thick of the fight, to bring his troops back to battle. Castagnette sees him, leaps upon him like a lion, and, after having held his own against ten assailants, finishes by tearing away the standard. Now, what do you think he did with it? In his place, you would have cried "Victory!" and gone at once to the Emperor, proud to renew upon the field your acquaintance with the master of a world, would you not? But our captain was a different kind of man from that.

His uncle (the famous Wooden-Head) fought at his side. The poor soldier had no luck: notwithstanding his courage, he was still only a sergeant. Castagnette gave him the flag, saying,

"Look here, Uncle. You are married, and a father: you want your promotion; while I am a bachelor without ambition. Carry this to the Emperor: you will come back with an epaulette, and my aunt will be greatly delighted to have an officer for her husband."

Don't you call that a noble action? How many of you would have done the like, do you think?

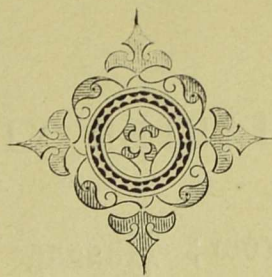


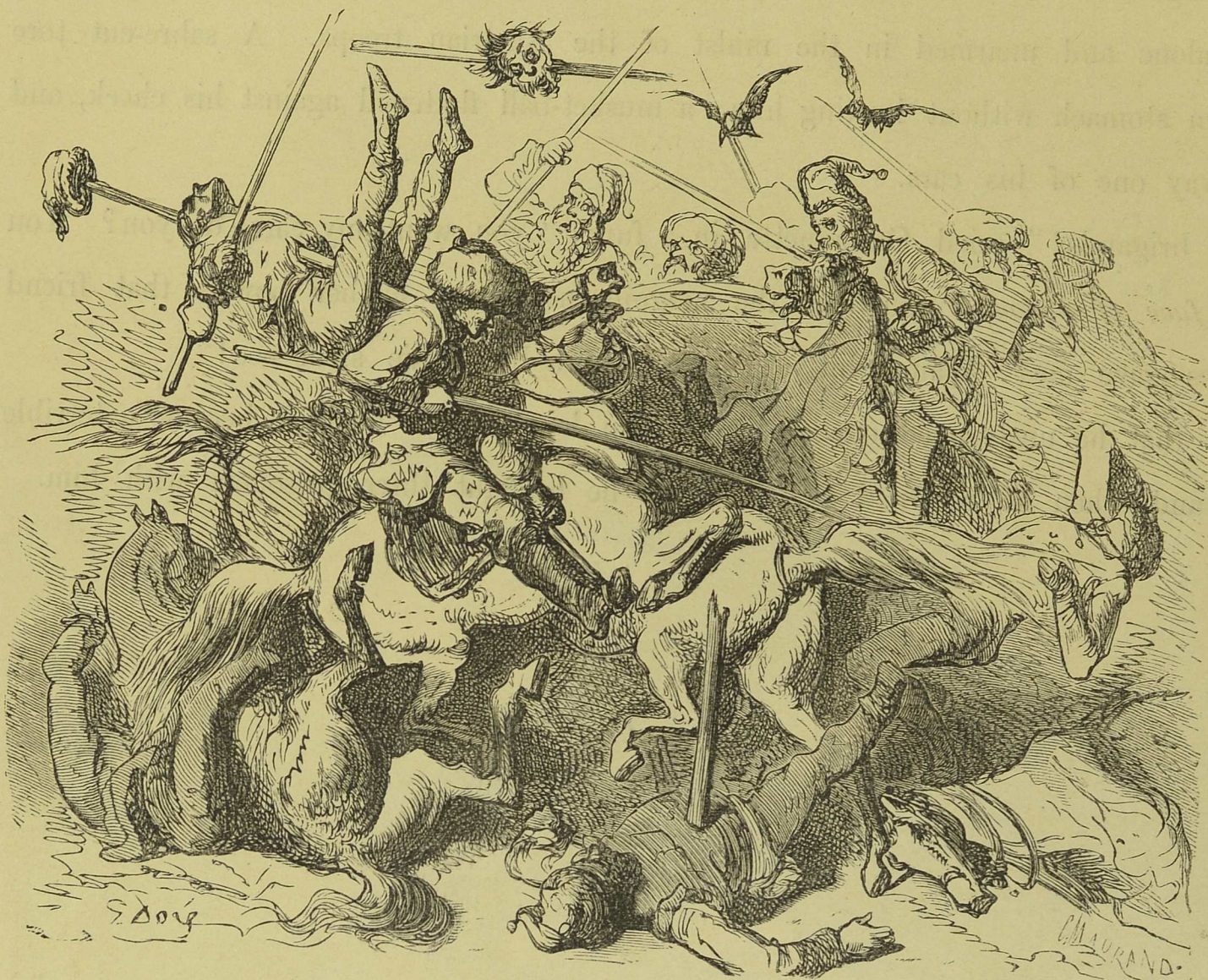
*Essling and Wagram.*

At Wagram his horse carried him into the enemy's ranks, and for an instant he was left alone and unarmed in the midst of the Austrian troops. A sabre-cut tore his leathern stomach without hurting him; a musket-ball flattened against his cheek, and carried away one of his ears.

"Ah, brigands!" cried Castagnette, in a fury; "you want my ears, do you? You spoil my *face of honour!* you tear the magnificent patent leather bowels that friend Desgenettes gave me! Wait a bit, carrion! wait a bit! We shall see!"

With that he unstrapped one of his wooden legs: in his hand it became a terrible weapon; and when he returned to the ranks he brought three prisoners with him.





## CHAPTER XI.

### Retreat from Moscow; Passage of the Beresina.

21ST OCTOBER, 1812; 29TH NOVEMBER, 1812.

THE fatal year 1812 came round, and found our hero on the banks of the Beresina. As he had nothing left but his arm, his chest, and his brain, he suffered little from cold in the commencement of the campaign. Whilst his comrades lost their toes, he blessed his wooden legs; whilst thousands died of sickness and of hunger, he glorified his leathern stomach. But at last came a real misfortune: he lost his horse at Stoudziancka Ford, and was, in consequence, obliged to continue his journey on foot.



*Retreat from Moscow; Passage of the Beresina.*

Then only his strength failed him. For a time he followed the army, but soon fell back among the stragglers. Some half-dozen cripples, in sorry cavalcade, brought up the rear—a pale Vanguard of Death.

For a time they strove unsuccessfully to follow their fellows; but one by one they dropped upon the snow, never to rise again. Those who still struggled on saw them from afar off eaten by the wolves, and trembled for the destiny which was reserved for themselves.

In his turn, too, Castagnette found himself alone, without strength to pursue his journey, and without hope of succour—praying only for a speedy death. He tottered into the snow, and soon the crows—fell Cossacks of the air!—wheeled round and round him. He tried to rise, but the cold had overcome him, and he became insensible.

The wheeling birds of prey lit down upon his body, hoping for a feast. But what was their astonishment to find his silver face, his leathern stomach, and his wooden legs!

By and by a band of Cossacks, seeing the flock of crows that circled round him, scented spoil; and, coming up at the gallop, drove away their winged rivals with their lances. They robbed him of his arms, and then, as he lay with his face downwards, turned him over, in search of other booty. Judge of their joy and surprise at the sight of the silver face that glittered with its precious stones!

As each of them wished to secure so rich a booty, a dispute followed. Blows were exchanged with so much fury that, when the fight was over, only one of the marauders remained upon the field.

The solitary survivor pounced upon his prey. But the face was firmly fixed, and in his efforts to detach it he twisted our hero's neck most terribly. No one but our brave Castagnette could have survived the shock.



*Retreat from Moscow; Passage of the Beresina.*

The Cossack mounted his horse and galloped off, leaving the unfortunate officer more mutilated than ever, and buried under the still warm bodies of the scoundrels who had fought so fatally for the honour of pillaging him.







## CHAPTER XII.

### Captain Castagnette's Escape.

THE fleshly covering brought back warmth by degrees to his frozen body: the pain which he felt on the removal of his face aroused him completely. He looked around, and, recalling his horrible position, for a moment almost regretted being alive. He could not understand the presence of the hostile corpses about him. He rose, to take in his turn the clothes of those who had purposed to despoil him; but what was his surprise when he found himself going backward in lieu of advancing, and passing his hand through his hair instead of wiping his face, as he desired to do! He felt a tickling at his throat, put up his hand, and understood it all.

You too can understand. In fifty degrees of cold a twisted neck remains a twisted

### *Captain Castagnette's Escape.*

neck. It was not until the following spring, when the thaw came, that our hero's head resumed its original position.

"Well," said Castagnette to himself, resignedly, "my head feels as if it were on the end of a corkscrew: 't is disagreeable, certainly; but, after all, everything has its good side. I defy any one now to surprise me from behind."

He pulled off the warmest clothes of the dead Cossacks about him, and, his toilet finished, looked for all the world like a Kalmuck. Two horses still lingered by the



corpses of their masters: one he took to ride on, the other he killed to satisfy his hunger. Unfortunate Castagnette! to what a strait was he reduced!

He mounted his horse as usual, but his face was, of course, turned to the animal's tail, and he was obliged to dismount again, in order to set matters right.

Thanks to his dress, he traversed the Russian army without molestation. When any one spoke to him, he showed his earless head, to let them think him deaf; then turned his mutilated face towards them, to make them believe him dumb.

When he arrived at the Polish frontier, he entered a cabin one evening, in search of something to eat. A Cossack was seated by the fire, before an excellent supper. As he rose to pay the score, Castagnette noticed that he gave a valuable pearl to the hostess.

## *Captain Castagnette's Escape.*

“Oh, ho!” thought our hero, “this is worth seeing. Now, I wonder if that pearl came out of my jaw, and whether this villain is my robber?”

The captain left his supper unfinished when the Cossack went away, and proposed that they should make their road

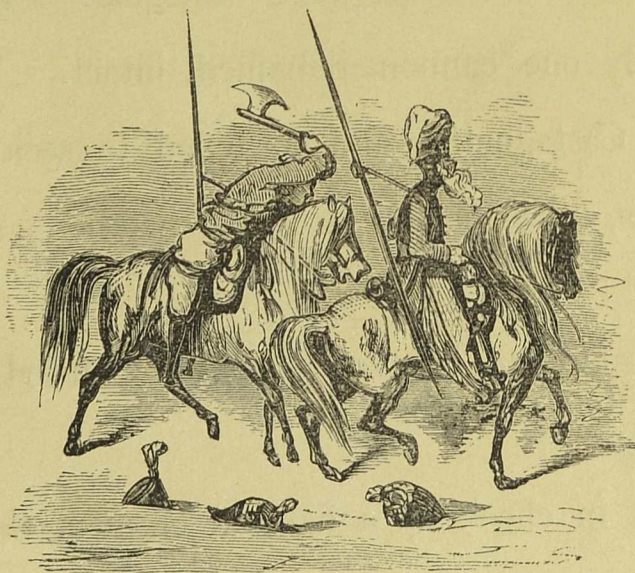


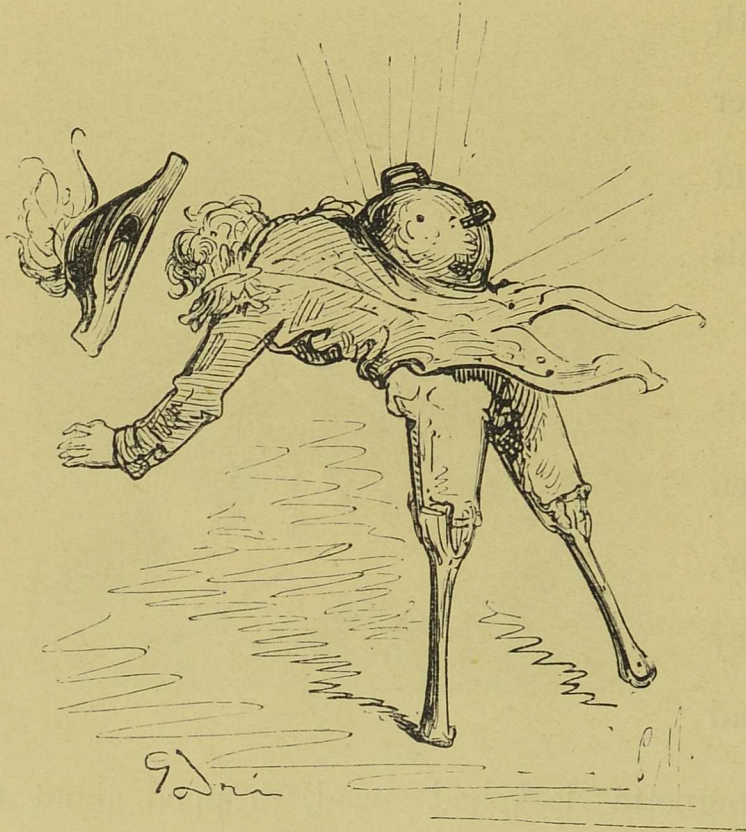
together. The offer was accepted, and the two set out in company.

“I have half a mind to kill him,” mused the captain. “He may not be my thief, it’s true; but in any case he has robbed some one, and death, after all, will be the first thing he has not stolen.”

So thereupon Castagnette slackened speed, dropped about three paces behind, seized an axe which was hanging to his saddle-bow, and, crash! with one blow he split the Cossack’s skull. The wretch fell forward on his horse’s neck, and rolled upon the ground. Castagnette was out of the saddle in a moment. It did not take him long to search his victim, and his joy was unbounded when he discovered his famous face of honour, which only wanted three of its teeth.

“There’s no doubt about it! I have the most infernal luck,” said Castagnette to himself, as he covered his face with kisses, and packed it away carefully, deep in the bottom of his pocket.





## CHAPTER XIII.

### Kowno.

CASTAGNETTE entered Kowno with Ney. The marshal arrived attended only by his *aides-de-camp*, and found there four hundred men under General Marchand, and about three hundred Germans. He took the command of this little band, and hurried to the Wilna Gate, which the Russians were besieging. The guns were spiked and the gunners had fled. Only one cannon remained intact. Ney had it dragged to the gate, gave it in charge to Castagnette, and hastened to seek the Germans. But their leader blew out his brains, the men fell into disorder, and it was impossible to rally them.

The marshal seized a gun, and, grenadier again, guarded the gate, resisting all the efforts of the enemy's army.

Ashamed of being held in check by a handful of men, the Russians threw in shells to set the town on fire. One of the first struck our captain: he received it in his

*Kowno.*

back, which was courageously presented to the enemy. The bomb lodged where it fell, and shattered his remaining arm.

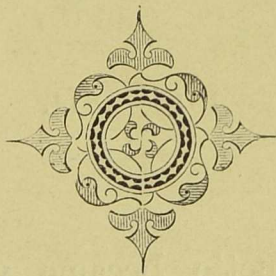
A bomb in the back gives considerable pain, and Castagnette certainly cried out, and loudly. Ney, who had appreciated the brave cripple's courage, approached him.

"Ah, Marshal, what a misfortune! I—who have always been so lucky—to be wounded in the back like a coward! I shall never get over it."

"You are wrong, Captain. I know something of courage; and, believe me, any one would be proud of receiving such a wound."

"Ah! you say that to console me; but I am dishonoured, Marshal, dishonoured!"

A surgeon was called, who declared that the extraction of the bomb would be immediately followed by the death of the sufferer. So Castagnette returned to France with two wooden legs and *minus* both his arms, with a leathern stomach and a twisted neck, a silver face, and a bomb in the small of his back.





## CHAPTER XIV.

### Castagnette under a Cloud.

1813—1814.

AFTER this last mishap Castagnette became very gloomy. He scarcely dared to go anywhere, from the fear of being thought a coward. Some of his comrades, pained by his melancholy, went to beg Ney to give the cross to their old captain. But the sorrowful events of 1813 prevented the marshal from recalling to the memory of Napoleon his old friend of 1799.

Castagnette retired to a little country house at Vincennes. He took a pleasure in watching the works of the arsenal which furnished all the military operations. Here, too,

*Castagnette under a Cloud.*

he formed a friendship with General Daumesnil, a cripple like himself, who was then in command, and was a man well calculated to comprehend our Castagnette.

It was from Vincennes that these two glorious relics of the Empire followed the alternately heroic and sorrowful events which succeeded each other so rapidly between 1813 and 1814: the defection of Prussia and Austria, the battle of Lutzen (2nd May, 1813), that of Bautzen (20th May), the death of the great Marshal Duroc (22nd May), the battle of Leipsic (19th October); the death of Poniatowski (19th October), the retreat from Spain, the capitulation of Dantzic, and the transfer, despite the terms of the capitulation, of its twenty thousand defenders to Siberia; the defection of Murat, the battles of Brienne (29th January, 1814), Champ-Aubert (10th February); the combats of Montereau, Montmirail, La Fère-Champenoise, the capitulation of Paris (30th March), and so many other disastrous victories and glorious defeats.



## CHAPTER XV.

Vincennes.

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1814.

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THE enemy surrounded the stronghold of Daumesnil.

“Faith, General!” said Castagnette to him, “my most ardent wish is going to be realized. I am good for nothing: everything that happens gives me the blues, and I always had a strange craving to know how a man feels when he is blown some fifty feet in air. As I suppose you don’t exactly intend to undo the latch to those noisy rascals who are making such indecent attempts to come in, I want to ask you—— But you won’t hear of it, I know.”

“Well, what is it?” returned Daumesnil.

“No, I should deprive you——and, after all, it’s rather cool——”

“You want to blow up the powder, then?”

“General, you read my thoughts like a book. While you parley with these madmen, let as many in as possible, and I engage to give them a little music that will unstiffen the stiffest of them——something in the thunder-clap way, with an accompaniment of volcanoes.”

After some discussion, Daumesnil gave up to his friend the place of honour that he had reserved for himself.

Before he took his post, Castagnette mounted the ramparts, to survey the enemy.

“Hi! you down there!” cried he to a Prussian officer who was making more noise than the rest: “what do you want?”

“Want, *Parbleu!* We want you to open.”





“Open what?”

“The gate -- what else?”

“Then it isn't here. Knock at the side.”

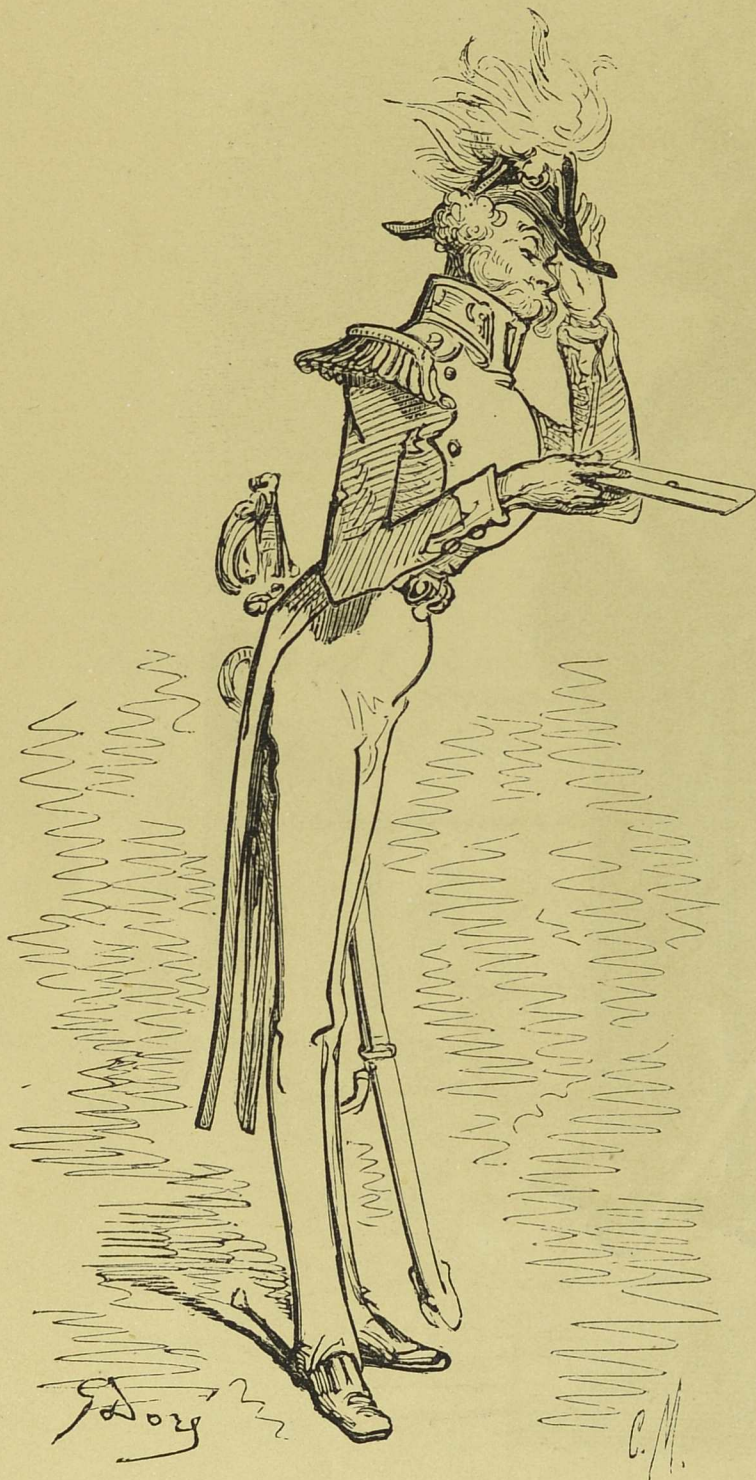
“Let me manage them,” said Daumesnil to Castagnette as he came down. “You go to your post, and I will receive the envoy of the Allies.”

The envoy was introduced into the fortress.

“We summon you to give up the place; and in case of refusal—”

*Vincennes.*

“Refuse! how so? You surely don't come without an order bidding me to admit you?”



“Certainly not. Here is your authority; and I am glad to find you do not intend resisting.”

“There must be some mistake,” interrupted Daumesnil. “You have given me the wrong paper. This order is signed ‘Alexander’ and ‘Frederick William.’ I know no other master than Napoleon I.”

“Napoleon is no longer Emperor — the usurper has fled. You pretend not to know it.”

“I do not know it in fact; and, as a proof, you must be good enough to let me deliver up the place to those who confided it to me.”

“Take care! In that case we shall blow you up!”

“Pardon me,” said the general, politely, “you forget I am at home here—you must let me do the honours of my own house. I shall therefore have the pleasure of blowing *you* up—I am used

to that kind of work. We will ascend *together*, if you please.”

This, in the mouth of Daumesnil, was no vain menace. Every one knew the invincible courage of the man, who had been dubbed *brave* at Wagram. A shiver ran through the crowd.

“Think again, General,” said the envoy. “All resistance on your part is useless. Whether you blow us up or not, France is not the less in our power. Whether Vincennes stands or falls, the cause that you defend is just as surely lost.”

“Apparently it is nothing to you whether I dishonour myself or not. You would

*Vincennes.*

not think it extraordinary if I did nothing. Go back to those who sent you, and tell them that I will never yield up this place until they have given me back the leg which one of their balls took from me at Wagram."

And, with the end of his cane, Daumesnil pointed out the door to the furious messenger.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### Vincennes—continued.

MEANWHILE our brave Castagnette was biding his time among some thousand barrels of powder. A few of the daring spirits were seeking the magazine, in order to seize the ammunition. He heard the wave of people sweep into the stairway, come rolling down the steps, and finally thunder at the door.

“Quiet, quiet!” he muttered. “Now’s the time! Don’t let’s be in a hurry. We will amuse these little ones till the crowd comes in.—What do you want?” he cried through the key-hole.

Hearing a voice, which announced that the door was guarded, some few of the visitors began to consider the matter; and, turning, climbed the stairs again a good deal faster than they came down.

“We are come in the name of the Government to take charge of the powder,” cried the rest.

“Very well, then: take charge of it.”

“Will you open the door?”

“Have you an order from the commandant?”

“Open, and we will give it to you.”

“Comrades!” thundered Castagnette with all the power of his lungs, to make them believe that he was not alone, “to your posts! get ready your matches, every man to his barrel, and remember that the eyes of France are upon you!”



Again the stair filled with fugitives, but still some thirty determined men remained, who began to ply the door with crowbars and levers.

“What a pity it is to find brave men fighting in such a cause. Let us gain time if we can. Every minute brings me new customers, and I mean to die in a goodly company.”

One of the hinges was already yielding: Castagnette slipped one of his wooden legs under the door, to strengthen it for a few moments longer; but at last, under the formidable pressure, the panels broke in, shattering as they fell the legs of the brave old captain.

He was unable to rise — one of his legs was six inches long, and the other two feet. He rolled over to a barrel of powder, plunged into it like a bath, and fell to crying “*Vive l'Empereur!*” as if he were twenty men at once.

He was surrounded in an instant.

“Don't come closer! don't come closer! or, *mille million de cartouches!* I'll blow you to the first floor quicker than you came down. Ah! you would dishonour French powder in using it against Frenchmen, would you? But it can't be. I, Captain Castagnette, tell you so, for you shall end with it.”





This fantastic creature without arms or legs—this deformed trunk—this nondescript that defended itself with a wooden leg—struck terror to the bravest. What kind of being was this, which plunged in the obscurity, with nothing human but a voice, and with a power at its command more terrible than thunder?

The Captain buried himself in the powder up to the chin: his pipe, which he held between his teeth, flung at each puff fantastic lights upon his jewelled silver face, and, as it glowed to every breath, the head of shining metal flashed out suddenly, like an apparition from the other world, and as suddenly faded away into darkness.

At the sight the most courageous felt their knees tremble and their tongues grow cold.

*Vincennes.*

“I give you two minutes to cry ‘*Vive l’Empereur!*’ If any of you hesitate, I shall drop my pipe.”

Thirty formidable shouts of “*Vive l’Empereur!*” responded immediately, despite



the frozen tongues: even the most terrified found legs to run away; and it was not until they were far from the fortress that they ceased their cries of “*Vive l’Empereur!*”

Daumesnil met some of the fugitives in the stairway, and gave them a stroke or two with his cane—of which, by the way, they had little need—to hasten their flight.

*Vincennes.*

After the dismissal of the envoy he remembered Castagnette, and he hastened, as quickly as his wooden leg would permit of, to avert the catastrophe.

“Castagnette! Stop, Castagnette! It is I, Daumesnil. Where are you?”

“I am taking a powder-bath for my health. When you came, I was just going to warm up by dropping my pipe in it.”

“Don't play any tricks. On the contrary, hold it carefully. Get out cautiously, and follow me.”

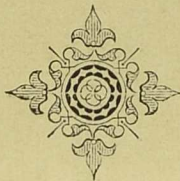
“I am sorry to refuse, General, but I can't. My legs are broken.”

Daumesnil, preoccupied, forgot for an instant the misfortune of Castagnette.

“What! have the brigands broken your legs? They shall pay for it. I will send you a surgeon.”

“If it's all the same to you, Commandant, I should prefer a carpenter. A plane and a nail or two in my wounds would do me an immensity of good.”

Daumesnil laughed at his mistake; and a few minutes afterwards, Castagnette was carried across the court in triumph, amid the cheers of the little garrison.





## CHAPTER XVII.

Departure for the Island of Elba; Return from Elba; Waterloo.

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20TH APRIL, 1814; 1ST MARCH, 1815; 18TH JUNE, 1815.

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You may read in more serious books the story of this campaign of France, so much more glorious for the conquered than for the conquerors: you will be moved, as we have been, by this recital of disasters, and you cannot fail to admire Napoleon in his decline.

Castagnette would have followed his former leader to the island of Elba; but Daumesnil made him understand that he would be more of a hindrance than an assistance—that Napoleon needed hale and hearty servants, who were ready for anything. Our captain resigned himself to fate, and shut himself up until the day he heard that Napoleon had landed (1st March) at Gulf Juan.

“Zounds! I knew that it was n’t all over,” cried our friend, with tears of joy in his eyes. “Come out, old uniform, and see the sun. You have been hidden for a long time now.”

On the 6th, Napoleon left Gap for Grenoble, where the enthusiastic inhabitants brought him the gates in lieu of keys; on the 10th he entered Lyons at the head of the army sent to check him; on the 20th, at nine in the evening, the exile entered Paris as Emperor, borne in triumph by the multitude.

In a few months Napoleon had formed an army, and prepared to fall upon the allied forces, who were concentrating themselves in Belgium.

When he learned the Emperor’s departure, all Castagnette’s old warlike instincts revived. Here was an assortment of English, Prussians, Dutch, and Saxons, enough to make a man’s mouth water! It was impossible to resist the temptation. But,



*Castagnette in the Jardin des Plantes.*

mutilated as he was, of what service could he be? A visit to the Jardin des Plantes furnished him with the solution of this riddle.

For an hour he had been watching the animals, envying the trunk of the elephant, the legs of the ostrich, and the wings of the eagle. At last he stopped in front of a rhinoceros, newly arrived from Africa, and which shared public favour with the giraffe.

“Do you see, Madame Potin,” said an honest citizen to his neighbour, “these creatures have all their strength in their noses, as the bull has his in his neck, the horse his in his loins. This is a very savage brute, and that’s why he’s called the *rhinoferocious*. As he has neither arms nor legs to fight, our kindly mother, Nature, has provided him with the little instrument on his nose, so that he may strike his enemies in the stomach.”

The explanation was like a flash of intelligence to Castagnette.

“Like the rhinoceros, I have neither arms nor legs to attack my enemies: what fails me I can surely procure. *En avant* the rhinoceros of the *Grande Armée!*”



## *Castagnette at Waterloo.*

And thereupon he repaired to an armourer, saying,

“Measure my head carefully; make me a nice light little helmet that shall fit exactly, pad it well inside, put a lip-strap to it, and surmount the whole with a triangular spike like a lightning-conductor, as sharp as you can make it, and about seven inches long.”

When he was fully equipped, Castagnette sought out his old Kowno acquaintance, Marshal Ney, and applied for permission to follow him as an amateur. The brave captain was well received, and on the 15th of June he arrived at Quatre Bras, five leagues from Charleroy.

“Well, one must confess that Fate is very fanciful,” thought Castagnette. “If I go off in the next battle, they will cut upon my grave—

‘HERE LIES  
CAPTAIN CASTAGNETTE,  
A CRIPPLE,  
KILLED AT QUATRE BRAS.’”

At Ligny, our friend, to get his hand in, disembowelled in his rhinoceros fashion six Englishmen, three Prussians, and a Saxon. He was never so pleased in his life.

A few days later the disastrous battle of Waterloo took place. Never did the enthusiasm of the troops promise a more brilliant success; and had not treason and fatality lent their aid to our enemies, the days of Wellington and of Blücher had been numbered. The former, in particular, was the pet aversion of Castagnette, and an exploit of our hero had all but changed the face of things. At the attack of the farm of *La Haie Sainte*, he managed in the *mélée* to approach the English general, and, gliding under his horse, buried his spike in the animal's belly. The creature sprang in the air, and unseated Wellington. General Perch disengaged him, or we should have lost our most mortal enemy. But Castagnette sprang upon the general, and laid him dead by the side of the horse of that famous duke, who filled the place which had, for so long a period, been held by Marlborough in the Pantheon of England.

A few hours later, thanks to the inaction of Grouchy, the tide had turned. Blücher, at the head of thirty thousand Prussians, had joined Wellington, the French



*Castagnette's last interview with the Emperor.*

ranks fell into the most terrible disorder; and the fatal cry of "*Sauve qui peut!*" raised by a handful of traitors, completed the confusion. The eight battalions of the Guard led by Ney and Cambronne were swept away by the sea of fugitives. In vain Napoleon flung himself among them: the darkness prevented his being recognized, and the tumult drowned his voice. Then Prince Jerome cried out, "Here should end all who bear the name of Bonaparte!" The Emperor understood, and, sword in hand, sought the death which his generals turned from him. Nevertheless, a wounded English soldier who saw him pass dragged himself up, and, seizing a pistol, aimed it full and fired. But the ball did not reach the mark — Castagnette had just time to cover the Emperor with his body. He received the shot in his leathern stomach, from which he instantly extracted it, offering it to the Emperor with a smile.

"Will you accept it, Sire? The gift was meant for you."

"Willingly," returned the Emperor. "I shall not pay for it too dearly if I give you this in return."

So saying, he extended to our friend the cross which glittered on his breast. The queer helmet of the captain then for the first time caught Napoleon's eye.

"But what regiment do you belong to, then?"

"Don't try to guess, Sire. I am all the regiment. Call it, if you will, the Cripples of the Guard. It never turned tail, this one."

The Emperor recognized his old friend of Egypt and the Directory, and attached the cross upon his chest.

"No longer your Castagnette of former days, Sire," said the poor captain: "they have cut him up sadly. There's nothing but his heart left, and that is entirely yours."

"If better days return, my brave Castagnette, we shall meet again — if Heaven hears me, if Death does not join himself with those who to-day betray me, and strike me on this battle-field. — Farewell!"

Never again on earth did Castagnette see the Emperor Napoleon I.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### Return of Napoleon to Paris; Abdication; Death of Napoleon.

21<sup>ST</sup>, 22<sup>ND</sup>, 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 1815; 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 1821.

It is scarcely my purpose to recount to you the sorrowful events which succeeded the loss of the battle of Waterloo. Nevertheless, permit me to remind you in a few words that, on the 21st of June, the Emperor returned to Paris, to find opinion entirely against him. The public powers required his abdication, and on the 29th he quitted the capital. He took the road to Rochefort, whence he hoped to reach America; but he was stopped by an English cruiser. He had thought to shelter himself under the safeguard of the Britannic liberties, and sought an asylum on board a British vessel; but he was considered as a prisoner, and conveyed to St. Helena, where the fatal climate hastened the melancholy effects of the chagrin which overcame him.

Castagnette retired to the environs of Paris. He saw no one but his uncle, and a few friends of his campaigns. They waited for the return of Napoleon, and every

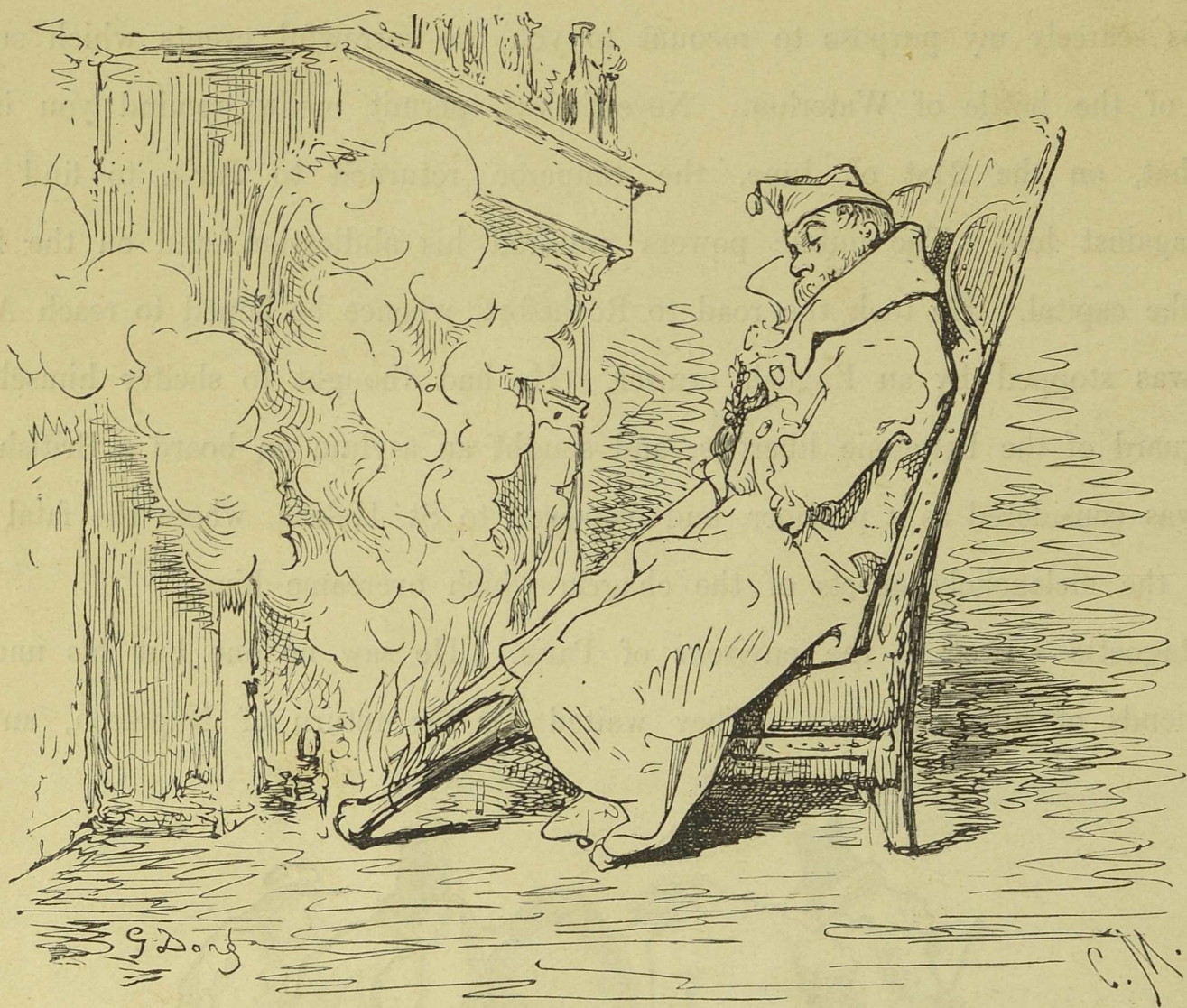


*Captain Castagnette's last Mishap.*

now and then their old hearts beat hopefully at some fresh — and false — report. But this time the English had taken sure precautions, for never gaoler or hangman filled the office better than Sir Hudson Lowe.

I come at last to the recital of my poor captain's death. I shall not relate it with a dry eye, for I felt for him all the affection of a son.

One evening — 't was the 5th of May, 1821 — he was dozing over the embers, taking his *siesta*, and dreaming of the old glorious campaigns. His poor wooden legs



were stretched upon the fire-dogs; suddenly they caught fire without his perceiving it. He dreamed of the siege of Toulon, where he had undergone his first amputation, of Italy, where he lost both face and legs. The flames, rising slowly, attacked his leathern stomach, the gift of Desgenettes. As the sleeper felt the strengthening heat, he dreamed of that land of Egypt where he had left his bowels and received that face of honour which had been his pride. But the fire, mounting slowly, mounting

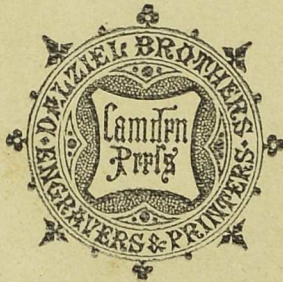




*The End.*

ever, one by one destroyed these artificial trophies—the tokens of his bravery and his devotion—and the old officer dreamed of that great conflagration of Moscow which had been followed by such disastrous consequences.

All at once a terrible explosion was heard—the fire had reached the bomb which for so many years the veteran had carried in his back. The noise aroused him, but, alas! too late. His limbs were crumbled to the smallest dust; his cross alone remained intact; and the brave old soldier, whom nothing up to that hour had moved, died of surprise at beholding himself so mutilated.









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