

JACQUES BONHOMME.

By MAX O'RELL, Author of "Jonathan and His Continent," "John Bull and His Island," "John Bull's Daughters," Etc.

II—THE FRENCH AT WAR.

Interesting Information About the Army and Its Members from the Highest to the Lowest Rank.

Jacques Bonhomme does not love his army as John Bull loves his.

John gives ovations to his soldiers, showers decorations on their heads when they return home from a little expedition that will enable him to publish a new map with one more little corner marked in red; but if he goes to a public place of entertainment, and meets a soldier in uniform there, away he hurries, exclaiming: "This place is not respectable; soldiers are admitted!" In the singular the warrior loses all his prestige.

Very different are the feelings of Jacques towards his army. He loves it in the singular because his boy belongs to it (every Frenchman has to serve in the army). In the plural, however, it represents authority, and he is well aware that the army is ready for use as a police force in case he should ever be tempted to make his voice heard too loudly in demanding a reform. This is why French soldiers in their different garrison towns live a life apart. They do not mix with the people, and have to put up with "Coventry."

The French army is viewed through many spectacles. The Conservatives see in it the preservers of order; the Radicals a danger to the liberties of the nation; the League of the Patriots call it the hope of France. To the French Mary Jane it is the repository of tender sentiments; to the tradesman of the garrison town, a source of income. Ball giving ladies like it because it provides them with dancers who are as ornamental as useful, though the officer's uniform is no longer the gorgeous dress it was in my time, when a lieutenant's full uniform cost from a half to a whole year's pay. French girls have a deep conviction that no man can make love like a young lieutenant; but papa was always apt to frown on him, knowing that this Romeo had generally more gold on his shoulders than in his waistcoat pocket, and that, according to the army regulations, no officer might marry a lady with less than 30,000 francs dot.

But here comes the regiment. Let us open the window and have a look at the "Children of France," as Beranger called them.

In front march the sapeurs, with their long, bushy beards covering their chests. Look at one and you will see them all. Sapeurs are all alike; to be able to tell one from another is a proof of marvelous perspicacity. Under the empire the sapeurs used to march with large white leather aprons covering their chest and legs, hatchets over their shoulders and huge bushes on their heads; and they formed an imposing looking body. The aprons are now done away with, but the hatchets are retained. Most of the officers' orderlies were taken from this part of the regiment, and it was a pleasant sight to see one of these good fellows, who are mostly middle aged, fatherly looking men, with his apron on, leading about the children of some married officer, who made use of him as a dry nurse (not so dry either, for we still say in France "to drink like a sapeur").

These big, kind, bearded nurses have always been favorites with their little charges, and are great at telling stories, long stories, ending in the heroine's marrying a general. The office of the sapeurs being to precede the regiment and clear away all obstacles that could impede its march, the hatchet was originally a very important part of their accoutrement. But in these days virgin forests are not plentiful in Europe, the high roads are excellent, and the colonel prefers to use them; so that now the chief utility of the formidable tool is to chop wood to make the pot boil.

Next come the drummers and buglers. How martial they look with their heads high, every head turned to the right and every bugle parallel, making the air resound with their fanfares! They are very popular with the soldiers. It is the buglers who, with their stirring notes, cheer the men when they show signs of flagging on a long, weary march. I have seen them at the foot of a steep hill, tired, perhaps, with hours of marching. "Sound the charge," says the colonel, and immediately, as if by magic, the limp legs and backs straighten, and the column of men step out bravely, singing to the notes of the bugle:

Il y a la goutte a boire la-haut.
Il y a la goutte a boire.

The summit of the hill reached, the goutte is dispensed by the Cantinier, and generally takes the form of a small glass of brandy, which in time of peace has to be paid for at the rate of a penny the glass. The bugler has no need to pull out his purse; every trooper is ready to treat him. Those of the men who have seen active service can never forget how those same notes that have just cheered them up the hill nerved them when they had to charge the enemy, and know that in many a terrible battle, when the enemy's guns did their deadly work too well, one or two surviving buglers have bravely cheered on the diminished ranks to the last, and perhaps turned the fortune of battle.

Next to the buglers comes the band. The appearance of the bandsmen is not particularly martial; the uniform is a little bit negligible. We are in the presence of artists now.

Why the trombone should be the oldest member of the band I have never been able to discover; but it is a fact that he is, nine times out of ten, a gray-headed, spectacled man, with a grave expression and three stripes on his sleeves. He feels the weight of his responsibility. It is all very well for the clarinet to take life lightly; if he plays a note a little flat

it passes in the general hum of the music without any disastrous consequences; but a wrong note from the trombone is awful to think of! So he looks neither to right nor left, and never loses sight of his majestic instrument. As a man who only plays accompaniments, the trombone is modest, and seems to apologize for the noise he makes.

The cornet plays solos, and the applause he has won from the public in the place d'armes has made him vain. Holding his instrument in the air, he is not only seen and heard, but can see the effect he produces. He is young and good looking, waxes his mustache and is a perfect lady killer. Cornet players, like tenors, are conceited.

The flute is reserved. The habit of casting down his eyes on his tiny instrument has made him bashful.

The clarinet is a picture of misery. With head bent down, he looks like a plaintive philosopher giving utterance to his sad views of life.

The masher of the band is the hautbois. His uniform is unimpeachable, and more than once the colonel has frowned on him for showing too much white collar. He gives private lessons in town.

The ophicleide is funeral. His general expression is one of solemnity. The only time his face lights up at all is when he has to play the "Prayer of Moses" as a solo. That is his triumph.

The bandmaster ranks with the quartermaster. In his numerous leisure hours he composes variations on the principal airs of "William Tell" and "Norma"—a thankless task, seeing that these airs of Rossini and Bellini are good enough for most people in their original form. But it is his pride to see his name on a programme in company with these great ones, and so he works away at his "Airs from 'William Tell,' arranged (deranged?) by N—, bandmaster of the Forty-second Light Foot." Just as every English chemist has composed a special tooth powder, every French bandmaster has composed an arrangement of "William Tell."

Here comes the colonel on horseback. He looks sad and careworn. No wonder, exclaims Jules Noriac, three thousand men to manage, and the variations on "William Tell" to hear every day at dinner.

I pass over the lieutenant colonel and the chief of squadron to have the pleasure of introducing to you a few subalterns, the non-commissioned officers, and the French Tommy Atkins, who is called "Pitou" by his compatriots.

The married officer keeps to himself, and does his best to keep his wife at home. French susceptibilities, in barracks especially, are soon wounded, and he wants to avoid the possibility of quarrels that might arise from the dear ladies' tattle. He does wool work in his spare moments, and looks forward to the time when he will be able to retire on his pension. He is a peace loving man. In the army matrimony is the grave of glory.

The serious officer is the one who looks for promotion. He is a soldier by profession and by vocation. He studies tactics and military history, and practices fencing, shooting at targets, swimming and all athletic sports. He has the campaigns of Napoleon at his fingers' ends. You will always see him poring over maps. He studies geography and the German language. He is of opinion that when the French can all speak German, the Prussians will have a hard time.

The officer of fortune is the one who has not got any—and runs into debt. Give him a wide berth; he is the bully of the regiment, very quick to take offense, and overticklish on the point of honor.

The officer who has risen from the ranks is very popular with the soldiers, whose wants he knows much better than do the young lieutenants fresh from the military school. His messmates say "he is not a gentleman." He is, however, a good soldier and a trusty, straightforward man. It is true that his manners are not refined. He can speak very fair French, but prefers bad language, and can swear for a quarter of an hour without using the same oath twice.

I remember, during the Franco-Prussian war, I happened to be quartered for a day in an aristocratic household in Lorraine with a lieutenant of this type. Trembling at the thought of my worthy friend's unruly member, I seated myself at our host's dinner table. All went well until the conversation unluckily fell upon military marches, when the lady of the house wanted to know whether the feet did not suffer very much with such a quantity of walking to do every day in the hot weather.

"I'll tell you what, ma'am," said he, "you must never wash the feet. I never do. Grease them well with tallow and they'll be all right."

The lady wished she had not spoken. Later on there was a whist party formed in the drawing room, and my comrade was asked if he would make a fourth at a little table where three old whist players were already seated, ready to enjoy their favorite game.

"With pleasure, I'm sure," said he, comfortably installing himself in the empty chair—"only I must tell you I never played before."

The face of the old gentleman opposite, as he looked at him over his spectacles, was a study.

The sergeant major is pretentious. He will tell you that if he were a civilian he could occupy a position that very few officers would be able to fill. When he retires to private life he boasts of having been a sergeant major.

The corporal, to be seen in all his glory, must be studied when he has a written report to make to the colonel. He is a good fellow, who rules four men, and defies all rules of grammar. His spelling is phonetic; yet he loves long words, and his reports bristle with such words as nevertheless, notwithstanding. He is regarded by his four men as an authority on elegant diction. A private may be able to spell, but a corporal never—such is the deep rooted belief of all French officers. I was present one day when a corporal came to the doctor with one of his men who was unfit for the saddle. The doctor examined him and

found him suffering from rheumatism. The corporal proceeded to fill up the requisite form for the man's admission to the nearest military hospital.

"Can you spell rheumatism, corporal?" said the doctor.

"I think I can, doctor, thank you," replied he, saluting.

That corporal was Louis Coetloyon, one of the leading journalists of Paris, who had volunteered soon after the outbreak of the war. We had a good laugh over the incident when I told the doctor of his blunder.

"What business has he to be a corporal if he can spell?" exclaimed the surgeon, who was a little bit sorry for what had happened.

Pitou serves his country for the modest sum of two sous a day. He receives one sou cash, and the other is placed to his credit until his term of service is over, when he is presented with a sum representing as many sous, plus interest, as he has spent days in the army. Of course his pay is not often his only source of revenue. Many soldiers work at some trade inside the barracks, and those who come from the middle classes are well supplied with pocket money from home—even the peasant's son is sure to receive a little help every month. He rises at 5 in the morning, and as there is no food served before 8, he goes straight to the canteen and has his petit verre (a tablespoonful of brandy). He tosses it at one draught, drains the dregs out in his palms and touches up his hair with it.

Great fraternity prevails in the barracks. If there are any empty pockets, their owners are not allowed to go short. He who received a little postoffice order yesterday is always ready to pay. The poor fellow who has nothing but his sou a day is never left out either, and not one of his comrades who treat him would think of alluding to his inability to return their kindness. He is drilled eight hours a day. At 8 a. m. and 4 p. m. he has his gamelle containing a piece of beef, cooked and served in a good, thick soup of vegetables. This savory and nourishing repast is eaten with bread, and forms his only food in time of peace. How often during the war, when the officer's dinner was but a dream, have I relished a dish of this appetizing compound brought me by my good orderly!

I cannot relate here the thousands of jokes that the barracks have furnished, and will always furnish, to the French comic papers. But I cannot refrain from mentioning the curious fact that one finds Hibernianism common among the ranks, while not to be found elsewhere in France. I remember one bull that Paddy might be proud to have perpetrated.

Pitou, ordered by a corporal to dig a pit and bury a quantity of rubbish from the yard, is in trouble. He has performed his task, but there is no room in the pit for all the mold which was dug out to make it; so he comes to his corporal to ask what he shall do.

"You fool," said the corporal magnificently, "make the pit larger, of course."

In war time the French soldier is admirable. The good humor with which he goes through the greatest hardships is simply wonderful. If the provisions are not at hand he breakfasts off a joke or a song. The only thing that puts him out is to get short weight when the rations of bread, rice, coffee, sugar and salt are served out. He always goes straightway and weighs them, to make sure he has his due, and if there is a deficiency of the tenth of an ounce he will grumble all day; but if his rations are right, he is right, ready for anything the day may bring, merry as a lark. His philosophical way of taking the inevitable, and putting a good face on personal misfortune, is proverbial. At the battle of Worth one of my men had his right hand completely shot away by a shell. Seeing the poor fellow look at his maimed arm as he was being carried away, I went to him and gave him a word of sympathy.

"Ay, mon lieutenant," he cried, "I shall have to learn to make cigarettes with one hand!"

The whole character of the French soldier is there.

To be Continued.

NOTICE.
I have been this day qualified as administrator of the estate of John Wells, deceased, and notice is hereby given to all persons holding claims against the estate to present them for payment before the 12th day of October, 1890, otherwise this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery.
OCT-17-90 W. H. REEVES, Admin'r.

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To the Patrons of the

ASHEVILLE TOBACCO MARKET!

We have been having very heavy sales during the past two weeks and prices were never before known to hold up so well in such a rush; in fact, we have not had more than a dozen lots of tobacco called in on our floor during the whole of this season, which is proof enough that we have been getting high prices. There can be no disputing the fact that Tobacco sells as high on the Asheville market as anywhere in the world, and we have every advantage here that any market can have. Your neighborhood is no doubt full of paid drummers, who are not responsible for what they say, but put up most any kind of a statement in order to get you to ship your tobacco to the house which they (mis)represent. They are not themselves to see that your interests are protected, but trust it altogether to parties with whom, in many instances, you are not acquainted, and sometimes with men who are not even judges of tobacco. We notice in a circular from Danville that they quote many thousand pounds at an average of \$30, but they don't quote that as any one particular sale. We do quote one sale of as many thousand pounds at an average of \$21 FOR EVERYTHING ON THE FLOOR, trash included. If we would run over our sales, as they have done, and select the high prices to make the average, we could quote as many thousand pounds at \$40 or \$45 instead of \$30, which they quote as being extra good sales. We quote below the prices on our market, which, of course, will vary according to quality:

Dark Lugs	83.00 to 88.00	Cutters, common	16.00 to 22.00	Wrappers, fancy	40.00 to 50.00
Bright "	8.00 to 16.00	" fine	22.00 to 35.00	" orange	30.00 to 45.00
Fillers, common	2.00 to 6.00	English	20.00 to 25.00	" lemon	40.00 to 55.00
" good	6.00 to 15.00	Wrappers (Mahogany)		" canary	50.00 to 80.00
Strips, common	4.00 to 10.00	" medium	\$15.00 to \$22.00		
" good	10.00 to 18.00	" good	25.00 to 30.00		

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