## BRIGADIER GERARD

BY 'A. CONAN DOYLE.

Now First Published. All Rights Post rved. The Duke of Tarentum, or McDonald, as his old comrades preferred to call him, was, as I could perceive, in the vilest of tempers. His grim Scotch face was like one of those grotesque door knockers which one sees in the Faubourg of St. Germain. We heard afterwards that the emperor had said in jest that he would have sent him against Wellington in the south, but that he was afraid to trust him



HE WAS STANDING AT THE SIDE OF THE

within sound of the pipes. Maj. Charpentier and I could plainly see that he was smouldering with anger.

"Brigadier Gerard, of the Hussars," said

he, with the air of the corporal with the I saluted.

"Maj. Charpentier, of the Horse Grenadiers."

My companion answered to his name. "The emperor has a mission for you." Without more ado he flung open the door and announced us.

I have seen Napoleon ten times on horseback to once on foot, and I think that he does wisely to show himself to his troops in this fashion, for he cuts a very good figure in the saddle. As we saw him now he was the shortest man out of six, by a good hand's breadth, and yet I am no very big man myself, though I ride quite heavy enough for a hussar. It is evident; too, that his body is too long for his legs. With his big round head, his curved shoulders and his clean-shaven face, he is more like a professor at the Sorbonne than the first soldier of France. Every man to his tastes, but it seems to me that if I could clap a pair of fine light cavalry whiskers like my own onto him it would do him no harm. He has a firm mouth, however, and his eyes are remarkable. I have seen them once turned upon me in anger, and I had rather ride at a square on a spent horse than face them again. I am not a man that is easily dannted, either.

He was standing at the side of the room, away from the window, looking up at a great map of the country, which was hung upon the wall. Berthier stood beside him, trying to look wise, and just as we entered Napoleon snatched his sword impatiently. from him, and pointed with it on the map. He was talking fast and low, but I heard him say: "The valley of the Meuse," and . twice he repeated: "Berlin." As we entered his aid-de-camp advanced to us, but the emperor stopped him, and beckoned us to his side.

"You have not yet received a cross of honor, Brigadier Gerard?" he asked.

I replied that I had not, and was about to add that it was not for one who hadn't deserved it, when he cut me short in his decided fashion.

"And you, Major?" he asked. "No, sire."

"Then you shall both have your opportunity now."

He led us to the great map upon the wall, and placed the tip of Berthier's sword

upon Rheims. "I will be frank with you, gentlemen, as with two comrades. You have both been with me since Marengo, I believe." He had a strangely pleasant smile which used to light up his pale face with a kind of cold sunshine. "Here at Rheims are our present headquarters on this, the 14th of

March .. Very good. Here is Paris, distant by road a good twenty-five leagues. Blucher lies to the north, Schwarzenburg to the south." He prodded at the map with the sword as he spoke. "Now," said he, "the further into the country these people march, the more completely I shall crush them. They are about to advance upon Paris. Very good. Let them do so. My brother, the king of Spain, will be there with a hundred thousand men. It is to him that I send you.

You will hand him this letter, 'a copy of

which I confide to each of you. It is to

tell him that I am coming at once, in two

days' time, with every man and horse and gun, to his relief. I must give them fortyeight hours to recover. Then straight to Paris. You understand me, gentlemen?" Ah, if I could tell you the glow of pride it gave me to be taken into the great man's confidence in this way. As he handed our letters to us I clicked my spurs and threw out my chest, smiling and nodding to let him know that I saw what he would be after. He smiled also and rested his hand for a moment upon the cape of my dolman. I would have given half my arrears

that instant. "I will show you your route," said he, turning back to the map. "Your orders are to ride together as far as Bazoches. You will then separate, the one making for Paris by Oulchy and Neuilly, and the other to the north by Braine, Soissons and Senlis. Have you anything to say, Briga-

of pay if my mother could have seen me at

dier Gerard?" I am a rough soldier, but I have words and ideas. I had began to speak about glory and the peril of France when he cut

me short.

"And you, Maj. Charpentier?" "If we found our route unsafe, are we at

liberty to choose another?" said he. "Soldiers do not choose. They obey." He inclined his head to show that we were dismissed and turned round to Berthier. I do not know what he said, but I heard

them both laughing. Well, as you may think, we lost little time in getting upon our way. In half an hour we were riding down the high street of Rheims, and it struck twelve o'clock as we passed the cathedral. I had my little gray mare, Violette, the one which Sebastiani had wished to buy after Dresden. It is the fastest horse in the six brigades of light cavalry, and was only beaten by the duke of Rovigo's racer from England. As to Charpentier he had the kind of horse which a horse grenadier or a curassier would be likely to ride, a back like a bedstead, you understand, and legs like the posts. He is a bulking fellow himself, sothat they looked a singular pair. And yet in his insane conceit he ogled the girls as they waved their handkerchiefs to me from the windows, and he twirled his ugly red mustache up to his eyes, just as if it 'were to him that their attention was addressed.

When we came out of town we passed through the French camp and then across the battlefield of yesterday, which was and by the Prussians. But of the two the camp was the sadder sight. Our army conscripts. The artillery and the heavy of them, but the infantry privates with silent. They had given up the chase. tear until the thought came that the very morning he had placed his hand upon my dolman and had promised me a medal of honor. This set me singing and I spurred Violette on until Charpentier had to beg me to have mercy on his great snorting, panting camel. The road was beaten a into paste and rutted two feet deep by the artillery, so that he was right in saying that it was not the place for a gallop.

I have never been friendly with this Charpentier, and now for twenty miles of the way I could not draw a word from him. He rode with his brows puckered and his chin upon his breast like a man who is heavy with thought. More than once I asked him what was on his mind, thinking that perhaps with my quicker intelligence I might set the matter straight. His answer always was that it was his mission of which he was thinking, which surprised me, because, although I had never thought much of his intelligence, still it seemed to me to be impossible that anyone could be puzzled by so simple and soldierly a task.

Well, we came at last to Bazdches, where he was to take the southern road and I the



HE RODE LIKE A MAN WHO WAS HEAVY WITH THOUGHT.

northern. He half turned in his saddle

before he left me, and he looked at me with a singular expression of inquiry on his face. "What do you make of it, brigadier?" he

asked.

"Of what?"

"Of our mission."

"Surely, it is plain enough." "You think so? Why should the emperor tell us his plans?"

"Because he recognized our intelli-

My companion laughed in a manner which I found annoying. "May I ask what you intend to do if you find these villages full of Prussians?" he asked.

"I shall obey my orders." "But you will be killed."

"Very possibly." He laughed again and so offensively that I clapped my hand to my sword. But before I could tell him what I thought of his stupidity and rudeness he had wheeled his horse and was lumbering away down the other road. I saw his big fur cap vanish over the brow of a hill, and then I rode upon my way wondering at his conduct. From time to time I put my hand to the breast of my tunic and felt the paper crackle beneath my fingers. Ah; my precious paper which should be turned into the little silver medal for which I hadi yearned so long. All the way from Braine | myself. I turned on my saddle and shoutto Sermoise I was thinking of what my mother would say when she saw it.

I stopped to give Violette a meal at a wayside auberge on the side of a hill not far from Soissons—a place surrounded by old oaks, and with so many crows that one could scarce hear one's own voice. It was from the innkeeper that I learned that Marmont had fallen back two days before and that the Prussians were over the Aisne. An hour later in the fading light I saw two of their vedettes upon a hill to the right and then, as darkness gathered, the heavens to the north were all glimmaring

from the lights of a bivouac. When I heard that Blucher had been there for two days I was much surprised that the emperor should not have known that the country through which he had ordered me to carry my precious letter was already occupied by the enemy. Still . thought of the tone of his voice when he said to Charpentier that a soldier must not choose but must obey. I should follow the route he had laid down to me as long as Violette could move a hoof or I a finger upon her bridle. All the way from Sermoise to Soissons, where the road dips up and down, curving among fir woods, kept my pistol ready and my sword belt braced, pushing on swiftly where the path was straight and then coming slowly around the corners in the way we learned

When I came to the farmhouse which lies to the right of the road just after you cross the wooden bridge over the Crise,

in Spain.

hear where the great statue of the Virgin stands, a woman cried to me from the field saying the Prussians were in Soissons. A small party of their lancers, she said, had come on that very afternoon and a whole division was expected before midnight. I did not wait to hear the end of her tale, but clapped spurs into Violette and five minutes later was galloping her into the town.

Three Uhlans were at the mouth of the main street, their horses tethered, and they gossiping together, each with a pipe as long as my saber. I saw them well at the light of an open door, but of me they could have seen only the flash of Violette's gray side and the black flutter of my cloak. A moment later I flew through a stream of them rushing from an open gateway. Violette's shoulder sent one of them reeling and I stabbed at another but missed him. Pang, pang, went two carbines, but I had flown round the curve of the street and never so much as heard the hiss of the balls. Ah, we were great, both Violette and I. She lay down to it, like a coursed hare, the fire flying from her roofs. I stood in my stirrups and brandished my sword. Some one sprang for my bridle. I sliced him through the arm and I heard him howling behind me. Two horsemen closed upon me. I cut one down and outpaced the other. A minute still covered both by our own poor fellows | later I was clear of the town and flying down a broad white road with the black poplars on either side. For a time I heard was thawing away. The guards were all | the rattle of hoofs behind me, but they right, though the young guard was full of | died and died until I could not tell them from the throbbing of my own heart. cavalry were also good if there were more | Soon I pulled up and listened, but all was

their under officers looked like schoolboys | Well, the first thing that I did was to with their masters. And we had no dismount and to lead my mare into a reserves. When one considered that there | small wood through which a stream ran. were eighty thousand Prussians to the There I watered her and rubbed her down, north and a hundred and fifty thousand | giving her two pieces of soaked sugar in Russians and Austrians to the south, it | cognac from my flask. She was spent might make even the bravest man grave. I from the sharp chase, but it was wonder-For my own part I confess that I shed a | ful to see how she came round with a half hour's rest. When my thighs closed upon emperor was still with us and that on that | her again I could tell by the spring and swing of her that it would not be her fault if I did not win my way safe to Paris.

I must have been well within the enemy's lines now, for I heard a number of them shouting one of their rough drinking songs out of a house by the roudside, and I went round by the fields to avoid it. At another time two men cante out into the moonlight (for by this time it was a cloudless night) and shouted something in German, but I galloped on without heeding them and they were afraid to fire for their own hussars are dressed exactly as I was. It is best to take no notice at these times and then they put you down as a deaf man.

It was a lovely moon and every tree threw a black bar across the road. I could see the country side just as if it were daytime, and very peaceful it looked, save that there was a great fire raging somewhere in the north. In the silence of the night time and with the knowledge that danger was in front and behind me, the sight of that great distant fire was very striking and awesome.

But I was not easily clouded, for I have seen too many singular things, so hummed a tune between my teeth and thought of little Lisette whom I might see in Paris. My mind was full upon her when, trotting round a corner, I came Atraight upon half a dozen German dragoons who were sitting round a brushwood fire by the roadside.

I am an excellent soldier. I do not say this because I am prejudiced in my own favor, but because I really am so. I can weigh every chance in a moment and decide with as much certainty as though had brooded for a week. Now I saw like a flash that come what might I should be chased, and on a horse which had already done a long twelve leagues. But it was better to be chased onwards than chased back. On this moon it night, with fresh horses behind me, I must take my risk in either case, but if I were to shake them off, I preferred that it should be near Senlis than near Soissons. All



SHE WAS OFF WITH A RATTLE. this flashed on me, as if by instinct, you understand. My eyes had hardly rested upon the bearded faces under the brass helmets before my rowels were up to the bosses in Violette's side and she was off with a rattle like a pas-decharge. Oh, the shouting and rushing and stamping from behind us! Three of them fired and three swung themselves onto their horses. A bullet rapped on the crupper of the saddle with the noise like a stick on a door. Violette sprang madly forward and 1 thought she had been wounded, but it was only a graze above the near fore fetlock. Ah, the dear little mare, how I loved her when I felt her settle down into that long easy gallop of hers, her hoofs going like a Spanish girl's eastanets. I could not hold ed and raved. "Vive L'Empereur!" L screamed, and laughed at the gust of oaths that came back to me.

But it was not over yet. If she had been

fresh she might have gained a mile in five. Now she could only hold her own with a very little over. There was one of them, a young boy of an officer; who was better mounted than the others. He drew ahead with every stride. Two hundred yards behind him were two troopers, but I saw every time that I glanced round that the distance between them was increasing. The other three who had waited to shoot were a long way in the rear. The officer's mount was a bay, a fine horse, though not to be spoken of with Violette. Yet it was a powerful brute, and it seemed to methat in a few miles its freshness might tell. I waited until the lad was a long way in front of his comrades, and then I eased my mare down a little-a very, very 'little, so that he might think that he was really catching me. When he came within pistol shot of me I drew and cocked my own pistol and laid my thin upon my shoulder to see what he would do. He did not offer to fire and I soon discerned the cause. The silly boy had taken his pistols from his holsters when he had camped for the night. He wagged his sword at me now and roared some of his gibberish. He did not seem to understand that he was at my. mercy. I eased Violette down until there was not the length of a long lance between the gray tail and the bay muzzle.

"Rendez-vous!" he yelled: ... "I must compliment monsieur upon his

French," said I, resting the barrel of my pistol upon my bridle arm, which I have always found best when shooting from the sayldle. I aimed at his face, and could see, even in the moonlight, how white he grew when he understood that it was all up with him. But even as my finger pressed the trigger I thought of his mother and I put my ball through his horse's shoulder. I fear he hurt himself in the fall, for it was a fearful crash, but I had my letter to think of, so I stretched the mare into a gallop once more.

But they were not so easily shaken off, these brigands. The two troopers thought no more of their young officer than if he had been a recruit thrown in the riding school. They left him to the others and thundered on after me. I had pulled up on the brow of a hill, thinking that I had heard the last of them, but, my faith, I soon saw that there was no time for loitering, so away we went, the mare tossing her head and I my busby, to show what; we thought of two dragoons who tried to catch a hussar. But at this moment, even while I laughed at the thought, my heart stood still within me, for there at the end of the long, white road was a black patch of cavalry waiting to receive me. To a young soldier it might have seemed the shadow of the trees, but to me it was a troop of hussars, and turn where I would death seemed to be waiting for me.

Well, I had the dragoons behind me and the hussars in front. Never since Moscow have I seemed to be in such peril. But for he honor of the brigade I would rather be cut down by a light cavalryman than by a heavy. I never drew bridle, therefore, or hesitated for an instant, but I let Violette have her head. I remember that I tried to pray as I rode, but I am a little out of practice at such things and the only words I could remember were the prayer for fine weather which we used at the school on the evening before holidays. Even this seemed better than nothing, and I was pattering it out, when suddenlywhen suddenly I heard. French voices in front of me. Ah, mon Dieu, but the joy went through my heart like a musket ball. They were ours-our own dear little rascals from the corps of Marmont. Round whisked my two dragoons and galloped for their lives with the moon gleaming on their brass helmets, while I trotted up to my friends with no undue haste, for I would have them understand that though a hussar may fly it is not in his nature to fly very fast. Yet I fear that Violette's heaving flanks and foam spattered muzzle gave the lie to my careless bearing.

Who should be at the head of the troop. but old Bouvet whom I saved at Leipsig. When he saw me his little pink eyes filled with tears, and indeed I could not but shed a few myself at the sight of his joy. Itold him of my mission, but he laughed when I said I must pass through Sculis.

"The enemy is there," said he. "You cannot go." "I prefer to go where the enemy is," I

answered. "I would ride through Berlin if I had the emperor's order." But why not go straight to Paris with your dispatch? Why should you choose to pass through the one place where. ou are almost sure to be taken or killed?"

"A soldier does not choose. He obeys?" said I, just as I had heard Napoleon say it. Old Bouvet laughed in his wheezy way until I had to give my mustache a twirl and look him up and down in a manner which brought him to reason.

"Well," said he, "you had best come along with us, for we are bound for Senlis. Our orders are to reconnoitre the place. A squadron of Poniatowski's Po lish lancers are in front of us. If you must ride through it it is possible that we may be able to go with you."

So away we went, jingling and clanking through the quiet night until we came up with the Poles-fine old soldiers, all of them, though a trifle heavy for their horses. It was a treat to see them, for they could not have carried themselves better if they had belonged to my own brigade. We rode together until in the early morning we saw the lights of Senlis. A peasant was coming along with a cart, and from him we learned how things were going there.

His information was certain, for his brother was the mayor's coachman and he had spoken with him late the night before. There was a single squadron of Cossacks-or a polk as they call it in their frightful language-quartered upon the mayor's house, which stands at the corner of the market place, and is the largest building in the town. A whole division of Prussian infantry was encamped in the woods to the north, but only the Cossacks were in Senlis. Ah! what a chance te avenge ourselves upon these barbrrians, whose crueity to our poor country folk was | the talk at every camp fire. We were inte the town like a torrent, hacked down the vedettes, rode over the guard and were smashing in the doors of the mayor's house before they understood that there was a Frenchman within twenty miles of them. We saw horrid heads at the windows, heads bearded to the temples; with tangled hair and sheepskin caps, and silly gaping mouths. "Hourra!" they shrieked, and fired with their carbines, but our fellows were into the house, and at their throats before they had wiped the sleep out of their eyes. It was dreadful to see how the Poles flung themselves upon them, like starving wolves upon a herd of fat bucks-for, as you know, the Poles have a blood feud



"RENDEZ-VOUS!" HE YELLED

against the Cossacks. The most were killed in the upper rooms, whither they had fled for shelter, and the blood was pouring down into the hall like rain upon a roof. They are terrible soldiers, these Poles, though I think they are a trifle heavy for their horses. Man for man they are as big as Kellermann's cuirassiers. Their equipment, however, is of course much lighter, since they are without the cuirass, backplate and helmet.

Well, it was at this point that I made an error-a very serious error, it must be admitted. Up to this moment I had carried out my mission in a manner which only my modesty prevents me from describing as remarkable. But now I did that which an official would condemn and a soldier

There is no doubt that the mare was spent, but still it is true that I might have galloped on through Senlis and reached the country where I should have had no enemy between me' and Paris. But what

hussar can ride past a light and never draw rein? It is to ask too much of him. Besides I thought that if Violette had an hour of rest I might be, three hours the better at the other end. Then on the top of it came those heads at the windows with their sheepskin hats and their barbarous cries. I sprang from my saddle, threw Violette's bridle over a nail post and ran into the house with the rest. It is true that I was too late to be of service, and that I was nearly wounded by a lancethrust from one of these dying savages. Still it is a pity to miss even the smallest affair, for one never knows what opportunity for advancement may present it self. I have seen more soldierly work in outpost skirmishes; and little gallop and hack affairs of the kind than in any of the emperor's big battles:

When the house was cleared I took a bucket of water out for Violette, and our peasant guide showed me where the good mayor kept his fodder. My faith, but the little sweetheart was ready for it. Then I sponged down her legs and leaving her still tethered, I went back into the house. to find a mouthful for myself, so that I should not need to halt again until I was in Paris.

And now I come to the part of my story which may seem singular to you, although I could tell you at least ten things every hit as queer which happened to me in my lifetime. You can understand that to a man who spends his rife in escouting and. vedette duties on the bloody ground which lies between two great armies there are many chances of strange experiences. I'll tell you, however, exactly what oc-

Old Bouvet was waiting in the passage when kentered, and he asked me whether we might not crack a bottle of wine together. "My faith, we must not be long," said he. "There are fen thousand Theilmann's Prussians in the woods up yonder." "Where is the wine?" I asked.

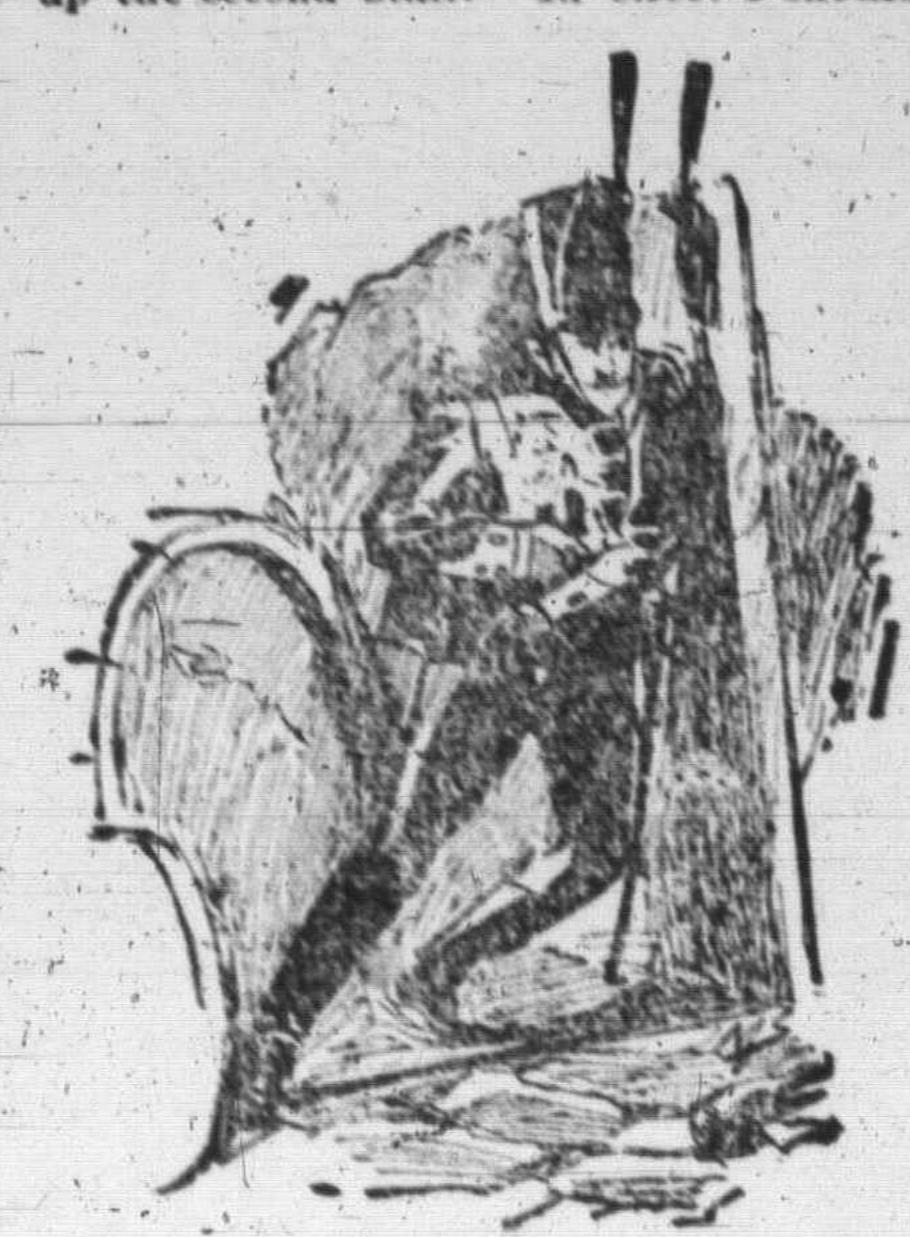
"Ah! you may trust two hussars to find where the wine is," said he, and, taking a candle in his hand, he led the way down the stone steps which led to the

When we got there we found another door which opened onto a winding stair with the cellar at the bottom. The Cossacks had been there before us, as was easily seen by the broken bottles littered all over it. However, the mayor was a bon vivant, and I do not wish to have a better set of bins to pick from. Chamber tin, Graves, Alicant, white wine and red, sparkling and still, they lay in pyramids peeping coyly out of the sawdust. Old Bouvet stood with his candle, looking here and peeping there, purring in his throat like a cat before a milkpail. He had picked apon, a Burgundy at last, and had his hand outstretched to the bottle, when there came a roar of musketry from above us, a rush of feet, and such a yelping and a screaming as I have never listened to. The Prussians were upon us.

Bouvet is a brave man; I will say that for him. He flashed out his sword and away he clattered up the stone steps, his spurs clinking as he ran. I followed him; but just as he came out into the kitchen passage a tremendous shout told us that the house had been recaptured.

"It is all over," I cried, grasping at Bouvet's sleeve.

"There is no more to die," he shouted, and away he went like a madman up the second stair. In effect I should



"I GAVE SUCH A PUSH THAT-" have gone to my death also had I been in his place, for he had done very wrong in not throwing out his scouts to warn him if the Germans advanced upon him. For, an instant I was about to rush up with him, and then I bethought myself that after ali I had my own mission to think of, and that if I were taken the important letter of the emperor would be sacrificed. I let Bouvet die alone, therefore, and I went down into the cellar again, closing the door behind me.

Well, it was not a very rosy prospect. down there, either. Bouvet had dropped the candle when the alarm came, and I, pawing about in the darkness, could find nothing but broken bottles. At last l came upon the candle, which had rolled under the curve of a cask, but try as I would with my tinder box I could not light it. The reason was that the wick had been wet in a puddle of wine, so, suspecting that this might be the case, I cut the end off with my sword. Then I found that it . lighted easily enough. But what to do I could not imagine. The secondrels upstairs were shouting themselves hoarse, several hundred of them from the sound, and it was clear that some of them would soon want to moisten their throats. There would be an end of a dashing soldier, and of the mission and of the medal. I thought of my mother and I thought of the emperor. It made me weep to think that one would lose so excellent a son and the other the best light cavalry officer he ever had since La Salle's time. But presently I dashed the tears from my eyes. "Courage!" I cried, striking myself upon the chest. 'Courage, my brave boy! Is it possible that one who has come safely from Moscow without so much as a frost bite will die in a French wine cellar?" At the thought I was up on my feet, and clutching at the letter in my tunic, for the crackle of it gave me

To be Continued.

A. E. Van Gieson, Chief inspector of New York board of fire underwriters, writes: I have taken your K. D. C. with satisfactory results. I can freely recommend it to any suffering from dyspepsia; I think I had it as bad as any one could well have it, but I am now free of it. I gave your goods a fair trial, and shall always have a bottle on hand for use to correct indiscretions in diet." Sold by E. C. Mitchell.

William Masson has been appointed postmaster of Owen Sound. The Waterous engine house are being moved from Brantford.