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ALPHONSE DAUDET

TARTARIN OF TARASCON

With Illustrations

“ In France every one is somewhat Tarasconian ”

REVISED TRANSLATION

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To my Friend,

GONZAGUE PRIVAT

.



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FIRST EPISODE.



IN TARASCON.

CHAPTER I

The Baobab Garden.





I

The Baobab Garden.

MY first visit to Tartarin of Tarascon has remained a never-to-be-forgotten date in my life; it was ten or a dozen years ago, but I remember it better than yesterday.

The intrepid Tartarin lived at that time on the Avignon road, in the third house on the left as the town begins. A pretty little villa in the local style, with a garden in front, a balcony behind, very white walls, green venetian blinds, and about the doorsteps a brood of little Savoyard urchins playing hopscotch, or dozing in the broad sunshine with their heads pillowed on their blacking-boxes.

Outwardly the dwelling had no remarkable features.

You would never have believed it to be the abode of a hero. But when you stepped inside, *coquin de sort!* . . .

The whole building from cellar to garret, even the garden, had an heroic aspect.

Oh that garden of Tartarin's! there was not another like it in Europe! Not a native tree was there, — not one flower of France; nothing but exotic plants, gum-trees, calabash-trees, cottonwoods, cocoanut-trees, mangoes, bananas, palms, a



baobab, nopals, cacti, Barbary figs, — till you would think yourself in the very midst of Central Africa, ten thousand leagues away. None of these, of course, was full grown; thus the cocoanut-trees were scarcely bigger than beets, and the baobab (*arbos gigantea*, — "giant tree") was easily held by a mignonette-pot; but, all the same, it was rather fine for Tarascon, and the townsfolk who were admitted on Sundays to the honor of contemplating Tartarin's baobab, went home full of admiration.

Imagine what emotion I must have felt on the day when I passed through this marvellous garden! . . . Even that was capped when I was ushered into the hero's sanctum.

This sanctum, one of the curiosities of the town, was at the end of the garden, its glass door opening directly out on the baobab.

Picture a large apartment adorned from top to bottom with guns and sabres: all the weapons of all the countries in the world,—carbines, rifles, blunderbusses, Corsican knives, Catalan knives, revolver knives, dagger knives, Malay kreeses, Carib arrows, flint arrows, knuckle-dusters, tomahawks, Hottentot clubs, Mexican lassoes, and what not!

A fierce sunlight fell from above, making the steel of the blades and the butt ends of the firearms gleam as if to give you all the more goose-flesh. . . .

Still, the fine appearance of order and tidiness reigning over all this *yataghanry* was somewhat reassuring. Everything was in place, brushed, dusted, labelled, as though it were an apothecary shop; at intervals an obliging little card reading,—

Poisoned Arrows! Do not touch!

Or,

Loaded! Take care!

Had it not been for these cautions, I should never have dared to enter.

In the middle of the room stood a round table; on the table a flagon of rum, a Turkish tobacco-pouch, "Captain Cook's Voyages," the tales of Cooper and

Gustave Aimard, stories of bear-hunting, hawking, elephant-hunting, and so on.

Lastly, beside the table sat a man of between forty and forty-five, short, stout, thick-set, ruddy, with blazing eyes and a vigorous stubbly beard; he wore flannel tights, and was in his shirt-sleeves; he held a book in one hand, and in the other brandished an enormous pipe with an iron bowl-cap, and while reading some terrific adventure of scalp-hunters, he pouted out his lower lip, making a frightful face, which gave the little Tarascon gentleman's honest phiz the same impression of kindly ferocity which abounded throughout the house.

This man was Tartarin himself, — Tartarin of Tarascon, the intrepid, the great, incomparable Tartarin of Tarascon.

CHAPTER II

A general survey of the good town of Tarscon; the cap-hunters.





II

*A general survey of the good town of Tarascon;
the cap-hunters.*

AT the time of which I am telling you, Tartarin of Tarascon had not yet become the present-day Tartarin, the great Tartarin of Tarascon, so popular in the whole South of France. Yet — even then — he was already King of Tarascon!

Let us show whence arose his sovereignty.

In the first place you must know that everybody in that region, from the greatest to the least, is a huntsman. Hunting is the local craze, and it has been so ever since the mythological times when the *Tarasque* flourished in the town marshes, and when the Tarasconians of that day organized shooting-parties against him. That's a long time, as you see.

So, every Sunday morning, Tarascon flies to arms and rushes out of its walls, with game-bag on back, with fowling-piece on shoulder, together with a tremor of hounds, of ferrets, of bugles, and of hunting-horns. It's splendid to see! . . . Unfortunately, game is lacking, absolutely lacking.

Stupid as animals are, you can realize that at length they learnt to feel distrust.

For five leagues around about Tarascon, the burrows are empty, the nesting-places abandoned. Not a blackbird, not a quail, not one little leveret, not the tiniest snipe.

Yet mightily tempting are these pretty Tarascon hillocks, all sweet smelling of myrtle, lavender, and rosemary; and the fine muscatel grapes plumped out with sweetness, as they spread along the banks of the Rhône, are deucedly appetizing too. . . . Yes, but Tarascon lies behind all this, and Tarascon has a very bad reputation in the little world of fur and feather. The very birds of passage have marked it on their guide-books with a big cross; and when the wild ducks, coming down towards the Camargue in long triangles, spy the town steeples from afar, the leader begins to squawk out loudly, —

“There's Tarascon! there's Tarascon!”

And the whole flock takes a swerve.

In short, so far as game goes, there's no more left in the land save one old rogue of a hare, escaped as by miracle from the September massacres of the Tarasconians, and stubbornly determined to live. This hare is very well known at Tarascon. A name has been given him. He is called “The Rapid.” It

is known that he has his form on M. Bompard's grounds, — and this, by the way, has doubled, ay, tripled, the value of the property, — but no one as yet has managed to get him.

At the present time, only two or three inveterate fellows worry themselves about him.

The rest have given him up, and "The Rapid" long ago passed into the legendary world, although the Tarasconian is by nature very slightly superstitious, and eats ragouts of swallows whenever he can get them.

— Ah, but that won't do! you will say. If game is so scarce at Tarascon, what do the Tarasconian sportsmen do every Sunday?

What do they do?

Why, good gracious! they go out into the real country two or three miles from town. They gather in knots of five or six, stretch themselves out tranquilly in the shade of some well, old wall, or olive-tree, extract from their game-bags a good-sized piece of spiced beef, raw onions, a big sausage, a few anchovies, and begin an interminable luncheon, washed down with one of those nice Rhône wines, which make one laugh and make one sing.

After that, when they are thoroughly set up, they rise, whistle the dogs to heel, cock their guns, and go "on the shoot." That is to say, every man of them doffs his cap, shies it up with all his might into the air, and pops at it with No. 5, 6, or 2 shot, according to regulations.

He who hits the cap oftenest is proclaimed King of the sport, and returns triumphantly at evening to

Tarascon, with his riddled cap on the end of his gun, accompanied by the barking of dogs and the flourish of trumpets.



It is needless to say that cap-selling is a fine business in the town. There are even some hatters who sell hunting-caps ready shot, torn, and perforated for poor marksmen; but almost the only one known to buy this kind is the apothecary Bézuquet. It is dishonorable!

As a crack shot at caps, Tartarin of Tarascon never had his match.

Every Sunday morning he went out in a new cap, and every Sunday evening he came back with a mere thing of shreds. The garrets of the little Baobab Villa were full of these glorious trophies. Hence all the Tarasconians acknowledged him as their master; and as Tartarin thoroughly understood the huntsman's code, as he had read all the handbooks of all possible kinds of venery, from cap-popping to Burmese tiger-shooting, these gentlemen constituted him their great cynegetical umpire, and took him for referee in all their differences.

Between three and four daily, at Costecalde the gunsmith's, a stern, stout man, with a pipe between his teeth, might be seen in a green leather-covered arm-chair in the centre of the shop crammed with cap-hunters, all standing up and wrangling. This was Tartarin of Tarascon delivering judgment. Nimrod *plus* Solomon.

CHAPTER III

*Nan ! nan ! nan ! Continuation of the
general survey of the good town of Tarascon.*



III

Nan! nan! nan! Continuation of the general survey of the good town of Tarascon.

TOGETHER with the craze for sporting, the lusty Tarascon race cherishes another passion, that of singing romances. The quantity of ballads used up in that little region is beyond belief! All the old sentimental stuff turning sere and yellow in the most antiquated of portfolios, is to be found at Tarascon in full pristine lustre. It is all there, all of it! Every family has its own, and in town is well known.

For instance, it is known that the chemist Bézuquet's is, —

*Toi, blanche étoile que j'adore ;**

* "Thou art the fair star I adore!"

the gunmaker Costecalde's, —

*Veux-tu venir au pays des cabanes : **

the official registrar's (supposed to be comic), —

Si j'étais-t-invisible personne n'me verrait ; †

and so on for all Tarascon. Two or three times a week they met at each other's houses, where these were sung. The strange thing about it is that they are always the same, and that these honest Tarasconians have never had an inclination to change them, long as they have been singing them. They are handed down from father to son in the families, and no one ventures to improve on them; they are sacred. There is never any attempt made to borrow from one another. Never would it occur to the Costecalde's mind to sing the Bézuquets', or the Bézuquets to try the Costecalde's'. And yet you may believe that they ought to know by heart what had been sung for forty years! But, no! every one sticks to his own, and they are all contented.

In romance-singing, as in cap-popping, Tartarin was still the foremost. His superiority over his fellow-townsmen consisted in this: Tartarin of Tarascon had no one song of his own. He had them all!

All!

But it was the devil's own work to get him to sing them.

Surfeited early in life with his drawing-room triumphs, the Tarascon hero preferred by far to bury

* "Wilt thou come to the land
Where the log-cabins stand?"

† "If I were only invisible,
No one could see me."

himself in his hunting story-books, or to spend the evening at the club, rather than to make a personal exhibition before a Nîmes piano between a pair of Tarascon candles. These musical parades seemed beneath him. . . .

Nevertheless, at times, when there was music at Bézuquet's, he would drop into the apothecary shop as if by chance, and, after a deal of urging, consent to do the grand duo in *Robert le Diable* with old Madame Bézuquet. . . .

Whoso never heard that, never heard anything . . . !

For my part, even if I lived a hundred years, I should always see the mighty Tartarin approaching the piano with solemn step, leaning on his elbow, getting his mouth ready, and, beneath the green reflection from the show-bottles in the window, trying to give his pleasant visage the fierce and satanic expression of Robert the Devil.

Hardly would he fall into position before the whole audience would be shuddering; it was felt that something great was at hand. . . .

Then after a hush, old Madame Bézuquet would begin to her own accompaniment: —

*Robert, toi que j'aime
Et qui reçus ma foi,
Tu vois mon affroi, (bis)
Grâce pour toi-même
Et grâce pour moi.**

* " Robert, thou whom I love,
And who didst receive my plighted faith,
Thou seest my despair, —
Pardon for thyself
And pardon for me ! "

In a whisper she would add: "Now, then, Tartarin!" and Tartarin of Tarascon, with extended arm, clenched fists, and quivering nostrils, would roar three times in a formidable voice, rolling like a thunder-clap in the bowels of the instrument:—

"*Non . . . ! non . . . ! non . . . !*" which, like the thorough Southerner he was, he pronounced nasally as "*Nan . . . ! nan . . . ! nan . . . !*" Then would old Madame Bézuquet again sing:—

*Grâce pour toi-même
Et grâce pour moi!*

"*Nan . . . ! nan . . . ! nan . . . !*" bellowed Tartarin at his loudest, and there the gem ended.

Not long, you see; but it was so handsomely voiced forth, so clearly gesticulated, and so diabolical, that a tremor of terror overran the apothecary shop, and the "*Nan . . . ! nan . . . ! nan . . . !*" would be encored four or five times running.

Upon this Tartarin would sponge his brow, smile on the ladies, wink at the men, and withdrawing upon his triumph would go remark at the club with a trifling, offhand air,—

"I have just been at the Bézuquets', singing the duo from *Robert le Diable*."

The cream of the joke was that he really believed it! . . .

CHAPTER IV



“ They ! ”



IV

“*They!*”

THESE diverse talents gave Tartarin of Tarascon his high position in the town.

However, this deuce of a fellow knew how to captivate every one.

The army, at Tarascon, was for Tartarin. The gallant commandant, Bravida, the quartermaster on the retired list, called him *un lapin*, — a buck rabbit, — and you may imagine that the commandant knew all about rabbits after having dressed so many!

The magistracy was for Tartarin. Two or three times, in open court, the old chief judge, Ladevèze, had said, in alluding to him, —

“He is a character!”

Lastly, the people were for Tartarin. He was the Lord Seymour of the place, the King of the Tarasconian markets; and this was due to his breadth of shoulders, his gait, his bearing,—the bearing of a trumpeter’s charger fearing no noise,—to his reputation as a hero which he had acquired from some unknown source, and to some scattering of coppers and of thumps among the little bootblacks basking at his doorway.

Along the quais on Sunday evenings, when Tartarin came home from hunting with his cap on the end of his gun, and his fustian shooting-jacket belted in tightly, the stevedores of the Rhône would respectfully salute him, and, blinking toward the huge biceps swelling out his arms, would mutter to one another in admiration, —

“That there’s a powerful chap! . . . he has double-muscles!”

DOUBLE MUSCLES!

Only at Tarascon are such things known!

And yet, with all his numberless talents, his double muscles, the popular favor, and the so precious esteem of the gallant Commandant Bravida, ex-quartermaster, Tartarin was not happy: this life in a petty town weighed upon him, suffocated him.

The great man of Tarascon was bored in Tarascon.

The fact is, for a heroic temperament like his, for a wild adventurous spirit dreaming of nothing but

battles, races across the pampas, mighty battues, desert sands, blizzards and typhoons, it was not enough to go out every Sunday to pop at a cap, and the rest of the time to act as umpire at the gun-maker Costecalde's. . . . Poor dear great man! Had this existence been prolonged, there would have been sufficient reason for him to die of consumption.

In vain did he surround himself with baobabs and other African trees, to widen his horizon, and some little to forget his club and the market-place; in vain did he pile weapon upon weapon, and Malay kreese upon Malay kreese; in vain did he cram with romantic reading, endeavoring like the immortal Don Quixote to wrench himself by the vigor of his fancy out of the talons of pitiless reality. . . . Alas! all that he did to appease his thirst for deeds of daring only helped to augment it. The sight of all the murderous implements kept him in a perpetual stew of wrath and excitement. His rifles, arrows, and lassoes cried to him: "Battle! battle!" The tempest of great travels blew through the branches of his baobab and gave him bad advice. To finish him, Gustave Aimard and Fenimore Cooper. . . .

Oh, how many times on sultry summer afternoons, when he was reading alone amidst his blades, did Tartarin with a howl spring up; how many times did he dash down his book and rush to the wall to unhook a deadly weapon!

The poor man, forgetting that he was at home in Tarascon, in his underclothes, and with a handkerchief round his head, would translate his readings

into action, and, growing excited at the sound of his own voice, shout out while swinging a battle-axe or tomahawk, —

“Now, let 'em come!”

Them? who were *they?*

Tartarin himself did not know. . . . *They* was all that attacks, all that fights, all that bites, all that claws, all that scalps, all that whoops, all that yells. . . . *They!* It was the Sioux Indian dancing around the war-stake to which the unfortunate pale-face is lashed.

It was the grizzly of the Rocky Mountains, which waddles and licks himself with a tongue full of blood. Again it was the Touareg of the desert, the Malay pirate, the brigand of the Abruzzi. . . . In short, they! it was *they*, . . . that is to say, warfare, travel, adventure, glory.

But, alas! it was in vain that the intrepid Tarasconian called for *them*, defied *them*; . . . never did *they* come. Odsboddikins! what would *they* have come to do in Tarascon?

Nevertheless, Tartarin was always expecting *them*, particularly at eventide in going to the club.

CHAPTER V



How Tartarin went round to his club.



V

How Tartarin went round to his club.

THE Knight Templar preparing for a sortie upon the besieging infidel, the Chinese *tiger* equipping himself for combat, the Comanche warrior about to go on the war-path,—all these were as nothing compared to Tartarin of Tarascon arming himself cap-a-pie to go to his club at nine, an hour after the retreat had sounded on the bugle.

“Clear the decks for action!” as the men-of-war’s men say.

In his left hand Tartarin took a steel-pointed knuckle-duster; in the right he carried a sword-cane; in his left pocket a tomahawk; in the right

a revolver. On his chest, betwixt outer and under garment, lay a Malay krees. But never any poisoned arrows, — they are weapons altogether too unfair! . . .

Before starting, in the silence and gloom of his study, he would exercise himself for a while, warding off imaginary cuts and thrusts, lunging at the wall, and giving his muscles play; then he would take his master-key and go through the garden leisurely, without hurrying. Cool and calm, — British courage, that is the true sort, gentlemen.

At the garden end he would open the heavy iron door. He would open it violently and abruptly, so that it should slam against the outer wall. If *they* had been skulking behind it, you may wager they would have been jam . . . Unhappily *they* were not there.

The door being open, Tartarin would sally out, quickly glancing to the right and left, ere banging the door to and fastening it smartly with double-locking. Then, away.

Not even a cat on the Avignon road, — doors closed; lights out. All was black. At intervals the street lamps, blinking in the mist of the Rhône. . . .

Calm and proud, Tartarin of Tarascon marched on in the night, ringing his heels with regularity, and striking sparks out of the paving-stones with the ferule of his stick. . . . Whether in avenues, streets, or lanes, he took care to keep in the middle of the road, — an excellent method of precaution, allowing one to see danger coming, and, above all, to avoid what is sometimes thrown from windows after

dark in Tarascon. On seeing so much prudence in Tartarin, pray do not conclude that Tartarin was afraid. . . . No! he was only on his guard.

The best proof that Tartarin was not afraid is that instead of going to the club by the street called the *Cours*, he went by the town, that is to say, by the longest and darkest way round, through a maze of vile, paltry alleys, at the mouth of which the Rhône could be seen ominously gleaming. The poor man constantly hoped that, beyond the turn of one of these cut-throats' haunts, *they* would leap from the shadow and fall on his back. I warrant you, *they* would have been warmly received. . . . But, alas! by some irony of Fate, never, never in the world, did Tartarin of Tarascon enjoy the luck to meet an ugly customer, not even a dog, not even a drunken man, — nothing at all!

Yet sometimes there were false alarms. A sound of steps, muffled voices. . . .

"Look out!" Tartarin would mutter, and stop short, rooted to the spot, scrutinizing the gloom, sniffing the wind, applying his ear to the ground Indian fashion. . . . The steps would draw nearer, the voices would grow distinct. . . . No more doubts! . . . *They* were coming . . . here *they* were!

Steady, with eye afire and heaving breast, Tartarin, like a jaguar, would gather himself together and would be in readiness to spring forward while uttering his war-cry . . . when, all of a sudden, out of the thick of the murkiness, he would hear honest Tarasconian voices quite tranquilly hailing him with, —

"*Té! Vé!* . . . it's Tartarin! . . . And good-night, Tartarin!"

Curse it! it was the druggist Bézuquet, with his family, coming from singing their family ballad at Costecalde's.



"Good evening, good evening!" Tartarin would growl, furious at his blunder, and plunging fiercely into the night with his cane on high.

On arriving in the street where stood his clubhouse, the dauntless Tarasconian would linger yet a moment, walking up and down before the portals ere entering. . . . At last, weary of awaiting *them*,

and certain *they* would not show themselves, he would fling a last glare of defiance into the shades, and mutter wrathfully, —

“Nothing . . . nothing at all ! . . . there never is anything !”

Whereupon the worthy man would walk in to play his game of *béziq*ue with the commandant.

CHAPTER VI



The two Tartarins.



VI

The two Tartarins.

How the mischief is it that with all this mania for adventures, this need of powerful sensations, this craze for travel, hunting, and journeys to the ends of the earth, Tartarin of Tarascon had never been away from Tarascon?

For that is a fact. Up to the age of forty-five, the intrepid Tarasconian had never once gone to bed outside his own city. He had not even taken that famous trip to Marseilles which every good Provençal makes on coming of age. It is doubtful if he knew Beaucaire, and yet Beaucaire is not far from Tarascon, there being merely the bridge to go over. Unfortunately, this rascally bridge has been so often blown away by the gales, it is so long, so frail, and the Rhône is so wide at this spot, that — faith! you

understand! . . . Tartarin of Tarascon preferred *terra firma*.

We must make a clean breast of it; in our hero there were two very distinct characters. Some Church Father has said: "I feel there are two men in me." He would have spoken truly in saying this about Tartarin, who carried in his frame the soul of Don Quixote, the same chivalric impulses, the same heroic ideal, the same craze for the grandiose and romantic; but, unhappily! he had not the body of the celebrated hidalgo, that thin and meagre body, that apology for a body, over which material life failed to get control; one able to go twenty nights without unbuckling its breast-plate, and forty-eight hours on a handful of rice. . . . On the contrary, Tartarin's body was a good honest body, very fat, very weighty, very sensual, very delicate, very squeamish, full of middle-class appetites and homely requirements, — the short-legged, paunchy body of the immortal Sancho Panza.

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in one and the same man! You will readily comprehend what a cat-and-dog couple they made! what strife! what clapperclawing! . . . Oh the fine dialogue for Lucian or Saint-Evremond to write, a dialogue between the two Tartarins, — Quixote-Tartarin and Sancho-Tartarin! Quixote-Tartarin firing up on the stories of Gustave Aimard, and shouting, "I am going!" and Sancho-Tartarin thinking only of the rheumatics, and saying, "I stay at home."

QUIXOTE-TARTARIN (*highly excited*). Cover yourself with glory, Tartarin.

SANCHO-TARTARIN (*quite calmly*). Tartarin, cover yourself with flannel.

QUIXOTE-TARTARIN (*still more excitedly*). Oh for the terrible double-barrelled rifle! Oh for bowie-knives, lassoes, and moccasins!

SANCHO-TARTARIN (*still more calmly*). Oh for the thick-knitted waistcoats and warm knee-caps! Oh for the welcome caps with ear-flaps!

QUIXOTE-TARTARIN (*above all self-control*). A battle-axe! fetch me a battle-axe!

SANCHO-TARTARIN (*ringing up the maid*). Jeannette, my chocolate!

Whereupon Jeannette appears with an excellent cup of chocolate, hot, wavy-mottled, odoriferous, and with succulent toast flavored with aniseseed, making Sancho-Tartarin laugh as he drowned the shouts of Quixote-Tartarin.

And thus it came about that Tartarin of Tarascon had never been away from Tarascon.

CHAPTER VII

*The Europeans at Shanghai — Commerce
— The Tartars — Can Tartarin of Tarascon
be an impostor? — The mirage.*





VII

The Europeans at Shanghai — Commerce — The Tartars — Can Tartarin of Tarascon be an impostor? — The mirage.

ONCE, however, had Tartarin almost started out on a great journey.

The three brothers Garcio-Camus, natives of Tarascon, established in business at Shanghai, offered him the managership of one of their branches there. This undoubtedly was the kind of life he hankered after. Plenty of important business, a whole army of under-strappers to control, connections with Russia, Persia, Turkey in Asia, — in short, High Commerce.

In Tartarin's mouth, this expression *le Haut Commerce*—High Commerce—thundered out as something High indeed! . . .

The house of Garcio-Camus had the further advantage of sometimes being favored with a call from the Tartars. Then the doors would be quickly shut. All the clerks would fly to arms, they would run up the consular flag, and bang! bang! out of the windows upon the Tartars!

I need not tell you with what enthusiasm Quixote-Tartarin clutched this proposition; sad to say, Sancho-Tartarin did not see it in the same light, and, as he was the stronger party, it never came to anything. But in the town there was much talk about it. Will he go or will he not? "I'll wager he will"—and "I'll wager he won't!" It was an event. . . . In the upshot, Tartarin did not go, but the matter redounded to his credit none the less. Going or not going to Shanghai was all one to Tarascon. Tartarin's journey was so much talked about that people got to believe he had done it and returned, and at the club in the evening all the members would ask him about life at Shanghai, about the manners and customs and climate, opium, and High Commerce.

From his fund of information Tartarin would graciously furnish the particulars desired, and, in the end, the good fellow was not quite sure himself about not having gone to Shanghai, so that, after relating for the hundredth time how the Tartars came down on the trading-post, he came to add in the most natural way, —

“Then I made my clerks take up arms, I hoisted the consular flag, and bang! bang! out of the windows upon the Tartars.”

On hearing this, the whole club would quiver.

— But according to that, this Tartarin of yours is an awful liar.

— No, no, a thousand times no! Tartarin was no liar.

— But the man ought to have known that he never went to Shanghai.

Why, of course, he knew it; only . . .

“Only”: now listen! It is high time to come to an understanding once for all on the reputation for lying which Northerners fling at Southerners. There are no liars in the South of France, neither at Nîmes nor Marseilles, Toulouse nor Tarascon. The Southerner does not lie; he is self-deceived. He does not always tell the truth, but he believes he does. . . . His falsehood is not falsehood, it is a kind of mirage. . . .

Yes, mirage! . . . and the better to understand me, go South, and you will see. You will see that deuce of a country where the sun transmogrifies everything, and magnifies it beyond life-size. You will see those little hills of Provence which are no higher than the Butte Montmartre, but they will loom up gigantic. You will see the Square House at Nîmes, a mere model to put on your whatnot, and it will seem grander than Notre Dame. You will see . . . in brief, the only liar in the South — if there is one — is the sun. . . . He exaggerates everything that he touches! . . . What was Sparta

in its days of splendor? A pitiful hamlet. . . . What was Athens? At the most, a provincial town, . . . and yet in history both appear to us as enormous cities. This is a sample of what the sun can do.

Are you going to be astonished after this that the same sun falling on Tarascon should have made an ex-quartermaster like Bravida into the "gallant commandant Bravida;" a sprout into a baobab; and a man who had missed going to Shanghai into one who had been there?

CHAPTER VIII

Mitaine's Menagerie — A Lion from the Atlas at Tarascon — A solemn and awe-inspiring confrontation.



VIII

Mitaine's Menagerie — A lion from the Atlas at Tarascon — A solemn and awe-inspiring confrontation.

AND now that we have shown Tartarin of Tarascon as he was in his private life, before Fame kissed his brow and garlanded him with her well-worn laurel wreath, — now that we have narrated his heroic existence in a modest state, his joys and sorrows, his dreams and his hopes, — let us hurriedly skip to the grandest pages of his story, and to the singular event which was to give the first flight to his incomparable career.

It happened one evening at Costecalde the gun-maker's, Tartarin was engaged in showing several sportsmen the working of the needle-gun, then in its first novelty. . . . The door suddenly flies open, and in rushes a frightened cap-hunter, howling, —

“A lion, a lion!”

General stupefaction, alarm, uproar, tumult! Tartarin sets the bayonet, Costecalde runs to shut the door. The sportsman is surrounded and pressed and questioned, and here follows what he told them: Mitaine's Menagerie, returning from the Fair at Beaucaire, had consented to stay over a few days at Tarascon, and had just set up the show on the Place du Château, with a lot of boas, seals, crocodiles, and a magnificent lion from the Atlas Mountains.

An African lion in Tarascon!

Never in the memory of man had the like been seen. Hence how proudly our dauntless cap-hunters looked at one another! What a beaming on their manly faces! and in every corner of Costecalde's shop what hearty congratulatory grips of the hand were silently exchanged! The sensation was so great, so unforeseen, that nobody could find a word to say. . . .

Not even Tartarin.

Blanched and agitated, with the needle-gun still in his hands, he brooded, erect before the counter. . . . A lion from the Atlas there, so near, only two steps off! A lion, — the beast heroic and ferocious above all others, the King of the Brute Creation, the crowning game of his fancies, something like the leading

actor in the ideal company which played such splendid dramas in his imagination. . . .

A lion, ye Gods! . . .

And from the Atlas, to boot! It was more than the great Tartarin could bear.

Suddenly a flush of blood flew into his face.

His eyes flashed. With one convulsive movement he shouldered the needle-gun, and turning toward the gallant Commandant Bravida, ex-quartermaster, he thundered to him, —

“Let’s go have a look at him, commandant.”

“*Hé! bé! . . .! hé! bé! . . .* And my gun . . . you are carrying off my needle-gun!” timidly ventured the prudent Costecalde; but Tartarin had already got round the corner, with all the cap-hunters proudly marching in lock-step behind him.

When they reached the menagerie, they found a goodly number of people there. Tarascon, heroic but too long deprived of sensational shows, had rushed upon Mitaine’s booth, and had taken it by storm. Hence the voluminous Madame Mitaine was highly contented. . . . In a Kabyl costume, her arms bare to the elbow, iron anklets on, a whip in one hand and a plucked though live fowl in the other, the illustrious lady was doing the honors of the booth to the Tarasconians; and as she also had “double muscles,” her success was almost as great as her animals’.

The entrance of Tartarin with the gun on his shoulder was a damper.

All these good Tarasconians, who had been quite tranquilly strolling before the cages, unarmed and

with no distrust, without even any idea of danger, felt momentary apprehension, naturally enough, on beholding their mighty Tartarin rush into the enclosure with his formidable engine of war. There must be something to fear when such a hero as he was . . .

In a twinkling all the space along the cage fronts was cleared. The youngsters burst out squalling for fear; the women looked round for the door. The druggist Bézuquet made off altogether, alleging that he was going home for his gun. . . .

Gradually, however, Tartarin's bearing restored courage. With head erect, the intrepid Tarasconian slowly and calmly made the circuit of the booth, passed the seal's tank without stopping, glanced disdainfully on the long box filled with bran in which the boa was scanning its featherless fowl, and went to take his stand before the lion's cage. . . .

A terrible and solemn confrontation!

The lion of Tarascon and the lion of the Atlas face to face! . . .

On the one hand, Tartarin, erect, rigid, his arms folded on his rifle; on the other, the lion, a gigantic lion, stretched out on the straw, with blinking eyes and brutish mien, resting his huge muzzle and tawny wig on his forepaws. . . . Both calm and gazing at each other.

Singular thing! the needle-gun may have put him out of sorts, or he may have scented an enemy of his race, but the lion, which had hitherto regarded the Tarasconians with sovereign scorn, and yawned in their faces, was all at once affected by ire. At

first he sniffed ; then he growled hollowly, unsheathed his claws, stretched out his paws ; then he rose, tossed his head, shook his mane, opened his enormous mouth, and belched a deafening roar at Tartarin.

A yell of fright responded. Tarascon precipitated itself madly towards the exit, all, — women and children, stevedores, cap-hunters, the gallant Commandant Bravida himself. . . . Tartarin of Tarascon alone did not budge. . . . There he stood, firm and resolute, before the cage, lightnings in his eyes, and that gruesome expression with which all the town was familiar. . . . In a moment's time, when all the cap-hunters, some little fortified by his bearing and the strength of the bars, re-approached their leader, they heard him mutter, as he gazed at the lion, —

“Now, this is something to hunt !”

That day, Tartarin of Tarascon said nothing more about it.



CHAPTER IX



Singular effects of mirage.



IX

Singular effects of mirage.

THAT day Tartarin of Tarascon said nothing more about it, but unfortunately he had already said too much.

On the morrow there was nothing talked about through town but the speedy departure of Tartarin for Algeria and lion-hunting. You are all witness, dear readers, that the honest fellow had not breathed a word on that head; but, you know, the mirage . . .

In brief, all Tarascon spoke of nothing but his departure.

On the "Cours," at the club, at Costecalde's, friends accosted one another with a startled aspect, —

"And furthermore, you know the news, at least?"

“And furthermore, rather? Tartarin’s setting out, at least?”

For at Tarascon all phrases begin with *et autrement*, pronounced *autremain*, and conclude with *au moins*, which is pronounced *au mouain*. Now, on this occasion more than upon others, these peculiarities rang out till the windows shivered.

The man in town most surprised to hear that he was going off to Africa, was Tartarin himself. But only see what vanity is! Instead of plumply answering that he was not going at all, and had never had any such intention, poor Tartarin, the first time this journey was mentioned to him, observed with a neat little evasive air, “Hé! . . . hé! . . . maybe I shall,—but I do not say as much.” The second time, a trifle more familiarized with the idea, he replied, “Very likely.” The third time, “It’s certain.”

Finally, in the evening, at Costecalde’s and the club, carried away by the egg-nog, cheers, and illumination, intoxicated by the impression that announcement of his departure had made on the town, the hapless fellow formally declared that he was sick of hunting caps, and that he was going, before long, to engage in pursuing the great lions of the Atlas. . . .

A deafening hurrah greeted this announcement. Whereupon more egg-nog, bravoos, hand-shaking, slappings of the shoulder, and a torchlight serenade up to midnight before Boabab Villa.

Sancho-Tartarin was anything but delighted. This idea of travel in Africa and lion-hunting made him shudder beforehand; and when the two Tartarins went home again, even while the complimentary concert was sounding under their windows, he had a dreadful "row" with Quixote-Tartarin, calling him "cracked," visionary, imprudent, and thrice an idiot, and detailing by the card all the catastrophes awaiting him on such an expedition, — shipwreck, rheumatism, high-fever, dysentery, the black plague, elephantiasis, and all the rest. . . .

In vain did Quixote-Tartarin vow that he would not commit any imprudence, — that he would wrap himself up well, that he would take everything that was necessary with him. Sancho-Tartarin would listen to nothing. The poor man saw himself already torn to tatters by the lions, engulfed in the desert sands like the late Cambyses; and the other Tartarin managed to appease him a little only by explaining that the start was not immediate, that there was no hurry, and that after all they were still at home!

It is clear enough, indeed, that no one embarks on such an enterprise without some precautions. A man is bound to know whither he goes, hang it all! and not fly off like a bird. . . .

Before anything else, the Tarasconian wanted to peruse the accounts of great African explorers, the narrations of Mungo Park, Du Chaillu, Dr. Livingstone, and Henri Duveyrier.

In them he learnt that these daring explorers, before donning their sandals for distant excursions, hardened themselves well beforehand to support

hunger and thirst, forced marches, and all kinds of privation. Tartarin meant to do as they did, and from that day forward he lived upon water broth alone. — The water broth of Tarascon is a few slices of bread drowned in hot water, with a clove of garlic, a pinch of thyme, and a sprig of laurel. — Strict diet, at which you may believe poor Sancho made a wry face. . . .

To the regimen of water broth Tartarin of Tarascon joined other wise practices. Thus, to break himself into the habit of long marches, he constrained himself to go round the town seven or eight times consecutively every morning, sometimes at double quick, sometimes at a gymnastic pace, his elbows well set against his body, and two white pebbles in his mouth, according to the antique usage.

Then, to get inured to fog, dew, and the cool night air, he would go down into his garden every evening, and stay there till ten or eleven, alone with his gun, on the lookout, behind the baobab. . . .

Finally, so long as Mitaine's Menagerie tarried in Tarascon, the cap-hunters belated at Costecalde's might spy in the shadow of the tent, as they crossed the Place du Château, a mysterious figure stalking up and down.

It was Tartarin of Tarascon, habituating himself to hear without emotion the roarings of the lion in the sombre night.

CHAPTER X



Before the start.





X

Before the start.

WHILE Tartarin was thus delaying the event by all sorts of heroic means, all Tarascon kept an eye on him, and nothing else was thought of. Capping flapped only one wing, romances lay fallow. The piano in Bézuquet's apothecary shop languished under its green cover, and the Spanish flies dried up on it, their bellies in the air. . . . Tartarin's expedition had put a stopper on everything.

You ought to have seen his success in the parlors. He was snatched away by one from another, fought for, loaned and borrowed, ay, stolen. There was no greater honor for the ladies than to go to Mitaine's Menagerie on Tartarin's arm, and have it explained

before the lion's cage how such large game are hunted, where they should be aimed at, at how many paces off, if the accidents were numerous, and the like.

Tartarin furnished all the elucidation desired. He had read Jules Gérard, and had lion-hunting at his finger ends, as if he had been through it himself. Hence he orated on these matters with great eloquence.

But where he shone the brightest was at dinner at Chief Judge Ladevèze's, or the gallant Commandant Bravida's the ex-quartermaster, when coffee was brought in, and all the company hitched up their chairs closer, and made him chat of his future hunts. . . .

Then, with his elbow on the cloth, his nose over his Mocha, the hero would discourse in a feeling tone of all the dangers awaiting him yonder. He would speak of the long moonless night lyings-in-wait, the pestilential fens, the rivers poisoned by oleander leaves, the deep snow-drifts, the scorching suns, the scorpions, and rains of grasshoppers; he would also descant on the peculiarities of the great lions of the Atlas, their way of fighting, their phenomenal vigor, and their ferocity in the mating-season. . . .

Then, growing enthusiastic over his own recital, he would rise from table, bound into the middle of the dining-room, imitating the bellowing of a lion and the going off of a rifle, — bang! bang! — the hissing of an explosive bullet, — pfft! pfft! — gesticulating, roaring, overturning the chairs. . . .

Every one around the board would turn pale.

The gentlemen would look at one another and wag their heads; the ladies would shut their eyes with pretty screams of fright; the elderly men would combatively brandish their long canes; and, in the side apartments, the little boys, who had been put to bed betimes, suddenly waked up by the roars and imitations of guns, would be frightened out of their wits, and scream for lights.

Meanwhile Tartarin did not go.

CHAPTER XI



“Use swords, gentlemen, not pins.”





XI

“ Use swords, gentlemen, swords, not pins ! ”

HAD he really any intention of going? . . .

A delicate question, which Tartarin's biographer would be highly embarrassed to answer.

The truth is, Mitaine's Menagerie had been gone from Tarascon over three months, and still the lion-slayer had not started. . . . After all, our candid hero, blinded by a new mirage, may have imagined in perfectly good faith that he had gone to Algeria. On the strength of having related his future hunts, he may have believed he had performed them as sincerely as he fancied he had hoisted the consular flag and fired on the Tartars, bang! bang! at Shanghai.

Unfortunately, granting that Tartarin was this time again dupe of an illusion, his fellow-townsmen were not. When, after three months of expectation, they perceived that the hunter had not yet packed one trunk, they began to murmur.

"This is going to turn out like the Shanghai expedition," remarked Costecalde, smiling.

The gunsmith's comment was welcomed all over town, for no one believed any longer in Tartarin.

Simpletons and poltroons — fellows of Bézuquet's stamp, whom a flea would put to flight, and who could not fire a shot without closing their eyes — were conspicuously pitiless. In the club-rooms or on the esplanade, they accosted poor Tartarin with bantering mien, —

"*Et autremain*, when is that trip coming off?"

In Costecalde's shop, his opinions no longer were of weight. The cap-hunters renounced their chief!

Next, epigrams dropped into the affair. Chief Judge Ladevèze, who in his leisure hours willingly paid court to the native Muse, composed in local dialect a song which won much success. It told of a great huntsman called "Master Gervais," whose dreaded rifle was bound to exterminate all the lions in Africa to the very last. Unluckily, this terrible gun was of a strange kind: "though loaded daily, it never *went off*."

"It never *went off*" — you will catch the drift. . . .

In less than no time, this ditty became popular: and when Tartarin came by, the 'longshoremen and the little shoeblacks before his door sang in chorus, —

Lou fùsiou de mestre Gervai,
Toujou lou cargon, toujou lou cargon,
Lou fùsiou de mestre Gervai,
Toujou lou cargon, part jamaï.

But it was sung from a distance, on account of the double muscles.

Oh the fragility of Tarascon fads! . . .

The great man himself feigned to see and hear nothing; but, under the surface, this sullen and venomous petty warfare much afflicted him. He felt Tarascon slipping out of his grip, the popular favor going to others; and this made him suffer horribly.

Ah, the huge porringer of popularity! 't is fine to sit in front of it, but what a scalding you catch when it is overturned! . . .

Notwithstanding his pain, Tartarin smiled and peacefully jogged on in the same life as if nothing untoward had happened.

Sometimes, however, the mask of jovial unconcern which out of sheer pride he had fastened over his face would be suddenly detached. Then, in lieu of laughter, grief and indignation were to be seen. . . .

Thus it was that one morning, when the little bootblacks were singing "*lou fùsiou de mestre Gervai*" beneath his window, the wretches' voices rose even into the poor great man's room, where he was shaving before the glass. (Tartarin wore a full beard, but as it grew very thick, he was obliged to watch it.)

All at once the window was violently opened, and Tartarin appeared in nightgown and nightcap,

smothered in lather, flourishing his razor and shaving-brush, and roaring in a formidable voice,—

“Use swords, gentlemen, swords, not pins! . . . no pins!”

Fine words, worthy of history's record, with only the blemish that they were addressed to little scamps not higher than their boot-boxes, and gentlemen quite incapable of holding a sword.

CHAPTER XII



What was said in the little Baobab Villa.



XII

What was said in the little Baobab Villa.

AMID the general defection, the army alone stuck out firmly for Tartarin.

The gallant Commandant Bravida, ex-quartermaster, continued to show him the same esteem as ever. *C'est un lapin*, — "He's game!" he persisted in saying; and his assertion, I believe, was fully worth the chemist Bézuquet's. . . . Not once did the gallant commandant make any allusion to the trip to Africa; but when the public clamor grew too loud, he determined to speak.

One evening the luckless Tartarin was alone in his study, in a brown study himself, when he saw the commandant stride in, stern, wearing black gloves, buttoned up to his ears.

"Tartarin," said the ex-quartermaster, authoritatively, — "Tartarin, you'll have to go!"

And there he stood, erect in the doorway frame, grand and rigid as Duty. . . .

Tartarin of Tarascon comprehended all the significance of "Tartarin, you'll have to go!"

Very pale, he rose and looked around with a softened eye on his pretty study, tightly closed in, full of warmth and tender light, — on his commodious easy-chair, his books, his carpet, the white blinds of his windows, beyond which trembled the slender twigs of the little garden. Then, advancing toward the gallant commandant, he took his hand, grasped it energetically, and said in a voice full of tears, but yet stoical, —

"I *am* going, Bravida."

And go he did, as he said he would. Not straight off, though . . . it takes time to provide paraphernalia.

To begin with, he ordered of Bompard two large boxes sheathed with copper, and with a long label bearing this inscription: —

TARTARIN OF TARASCON

FIREARMS

The sheathing and the lettering took much time. He also ordered at Tastavin's a magnificent album, in which to keep a diary and his impressions of travel; for a man can not help having an idea or two strike him even when he is busy lion-hunting.

Next, he had over from Marseilles a downright cargo of canned eatables, pemmican compressed in

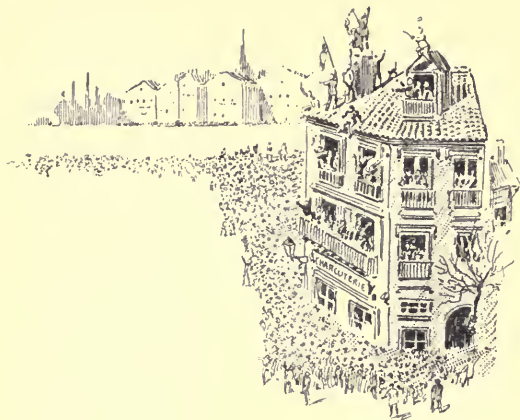
cakes for making soup, a new pattern shelter-tent, opening out and packing up in a minute, sea-boots, two umbrellas, a waterproof coat, and blue spectacles to ward off ophthalmia. Finally, Bézuquet the druggist made him up a miniature portable medicine-chest stuffed with diachylon plaster, arnica, camphor, and medicated vinegar.

Poor Tartarin ! he did not do these things on his own behalf ; but he hoped, by dint of precautions and delicate attentions, to allay Sancho-Tartarin's fury, who, since the start was fixed, never left off raging day or night.

CHAPTER XIII



The departure.



XIII

The departure.

At last it arrived, — the great day, the solemn day.

From early dawn all Tarascon had been on foot, encumbering the Avignon road and the approaches to the Baobab Villa.

People were up at the windows, on the roofs, and in the trees; the Rhône bargees, stevedores, shoe-blacks, gentry, tradesfolk, warpers and weavers, tafety-workers, the club members, — in short, the whole town; moreover, people from Beaucaire had come over the bridge, market-gardeners from the suburbs, carts with huge awnings, vine-dressers upon handsome mules, tricked out with ribbons, streamers, bells, rosettes, and jingles, and even, here and there,

a few pretty maids from Arles, come on the pillion behind their sweethearts, with bonny blue ribbons round their heads, on little iron-gray Camargue horses.

All this swarm squeezed and jostled before the door of Tartarin, our good Tartarin, who was going to slaughter lions in the land of the *Teurs*.

For Tarascon, Algeria, Africa, Greece, Persia, Turkey, and Mesopotamia all form one great hazy country, almost mythological, called the land of the *Teurs*, — that is, the Turks.

In the midst of all this throng, the cap-hunters bustled to and fro, proud of their leader's triumph, leaving, as it were, glorious wakes where they passed.

In front of the house of the Baobab, were two large wheelbarrows. From time to time the door would open, and allow several persons to be seen gravely walking up and down in the little garden. Men were bringing out trunks, boxes, carpet-bags, and piling them up on the wheelbarrows.

At every new package the throng trembled. The articles were named in a loud voice:—

“There 's the shelter-tent. . . . Those are the potted meats. . . . That 's the medicine-chest, — the gun-cases;” and the cap-hunters gave explanations.

All of a sudden, about ten o'clock, there was a great stir in the multitude. The garden gate banged open.

“Here he is! . . . here he is!” they shouted.

It was he. . . .

When he appeared on the threshold, two outcries of stupefaction burst from the assemblage:—

“It’s a *Teur!*”

“He’s got on goggles!”

In truth, Tartarin of Tarascon had deemed it his duty, on going to Algeria, to don the Algerian costume. Full white linen trousers, small tight jacket with metal buttons, a red sash two feet wide around the waist, the neck bare and the forehead shaven, and on his head a vast red fez, or *chechia*, with something like a long blue tassel. . . . Together with this, two heavy guns, one on each shoulder, a broad hunting-knife in the girdle, a bandolier across the breast, a revolver on the hip, swinging in its leather case,—that is all.

No, I crave your pardon, I was forgetting the goggles,—an enormous pair of azure goggles, which came in appropriately to temper what was rather too fierce in our hero’s appearance.

“Long life to Tartarin! . . . hurrah for ‘Tartarin!’” roared the populace.

The great man smiled, but did not salute, on account of the firearms hindering him. Moreover, he knew now how far to rely on popular favor; it may be that in the depths of his soul he even cursed his terrible fellow-townfolk, who obliged him to go away and leave his pretty little home with its white walls and green venetians. . . . But there was no show of this.

Calm and proud, although a little pallid, he stepped out on the sidewalk, glanced at the wheelbarrows, and, seeing all was right, lustily took the road to the railway-station, without even once looking back toward Baobab Villa. Behind him marched the

gallant Commandant Bravida, ex-quartermaster, Ladevèze the Chief Judge, then Costecalde the gunsmith and all the cap-hunters, then the wheelbarrows, then the populace.

Before the station the station-master was waiting for him, — an old African veteran of 1830, who shook Tartarin's hand many times with fervency.

The Paris-Marseilles express was not yet in. Tartarin and his staff went into the waiting-rooms. To prevent the place being overrun, the station-master ordered the gates to be closed.

During a quarter of an hour Tartarin promenaded up and down in the rooms in the midst of his brother marksmen. He spoke to them of his journey and his hunting, and promised to send them skins. They put their names down in his memorandum-book for a lion-skin apiece, as waltzers book for a dance.

Gentle and placid as Socrates on the point of quaffing the hemlock, the intrepid Tarasconian had a word for each and a smile for all. He spoke simply, with an affable mien; it looked as if, before departing, he meant to leave behind him a trail of delight, regrets, and pleasant memories. On hearing their leader speak in this way, all the cap-hunters had tears in their eyes; and some were stung with remorse, as, for example, Chief Judge Ladevèze and the apothecary Bézuquet.

The railway employés blubbered in the corners. Outside the public squinted through the bars and shouted: "Long live Tartarin!"

At length the bell rang. A dull rumble was heard,

and a piercing whistle shook the vault: . . . All aboard! All aboard!

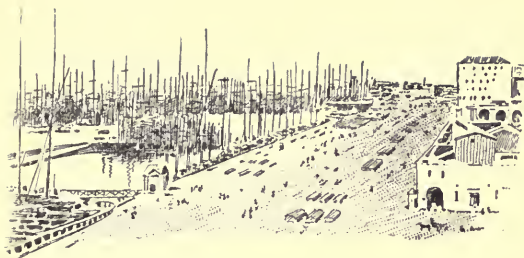
“Good-bye, Tartarin! . . . Good-bye, Tartarin! . . .”

“Good-bye to you all! . . .” murmured the great man; and kissing the gallant Commandant Bravida on the cheeks, he kissed his dear Tarascon.

Then he leaped out on the platform, and clambered into a car full of Parisian ladies, who were ready to die with fright at sight of this stranger with so many pistols and rifles.

CHAPTER XIV

*The Port of Marseilles — "All aboard,
all aboard!"*



XIV

The Port of Marseilles — “All aboard, all aboard!”

ON the 1st of December, 186-, at noon, in clear, brilliant, splendid weather, under a Provençal winter's sun, the startled inhabitants of Marseilles beheld a *Teur* come down the Canebière. A *Teur*, a regular Turk, — never had such a one been seen; and yet, Heaven knows, there is no lack of *Teurs* at Marseilles.

The *Teur* in question — have I any necessity of telling you? — was Tartarin, the great Tartarin of Tarascon, who marched along the quays, followed by his gun-cases, medicine-chest, and canned comestibles, on his way to the landing-stage of the Touache Company and the mail steamer the “Zouave,” which was to transport him over the sea.

With his ears still ringing with Tarasconian applause, intoxicated by the glare of the heavens and the reek of the sea, Tartarin fairly beamed as

he stepped out with his guns on his shoulders, his head high, looking with all his eyes on that wondrous dazzling harbor of Marseilles, which he saw for the first time. . . . The poor fellow believed he was dreaming. He fancied his name was Sinbad the Sailor, and that he was roaming in one of those fantastic cities abundant in the "Arabian Nights."

As far as eye could reach there was a forest of masts and spars, crossing in every direction. Flags of all countries, Russian, Swedish, Greek, Tunisian, American. . . .

The vessels with their decks almost on a level with the quay, their bowsprits projecting over the strand like rows of bayonets. Beneath them the mermaids, goddesses, madonnas, and other carved and painted wooden figure-heads which give names to ships — all worn by sea-water, split, dripping, mouldy. . . . Ever and anon, between the hulls, a patch of harbor like watered silk splashed with oil. . . . Between the intertangled yards clouds of sea-gulls, prettily spotting the blue sky; shipboys, hailing one another in all languages.

On the quay, amid rivulets, green, thick, black, flowing down from the soap-factories loaded with oil and soda, bustled a tribe of custom-house officers, messengers, porters, and truckmen with their *bogheys*, drawn by small Corsican horses.

Shops for strange wares; smoky shanties where sailors were cooking; dealers in pipes, monkeys, parrots, ropes, sailcloth, fanciful curios, amongst which were mingled higgledy-piggledy old culverins, huge gilded lanterns, old tackle, old flukeless anchors,

old cordage, old pulleys, old speaking-trumpets, and marine glasses of the time of Jean Bart and Duguay-Trouin. Women with cockles and mussels for sale squatted beside their heaps of shellfish and yawped their goods. Seamen rolled by with tar-pots, with smoking saucepans, with big baskets full of cuttlefish, which they went to wash in the whitish water of the fountains.

Everywhere a prodigious collection of all kinds of merchandise: silks, minerals, piles of wood, pigs of lead, cloths, sugars, carob beans, rape-seed, licorice, sugar-cane. The East and the West in indiscriminate confusion. Pyramids of Dutch cheeses which the Genoese women were staining red with their hands.

Yonder, the corn market: stevedores discharging their sacks down from high scaffoldings on the pier. Loose grain rolling like a golden torrent through a blond dust. Men in red skullcaps sifting it as they caught it in large asses'-skin sieves, and loading it on carts which rolled away, followed by a regiment of women and youngsters with wisps and gleaning-baskets. . . . Farther on, the carenage dock; large vessels lying on their sides and singed with thorn-bushes to free them of sea-weed; the yards dipping in the water, the smell of pitch, the deafening clatter of carpenters sheathing the bottoms with broad sheets of copper.

Here and there a gap between the masts. Then Tartarin could see the harbor mouth, with the coming and going of vessels: a British frigate off for Malta, smart and thoroughly washed down, the

officers in primrose gloves, or a large Marseillaise brig hauling out in the midst of uproar and oaths, and on the poop the fat captain, in a high silk hat and frock-coat, ordering the operations in Provençal. Out-going craft running before the wind under all sail. Far out in the offing, others slowly beating in loomed up in the sunshine as if they were sailing in the air.

And then all the time a frightful riot; the rumbling of carts, the "Haul all, haul away!" of the shipmen, oaths, songs, steamboat whistles, the bugles and drums in Fort Saint-Jean and Fort Saint-Nicolas, the bells of the Major, the Accoules, and Saint-Victor; with the mistral atop of all, catching up all these noises and this clamor and rolling them up together, shaking them, confounding them with its own voice, and making a mad, wild, heroic music like a great flourish of trumpets, — a fanfare for a journey, filling you with a longing to be off, to go far away, to have wings.

It was to the sound of this splendid blast that the intrepid Tartarin of Tarascon embarked for the land of lions. . . .

SECOND EPISODE.



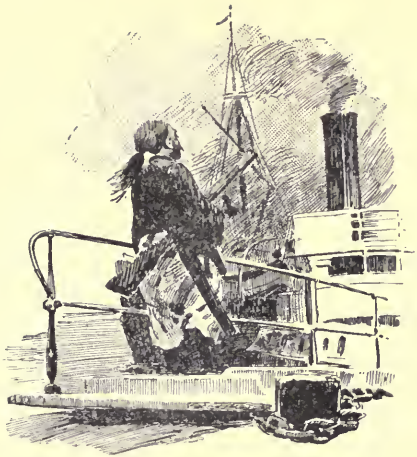
AMONG "THE TEURS."



CHAPTER I



*The passage — The five positions of the
chechia — The third evening out — Mercy on
us !*



I

*The passage — The five positions of the chechia —
The third evening out — Mercy on us!*

WOULD that I were a painter, and a great painter, my dear readers, that I might set under your eyes, at the head of this second episode, the various positions taken by Tartarin's *chechia* in the three days' passage it made on board of the "Zouave," between France and Algeria.

I would first show it to you at the hour of departure, on deck, arrogant and heroic as it was, forming an aureole round that handsome Tarasconian head. Next would I show you it at the

harbor-mouth, when the "Zouave" began to caracole on the waves; I would depict it for you all of a quake in astonishment, and as though already experiencing preliminary qualms.

Then, in the Gulf of Lyons, as they came nearer to the open sea, where the white caps heaved harder, I would make you behold it wrestling with the tempest, standing up in terror on the hero's cranium, with its mighty mane of blue wool bristling out in the spray and the squall. . . .



Fourth position: six in the afternoon, with the Corsican coast in view. . . . The unfortunate *chechia* hangs over the ship's side, and lamentably stares down and sounds the sea. . . . Finally, the fifth and last position: at the back of a narrow state-room, in a box-bed like a bureau drawer, something shapeless and disconsolate, rolling and moaning on the pillow.



This is the *chechia*, the *chechia* so heroic at the sailing, now reduced to the vulgar condition of a night-cap, and pulled down over the very ears of the head of a pallid and convulsed sufferer. . . .

Ah! if the people of Tarascon could have seen their great Tartarin stretched in his bureau drawer in the

dull, wan gleam that fell through the dead-lights, amid the sickly odor of cooking and wet wood, — the heart-heaving perfume of mail-boats; if they had but heard him gurgle at every turn of the screw, wail for tea every five minutes, and swear at the steward in a childish treble, — how angry would they not have been with themselves for having compelled him to leave home! . . .



On my word of honor as a historian, the poor *Teur* was a pitiable object!

Suddenly overcome by nausea, the hapless victim had not the courage to undo his Algerian girdle, or lay aside his armory; the clumsy-handed hunting-knife hurt his ribs, and the leather revolver-case made his thigh raw. To finish him arose the taunts of Sancho-Tartarin, who never ceased to groan and inveigh, —

“Imbecile, there! . . . I told you so! . . . Ha! you were bound to go to Africa. . . .

Well, there 's Africa, . . . how do you like it?”



The cruelest part of it was that, from the depths of his stateroom and his moaning, the hapless wretch could hear the passengers in the grand saloon laughing, munching, singing, and playing cards. On board the “Zouave” the company was as jolly as it was numerous. Officers going back to join their regi-

ments, ladies from the Marseilles Alcazar, strolling-players, a rich Mussulman returning from Mecca, and a very jocular Montenegrin prince, who gave



imitations of Ravel and Gil Pérès. . . . Not one of these people were sea-sick, and their time was passed in quaffing champagne with the captain of the "Zouave," a good fat native of Marseilles, who had a wife and family as well at

Algiers as at home, and who answered to the merry name of Barbassou.

Tartarin of Tarascon hated this pack of wretches; their mirthfulness deepened his ails. . . .

At length, on the afternoon of the third day, there was such an extraordinary disturbance on board the vessel that our hero was roused out of his long torpor. The ship's bell was ringing; seamen's heavy boots were trampling over the deck.

"Go ahead! . . . Back her! . . ." barked the hoarse voice of Captain Barbassou; and then, "Stop her!"

An abrupt check of movement, a shock, and no more. . . . Nothing except the silent rocking of the boat from side to side like a balloon in the air. . . .

This strange stillness alarmed the Tarasconian.

"Mercy on us, we are going down! . . ." he yelled in a terrible voice; and, recovering his strength by magic, he bounded out of his berth, and rushed on deck with his arsenal.

CHAPTER II

“ To arms ! to arms ! ”



II

“ To arms ! to arms ! ”

THEY were not foundering, they were making port.

The “ Zouave ” had just glided into the roadstead, — a fine roadstead of deep, black water, but silent, dull, almost deserted. On elevated ground ahead rose Algiers, the White City, with its little cream-colored houses huddled together and pressing down to the sea. It was like Meudon slope with a laundress’s washing hung out to dry. Over it a splendid sky of blue satin, oh ! but so blue ! . . .

A little restored from his fright, the illustrious Tartarin gazed on the landscape, and respectfully listened to the Montenegrin prince, who stood by

his side and named the different parts of the town, the Kasbah, the upper town, and the Bab-Azûn Street. Very well brought-up was this Montenegrin prince; moreover, knowing Algeria thoroughly, and speaking Arabic fluently. Hence Tartarin thought of cultivating his acquaintance. . . .

All at once, along the bulwark against which they were leaning, the Tarasconian perceived a row of large black hands clinging to it from over the side. Almost instantly a negro's woolly head shot up before him, and, before he had time to open his mouth, the deck was invaded from all sides by a hundred black or yellow corsairs, half-naked, hideous, terrible.

Tartarin knew who these pirates were. . . . It was they, that is to say, THEY, the celebrated THEY whom he had so often hunted in the by-ways of Tarascon. At last then THEY had decided to come!

. . . At first surprise nailed him to the spot. But when he saw the Corsairs fall on the luggage, tear off the tarpaulin covering, and actually begin the pillage of the ship, then the hero awoke, and, whipping out his hunting-knife, "To arms! to arms!" he roared to the passengers; and away he flew, the foremost of all, on the buccaneers.

"*Qu'es aco?* What is it? What's the matter with you?" exclaimed Captain Barbassou, coming out of the 'tweendecks.

"Ah, here you are, captain! . . . Quick, quick, arm your men!"

"*Hé!* what for, *boun Diou?*"

"Why, can't you see?"

"See what?"

"There, before you, the pirates. . . ."

Captain Barbassou stared at him in bewilderment. At this juncture a tall blackamoor tore by with our hero's medicine-chest on his back.

"You wretch! . . . just wait for me!" yelled the Tarasconian; and he darted in pursuit, with the knife uplifted.

Barbassou caught him on the fly, and holding him back by his waist-sash, —

"Now don't disturb yourself! *Trou de ler!* . . . they're not pirates. . . . It's long since there were any pirates hereabout. . . . Those are porters."

"Porters? . . ."

"Hé! yes, porters after the luggage to carry it ashore. . . . So put up your cutlas, give me your ticket, and walk off behind that negro, — an honest lad, who will see you to land, and even into a hotel if you like." . . .

A little abashed, Tartarin handed over his ticket, and, falling in behind the negro, clambered down by the hanging-ladder into a big skiff dancing alongside. All his effects were already there, — his boxes, trunks, gun-cases, canned provisions; as they loaded up the



boat, there was no need to wait for any other passengers. The negro scrambled upon the boxes, and squatted there like a baboon, with his hands clutching his knees. Another negro took the oars. . . . Both of them eyed Tartarin, and laughed, and showed their white teeth.

Standing in the stern-sheets, making that terrifying face which had daunted his fellow-countrymen, the great Tarasconian feverishly fumbled with the haft of his hunting-knife; for, in spite of what Barbassou had told him, he was only half at ease as regarded the intention of these ebony-skinned porters, who so little resembled the honest porters of Tarascon. . . .

Five minutes afterwards the skiff reached shore, and Tartarin set foot on the little Barbary wharf, where, three hundred years before, a Spanish galley-slave named Miguel Cervantes, under the cane of the Algerian taskmaster, was devising a sublime romance which was to bear the title of "Don Quixote."

CHAPTER III

Invocation to Cervantes — The disembarkation — Where are the Teurs ? — Not a Teur — Disenchantment.



III

*Invocation to Cervantes — The disembarkation —
Where are the Teurs? — Not a Teur — Disen-
chantment.*

OH, Miguel Cervantes Saavedra, if what is asserted be true, to wit, that wherever great men have dwelt some emanation of their spirits wanders and hovers in the air until the end of ages, then what remained of your essence on the Barbary coast must have quivered with glee to behold the landing of Tartarin of Tarascon, — that marvellous type of the French Southerner, in whom were embodied both heroes of your work, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. . . .

The air was sultry that day. On the quays, ablaze with sunshine, were five or six revenue officers, Algerians waiting for news from France, squatting Moors pulling at their long pipes, Maltese mariners dragging large nets, in the meshes of which thousands of sardines glittered like small silver coins.

But Tartarin hardly had set foot on shore before the quay sprang into life and changed its aspect. A horde of savages, still more hideous than the pirates on the steamer, rose between the stones on the strand and rushed upon the new-comer. Tall Arabs nude under woollen blankets, little Moors in tatters, negroes, Tunisians, Port Mahonese, M'zabites, hotel servants in white aprons, all yelling, shouting, clutching his clothes, fighting over his luggage, one carrying away the provender, another his medicine-chest, and pelting him in one fantastic medley with the preposterous names of hotels. . . .

Bewildered by all this tumult, poor Tartarin wandered to and fro, blustered, swore, and stormed, ran after his property, and, not knowing how to make these barbarians understand him, harangued and addressed them in French, Provençal, and even in Latin, the Latin of Pourceaugnac: "*Rosa, the rose : bonus, bona, bonum !*" — all that he knew. . . . Wasted labor. No one heeded him. . . . Happily, a little man in a yellow-collared tunic, and armed with a long running-footman's cane, intervened like a god in Homer, and dispersed the whole riff-raff with cudgel-play. He was a policeman of the Algerian capital. Very politely he induced Tartarin to put up at the Hôtel de l'Europe, and confided him to

its waiters, who carted him and his traps thither in several brouettes.

At the first steps which he took in Algiers, Tartarin of Tarascon opened his eyes wide. Beforehand he had pictured it as an Oriental, fairy-like, mythological city, — something between Constantinople and Zanzibar. . . . It was nothing but Tarascon over again. . . . Cafés, restaurants, wide streets, four-story houses, a little macadamized square, where the infantry band was playing Offenbach polkas, gentlemen in chairs, drinking beer and eating sinner cakes, ladies, a few lorettes, and then soldiers — more soldiers — no end of soldiers, . . . but not a *Teur* . . . only himself! . . .

Hence he felt a little abashed about crossing the square. Everybody looked at him. The musicians stopped, and the Offenbach polka halted with one foot in the air.

With both guns on his shoulders, the revolver on his hip, as fierce and stately as Robinson Crusoe, Tartarin gravely passed through all these groups; but on arriving at the hotel his powers failed him. The departure from Tarascon, the harbor of Marseilles, the voyage, the Montenegrin prince, the corsairs, — everything was jumbled in wild confusion in his mind. . . . They had to help him up into a room and disarm him and undress him. . . . At first they talked of sending for a doctor; but hardly was his head on the pillow than the hero set to snoring, so loudly and so heartily that the landlord judged the succor of science useless, and every one considerably withdrew.

CHAPTER IV



The first lying in wait.



IV

The first lying in wait.

THREE o'clock was striking by the Government clock when Tartarin awoke. He had slept all the evening, all night, all the morning, and even a good piece of the afternoon. We must acknowledge, though, that during the last three days the *chechia* had seen pretty rough times!

The hero's first thought on opening his eyes was, "I am in the land of the lions!" And — why not say it? — at the idea that lions were nigh hereabouts, within a couple of steps, almost at hand's reach, and that he was bound to have a tussle with them, brr! . . . a deadly chill struck him, and he dived intrepidly under the bedclothes.

But, at the end of a moment, the outward gayety, the blue sky, the broad sun streaming into the bed-chamber, a nice little breakfast which he ate in bed, his window wide open upon the sea, the whole flavored with an excellent bottle of Crescia wine, — very speedily restored him his former pluckiness.

“Now for the lion, for the lion!” he exclaimed, throwing off the clothes and briskly dressing himself.

This was his plan: to go forth from the city without saying a word to a soul, plunge into the great desert, await nightfall to ambush himself, and bang away at the first lion which should stalk by; . . . then return to breakfast in the morning at the hotel, receive the congratulations of the natives, and hire a cart to bring in the quarry.

So he hurriedly armed himself, fastened to his back the shelter-tent, the centre pole of which projected a clear foot above his head, and descended to the street as stiff as a stake. Not caring to ask the way of any one, from fear of letting out his project, he turned square to the right, and threaded to the very end the Bab-Azûn arcades, where, as he passed, swarms of Algerian Jews watched him from their corner ambushes like so many spiders; crossing the Place du Théâtre, he entered the outer ward, and at last came out on the dusty Mustapha highway.

On this road was a quaint conglomeration: omnibuses, hackney-coaches, *corricolos*, army-service wagons, huge hay-carts drawn by bullocks, squads of Chasseurs d’Afrique, droves of microscopic asses, negro women selling cakes, trucks of Alsatian emigrants, spahis in scarlet cloaks, — all filing by in a

whirlwind cloud of dust, amid shouts, songs, and trumpet-calls, between two rows of vile-looking booths, at the doors of which lanky Port Mahon women might be seen doing their hair, drinking-dens filled with soldiers, and shops of butchers and knackers. . . .

“Now, what rubbish have I heard sung about the Orient!” said the great Tartarin to himself; “there are not even as many *Teurs* here as at Marseilles.”

All of a sudden he saw a superb camel passing by him quite close to him, stretching its long legs and puffing out its throat like a turkey-cock. That made his heart throb.

Camels already! Lions could not be far off now; and, indeed, within five minutes he saw a whole band of lion-hunters coming his way with guns on their shoulders.

“Cowards!” thought our hero, as he skirted them; “cowards! to go at a lion in companies and with dogs!”

For it would never have occurred to him that anything but lions could be hunted in Algeria. Nevertheless, these huntsmen wore such complacent faces, like retired tradesmen, and then this style of lion-hunting with dogs and game-bags was so patriarchal, that the Tarasconian, a little perplexed, deemed it incumbent to question one of the gentlemen.

“*Et autrement* . . . comrade, good sport?”

“Not bad,” responded the other, regarding the Tarasconian warrior’s imposing equipment with a scared eye.

“Killed any?”

“Rather! . . . Not so bad . . . only look.”

Whereupon the Algerian sportsman showed his game-bag stuffed out with rabbits and woodcock.

“What! that? your bag? . . . You put those in your bag?”

“Where else should I put 'em?”

“But then . . . it's . . . it's such little game.”

“Some run small, and some run large,” observed the hunter.

And as he was in haste to get home, he rejoined his companions with long strides.

The dauntless Tartarin remained rooted in the middle of the road with stupefaction. . . .

Then, after a moment's reflection, “Pooh!” he ejaculated, “these are jokers. . . . They have n't killed anything whatever;” and he went his way.

Already the houses were becoming scarcer, and also the passengers. Night was coming on and objects were growing blurred. . . . Tartarin walked on for half an hour more. Then he stopped. . . . It was absolutely night. A moonless night, too, but sprinkled with stars. On the highroad there was no one. . . . In spite of everything the hero concluded that lions are not stage-coaches, and would not of their own choice travel the main ways. So he started across country. . . . Everywhere were ditches and brambles and bushes. No matter; he still kept on. . . .

Then suddenly he halted.

“I smell lions about here!” said our friend, and sniffed to right and to left.

CHAPTER V



Bang, bang!



V

Bang, bang!

IT was a great wilderness, bristling with odd plants,—with those Oriental plants which look like ugly beasts. Under the feeble starlight their magnified shadows barred the ground in every direction. On the right the confused and heavy mass of a mountain,—perhaps the Atlas range! . . . On the left, the invisible sea tumbling with a muffled roar. . . The very spot to attract wild beasts. . .

With one gun laid before him, the other in his grasp, Tartarin of Tarascon went down on one knee and waited. . . He waited one hour, two hours . . . nothing! . . . Then he bethought him how, in his books, the great lion-slayers never went hunting without taking along with them a kid, which they tied up a few paces before them, and made to bleat

by jerking its foot with a string. Not having any kid, the Tarasconian had the idea of making imitations, and he set to crying in a tremulous voice, —

“Mê! Mê! . . .”

At first very softly, because in the bottom of his heart he was a little afraid lest the lion should hear him; . . . then, when he saw that nothing came, he bleated more loudly: “Mê! . . . Mê! . . .” Still nothing! . . . Losing patience, he tried it again more vigorously many times in succession: “Mê! . . . Mê! . . . Mê! . . .” with so much power that the kid began to seem like a bull. . . .

Suddenly, a few steps in front, something black and gigantic burst upon him. He held his breath. . . . This thing lowered its head, sniffed the ground, bounded up, rolled over, and darted off at a gallop, then came back and stopped short. . . . It was the lion, no doubt! . . . now he could plainly see its four short legs, its formidable mane and two eyes, two big eyes gleaming in the gloom. . . .

Aim! Fire! bang, bang! . . . it was done. Then instantly a leap to the goal and the drawing of the hunting-knife.

To the Tarasconian's shot a terrible roaring replied.

“I hit him!” cried our good Tartarin, and, steadying himself on his sturdy legs, he prepared to receive the brute's charge.

But it had more than its fill, and galloped off, howling. . . . Nevertheless *he* did not budge. He was waiting for the lioness. . . . Still, just as in his books!

Unhappily, the lioness came not. After two or three hours' waiting the Tarasconian grew tired. The ground was damp, the night was getting cool, and the sea-breeze was keen.

"I have a good mind to take a nap till daylight," he said to himself.

To avoid catching the rheumatism, he had recourse to his shelter-tent. . . . But here 's where the devil interfered! This tent was of so very ingenious a construction that he could not manage to open it.

In vain for an hour did he toil over it and sweat over it, — the confounded tent would not come unfolded. . . . There are some umbrellas which amuse themselves under torrential rains in playing just such tricks on you. . . . Fairly tired out with the struggle, the Tarasconian dashed the machine on the ground, and lay down on it, swearing like the true Provençal that he was.

"*Ta, ta, ra, ta! ta, ra, ta!*"

"*Quès aco?* . . . What 's that?" wondered Tartarin, suddenly aroused.

It was the bugles of the Chasseurs d'Afrique sounding the reveille in the Mustapha barracks. . . . The stupefied lion-slayer rubbed his eyes. . . . He who had believed himself out in the boundless desert! . . . Do you know where he was? . . . In a field of artichokes, between a cabbage-garden and a beet-patch.

His Sahara grew kitchen vegetables. . . .

Quite close to him, on the pretty verdant slope of Upper Mustapha, the snowy Algerian villas sparkled in the dew of the dawn: one might have thought

oneself in the neighborhood of Marseilles, amongst its *bastides* and *bastidons*.

The commonplace and kitchen-gardenish aspect of this sleeping landscape much astonished the poor man, and put him in very bad humor.

"These folk are crazy," he reasoned, "to plant artichokes in the prowling-ground of lions; . . . for, surely, I have not been dreaming. . . . Lions come here. . . . There 's the proof. . . ."

"The proof" was blood-spots which the beast in its flight had left behind. Bending over this gory trail, with his eye on the lookout and his revolver in his hand, the valiant Tarasconian went from artichoke to artichoke down to a little field of oats. . . . In the trampled grass was a pool of blood, and in the midst of the pool, lying on its flank, with a large wound in the head, was a . . . guess what?

"A lion, of course!"

No! An ass!—one of those little asses so common in Algeria, where they are called *bourriquets*.

CHAPTER VI

Arrival of the female — A terrible combat
— "*Le rendezvous des Lapins !*"



VI

*Arrival of the female — A terrible combat —
“Le rendezvous des Lapins!”*

TARTARIN'S first impulse when he caught sight of his hapless victim was one of vexation. There is such a wide gap between a lion and a *bourriquot*! . . . His second impulse was one of pity. The poor *bourriquot* was so pretty, and looked so gentle. The hide on his still warm sides heaved and fell like waves. Tartarin knelt down, and strove with the end of his Algerian sash to stanch the blood of the wretched beast; and this great man tending this little ass was all you can imagine most touching.

At the touch of the silky cloth the *bourriquot*, who had not twopennyworth of life in him, opened his large gray eye and moved his long ears two or three times, as much as to say, "Thank you! . . . thank you! . . ." Then a final spasm shook it from head to tail, and it stirred no more.

"Noiraud! Noiraud!" suddenly screamed a voice, choking with anguish. At the same time the branches in a thicket hard by stirred. . . .

Tartarin had no more than enough time to rise and stand on guard. . . . This was the female!

She rushed up, terrible and bellowing, under form of an old Alsatian woman, her hair in a kerchief, armed with a large red umbrella, and calling for her ass, till all the echoes of Mustapha rang. It certainly would have been better for Tartarin to have had to deal with a lioness in fury than this old virago. . . . In vain did the luckless sportsman try to make her understand how the thing had occurred; that he had mistaken Noiraud for a lion. . . . The old woman believed that he was making fun of her, and, uttering energetic "*Der Teifels!*" fell on the hero with blows of her umbrella. Tartarin, a little bewildered, defended himself as best he could, and warded off the blows with his rifle; he perspired, he panted, he jumped about, and kept crying out, —

"But, Madame . . . but, Madame . . ."

Mind your own affairs! Madame was deaf, as was shown by her undiminished energy!

Fortunately a third party arrived on the battle-field. This was the Alsatian woman's husband,

himself an Alsatian, a roadside innkeeper, — moreover a very good ready-reckoner. When he saw what kind of a customer he had to deal with, — and that the assassin only wanted to pay the value of his victim, — he disarmed his better half, and they came to an understanding.

Tartarin gave two hundred francs; the ass was worth about ten! That is the current price of *bourriquets* in the Arab markets. Then poor Noiraud was laid to rest at the root of a fig-tree, and the Alsatian, raised to joviality by the color of the Tarascon duros, invited the hero to have a bite with him in his tavern, which stood only a few steps off on the edge of the highway.

Every Sunday the sportsmen from the city came there to breakfast; for the plain abounded in game, and there was no better place for rabbits for two leagues around.

“How about lions?” inquired Tartarin.

The Alsatian stared at him, greatly astounded.

“Lions!”

“Yes, . . . lions. . . . Don’t you see them sometimes?” resumed the poor fellow, with less confidence.

The innkeeper burst out in laughter: —

“Ah! ben! bless us! . . . lions! . . . What should we do with lions here?”

“Why, are n’t there any in Algeria?”

“Faith! I never saw any. . . . And yet I have been twenty years in the colony. Still, I believe I have heard tell . . . it seems to me the newspapers . . .

But that is ever so much farther inland — down South . . . ”

At this point they reached the tavern, a suburban tavern such as you see at Vanves or Pantin, with a withered green bough over the door, crossed billiard-cues painted on the wall, and this harmless sign: —

AU RENDEZ-VOUS DES LAPINS

The meeting-place for *Lapins*,— buck-rabbits, game fellows! Oh! Bravida, what a memory!

CHAPTER VII

*History of an omnibus, a Moorish beauty,
and a wreath of jasmine flowers.*



VII

History of an omnibus, a Moorish beauty, and a wreath of jasmine flowers.

THIS first adventure would have had something discouraging for many people ; but men of Tartarin's stamp are not easily cast down.

"The lions are in the South, are they?" mused the hero. "Very well. South I go."

As soon as he had swallowed his last mouthful, he jumped up, thanked his host, kissed the old woman without any ill-will, dropped a final tear over the hapless Noiraud, and quickly returned to Algiers, with the firm intention of packing up and starting that very day for the South.

Unfortunately, the Mustapha highroad seemed to have stretched since over-night; what a hot sun! what dust! what a weight in that shelter-tent! . . . Tartarin felt no courage to walk to town, and he beckoned to the first omnibus coming along, and climbed in. . . .

Oh, poor Tartarin of Tarascon! how much better it would have been for his name and fame not to have stepped into that fatal ark on wheels, but to have continued on his road afoot, at the risk of falling suffocated beneath the burden of the atmosphere, the tent, and his heavy double-barrelled rifles! . . .

When Tartarin got in, the 'bus was full. At the end, with his nose in his prayer-book, an Algerian vicar with a long black beard. Facing him, a young Moorish merchant smoking coarse cigarettes. Then, a Maltese sailor and four or five Moorish women muffled up in white cloths, so that only their eyes could be seen. These ladies had been to offer up prayers in the Abd-el-Kader cemetery; but this funereal visit did not seem to have saddened them, for they could be heard chuckling and jabbering together under their coverings while munching pastry.

Tartarin fancied that they watched him narrowly. One in particular, seated over against him, had fixed her eyes on his, and never took them off all the way. Although the dame was veiled, the liveliness of the big black eyes, lengthened out by *k'hol*; a deliciously slender wrist loaded with gold bracelets, of which a glimpse was given from time to time among the folds; the sound of her voice, the grace-

ful, almost childlike, movements of the head, all hinted at something young, pretty, adorable. . . . The unfortunate Tartarin did not know where to hide. The fond, mute gaze of those splendrous Oriental eyes agitated him, perturbed him, and made him feel like dying; he was hot, he was cold. . . .

To finish him, the lady's slipper took part: he felt it run, — that dainty slipper, — run and frisk about over his heavy hunting-boots like a tiny red mouse. . . . What could he do? Answer the glance and the pressure! Ay, but the consequences? A love affair in the East is a terrible matter! . . . And with his romantic Southern imagination, the honest Tarasconian saw himself already falling into the grip of the eunuchs, to be decapitated, or, better perhaps than that, sewn up in a leather sack and sunk in the sea with his head under his arm beside him. This somewhat cooled him. . . . In the mean time the little slipper continued its proceedings, and the eyes, widely open opposite him like twin black velvet flowers, seemed to say, —

“Come, cull us!”

The 'bus stopped. They were on the Place du Théâtre, at the mouth of the Rue Bab-Azûn. One by one, entangled in their voluminous trousers, and drawing their veils around them with wild grace, the Moorish women alighted. The one opposite Tartarin was the last to rise, and in rising her countenance came so close to our hero's that her breath enveloped him, — a veritable nosegay of youth, of jasmine, musk, and pastry.

The Tarasconian no longer resisted. Intoxicated

with love, and ready for anything, he darted out after the beauty. . . . At the sound of his straps and boots she turned, laid a finger on her veiled mouth, as if to say, "Hush!" and with the other hand quickly tossed him a little sweet-scented chaplet made of jasmine flowers. Tartarin of Tarascon stooped to pick it up; but as our hero was somewhat clumsy, and much overburdened with implements of war, the operation took rather long. . . .

When he did straighten up, with the jasmine garland on his heart, the Moorish beauty had vanished.

CHAPTER VIII



Lions of the Atlas, sleep!



VIII

Lions of the Atlas, sleep!

LIONS of the Atlas, sleep! Sleep tranquilly in the depths of your lairs amid the aloes and wild cacti. . . . For a few days longer Tartarin of Tarascon will not massacre you. For the time being, all his warlike paraphernalia, gun-cases, medicine-chest, shelter-tent, alimentary preserves, are peacefully reposing in their wrappers in a corner of room 36, Hôtel de l'Europe.

Sleep without fear, great tawny lions! The Tarasconian is engaged in looking up his Moorish charmer.

Since his adventure in the omnibus, the unfortunate perpetually fancies that he feels the scampering of that tiny red mouse on his foot, his huge trapper's foot; and the sea-breeze fanning his lips is ever scented, in spite of all that he can do, with a love-exciting odor of pastry and anise.

He wants his Maugrabine!

But it is no easy task. In a city of a hundred thousand souls, to find one certain person, whom one knows only by the breath, the slippers, and the color of her eyes, — none but a Tarasconian stung by love would be capable of attempting such an adventure.

The plague of it is that, under their broad white mufflers, all the Moorish women look alike; besides, these ladies do not go about much, and to see them a man has to climb up into the upper town, — the native city, the city of the *Teurs*.

A regular cut-throat place, this upper town. Little black alleys, very narrow, climbing perpendicularly up between mysterious house-walls, the roofs of which almost touch and form a tunnel. Low doors; sad, silent little casements well barred and grated. And then, on both hands, a mass of very dark stalls, wherein ferocious, piratical-looking *Teurs*, with white eyes and glittering teeth, are smoking long pipes, and whispering together as if hatching wicked attacks. . . .

To say that Tartarin traversed this grisly place without emotion would be telling a lie. On the contrary, he was much affected, and along these obscure alleys, where his protuberant stomach took

up all the width, the worthy fellow advanced only with the utmost precaution, his eye alert, his finger on the trigger of a revolver. Just as at Tarascon when he went to the clubhouse! At any moment he expected to have an onslaught of eunuchs and janissaries drop down at his back, yet the longing to behold his lady again gave him a giant's strength and boldness.

For a full week the undaunted Tartarin never quitted the high town. Sometimes he was seen cooling his heels before the Moorish bath-houses, awaiting the hour when the ladies came forth in troops, shivering and still redolent of soap and hot water; sometimes he was seen at the doorway of some mosque, stooping over, puffing, and melting in his efforts to get out of his big boots in order to enter the sanctuary. . . .

Sometimes at nightfall, when he was returning heart-broken at not having discovered anything at either bagnio or mosque, the Tarasconian, in passing Moorish mansions, would hear monotonous songs, the smothered twanging of guitars, the thumping of tambourines, and feminine laughter-peals, which would make his heart beat.

"Perhaps she is there!" he would say to himself.

Then, if the street was empty, he would go up to one of these dwellings, lift the heavy knocker of the low postern, and timidly rap. . . . The songs and merriment would instantly cease. Behind the wall nothing would be audible excepting little indefinite flutterings as in a slumbering pigeon-house.

“Let’s stick to it,” the hero would think. . . .
“Something will befall me yet.”

What most often befell him was the contents of the cold-water jug on his head, or else peel of oranges and Barbary figs. . . . Never anything more serious.

Lions of the Atlas, sleep!

CHAPTER IX



Prince Gregory of Montenegro.



IX

Prince Gregory of Montenegro.

FOR two long weeks the unfortunate Tartarin had been seeking his Algerian lady, and most likely he would be seeking after her to this day if the Providence of lovers had not come to his aid in the shape of a Montenegrin nobleman.

It happened as follows.

Every Saturday night in winter there is a masked ball at the Grand Theatre of Algiers, just as at the Paris Opera-House. It is the eternal and insipid provincial *bal masqué!* Few people on the floor, several waifs from Bullier's¹ or the Casino, wild

¹ The students' ball at Bullier's will soon be a thing of the past. The establishment which took the place of the "Closerie au Silas" as a resort of the Quartier Latin, though frequented

maidens following the army, faded veterans, routed porters, and five or six little Port Mahon laundresses aiming high, but still preserving a faint perfume of the garlic and saffron sauce of their virtuous days. . . . The real spectacle is not there, but in the foyer, transformed for the nonce into a gaming-saloon. . . .

A feverish and motley mob hustle one another around the long green table-covers : Turcos on parole and staking the fat sous of their advance pay, Moorish traders from the upper town, negroes, Maltese, colonists from the inland, who have come forty miles in order to risk on an ace the price of a plough or of a yoke of oxen, . . . all quivering, pale, clenching their teeth, and with that singular, anxious, sidelong look of the gamester, become a squint from always staring at the same card.

A little apart are the tribes of Algerian Jews, gambling *en famille*. The men are in the Oriental costume, hideously embellished with blue stockings and velvet caps. The women, puffy and wan, sit up stiffly in tight golden bodices. . . . Grouped around the tables, the whole tribe are squealing, laying their heads together, reckoning on the fingers, and risking but little. Now and anon, however, after long conferences, some old patriarch, with a beard such as the Father Eternal wears in pictures, detaches himself from the party and goes to risk the family *duro*. . . . As long as the game lasts, there is a scintillation of Hebraic eyes directed on the board, —

by a lower class, was one of the sights which foreigners visiting Paris felt morally called upon to enjoy.

dreadful black diamond-like eyes, making the gold pieces shiver, and at last gently attracting them, as if by a thread. . . .

Then wrangles, quarrels, battles, oaths of every land, mad outcries in all tongues, knives flashing out, the guard marching in, and the money disappearing. . . .

Into the thick of these saturnalia the great Tartarin came straying one evening to find oblivion and heart's ease.

The hero was roving alone through the gathering, thinking of his Moorish beauty, when two angered voices arose suddenly from a gaming-table above all the clamor and chink of coin.

"I tell you, M'sieu, that I am twenty francs short!"

"M'sieu!"

"Well, then . . . M'sieu!"

"You shall learn whom you are addressing, M'sieu!"

"I ask nothing better, M'sieu!"

"I am Prince Gregory of Montenegro, M'sieu. . . ."

On hearing this name, Tartarin, much excited, pushed his way through the throng, and placed himself in the foremost rank, proud and happy to find his prince again, his polite Montenegrin prince, whose acquaintance he had begun on board of the mail-steamer. . . .

Unfortunately the title of Highness, which had so dazzled the worthy Tarasconian, did not produce the slightest impression upon the Chasseurs officer with whom the prince was having his dispute.

“I am much the wiser!” observed the military gentleman, sneeringly; and turning to the bystanders, he added: “‘Prince Gregory of Montenegro,’—who knows any such person? . . . No one!”

The indignant Tartarin took one step forward.

“Allow me. I know the *préince*,” said he, in a very firm voice, and with his finest Tarasconian accent.

The Chasseurs officer eyed him hard for a moment; then, shrugging his shoulders, returned, —

“Come, that is good! . . . Just you two share between you the twenty francs lacking, and let us talk no more about it.”

Whereupon he turned his back upon them and mixed with the crowd.

The stormy Tartarin was going to rush after him, but the prince prevented that.

“Let him go. . . . I can manage my own affairs.”

And taking the Tarasconian by the arm, he drew him rapidly out of doors.

When they were on the square, Prince Gregory of Montenegro took off his hat, gave his hand to our hero; and as he but dimly remembered his name, he began in a vibrating voice, —

“Monsieur Barbarin . . . ”

“Tartarin!” prompted the other, timidly.

“Tartarin, Barbarin, no matter! . . . Between us henceforward it is a league of life and death!”

And the Montenegrin noble shook his hand with fierce energy. . . . You may infer that the Tarasconian was proud.

“*Préince, préince!* . . .” he repeated enthusiastically.

A quarter of an hour later the two gentlemen were installed in the Restaurant des Platanes, an agreeable late supper-house, with terraces running out over the sea, and there, before a hearty Russian salad, seconded by a nice Crescia wine, they renewed their friendship.

You can not imagine any one more bewitching than this Montenegrin prince. Slender, fine, with crisp hair curled by the tongs, shaved and as it were pumice-stoned, bestarred with strange decorations, he had a wily eye, cajoling gestures, and a vaguely Italian accent, which gave him a spurious resemblance to Cardinal Mazarin without his mustaches. He was deeply versed in the Latin tongues, and lugged in quotations from Tacitus, Horace, and Cæsar’s Commentaries at every opening.

Of an old noble strain, it appeared that his brothers had had him exiled at the age of ten, on account of his liberal opinions, and since then he had roamed the world for instruction and pleasure,—a genuine philosophical prince! . . . A singular coincidence! the prince had spent three years in Tarascon; and as Tartarin showed amazement at never having met him at the club or on the Esplanade, his Highness evasively remarked that he went out very little. Through delicacy, the Tarasconian did not dare to question further. All great existences have such mysterious nooks! . . .

All in all, this Seigneur Gregory was a very genial prince. While sipping the roseate wine of Crescia,

he patiently listened to Tartarin expatiating on his Moorish beauty, and he even promised to find her speedily, as he knew all these ladies.

They drank hard and long. They toasted "The ladies of Algiers" and "The freedom of Montenegro!"

Outside, under the terrace, heaved the sea, and its rollers slapped the strand in the darkness with a noise like wet sheets flapping. The air was warm, the sky full of stars.

In the plane-trees a nightingale was piping. . . .

Tartarin paid the piper.

CHAPTER X



“Tell me your father’s name, and I will tell you the name of this flower.”



X

*“Tell me your father’s name, and I will tell you
the name of this flower.”*

MONTENEGRIN princes are the ones to start up the quail.

Early in the morning following this evening at the Platanes, Prince Gregory was in the Tarasconian’s bedroom.

“Quick! Quick! Dress yourself! . . . Your Moorish beauty is found. . . . Her name is Baïa. She’s twenty, — as pretty as a picture, and already a widow. . . .”

“A widow! . . . What luck!” joyfully exclaimed the worthy Tartarin, who dreaded Oriental husbands.

“Yes, but closely guarded by her brother.”

“Oh, the deuce!”

“A savage Moor who sells pipes in the Orléans bazaar.”

Here a silence.

"Good!" proceeded the prince; "you are not the man to be daunted by such a trifle; and then perhaps you can pacify this old corsair by buying some pipes of him. . . . Come, quick! On with your clothes, . . . you lucky dog!"

Pale and agitated, with his heart brimming over with love, the Tarasconian leaped out of bed, and hastily buttoned up his capacious flannel drawers.

"What must I do?"

"Simply write to the lady and ask for a rendezvous."

"Why, does she know French?" replied the simple-hearted Tartarin, disappointed, for he had dreamed of the unadulterated Orient.

"She does not know one word of it," rejoined the prince, imperturbably, . . . "but you can dictate your letter, and I will translate it word for word."

"Oh, prince, how kind you are!"

And the Tarasconian began striding up and down the bedroom in silent meditation.

You realize a man does not write to a Moorish girl in Algiers in the same way as to a seamstress of Beaucaire. Very luckily our hero had in mind his numerous readings, which allowed him, by amalgamating the Apache eloquence of Gustave Aimard's Red Indians with Lamartine's "Voyage en Orient," and some vague reminiscences of the "Song of Songs," to compose the most Eastern letter imaginable. It opened with, —

"Like the ostrich in the sandy waste" — and concluded with, —

"Tell me your father's name, and I will tell you the name of this flower."

To this missive the romantic Tartarin would have much liked to join a bouquet of emblematic flowers in the Eastern fashion; but Prince Gregory thought it was better to purchase some pipes at the brother's, which could not fail to soften his wild temper, and would certainly confer a very great pleasure on the lady, as she was much of a smoker.

"Come quick, let's buy the pipes!" said Tartarin, full of ardor.

"No, . . . no! . . . Let me go alone. I can get them cheaper. . . ."

"What? Will you? . . . O prince, . . . prince . . .!"

Quite abashed, the good-hearted fellow offered his purse to the obliging Montenegrin, urging him to overlook nothing by which the lady would be gratified.

Unfortunately the suit, albeit capitially begun, did not progress as rapidly as might have been anticipated. It appeared that the Moorish beauty, very deeply affected by Tartarin's eloquence, and, for that matter, three fourths won beforehand, would have wished nothing better than to receive him; but her brother had scruples, and to lull them it was necessary to buy pipes by the dozens, — by the gross, — by the shipload. . . .

"What the devil can Baïa do with all these pipes?" poor Tartarin asked himself more than once; but he paid the bills all the same, and without stinginess.

At length, after having purchased mountains of pipes and poured forth lakes of Oriental poesy, an interview was arranged.

I have no need to tell you with what throbbings of the heart the Tarasconian prepared himself; with what carefulness he trimmed, brilliantined, and perfumed his rough cap-hunter's beard, and how he did not forget — for in everything there is need of forethought — to slip a spiky life-preserver and two or three revolvers into his pockets.

The ever-obliging prince went to this first tryst as interpreter.

The lady dwelt in the upper part of the town. Before her doorway a boy Moor of thirteen or fourteen was smoking cigarettes. This was the celebrated Ali, the brother in question. On seeing the two visitors arrive, he gave a double knock on the postern gate and delicately glided away.

The door opened. A negress appeared, who without uttering a word conducted the gentlemen across the narrow inner courtyard into a small cool room, where the lady was awaiting them, reclining on a low bed. . . . At first glance she seemed to the Tarasconian shorter and stouter than the Moorish damsel in the omnibus. . . . In fact, was it really the same? But the doubt merely flashed through Tartarin's brain like a stroke of lightning.

The lady was so pretty thus, with her feet bare, her plump fingers loaded with rings, she was so pink, so delicate; and under her bodice of gilded cloth and the folds of her brocaded dress was suggested a lovely creature, somewhat redundant, rounded everywhere, and nice enough to eat. . . . The amber mouthpiece of a narghileh smoked at her lips, and enveloped her wholly in a halo of light-yellow smoke.

On entering, the Tarasconian laid a hand on his heart and bowed as Moorishly as possible, rolling his large impassioned eyes. . . .



Baïa gazed on him for a moment without saying anything; then, dropping her amber mouthpiece, she threw herself back, hid her face in her hands, and only her white neck could be seen dancing with a wild laugh, like a bag full of pearls.



CHAPTER XI



Sidi Tart'ri Ben Tart'ri.



XI

Sidi Tart'ri Ben Tart'ri.

SHOULD you ever drop into the Algerian coffee-houses of the upper town after dark, even at this day, you would still hear the natives chatting among themselves, with many a wink and slight laugh, of one Sidi Tart'ri Ben Tart'ri, a rich and good-humored European, who dwelt, a few years back, in that neighborhood with a little lady of local origin, named Baïa.

This Sidi Tart'ri, who left such a merry memory around the Kasbah, is no other than our Tartarin, as will be guessed.

What could you expect? In the lives of saints and heroes, it happens the same way, — there are moments of blindness, perturbation, and weakness. The illustrious Tarasconian was no more exempt from this than another, and that is the reason that during two months, oblivious of lions and glory, he revelled in Oriental amorousness, and dozed, like Hannibal at Capua, in the delights of Algiers the White.

The good fellow took a pretty little house in the native style in the heart of the Arab town, with inner courtyard, banana-trees, cool verandahs, and fountains. Afar from noise, in company with his Moorish charmer, he dwelt there, himself a Moor from top to toe, pulling at his narghileh all day and eating musk-scented sweets.

Stretched out on a divan in front of him, Baïa, with a guitar on her arm, would drone him monotonous tunes; or else, to distract her lord and master, favor him with the *Danse du ventre*, holding up a little mirror in which she reflected her white teeth and the faces she made.

As the lady knew not a word of French, and Tartarin not a word of Arabic, the conversation sometimes languished, and the Tarasconian prattler had plenty of leisure to do penance for the gush of language of which he had been guilty in Bézuquet's apothecary shop or at Costecalde the gunmaker's.

But this penance was not devoid of charm, and he felt a kind of voluptuous spleen in dawdling away the whole day without speaking, and in listening to the gurgling of the narghileh, the strumming of the

guitar, and the faint splashing of the fountain on the mosaic pavement of the courtyard.

The pipe, the bath, caresses filled his entire life. They seldom went out of doors. Sometimes, with his lady-love on a pillion, Sidi Tart'ri would ride out on a sturdy mule to eat pomegranates in a little garden he had purchased in the suburbs. . . . But never, never in the world did he go down into the European quarter. That part of Algiers, with its drunken Zouaves, its alcazars crammed with officers, and its everlasting clink of sabre-sheaths under the arcades, appeared to him as ugly and unbearable as a barracks at home.

In short, our Tarasconian was very happy.

Sancho-Tartarin particularly, being very sweet on Turkish pastry, declared that nothing could be more satisfactory than this new existence. . . . Quixote-Tartarin now and then had twinges of conscience on thinking of Tarascon and the lion-skins which he had promised; . . . but this remorse did not last, and to drive away such gloomy ideas one glance from Baïa, or a spoonful of those diabolical sweetmeats, dizzying and odoriferous like Circe's potions, was sufficient.

In the evening Gregory came to discourse a little about a free Montenegro. . . . Of indefatigable obligingness, this amiable nobleman filled the functions of an interpreter in the household, at a pinch even those of a steward, and all for nothing,—for the sheer pleasure of it. . . . With the exception of him, Tartarin received none but "*Teurs.*" All those

fierce-headed pirates who had at first given him such frights from the backs of their black stalls proved, when once he made their acquaintance, to be good inoffensive tradesmen, embroiderers, dealers in spice, pipe-mouthpiece turners — well-bred fellows, humble, clever, close, and first-class hands at homely card games. Four or five times a week these gentry would come and spend the evening at Sidi Tart'ri's, win his money, eat his cates and dainties, and discreetly retire on the stroke of ten with thanks to the Prophet.

Left alone, Sidi Tart'ri and his faithful spouse would finish the evening on their terrace, a broad white terrace, serving as a roof to the house and overlooking the city.

All around them a thousand of other such white terraces, placid beneath the moonshine, sloped down like steps to the sea. The sound of tinkling guitars came to them on the wings of the breeze. . . . Suddenly, like a shower of firework stars, a full, clear melody would be softly sprinkled out from the sky, and on the minaret of the neighboring mosque a handsome muezzin would appear, a wan shadow outlined on the deep blue of the night, and chant the glory of Allah with a marvellous voice, filling the horizon.

Thereupon Baïa would let go her guitar, and with her large eyes turned toward the crier, seem to imbibe the prayer deliciously. As long as the chant endured she would remain there thrilled, in ecstasy, like an Oriental Saint Theresa. . . . Tartarin, deeply

impressed, would watch her pray, and conclude that it must be a splendid and powerful creed that could cause such frenzies of faith.

Tarascon, veil thy face! Thy Tartarin was on the point of becoming a renegade!

CHAPTER XII



The latest news from Tarascon.





XII

The latest news from Tarascon.

ONE fine afternoon when the sky was blue and the breeze was warm, Sidi Tart'ri astride of his mule was returning alone from his little country-seat. . . . With his legs kept wide apart by ample esparto saddle-bags stuffed with lemons and watermelons, lulled by the ring of his large stirrups, and rocking his whole body to the *balin balan* of his beast, the worthy man was thus traversing an adorable country, with his hands folded on his paunch, three quarters asleep through the heat and the comfort of it all.

Suddenly, on entering the town, a deafening appeal aroused him :—

“*Hé! monstre de sort!* Anybody 'd take this for Monsieur Tartarin.”

At the name of Tartarin, at this jolly Southern accent, the Tarasconian lifted his head, and perceived, a couple of steps away, the honest tanned

visage of Captain Barbassou, captain of the "Zouave," who was taking his absinthe and smoking his pipe at the door of a little coffee-house.

"*Hé!* Lord love you, Barbassou!" said Tartarin, pulling up his mule.

Instead of continuing the dialogue, Barbassou stared at him for a moment; then he burst into a peal of such hilarity that Sidi Tart'ri sat back dumfounded on his melons.

"What a turban, my poor Monsieur Tartarin! . . . Is it true, what they say of your having turned *Teur*? . . . How is little Baïa? Is she still singing 'Marco la Belle'?"

"Marco la Belle!" repeated the indignant Tartarin. . . . "I'll have you to know, Captain, that the person you mention is an honorable Moorish lady, and that she does not know a word of French."

"Baïa does not know French! . . . Where do you hail from, then? . . ."

And the worthy captain broke into still heartier laughter.

Then, seeing the poor Sidi Tart'ri's face growing long, he changed his course.

"However, maybe it's not the same. . . . Let's reckon that I have mixed 'em up. . . . Still, mark you, Monsieur Tartarin, you will do well, none the less, to distrust the Moorish women of Algiers and princes from Montenegro."

Tartarin rose in the stirrups, making his own grimace.

"The prince is my friend, Captain."

"Come, come, don't wax wrathful. . . . Won't you

have some absinthe? No? Have n't you anything to say to the folks at home? No, again? . . . Well, then, a pleasant journey. . . . By the way, mate, I have some good French tobacco, and if you would like to carry away a few pipefuls . . . Take it, take it, won't you? It will do you good. . . . It's your beastly Oriental tobaccos that have befogged your brain."

Upon this the captain returned to his absinthe, and the moody Tartarin trotted slowly on the road to his little house. . . . Although his great soul refused to credit anything, Barbassou's insinuations had vexed him, and the familiar adjurations and the home accent had awakened in him vague remorse.

At the house he found no one. Baïa was taking her bath. . . . The negress seemed to him ugly, the dwelling melancholy. . . . A prey to indefinable sadness, he went and sat down by the fountain and filled a pipe with Barbassou's tobacco. This tobacco was wrapped up in a piece of the "Sémaphore." On flattening it out, the name of his native place struck his eyes.

"Our Tarascon correspondent writes:—

"The city is in distress. There has been no news for several months from Tartarin the lion-slayer, who went to hunt the great feline tribe in Africa. . . . What can have become of our heroic fellow-countryman? . . . Those who know, as we do, how hot-headed and how bold, how thirsting for adventures, he was, hardly dare ask. . . . Has he, like many others, been smothered in the sands, or has he fallen under the murderous fangs of one of those monsters of the Atlas Range, the skins of which he had promised to the municipality? . . . Dreadful uncertainty! It is true some negro traders, come to Beaucaire Fair, assert having

met in the middle of the desert a European whose description agreed with his; he was proceeding toward Timbuctoo. . . . May Heaven preserve our Tartarin!"

When he read this, the Tarasconian reddened, blanched, shuddered. All Tarascon appeared unto him: the club, the cap-hunters, Costecalde's green arm-chair, and, hovering over all like a spread eagle, the imposing mustaches of the gallant Commandant Bravida.

Then, at seeing himself here, as he was, cowardly lolling on a mat, while his friends believed him to be slaughtering wild beasts, Tartarin of Tarascon was ashamed of himself, and wept.

Suddenly he leaped up.

"The lions! the lions!"

And dashing into the dusty lumber-hole where slept the shelter-tent, the medicine-chest, the potted meats, and the gun-cases, he dragged them out into the middle of the court.

Sancho-Tartarin was no more: Quixote-Tartarin alone was left.

Only time to inspect his armament and stores, don his harness, get into his heavy boots, scribble a couple of words to confide Baïa to the prince, only time to slip a few bank-notes sprinkled with tears into the envelope, and then the intrepid Tarasconian was rolling away in the stage-coach on the Blidah road, leaving the house to the negress, stupor-stricken before the narghileh, the turban, the babooshes, — all of Sidi Tart'ri's Mussulman belongings sprawling piteously under the little white trefoils of the gallery. . . .

THIRD EPISODE.



AMONG THE LIONS.



CHAPTER 1



Exiled stage-coaches.





I

Exiled stage-coaches.

IT was an ancient, old-fashioned diligence, upholstered in coarse blue cloth all faded, with those enormous rough woollen pads which, after a few hours' journey, finally cause raw spots in your back.

Tartarin of Tarascon had a corner of the inside, where he installed himself as best he could; and, until he should breathe the musky emanations of the great African felines, the hero had to content himself with that good old stage-coach odor, oddly composed of a thousand smells of men and horses, women and leather, eatables and musty straw.

There was a little of everything inside, — a Trappist monk, some Jew merchants, two fast ladies going to join *their* regiment, — the Third Hussars, — a photographer from Orléansville. . . . But, however charming and varied was the company, the Tarasconian was not in the mood for chatting; he remained quite thoughtful, with an arm in the sling-strap, with his guns between his knees. . . .

His precipitate departure, Baïa's black eyes, the terrible hunting he was about to undertake, — all disturbed his imagination, to say nothing of this European diligence, with its patriarchal aspect, re-discovered in the heart of Africa, vaguely recalling the Tarascon of his youth, with its races in the suburbs, jolly dinners on the river-side, a throng of memories. . . .

Gradually night came on. The guard lit up the lamps. . . . The rusty diligence bobbed and creaked on its old springs; the horses trotted, the bells jangled. . . . From time to time under the awning of the imperial a dreadful clank of iron . . . that was the war material.

Tartarin of Tarascon, three quarters asleep, for a moment scanned his fellow-passengers, comically shaken by the jolts, and dancing before him like comic shadows; then his eyes grew cloudy and his mind befogged, and only vaguely he heard the wheels grinding on the axles, and the sides of the diligence complaining. . . .

Suddenly a voice called the Tarasconian by his name, — the voice of an old fairy godmother, hoarse, broken, and cracked.

“Monsieur Tartarin! Monsieur Tartarin!”

“Who's calling me?”

“It's I, Monsieur Tartarin. Don't you recognize me? . . . I am the old diligence who used to do the road betwixt Nîmes and Tarascon twenty years ago. . . . How many times I have carried you and your friends when you went to shoot at caps over Jonquières or Bellegarde way! . . . I did not place you

at first, on account of your *Teur's* cap and the flesh you have accumulated; but as soon as you began to snore, — *coquin de bon sort!* — I knew you instantly.”

“All right, that's all right!” observed the Tarasconian, a shade vexed. Then, softening, he added, “But to the point, my poor old girl; what did you come out here for?”

“Ah! my good Monsieur Tartarin, I assure you I never came of my own free will. . . . As soon as the Beaucaire Railway was finished, I was considered good for nothing, and shipped away to Africa. . . . And I am not the only one, either! Almost all the old diligences of France have been packed off like me. We were regarded as too conservative, — ‘the slow coaches,’ — and now we are all here leading a dog's life. . . . This is what you in France call the Algerian railways: —”

Here the ancient vehicle heaved a long-drawn sigh. Then she proceeded: —

“Ah, Monsieur Tartarin, how I regret my lovely Tarascon! That was the good time for me, when I was young! It was a great sight when I started off in the morning, washed with no stint of water and all ashine, with my wheels freshly varnished, my lamps blazing like two suns, and my boot always rubbed up with oil! It was indeed lovely when the postilion cracked his whip to the tune of ‘Lagadigadeou, the Tarasque! the Tarasque!’ and the guard, his horn in its sling, his laced cap cocked well over one ear, chucking his little dog, always in a fury, on the awning of the imperial, climbed up himself with a shout: ‘Right — away!’”

“Then would my four horses dash off to the medley of bells, barks, and horn-blasts, the windows would fly open, and all Tarascon would look with pride as the diligence darted over the king’s highway.

“What a splendid road that was, Monsieur Tartarin, broad and well kept, with its mile-stones, its little heaps of road-metal at regular distances, and its pretty plains full of vines and olive-trees! . . . Then, the taverns every ten steps, and the changes of horses every five minutes! . . . And what jolly, honest chaps my patrons were! — village mayors and parish priests going up to Nîmes to see their prefect or their bishop, taffety-weavers returning openly from the *Mazet*, collegians on their vacations, peasants in worked smock-frocks, all fresh shaven that morning; and up above, on the imperial, you gentlemen, you cap-hunters, always in high spirits, and singing each your own family ballad to the stars as you came back in the evening. . . .

“Now it’s another story. . . . Lord knows the kind of folks I am carting here, — a crowd of infidels come from no one knows where! They fill me with vermin, with negroes, with Bedouin Arabs, with swashbucklers, adventurers from every land, with ragged settlers who poison me with their pipes, and all jabbering a language that the Almighty himself could make nothing of! . . . And, furthermore, you see how I am treated, — never brushed, never washed. They begrudge me grease for my axles. . . . Instead of my good fat quiet horses of other days, little Arab ponies, with the devil in their frames, who

fight and bite, caper as they run like so many goats, and smash my shafts with their heels. . . . *Aïe!* . . . *aïe!* . . . there they are at it again! . . .

“And such roads! Just here it is bearable, because we are near the governmental headquarters; but out a bit there’s nothing, no road at all. We get along as we can over hill and dale, among dwarf palms and mastic-trees. . . . Never a certain change of horses. We stop at the guard’s whim, — now at one farm, again at another.

“Sometimes this rogue goes a couple of leagues out of the way to have a glass of absinthe or *champoreau* with a friend. . . . After which, ‘Whip up, postilion!’ so as to make the lost time. The sun broils, the dust scorches, we whip up! We catch in the scrub and spill over, but whip up! We swim rivers, we catch cold, we get swamped, we drown, . . . but whip! whip! whip! . . . Then in the evening, all streaming, — a nice thing for my age, with my rheumatics! . . . — I have to sleep in the open air of some caravanserai yard, open to all the winds. In the night jackals and hyænas come sniffing my body; and the marauders, who don’t like the dew, get into my compartment to keep warm. . . .

“Such is the life I lead, my poor Monsieur Tartarin, and that I shall lead to the day when — burnt up by the sun and rotted by the damp nights — unable to do anything else — I shall fall in some spot of bad road, where the Arabs will boil their *kous-kous* with the bones of my old carcass . . .”

“Blidah! Blidah!” called out the guard, as he opened the door.

CHAPTER II

In which a little man is seen to pass.





II

In which a little man is seen to pass.

THROUGH the steam-dimmed panes Tartarin of Tarascon could vaguely see a market-place, as of a pretty provincial town, — a regular square, surrounded by arcades and planted with orange-trees, — in the midst of which little tin soldiers were going through their exercise in the clear roseate morning mist. The cafés were taking down their shutters. In one corner, a vegetable market. . . . It was bewitching, but it did not smack of lions yet.

“To the South! farther to the South!” muttered the good Tartarin, sinking back in his corner.

At this moment the door opened. A puff of fresh air rushed in, bearing on its wings, in the perfume of orange-blossoms, a very short gentleman in a brown frock-coat, old and dry, wrinkled and formal, his face no bigger than your fist, his black silk neck-cloth five fingers wide, a notary's letter-case, and umbrella, — the very picture of a village solicitor.

On perceiving the Tarasconian's warlike equipment, the little gentleman, who had sat down opposite him, appeared excessively surprised, and began to stare at Tartarin with annoying persistency.

The horses were taken out and the fresh ones put in; the coach started off again. . . . The little gentleman still gazed at Tartarin. . . . At last the Tarasconian took offence at it.

"Does it astonish you?" he demanded, staring the little gentleman full in the face in his turn.

"No! it annoys me," responded the other, very tranquilly.

And the fact is, that, with his shelter-tent, his revolvers, his two guns in their cases, and hunting-knife, not to speak of his natural corpulence, Tartarin of Tarascon took up a lot of room. . . .

The little gentleman's reply angered him.

"Do you by any chance fancy that I am going lion-hunting with your umbrella?" queried the great man, haughtily.

The little man looked at his umbrella, smiled blandly; then, still with the same lack of emotion, inquired, —

"Then, sir, you are —"

“Tartarin of Tarascon, lion-killer!”

In uttering these words the intrepid Tarasconian shook the tassel of his *chechia* like a mane.

There was in the diligence a movement of stupefaction.

The Trappist brother crossed himself, the dubious women uttered little screams of affright, and the Orléansville photographer bent over toward the lion-slayer, already meditating the distinguished honor of taking his likeness.

The little man, though, was not awed.

“Have you already killed many lions, Monsieur Tartarin?” he asked very quietly.

The Tarasconian received his charge in the handsomest manner.

“Have I killed many, Monsieur? . . . I only wish you had as many hairs on your head!”

All the coach laughed on observing three yellow bristles standing up on the little gentleman’s skull.

In his turn, the Orléansville photographer struck in:—

“Yours must be a terrible profession, Monsieur Tartarin. . . . You must pass some ugly moments sometimes. . . . I have heard that poor Monsieur Bombonnel . . .”

“Oh, yes, the panther-killer . . .” said Tartarin, rather disdainfully.

“Are you acquainted with him?” demanded the little man.

“*Té! pardi!* . . . Know him? . . . We have been out on the hunt over twenty times together.”

The little gentleman smiled:—

“So you also hunt panthers, Monsieur Tartarin?”

“Sometimes, just for pastime,” said the fiery Tarasconian. “But,” he added, tossing his head with a heroic movement that inflamed the heart of the two *cocottes*, “that’s nothing compared to lion-hunting.”

“After all,” ventured the photographer, “a panther is only a big cat . . .”

“Right you are!” said Tartarin, not sorry to abate the celebrated Bombonnel’s glory a little, particularly in the presence of ladies.

Here the coach stopped. The guard came to open the door, and addressed the little old gentleman most respectfully, saying,—

“Here we are, sir.”

The little gentleman got up, stepped out, and said, before the door was closed again,—

“Will you let me give you a bit of advice, Monsieur Tartarin?”

“What is it, Monsieur?”

“Faith! you look like a good fellow. I prefer to tell you things as they are. Go back quickly to Tarascon, Monsieur Tartarin. . . . You are wasting your time here. . . . A few panthers are left in the colony: but, out upon the big cats! they are too small game for you. . . . As for lions, they’re all gone. There’s none left in Algeria . . . my friend Chassaing has lately killed the last.”

Upon which the little gentleman saluted, closed the door, and trotted away chuckling, with his document-wallet and umbrella.

“Guard,” asked Tartarin, screwing up his face contemptuously, “who under the sun is that little man?”

“What! don’t you know him? Why, that’s Monsieur Bombonnel!”

CHAPTER III



A monastery of Lions.



III

A monastery of lions.

AT Milianah, Tartarin of Tarascon alighted, leaving the stage-coach to continue its way toward the South.

Two days of rough jolting, two nights spent with open eyes gazing out of the window with the hope of discovering the dread figure of a lion in the fields along the road, — so much sleeplessness well deserved some hours' repose. Besides, if we must tell everything, since his misadventure with Bombonnel, the outspoken Tartarin, notwithstanding his weapons, his terrifying visage, and his red cap, felt ill at ease before the Orléansville photographer and the two young ladies of the Third Hussars.

So he proceeded through the broad streets of Milianah, full of fine trees and fountains; but while looking up a suitable hotel, the poor fellow could not help musing over Bombonnel's words. . . . Suppose

they were true! Suppose there were no more lions in Algeria? . . . What would be the good then of so much running about, of so many fatigues? . . .

Suddenly, at the turn of a street, our hero found himself face to face with — with what? Guess! . . . With a splendid lion waiting before a coffee-house door, royally sitting up on his hind-quarters, with his tawny mane gleaming in the sun.

“What did they mean by telling me that there were no more of them?” exclaimed the Tarasconian, as he recoiled.

On hearing this outcry, the lion lowered his head, and, taking up in his mouth a wooden bowl that was before him on the sidewalk, humbly held it out towards Tartarin, who was immovable with stupefaction. . . . A passing Arab tossed a copper into the bowl; the lion wagged his tail. . . . Thereupon Tartarin understood it all. He saw, what emotion had prevented him previously perceiving, the crowd gathered around a poor tame blind lion, and the two stalwart negroes, armed with staves, who were marching him through the town as a Savoyard does a marmot.

The blood of Tarascon boiled over at once.

“Wretches!” he roared in a voice of thunder, “thus to debase such noble beasts!”

And springing to the lion, he wrenched the loathsome bowl from between his royal jaws. . . . The two negroes, believing they had a thief to contend with, rushed upon the Tarasconian with uplifted cudgels. . . . There was a dreadful tussle. . . . The negroes whacked, the women screamed, the young-

sters laughed. An old Jew cobbler shouted from the depths of his shop, "Dake him to the shustish of the beace!" The lion himself, in his blindness,



tried to roar; and the unhappy Tartarin, after a desperate struggle, rolled on the ground among the spilt sous and the sweepings.

At this juncture a man cleft the throng; made the negroes stand back with a word, and the women and urchins with a wave of the hand; lifted up Tartarin, brushed him down, shook him into shape, and sat him breathless upon a curbstone.

"What, *préince*, is it you?" said the good Tartarin, rubbing his ribs.

"Yes, indeed, it is I, my valiant friend. As soon

as your letter was received, I intrusted Baïa to her brother, hired a post-chaise, flew fifty leagues as fast as a horse could go, and here I am, just in time to snatch you from the brutality of these ruffians. . . . What in Heaven's name have you been doing to bring this ugly trouble upon you?"

"There, now, *préince!* . . . It was too much for me to see this unfortunate lion with a wooden bowl in his mouth, humiliated, conquered, buffeted about, set up as a laughing-stock to all this Mussulman rabble —"

"But you are wrong, my noble friend. On the contrary, this lion is an object of respect and adoration. This is a sacred beast which belongs to a great monastery of lions, founded three hundred years ago by Mahommed-Ben-Aûda, a kind of fierce and formidable La Trappe, full of roarings and wild-beastly odors, where strange monks rear and tame lions by hundreds, and send them out all over Northern Africa, accompanied by begging brothers. . . . The alms they receive serve for the maintenance of the monastery and its mosque; and the two negroes showed so much displeasure just now because it was their conviction that the lion under their charge would forthwith devour them if a sou, a single sou, of their collection were lost or stolen through any fault of theirs."

On hearing this incredible and yet veracious story, Tartarin of Tarascon was delighted, and sniffed the air noisily.

"What pleases me in this," he remarked, as the summing up of his opinion, "is that, whether Mon-

sieur Bombonnel likes it or not, there are still lions in Algeria. . . .”

“I should think there were!” ejaculated the prince, enthusiastically. . . . “We will start to-morrow beating up the Sheliff Plain, and you will see! . . .”

“What, prince! . . . do you intend to go a-hunting too?”

“Of course! Do you think I am going to leave you to march by yourself into the heart of Africa, in the midst of ferocious tribes of whose languages and usages you are ignorant! . . . No, no, illustrious Tartarin, I shall quit you no more. . . . Wherever you go, I want to be there.”

“O *préince ! préince !*”

The beaming Tartarin hugged the devoted Gregory to his breast with pride at the thought that, like Jules Gérard, Bombonnel, and other famous lion-slayers, he was to have a foreign prince to accompany him in his hunting.

CHAPTER IV



The caravan on the march.





IV

The caravan on the march.

LEAVING Milianah at the earliest hour next morning, the intrepid Tartarin and the no less intrepid Prince Gregory, followed by half-a-dozen negro porters, descended towards the Sheliff Plain through a delightful gorge shaded with jasmines, tuyas, carob-trees, and wild olives, between hedges of little native gardens, and thousands of merry, lively rills which scampered down from rock to rock with a singing splash . . . A veritable landscape of the Lebanon.

As much loaded with arms as the great Tartarin, Prince Gregory had, 'over and above that, donned a queer but magnificent military cap, all covered with gold lace and a trimming of oak-leaves in silver cord, which gave His Highness the aspect of a Mexican general or a railway station-master on the banks of the Danube.

This devil of a cap much puzzled the Tarasconian; and as he timidly craved some explanation, the prince gravely answered, —

“It is a kind of headgear indispensable for travel in Algeria.”

And while brightening up the peak with a sweep of his sleeve, he instructed his simple companion in the important part which the military cap plays in the French connection with the Arabs, the terror this article of army insignia alone has the privilege of inspiring, so that the Civil Service has been obliged to put all its employés in *Képis*, from the road-breaker to the receiver-general.

“In fact, to govern Algeria” — the prince is still speaking — “there is no need of a strong head, or even of any head at all. A military cap alone does it, — a handsome laced *Képi*, shining at the top of a pole, like Gessler’s.”

Thus chatting and philosophizing, the caravan proceeded. The barefooted porters leaped from rock to rock with ape-like screams. The gun-cases clanked. The guns flashed. The natives who were passing, salaamed to the ground before the magic cap. . . . Up above, on the ramparts of Milianah, the head of the Arab Department, who was out for an airing with his wife, hearing these unusual noises, and seeing weapons gleaming between the branches, fancied there was a revolt, ordered the drawbridge to be raised, the general alarm to be sounded, and put the whole town under a state of siege.

A capital commencement for the caravan!

Unfortunately, before the day ended, things went

wrong. Of the negro luggage-bearers, one was doubled up with atrocious colics from having eaten the adhesive plaster out of the medicine-chest. Another fell



on the roadside dead-drunk with camphorated brandy. The third, carrier of the travelling-album, deceived by the gilding on the clasps, and

persuaded that he was flying with the treasures of Mecca, ran off into the Zaccar on his best legs. . . .

This required consideration. . . . The caravan halted, and held a council in the broken shadow of an old fig-tree.

“It’s my advice that we give up negro porters from this evening forward,” said the prince, trying unsuccessfully to melt a cake of compressed meat in an improved patent triple-bottomed saucepan. “There is an Arab market quite near here. The best thing to do is to stop there, and buy *bourriquets*.”



“No, . . . no; . . . no *bourriquets*,” quickly interrupted the great Tartarin, becoming quite red at memory of Noiraud. And, hypocrite that he was, he added, “How can you expect that such little beasts could carry all our apparatus?”

The prince smiled.

“You are making a mistake, my illustrious friend. However lean and thin the Algerian *bourriquot* may appear to you, he has solid loins. . . . He must have them so to support all that he does. . . . Just ask the Arabs. This is how they explain the French colonial organization. . . . ‘On the top,’ they say, ‘is *musi* the Governor, with a heavy club to cane the staff; the staff, for revenge, canes the soldier; the soldier canes the settler, and the settler canes the Arab; the Arab canes the negro, the negro canes the Jew, and the Jew in his turn canes the *bourriquot*, and the poor little *bourriquot*, having nobody to belabor, arches up his back and bears it all.’ You see clearly now that he can bear your boxes.”



“All the same,” remonstrated Tartarin, “it strikes me that jackasses would not chime in nicely with the effect of our caravan. . . . I want something more Oriental. . . . For instance, if we could only get a camel” . . .

“As many as you like,” said his Highness; and off they started for the Arab market.

The market was held a few miles away, on the banks of the Sheliff. . . . There were five or six thousand Arabs in tatters there, swarming in the

sunshine and noisily trafficking, amid jars of black olives, pots of honey, bags of spices, and great heaps of cigars; huge fires were roasting whole sheep, basted with butter; in open-air slaughter-houses stark, naked negroes, with red arms and their feet in gore, were cutting up kids hanging from cross-poles, with small knives.

In one corner, under a tent patched with a thousand colors, a Moorish scribe in spectacles was scrawling in a large book. Here a group shouts with rage: it was a game of roulette set on a corn-measure, and Kabyles were ready to cut one another's throats over it. . . . Yonder were laughs and contortions of delight: they were watching a Jew trader on a mule drowning in the Sheliff. . . . Then scorpions, dogs, ravens, and flies! . . .

But camels were lacking. They finally discovered one, though, which some M'zabites were trying to dispose of. It was the real ship of the desert, the classical, standard camel, bald, woe-begone, with a long Bedouin head, and its hump, become limp in consequence of unduly long fasts, hanging melancholically on one side.

Tartarin considered it so handsome that he wanted the entire party to get upon it. . . . Still his Oriental craze! . . .

The beast knelt down. They strapped on the boxes.

The prince enthroned himself on the animal's neck. Tartarin, for the sake of the greater majesty, got them to hoist him on the top of the hump between two boxes, where, proud, and cosily wedged

in, he saluted the whole market with a lofty wave of the hand, and gave the signal of departure. . . .

Thunder! if the people of Tarascon could only have seen him! . . .

The camel rose, straightened up its long knotty legs, and stepped out. . . .

Oh, stupor! At the end of a few strides Tartarin felt he was growing pale, and the heroic *chechia* assumed one by one its former positions as in the "Zouave." This devil's own camel pitched and tossed like a frigate.

"*Préïnce! préïnce!*" gasped Tartarin, pallid as a ghost, and clinging to the dry tuft of the hump, "*préïnce*, let's get down. I feel . . . I feel that I m—m—must get off, or I shall disgrace France . . ."

Go to! The camel had started, and nothing could stop it. Behind it raced four thousand barefooted Arabs, gesticulating, laughing like mad, and making six hundred thousand white teeth glitter in the sun. . . .

The great man of Tarascon had to resign himself. He sadly collapsed on the hump. The *chechia* took all the positions it fancied, . . . and France was disgraced.

CHAPTER V

The night watch in an Oleander Grove.



V

The night-watch in an Oleander Grove.

PICTURESQUE as was their new steed, our lion-hunters had to give it up, out of consideration for the red cap. So they continued the journey on foot as before, and the caravan tranquilly proceeded southward by short stages, the Tarasconian in the van, the Montenegrin in the rear, and the camel, with the weapons in their cases, in the ranks.

The expedition lasted nearly a month.

During a month, seeking for lions impossible to find, the terrible Tartarin roamed from *dûar* to *dûar* on the immense plain of the Sheliff, through that formidable and absurd French Algeria, where the old Oriental perfumes are complicated by a strong odor of absinthe and the barracks, Abraham and

“the Zouzou” mingled, something fairy-tale-like and naïvely burlesque, like a page of the Old Testament related by Sergeant La Ramée, or Brigadier Pitou.

A curious sight for those who have eyes to see. . . .

A wild and corrupted people whom we are civilizing by teaching them our vices. . . . The ferocious and uncontrolled authority of grotesque *bashagas*, who gravely blow their noses on the wide ribbons of the Legion of Honor, and for a mere yea or nay order a man to be bastinadoed. It is the conscienceless justice of begoggled cadis under the palm-tree, hypocrites of the Koran and of the Law, dreaming languidly of promotion and selling their decrees, as Esau his birthright, for a dish of lentils or sweetened kouskous. Drunken and libertine military caïds, formerly servants to some General Yusuf or the like, who riot on champagne with laundresses from Port Mahon, and junket on roast mutton, while before their tents the whole tribe waste away with hunger, and fight with the hounds for the scraps of the lordly feast.

Then, all around, desert plains, burnt grass, leafless shrubs, thickets of cactus and mastic, — “the Granary of France!” . . . A granary void of grain, alas! and rich only in jackals and bugs. Abandoned douars, frightened tribes fleeing they know not whither to escape famine, and strewing the road with corpses. At long intervals a French village, with the dwellings in ruins, the fields untilled, maddened locusts gnawing even the window-blinds, and all the settlers in the cafés engaged in drinking absinthe and discussing projects of reform and the Constitution.

This is what Tartarin might have seen had he taken the trouble; but, wholly absorbed in his leonine passion, the man of Tarascon went straight on, looking to neither right nor left, his eyes steadfastly fixed on those imaginary monsters which never really appeared.

As the shelter-tent was stubborn in not unfolding, and the compressed meat-cakes would not dissolve, the caravan was obliged to stop, morning and evening, at tribal camps. Everywhere, thanks to Prince Gregory's cap, our hunters were welcomed with open arms. They lodged with agas, in fantastic palaces, large white windowless farmhouses, where were found, pell-mell, narghilehs and mahogany commodes, Smyrna carpets and moderator lamps, cedar coffers full of Turkish sequins, and French statuette-decked clocks in the Louis Philippe style. . . .

Everywhere, too, Tartarin was given splendid fêtes, *diffas*, and *fantasias*. . . . In his honor whole *goums* made their powder speak and their burnouses gleam in the sun. When the powder had spoken, the good aga would come and hand in his bill. . . . This is what is called Arab hospitality.

But still no lions. No more lions than on the New Bridge.

Nevertheless, the Tarasconian did not grow disheartened. Bravely diving ever more deeply into the South, he spent his days in beating up the thickets, probing the dwarf-palms with the muzzle of his rifle, and saying "Frirt! frirt!" to every bush. And every evening, before lying down, a little

ambush for two or three hours. . . . Useless trouble! the lion did not show himself.

One evening, however, toward six o'clock, as the caravan was scrambling through a violet-hued mastic-grove, where fat quails, rendered heavy by the heat were tumbling about in the grass, Tartarin of Tarascon fancied he heard — but afar, but vague, but thinned down by the breeze — that wondrous roaring to which he had so often listened at Tarascon from behind Mitaine's Menagerie.

At first the hero feared he was dreaming. . . . But in another instant the roaring began again more distinct, although yet remote; and this time the camel's hump shivered in terror, making the canned meats and the arms in the cases rattle, while all the dogs in the Arab douars were heard howling in every corner of the horizon.

No more doubt! It was the lion. . . .

Quick, quick! to the ambush. Not a minute to lose!

Near at hand there happened to be an old *marabout* (a saint's tomb) with a white cupola, and the defunct's large yellow slippers placed in a niche over the door, and a mass of odd offerings — hems of burnouses, gold thread, red hair — hanging on the wall. . . .

Tartarin of Tarascon left his prince and his camel there, and went in search of a good spot for lying in wait. Prince Gregory wanted to follow him, but the Tarasconian refused; he was bent on confronting the lion alone. But still he besought his Highness not to go too far away, and, as a measure of foresight,

he intrusted him with his pocket-book, — a fat pocket-book, full of precious papers and bank-notes, which



he feared would get torn by the lion's claws. This done, our hero looked up a good place.

A hundred steps in front of the *marabout*, a little clump of oleander-trees shook in the twilight haze on the edge of a rivulet all but dried up. There

it was that Tartarin went into ambush, one knee on the ground, according to the formula, his rifle in his hand, and his huge hunting-knife stuck boldly before him in the sandy bank.

Night fell.

The rosy tint of nature changed into violet, and then into dark blue. . . . Below him among the river pebbles gleamed a little pool of clear water like a hand-glass; this was the watering-place of the wild animals. On the slope of the opposite bank was dimly discernible the whitish trail which their heavy paws had traced among the lentisk bushes. This mysterious path made the flesh creep. Add to this the vague swarming sound of the African nights, the light rustling of branches, the velvety steps of roving creatures, the jackal's shrill yelp, and up in the sky, five or ten hundred feet aloft, vast flocks of cranes passing on with screams like children having their throats cut. You will own that there were grounds for a man being moved.

Tartarin was. He was even more than that. His teeth chattered, poor fellow! And on the cross-bar of his hunting-knife, planted upright in the bank, his rifle-barrel rattled like a pair of castanets. . . . What do you expect? There are times when one is not in the mood; and, then, where would be the merit if heroes were never afraid?

Well, yes, Tartarin was afraid, and all the time, too, for the matter of that. Nevertheless, he held out for an hour, for two hours; but heroism has its limits. . . . Near him, in the dry part of the rivulet-

bed, the Tarasconian suddenly hears a sound of steps and of pebbles rolling. This time terror lifted him off the ground. He fired off both his barrels at haphazard into the night, and retreated as fast as his legs would carry him to the *marabout's* tomb, leaving his knife standing up in the sand like a cross commemorative of the grandest panic that ever assailed the soul of a conqueror of hydras.

“Help ! *préince* . . . the lion !”

Silence !

“*Préince, préince*, are you there ?”

The prince was not there. On the white moonlit wall of the *marabout* the good camel alone cast the queer-shaped shadow of his hump. . . . Prince Gregory had cut and run with the wallet and the bank-notes. . . . His Highness had been for a month past awaiting this opportunity. . . .



CHAPTER VI



At last! . . .



VI

At last! . . .

WHEN, on the morning after this adventurous and tragic eve, our hero awoke early, very early, and got assurance doubly sure that the prince and the treasure had really gone off, gone off never to return! — when he found himself alone in that little white tomb, betrayed, robbed, abandoned in the heart of wild Algeria, with a one-humped camel and some pocket-money as all his resources, — then for the first time the Tarasconian doubted. He doubted Montenegro, he doubted friendship, he doubted glory, he doubted even the lions; and the great man, like Christ at Gethsemane, began to weep bitterly.

Now, while he was pensively seated there on the sill of the *marabout*, with his head between his hands and his gun between his legs, with the camel gazing

at him, suddenly the thicket in front of him was divided, and Tartarin stupefied saw a gigantic lion appear not a dozen paces off. It came on with its head on high and emitting formidable roars, which made the tinsel-laden walls of the *marabout* shake, and even the saint's slippers dance in their niche.

The Tarasconian alone did not tremble.

"At last!" he shouted, jumping up and levelling the rifle.

Bang! . . . bang! pfft! pfft! It was done. . . .

The lion had two explosive bullets in his head. For a minute, on the fiery background of the African sky, there was a dreadful firework display of scattered brains, smoking blood, and tawny hair. Then all fell, and Tartarin perceived . . . two tall angry negroes running toward him, brandishing their cudgels. The two negroes of Milianah!

Oh, misery!

It was the domesticated lion, the poor blind beggar of the Mohammed Monastery, which the Tarasconian's bullets had just knocked over.

This time, by Mahound, Tartarin escaped neatly. Drunk with fanatical fury, the two negro collectors would have surely beaten him to pulp had not the God of the Christians sent to his aid a delivering angel,—the garde champêtre of the Orléansville commune, coming up by a bypath with his sword under his arm.

The sight of the municipal cap suddenly calmed the negroes' choler. Peaceful and majestic, the man with the badge drew up a report on the affair, ordered the camel to be loaded with what remained of the

lion, and the plaintiffs as well as the delinquent to follow him, and proceeded to Orléansville, where the whole matter was laid before the registry.

There resulted a long and terrible suit!

After the Algeria of the native tribes which he had just been traversing, Tartarin of Tarascon became henceforth acquainted with another Algeria, not less ridiculous and to be dreaded, — the Algeria of the towns, litigious and pettifogging. He came to know the squint-eyed Law that is brewed at the back of a café, — the Bohemia of the Bar, briefs reeking of absinthe, white neckcloths spotted with *champoreau*; he came to know the ushers, the attorneys, the business agents, all those locusts of stamped paper, meagre and famished, who eat up the colonist even to the very straps of his boots, and leave him stripped leaf by leaf like a cornstalk. . . .

Before all, it was necessary to ascertain whether the lion had been killed on the civil territory or the military territory. In the former case the matter concerned the Tribunal of Commerce; in the second, Tartarin would be dealt with by the Council of War; and at the mere name of Council of War the impressionable Tarasconian saw himself already shot at the foot of the ramparts or wallowing at the bottom of a silo. . . .

The terrible thing about it is that the limitation of the two territories is very hazy in Algeria. . . .

At length, after a month of running about, of entanglements, and waiting under the sun in the courts of Arab Bureaux, it was established that if on the one hand the lion had been killed on the military

territory, on the other hand Tartarin was in the civil territory when he shot. So the case was decided in the civil courts, and our hero was let off on paying *two thousand five hundred francs* damages, without costs.

How could he pay such a sum ?

The few piastres escaped from the prince's raid had long since gone in legal documents and judicial libations.

The unfortunate lion-destroyer was therefore reduced to selling the store of guns by retail, rifle by rifle. He sold the daggers, the Malay kreeses, the life-preservers. . . . A grocer purchased the preserved meats ; an apothecary what remained of the medicaments. The big boots themselves walked off, and followed the improved tent to a bric-à-brac dealer, who elevated them to the dignity of "curiosities from Cochin-China."

When everything was paid up, only the lion's skin and the camel remained to Tartarin. The hide he had carefully packed, to be sent to Tarascon to the address of the gallant Commandant Bravida. (We shall soon see what came of this fabulous trophy.) As for the camel, he reckoned on making use of him to get back to Algiers, not by riding on him, but by selling him to pay his coach-fare, — the best way to employ a camel in travelling. Unhappily the beast was difficult to dispose of, and no one would offer a copper for him.

Still Tartarin wanted to regain Algiers by hook or by crook. He was in haste once more to behold Baïa's blue bodice, his little snuggery and his foun-

tains, and to repose on the white trefoils of his little cloister while awaiting money from France. So our hero did not hesitate; distressed but not downcast, he undertook to make the journey afoot and penniless by short stages.

In this enterprise the camel did not abandon him. The strange animal had taken an unaccountable fancy for his master, and on seeing him leave Orléansville, he started off striding religiously behind him, regulating his pace by his, and never quitting him by a foot!

At the outset Tartarin found this touching; such fidelity, such devotion above proof went to his heart, all the more because the creature was accommodating, and fed himself on nothing. Nevertheless, after a few days, the Tarasconian was worried by having this glum companion perpetually at his heels, to remind him of all his misadventures. Then, out of sheer spite, he was vexed with him because of his sad aspect, his hump, and his gait like a goose in harness. To tell the whole truth, he detested him, and only thought how to get rid of him; but the animal would not be shaken off. . . . Tartarin tried to lose him, but the camel found him again; he tried to run away, but the camel ran faster. . . . He bade him begone, and hurled stones at him. The camel stopped and gazed at him with a mournful mien, but in a minute resumed the pursuit, and always ended by overtaking him. Tartarin had to resign himself.

For all that, when, after a long week of tramping, the dusty harassed Tarasconian espied the first

white housetops of Algiers glimmer from afar in the verdure, when he found himself at the city gates, on the noisy Mustapha Avenue, amid Zouaves, Biskris, and Port Mahon women, all swarming around him and staring at him trudging by with his camel, overtaken patience escaped him.

“No! no!” he said, “it is impossible! . . . I cannot enter Algiers with such an animal!” And profiting by a jam of vehicles, he turned off into the fields, and jumped into a ditch. . . .

At the end of a minute he saw over his head on the highway the camel flying off with long strides, and stretching out his neck with a wistful air.

Then, relieved of a great weight, the hero sneaked out of his covert, and entered the town anew by a circuitous path which skirted the wall of his own little garden.

CHAPTER VII



Catastrophes upon catastrophes.



VII

Catastrophes upon catastrophes.

As he reached his Moorish dwelling, Tartarin stopped in perfect astonishment.

Day was dying; the street was deserted. Through the low-arched doorway which the negress had forgotten to close he could hear bursts of laughter, the clink of wine-glasses, the popping of champagne

corks, and, above all the jolly uproar, a woman's voice, clear and joyous, singing, —

*Aimes-tu, Marco la Belle,
La danse aux salons en fleur.*

“*Tron de Diou!*” ejaculated the Tarasconian, turning pale; and he rushed into the enclosure.

Hapless Tartarin! what a sight awaited him! . . . Beneath the arches of the little cloister, amid bottles, pastry, scattered cushions, pipes, tambourines, and guitars, stood Baïa, without her blue vest or bodice; wearing only a silvery gauze chemisette and full pink pantaloons; and she was singing *Marco la Belle* with a ship-captain's cap over one ear. . . . At her feet, on a mat, surfeited with love and sweetmeats, Barbassou, the infamous Captain Barbassou, was bursting with laughter at hearing her.

The apparition of Tartarin, haggard, thin, dusty, his flaming eyes, and the bristling *chechia*, sharply interrupted this tender Turkish-Marseillais orgie. Baïa uttered a squeal like a frightened leveret, and ran for safety into the house. But Barbassou did not wince; he only laughed the louder, saying, —

“*Hé, hé!* Monsieur Tartarin! What do you say about it now? You see she knows French.”

Tartarin of Tarascon advanced furiously.

“Captain!”

“*Digo-li qué vengué, moun bon!* — tell him what's happened, my dear!” screamed the Moorish woman, leaning over the first-floor gallery with a pretty low-bred gesture.

The poor man, overwhelmed, let himself collapse on a drum. His Moorish beauty even knew the French of Marseilles!

“I told you not to trust the Algerian girls,” observed Captain Barbassou, sententiously. “They’re as tricky as your Montenegrin prince.”

Tartarin raised his head.

“Do you know where the prince is?”

“Oh, he’s not far off. He has gone to live five years in the handsome prison of Mustapha. The rogue let himself be caught with his hand in the pocket. . . . However, this is not the first time he has been clapped into the calaboose. His Highness has already been three years in some state prison . . . and stop a bit! I believe it was at Tarascon.”

“At Tarascon! . . .” cried Tartarin, suddenly enlightened. . . . “That’s how he knew only one part of the town.”

“*Hé!* Of course. . . . Tarascon — as seen from the state prison. . . . I tell you, my poor Monsieur Tartarin, you have to keep your eyes peeled in this deuce of a country, or be exposed to very disagreeable things. . . . For a sample, there’s the muezzin’s game with you.”

“What game? What muezzin?”

“*Té! pardi!* . . . The muezzin across the way who was making up to Baïa. . . . The *Akbar* told the yarn t’other day, and all Algiers is laughing over it even now. . . . It is so funny for that muezzin up there in his tower to make declarations of love under your very nose to the little beauty while singing out his

prayers, and making appointments with her while invoking the name of Allah."

"But are they all scamps in this country? . . ." howled the unlucky Tarasconian.

Barbassou shrugged his shoulders like a philosopher.

"My dear, you know, these new countries! . . . But, anyhow, if you 'll believe me, you 'd best go back to Tarascon at full speed."

"Go back! . . . It's easy to say. . . . And the money? Don't you know that I was plucked out there in the desert?"

"What does that matter?" said the captain, laughing. "The 'Zouave' sails to-morrow, and if you like I will take you home. . . . Does that suit you, mate? . . . Very well, then. You have only one thing to do. There are some bottles of champagne left, and half the pie. Sit you down and pitch in without any grudge. . . ."

After the minute's wavering which his dignity demanded, the Tarasconian chose his course manfully. Down he sat, and they touched glasses. Baïa, gliding down when she heard that chinking sound, sang the finale of *Marco la Belle*, and the jollification was prolonged deep into the night.

About 3 A.M., with a light head but a heavy foot, the good Tarasconian was returning from seeing his friend the captain home, when, in passing the mosque, the remembrance of the muezzin and his practical jokes made him laugh, and instantly a capital idea of revenge flitted through his brain.

The door was open. He entered, threaded long

corridors laid with mats, mounted and kept on mounting, and at last found himself in a little Turkish oratory, where an openwork iron lantern swung from the ceiling, embroidering an odd pattern in shadows on the white walls.

There sat the muezzin on a divan, in his large turban and white pelisse, with his Mostaganem pipe, and a great glass of absinthe which he was whipping up in the orthodox manner, while awaiting the hour to call true believers to prayer. . . . At view of Tartarin, he dropped his pipe in terror.

“Not a word, priest!” said the Tarasconian, full of his project. “Quick! your turban, your pelisse!”

The Turkish priest all a-trembling handed over his turban, his pelisse, all that was demanded. Tartarin put them on, and gravely stepped out on the platform of the minaret.

In the distance shone the sea. The white roofs glittered in the moonbeams. On the sea-breeze was heard the strumming of a few belated guitars. . . . The muezzin Tarascon deliberated for a moment; then, raising his arms, he set to chanting in a very shrill voice, —

“*La Allah il Allah!* . . . Mahomet is an old humbug! . . . The Orient, the Koran, bashagas, lions, Moorish beauties, — the whole thing is not worth a rap! . . . There are no more *Teurs!* There is nothing left but gammoners. . . . Long live Tarascon!”

And while the illustrious Tartarin, in his queer jumbling of Arabic and Provençal, flung his mirthful Tarasconian malediction to the four corners of

the horizon, — over the sea, over the town, over the plain, over the mountain,—the clear, solemn voices of the other muezzins answered him, taking up the strain from minaret to minaret, and the believers of the upper town devoutly beat their bosoms.

CHAPTER VIII



Tarascon ! Tarascon !





VIII

Tarascon ! Tarascon !

MID-DAY.

The "Zouave" has her steam up, ready to sail. Up yonder, on the balcony of the Valentin Café, the officers are levelling telescopes, and from the colonel down are taking turns looking at the lucky little craft that is going back to France. This is the main distraction of the staff. . . . On the lower level the roads glitter. The breaches of the old Turkish cannon, stuck up along the quay, blaze in the sun. The passengers are hurrying. Biskris and Mahonnais are piling luggage up in the transfer-boats.

Tartarin of Tarascon has no luggage. Here he comes down the Rue de la Marine through the little market, full of bananas and melons, accompanied by his friend Barbassou. The hapless Tarasconian has left on the Moorish strand his gun-cases and his illusions, and now he is ready to sail for Tarascon with his hands in his pockets. . . . He has barely leaped into the captain's cutter before a breathless beast dashes down from the heights of the square and gallops toward him. It is the camel, the faithful camel, which during four-and-twenty hours has been hunting after his master in Algiers.

On seeing him, Tartarin changes countenance, and pretends not to know him; but the camel is desperate. He frisks along the quay; he whinnies for his friend; he gazes on him with affection.

"Take me away," his sad eyes seem to say,— "take me away in your ship, far, far from this painted, pasteboard Arabia, this ridiculous Orient, full of locomotives and stage-coaches, where I — a declassed dromedary — know not what will become of me. You are the last real Turk; I am the last camel. . . . Let us not part, O my Tartarin!"

"Is that camel yours?" inquires the captain.

"Not at all!" replies Tartarin, groaning at the idea of entering Tarascon with that ridiculous escort; and, impudently denying the companion of his misfortunes, he spurns the Algerian soil, and shoves the cutter off with his foot. . . . The camel sniffs of the water, stretches out its neck, cracks its joints, and, desperately jumping in behind the row-boat, he swims toward the "Zouave," with

his humped back floating like a bladder, and his long neck projecting over the wave like the beak of a trireme.

Cutter and camel come alongside the mail-steamer together.

“Now really this dromedary makes me sad,” says Captain Barbassou, quite affected. “I have a good mind to take him aboard. . . . When I get to Marseilles, I will make a present of him to the Zoological Gardens.”

With the aid of many blocks and tackles, they hoist the camel, heavy with brine, up on deck, and the “Zouave” starts.

The two days of the crossing Tartarin spent all alone in his stateroom, not because the sea was rough, or because the chechia had too much to endure, but because that deuced camel, as soon as his master appeared above decks, showed him the most preposterous attentions. . . . You never saw a camel make such an exhibition of a man as this.

From hour to hour, through the cabin portholes, where he stuck out his nose now and then, Tartarin saw the blue Algerian sky pale away; then one morning, in a silvery fog, he heard with delight all the bells of Marseilles ringing out. They had arrived. . . . The “Zouave” cast anchor.

Our man, having no luggage, got off without saying anything, hastily slipped through Marseilles, always fearing he should be pursued by the camel, and never breathed till he was in a third-class carriage making for Tarascon. . . .

Deceptive security!

Hardly are they two leagues from Marseilles when, lo! all heads are stuck out of windows. There are outcries and astonishment. Tartarin in his turn looks, and . . . what does he descry! . . . The camel, Monsieur, the inevitable camel, racing over the rails through the depths of Crau behind the train, and keeping up with it! Tartarin in dismay drew back and shut his eyes.

After this disastrous expedition of his he had reckoned on slipping into his house *incognito*. But the presence of this burdensome quadruped rendered the thing impossible. What kind of a triumphal entry would he make? Good heavens! not a sou, not a lion, nothing . . . a camel!

“Tarascon! . . . Tarascon!”

He was obliged to get down. . . .

Oh, amazement!

Scarce had the hero's chechia appeared in the doorway before a loud shout of “Vive Tartarin!” made the glazed roof of the railway-station tremble. “Long life to Tartarin, the lion-slayer!” And out burst the blast of horns and the choruses of the local musical societies. . . .

Tartarin felt death had come: he thought it was a hoax. But, no! all Tarascon was there, waving their hats, and enthusiastic! Behold the gallant Commandant Bravida, Costecalde the armorer, the Chief Judge, the apothecary, and the whole noble corps of cap-hunters pressing around their leader,

and carrying him in triumph out through the passageways. . . .

Singular effects of the mirage!—the hide of the blind lion sent to Bravida was the cause of all this riot. With that humble fur exhibited in the club-room, the Tarasconians, and, at the back of them, the whole South of France, had grown exalted. The “*Sémaphore*” had spoken of it. A drama had been invented. Tartarin had slain not merely one lion, but ten lions, twenty lions, a marmalade of lions! Hence Tartarin, on disembarking at Marseilles, was already celebrated without being aware of it, and an enthusiastic telegram had gone on two hours before him to his native place.

But what capped the climax of the popular gladness was to see a fantastic animal, covered with dust and sweat, appear behind the hero, and stumble down the station stairs.

Tarascon for an instant believed that its dragon was come again.

Tartarin reassured his fellow-citizens.

“This is my camel,” he said.

And already, under the influence of the Tarasconian sun, that splendid sun which makes people lie ingenuously, he added, as he fondled the dromedary’s hump, —

“It is a noble beast! . . . It saw me kill all my lions!”

Whereupon he familiarly took the arm of the Commandant, who was red with pleasure; and followed by his camel, surrounded by the cap-hunters, acclaimed by all the population, he pla-

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