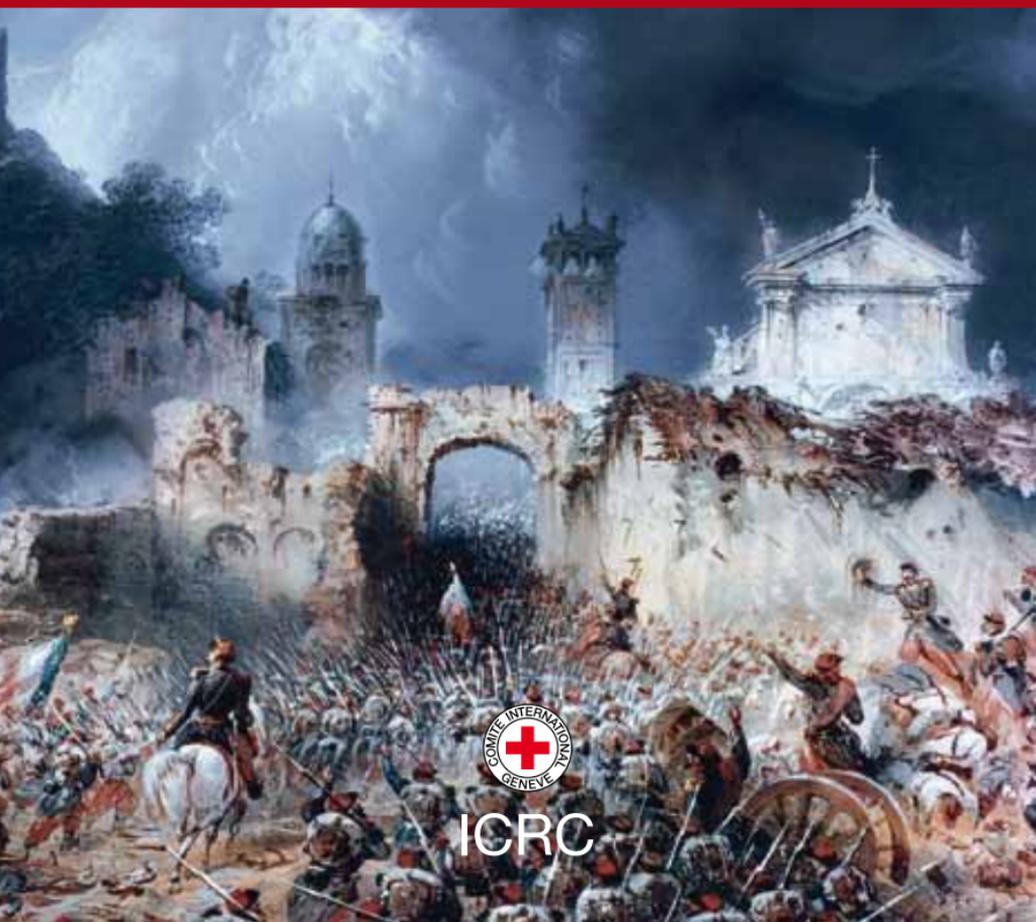


Henry Dunant

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A MEMORY  
OF SOLFERINO

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ICRC



HENRY DUNANT

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OF SOLFERINO



ICRC

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Geneva



*J.-Henry Dunant (1828–1910)*



# Henry Dunant 1828-1910

*Jean Henry Dunant, known as the father of the Red Cross, was born on May 8, 1828, in Geneva, Switzerland. His father, a successful businessman and a citizen of some prominence, was a man of means. His mother was a gentle and pious woman. She, more than anyone else, was responsible for her first-born child's early education. Her influence had much to do with molding his character.*

*As Dunant grew to manhood he enjoyed all the privileges accruing to him by virtue of his family's social and economic position. At the same time, he experienced the disciplines usual to the son of a responsible Swiss citizen. The atmosphere of Calvinist Geneva also influenced his growth and development. He early developed deep religious convictions and high moral principles.*

*In the first years of his maturity he found outlet for his energies by allying himself with various movements or causes and by engaging in charitable and religious activities. For a time he was active in a movement—then quite strong in many parts of Europe—for the union of Christians and Jews. He became a member of an organization in Geneva known as the League of Alms, whose purpose was to bring spiritual and material comfort and aid to the poor, sick, and afflicted. He*

*was also a regular visitor to the city prison, where he labored to help reform transgressors of the law.*

*Until he was nearly 30 years of age, however, Dunant's keenest interest was in a group of organizations in Switzerland, France, and Belgium operating under the name of "The Young Men's Christian Union". These were European counterparts of the newly formed Young Men's Christian Association in England. In early 1853 a movement was begun to federate the "Unions" into one organization. Dunant steadfastly opposed the plan as too limited, making the counterproposal that a "World Union" to include the YMCA should be organized. Largely as a result of Dunant's persistence, this was done at the first world conference of the YMCA, held in Paris in 1855.*

*Despite Dunant's dedication to causes of this sort, he did not limit his activities to them. He was engaged also in laying the foundation for, and embarking upon, a business career as well. In 1849 he was apprenticed to a banking house in Geneva to learn the banking business. So well did he progress that, in 1853, he was given a temporary appointment as general manager of a subsidiary enterprise of his firm in Algeria, known as "Colonies Suisses de Setif". Later he severed his connections with the company and went into business for himself. The energetic young man seemed headed for a successful business career and the acquiring of a substantial fortune.*

*It was while journeying on a business mission in Italy that Dunant chanced to arrive in Castiglione della Pieve on the same day in June 1859 that the Battle of*

*Solferino was fought nearby. When the town filled with casualties and the army medical services available at that point proved to be inadequate, it was wholly natural for Dunant to try to help relieve the pain and suffering of the wounded. By temperament, tradition, and training, he could do no less. This experience completely changed the course of his life. From that time forward Dunant's business activities and other interests became secondary as he sought to find a way in which such suffering could somehow be prevented, or at least ameliorated, in future wars.*

*The publication of A Memory of Solferino marked the beginning of a brief period in which Dunant reached the pinnacle of his career. His proposal that societies of trained volunteers be organized in all countries for the purpose of helping to care for wounded combatants in time of war was enthusiastically endorsed by many persons. Furthermore, his concept of an international treaty among nations to assure more humane care of the wounded aroused considerable interest. Dunant traveled to many of the capitals of Europe. All doors were open to him, and he was able to talk directly to many influential persons. Royalty and commoners alike listened respectfully to Dunant as he explained his proposals. If some of his audience doubted the feasibility of what he urged, nevertheless they listened. It was an exhilarating experience for this young man who had come without warning from obscurity to touch the heart and stir the conscience of Europe.*

*In the years 1863 and 1864 Dunant's star reached its*

zenith and then began almost immediately to decline. People rallied to his support, a committee was organized, and conferences were held. But during the transformation of his dream into reality, Dunant, the visionary, gradually moved aside as more practical men began to take over. The years 1865 and 1866 were marked by a further decline in his participation in the movement that his proposals had generated. Dunant's shyness or diffidence was in part responsible for this: the young man who was so eloquent and so convincing with his pen and in conversation had strangely little to say or offer in meetings and conferences.

The year 1867 was catastrophic for Dunant. His long-neglected business enterprises had to be liquidated. In the process he surrendered practically everything he owned in an effort to satisfy his creditors. Soon thereafter he left Geneva never to return. He was just 39 years old at the time.

The next 20 years were difficult ones indeed for Dunant. He lived precariously on the pittance friends could give him and a small allowance from members of his family. Poverty and want were no strangers to him. Occasionally he would reappear briefly before the public, in France, Germany, Italy, and in England, to be honored for his part in the founding of the Red Cross or in connection with other projects with which he had identified himself. Much of the time, however, he lived in obscurity.

Suddenly, one day in July 1887, an old man appeared in the little town of Heiden, Switzerland. The townspeople soon learned that it was Dunant. Although

*he was only 59 years of age, two decades of disappointment and want had aged him prematurely. In his new home, several persons befriended him and accorded him the respect that was his due, and for a time he continued a lively interest in the progress being made in the movement he had done so much to establish. Occasionally he heard from or was sought out by the few friends and former patrons who were aware that he was still alive. About 1892, ill health and advancing age finally forced him to take up residence in the local hospital where he lived for the last 18 years of his life.*

*In 1895 a young journalist on an expedition in the mountains near Heiden heard about Dunant and sought an interview with him. Within a few days the world learned that Dunant was still alive although living under somewhat austere conditions for a person who had given the world so much. Offers to help poured in; acknowledgments of his great service came through the mails, from the high and the lowly, in near and far places. Pope Leo XIII sent him his signed portrait, on which was inscribed with his own hand the words "Fiat pax in virtute tua Deus".<sup>1</sup> Dunant, calm in the serenity of age, appreciated the accolades bestowed upon him. He made it clear, however, that he did not need help; his few simple needs were more than adequately met by the hospital and his neighbors in Heiden.*

*One climaxing honour remained for Dunant. In 1901 the Nobel committee awarded him its first Peace Prize,*

<sup>1</sup> By Thy power, let there be peace, O God!

*shared jointly with the Frenchman Frederic Passy. Since Dunant was too feeble to make the long journey to Christiana, the prize and, later, the medal were sent to him. From Geneva, his old home, came this message from the International Committee of the Red Cross:*

*“There is no man who more deserves this honour, for it was you, forty years ago, who set on foot the international organization for the relief of the wounded on the battlefield. Without you, the Red Cross, the supreme humanitarian achievement of the nineteenth century, would probably never have been undertaken.”*

*On Sunday, October 30, 1910, Jean Henry Dunant died at Heiden, among the mountains and the people where he had found peace of mind, friendship, and a haven of security.*

## A Memory of Solferino

The sanguinary victory at Magenta had opened the gates of Milan to the French Army, and carried the enthusiasm of the Italians to its highest pitch. Pavia, Lodi and Cremona had seen their liberators approach, and were welcoming them rapturously. The Austrians had withdrawn from their lines on the Adda, the Oglio, and the Chiese, and, determined now to take a glorious revenge for their former defeats, had massed on the banks of the Mincio a considerable force, resolutely led by the brave young Austrian Emperor himself.

On the seventeenth of June, King Victor-Emmanuel arrived at Brescia, where he received the warmest ovations from a people who had been oppressed for ten long years, and who looked to the son of Charles-Albert as their saviour and hero. The next day Napoleon made a triumphal entry into the same city, amid general enthusiasm. One and all rejoiced at the opportunity of showing their gratitude to the ruler who came to help them win back their liberty and their independence.

On June 21, the Emperor of the French and the King of Sardinia left Brescia, a day behind their armies. On the twenty-second Lonato, Castenedolo, and Montechiaro were occupied; and, on the evening of the twenty-third, the Emperor, as Commander-in-Chief,

had given explicit orders for the army of King Victor-Emmanuel, which was camped at Desenzano and formed the left wing of the Allied Army, to attack Pozzolengo on the morning of the twenty-fourth. Marshal Baraguey d'Hilliers was to march on Solferino; Marshal the Duke of Magenta on Cavriana; General Niel was to go to Guidizzolo, and Marshal Canrobert to Medola, while the Imperial Guard was ordered to Castiglione. These united forces constituted a total strength of one hundred and fifty thousand men, and four hundred pieces of artillery.

The Emperor of Austria had at his disposal in Lombardy nine army corps, numbering together some two hundred and fifty thousand men, his invading force having been augmented by the garrisons of Verona and Mantua. Following the advice of Field-Marshal Baron Hess, the Imperial troops, after leaving Milan and Brescia, had consistently retreated, with a view to concentrating between the Adige and the Mincio all the forces that Austria then had in Italy. But the strength of the force that was to be engaged consisted of only seven corps, amounting to one hundred and seventy thousand men, supported by approximately five hundred pieces of artillery.

The Imperial headquarters had been removed from Verona to Villafranca, and then to Valeggio, and orders were given to the troops to re-cross the Mincio at Peschiera, Salionze, Valeggio, Ferri, Goito and Mantua. The bulk of the army took quarters between Pozzolengo and Guidizzolo, so as to attack the Franco-Sardinian Army between the Mincio and the Chiese,

following the suggestion of several of the most experienced Field-M Marshals.

The Austrian forces under the Emperor formed two armies: The first was led by Field-Marshal Count Wimpffen, whose command included the corps commanded by Prince Edmond of Schwarzenberg, Count Schaffgotsche, and Baron Veigl, as well as Count Zedtwitz' Cavalry Division. This was the left wing of the army, and had taken up a position in the neighborhood of Volta, Guidizzolo, Medola and Castel-Goffredo. The Second Army was commanded by General Count Schlick, who had under his orders Field-M Marshals Count Clams-Gallas, Count Stadion, Baron von Zobel, and Ritter von Benedek, besides Count Mendsdorff's Cavalry Division. This was the right wing, holding Cavriana, Solferino, Pozzolengo, and San Martino.

Thus, on the morning of the twenty-fourth, the Austrians occupied every point of vantage between Pozzolengo, Solferino, Cavriana and Guidizzolo. They had placed their formidable array of artillery along a line of low hills to form the center of an immense attacking line, thus making it possible for the right and left wings to withdraw, if necessary, under the cover of these fortified heights, which they considered to be impregnable.

Although they were marching against each other, the two opposing forces did not expect to meet and join battle as soon as they did. The Austrians hoped that only a part of the Allied Army had crossed the Chiese; they could not know the Emperor Napoleon's plan, and their information was not accurate.

Nor did the Allies have any idea of coming face to face so suddenly with the Emperor of Austria's army. Their reconnaissances, their observations, the reports of scouts, and the balloon ascensions made on the twenty-third, had given no indication of a counter-offensive or of an attack.

So, although both sides were fully expecting that a great battle would come shortly, the encounter between the Austrians and the Franco-Sardinians on Friday, June 24, was really unlooked-for, since both adversaries were mistaken as to each other's movements.

Everyone has heard, or may have read, some account of the battle of Solferino. The memory of it is so vivid that no one has forgotten it, especially as the consequences of that day are still being felt in many European countries.

I was a mere tourist with no part whatever in this great conflict; but it was my rare privilege, through an unusual train of circumstances, to witness the moving scenes that I have resolved to describe. In these pages I give only my personal impressions; so my readers should not look here for specific details, nor for information on strategic matters; these things have their place in other writings.

On that memorable twenty-fourth of June, more than 300,000 men stood facing each other; the battle line was five leagues long, and the fighting continued for more than fifteen hours.

The Austrian Army, after enduring the fatigues of a difficult all-night march on the twenty-third, had to withstand the fierce onslaught of the Allied Army at

daybreak on the twenty-fourth. Later they had to bear the intense heat of a stifling atmosphere, and hunger and thirst as well, since, with the exception of a double ration of brandy, they got practically no rations issued to them during the whole of that Friday. As for the French Army, it was on the march before daybreak and had nothing but morning coffee. The fighting troops, therefore, and especially those who were unfortunate enough to be wounded, were in a state of extreme exhaustion at the close of that terrible battle!

About three o'clock in the morning, the First and Second Corps, commanded by Marshals Baraguey d'Hilliers and de Mac-Mahon, moved forward to attack Solferino and Cavriana, but the heads of their columns had scarcely gone beyond Castiglione when they found the Austrian outposts before them, ready to stem their advance.

The alarm is given in both armies; on all sides are heard bugles sounding the charge, and the roll of drums. The Emperor Napoleon, who has passed the night at Montechiaro, sets forth hastily for Castiglione.

By six o'clock firing has begun in earnest. The Austrians advance, in perfect formation, along the beaten paths, with their yellow and black battle flags, blazoned with the German Imperial Eagle, floating above the compact masses of white-coats.

Among all the troops which are to take part in the battle, the French Guard affords a truly imposing sight. The day is dazzlingly clear, and the brilliant Italian sunlight glistens on the shining armour of Dragoons and Guides, Lancers and Cuirassiers.

At the very beginning of the action, the Emperor Francis Joseph had left his headquarters and removed to Volta with his staff. He was accompanied by the Archdukes of the House of Lorraine, among whom were to be observed the Grand-Duke of Tuscany and the Duke of Modena.

The first encounter took place amid the difficulties of ground which was entirely strange to the Allies. The French Army was forced to beat a way through row upon row of mulberry trees with grapevines strung between them, amounting to a real obstacle. The ground was broken up in many places by great dried-up ditches, and by long walls some three or five feet high, wide at the base and tapering to the top. The horses had to clear these walls, and cross the ditches.

The Austrians, from their vantage points on the hills, swept the French with artillery fire and rained on them a steady hail of shells, case- and grape-shot. Soil and dust, raised by this immense cloud of projectiles as they thundered into the ground, mingled with the thick fumes of smoking guns and shells. Facing the thunder of these batteries, roaring and spitting forth death upon them, the French rushed forward like an opposing storm sweeping from the plain, to attack the positions they were determined to secure.

During the torrid midday heat, the fighting that rages on all sides grows more and more furious. Compact columns of men throw themselves upon each other with the impetuosity of a destructive torrent that carries everything before it; French regiments, in skirmishing order, fling themselves upon the Austrian masses,

which are constantly reinforced, and become more and more solid and menacing, resisting attack with the strength of steel walls. Whole divisions threw off their knapsacks in order to be able to charge the enemy more freely with fixed bayonets. As one battalion is repulsed, another immediately replaces it. Every mound, every height, every rocky crag, is the scene of a fight to the death; bodies lie in heaps on the hills and in the valleys.

Here is a hand-to-hand struggle in all its horror and frightfulness; Austrians and Allies trampling each other under foot, killing one another on piles of bleeding corpses, felling their enemies with their rifle butts, crushing skulls, ripping bellies open with sabre and bayonet. No quarter is given; it is a sheer butchery; a struggle between savage beasts, maddened with blood and fury. Even the wounded fight to the last gasp. When they have no weapon left, they seize their enemies by the throat and tear them with their teeth.

A little further on, it is the same picture, only made the more ghastly by the approach of a squadron of cavalry, which gallops by, crushing dead and dying beneath its horses' hoofs. One poor wounded man has his jaw carried away; another his head shattered; a third, who could have been saved, has his chest beaten in. Oaths and shrieks of rage, groans of anguish and despair, mingle with the whinnying of horses.

Here come the artillery, following the cavalry, and going at full gallop. The guns crash over the dead and wounded, strewn pell-mell on the ground. Brains spurt under the wheels, limbs are broken and torn, bodies

mutilated past recognition—the soil is literally puddled with blood, and the plain littered with human remains.

The French troops climbed the mounds, and clambered up the steep hills and rocky slopes with the most fiery ardour, under the Austrian fire, with shells and grape-shot bursting over them. A few detachments of picked men, worn out with their efforts and bathed in sweat, would just manage to gain the top of a hill—then at once they would fall again like an avalanche on the Austrians, smashing into them, driving them from another position, scattering them and pursuing them to the very bottoms of ravines and ditches.

The positions of the Austrians were excellent ones, entrenched as they were in the houses and churches of Medola, Solferino and Cavriana. But nothing stopped the carnage, arrested or lessened it. There was slaughter in the mass, and slaughter man by man; every fold of ground was carried at the point of the bayonet; every position was defended foot by foot. Villages were won, house after house and farm after farm; each in turn became the stage of a siege. Every door, window, and courtyard was a ghastly scene of butchery.

Frightful disorder was caused in the Austrian lines by the French grape-shot, which was effective at prodigious ranges. It covered the hills with dead, and inflicted casualties even among the distant reserves of the German Army. But if the Austrians gave ground, it was only step by step, and they soon resumed the offensive; they rallied again and again, only to be scattered once more.

On the plain, clouds of dust from the roads were

thrown skyward by the wind, making dense clouds that darkened the air and blinded the fighting troops.

Now and again the fighting somewhere would seem to stop for a time, only to be renewed with greater force. The gaps made in the Austrian lines by the determined, murderous French attack, were immediately filled by fresh reserves. First from one side, then from another, drums would beat and bugles sound for the charge.

The guard behaved with really noble courage, only rivalled by the bravery and daring of the light infantry and troops of the line. The Zouaves sprang forward with fixed bayonets, charging like wild beasts, with furious shouts. French cavalry charged Austrian cavalry; Uhlans and Hussars stabbed and tore at each other; even the horses, excited by the heat of battle, played their part in the fray, attacking the horses of the enemy and biting them furiously, while their riders slashed and cut at one another.

The fury of the battle was such that in some places, when ammunition was exhausted and muskets broken, the men went on fighting with stones and fists. The Croats finished off every man they encountered; they killed the Allied wounded with the butts of their muskets; the Algerian sharpshooters too, despite all their leaders could do to keep their savagery within bounds, gave no quarter to wounded Austrian officers and men, and charged the enemy ranks with beastlike roars and hideous cries.

The most powerful positions were taken, lost and retaken, only to be lost again and again recaptured.

Everywhere men fell by thousands, with gaping wounds in limbs or bellies, riddled with bullets, mortally wounded by shot and shell of every kind.

The onlooker, standing on the hills around Castiglione, though he might not be able to see accurately what was the plan of the battle, could at least understand that the Austrians were trying to break through the centre of the Allied troops, so as to delay and hold up the attack on Solferino. This town's admirable situation inevitably made it the pivot-point of the battle. The onlooker could guess the efforts made by the Emperor of the French to establish contact between the different corps of his Army, so that they should be able to give each other help and support.

The Emperor Napoleon, sizing up the situation quickly and accurately, realized that the Austrian troops lacked strong and unified leadership. He ordered the Army Corps of Baraguey d'Hilliers and MacMahon, and then his own guard, under the brave Marshal Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely, to attack simultaneously the entrenchments at Solferino and at San Cassiano. His object was to break the centre of the enemy line, made up of the Army Corps of Stadion, Clam-Gallas and Zobel, which came singly one after the other, to defend these important positions.

At San Martino, the brave and dauntless Field-Marshal Benedek, with only a part of the second Austrian Army, stood out all day long against the Sardinian troops. He seemed electrified by the presence of his King, and fought heroically under his orders.

The right wing of the Allied Army, made up of the

Corps commanded by General Niel and Marshal Canrobert, resisted with indomitable energy the first German Army, under Count Wimpffen. Schwarzenberg's, Schaffgotsche's, and de Veigl's Corps could not succeed in acting together.

Marshal Canrobert did not put his available troops into action in the morning, but kept on the alert. This was an entirely reasonable course, and in exact conformity with Napoleon's orders. Nevertheless, in the end, the greater part of his Army, notably Renault's and Trochu's Divisions, and General Partouneaux' Cavalry, played an active part in the battle. While Marshal Canrobert at first held back because he expected to see Prince Edward of Liechtenstein's Army descending on him (a force belonging to neither of the two Austrian Armies, which had left Mantua that very morning and was a great source of anxiety to Napoleon), Liechtenstein's Corps, for its part, was absolutely paralyzed with fear of the approach of the Army of Prince Napoleon, one of whose divisions (Autemarre's Division) was on the way from Piacenza.

General Forey and General de Ladmirault, with their brave troops, bore the first brunt of the battle on that famous day. After indescribable fighting they managed to take the heights and hills leading to the lovely Mount of Cypresses, immortalized, like the Tower and Cemetery of Solferino, by the dreadful slaughter committed there. The Mount of Cypresses was at last taken by assault, and on its summit Colonel d'Auvergne hoisted a handkerchief on the point of his sword in sign of victory.

But such success was dearly bought by the heavy casualties suffered by the Allies. General Ladmirault had his shoulder broken by a bullet, and would scarcely take time to be bandaged at a field hospital set up in the chapel of a small village. In spite of his severe wound the brave man returned on foot into the fight and was cheering on his battalions when the second bullet struck his left leg.

General Forey, always calm and impassive in the midst of difficulties, was wounded in the hip, the white hood of his military cloak was shot through, and his aides were hit at his side. One of them, Captain Kervenoël, who was only twenty-five years old, had his head carried away by a bursting shell.

At the foot of the Mount of Cypresses, General Dieu fell from his horse with a mortal wound as he waved his skirmishers forward. General Douay was wounded, and not far from him his brother, Colonel Douay, fell dead. Brigadier-General Auger had his left arm splintered by a ball, and won the rank of General of Division on the battlefield that was to cost him his life.

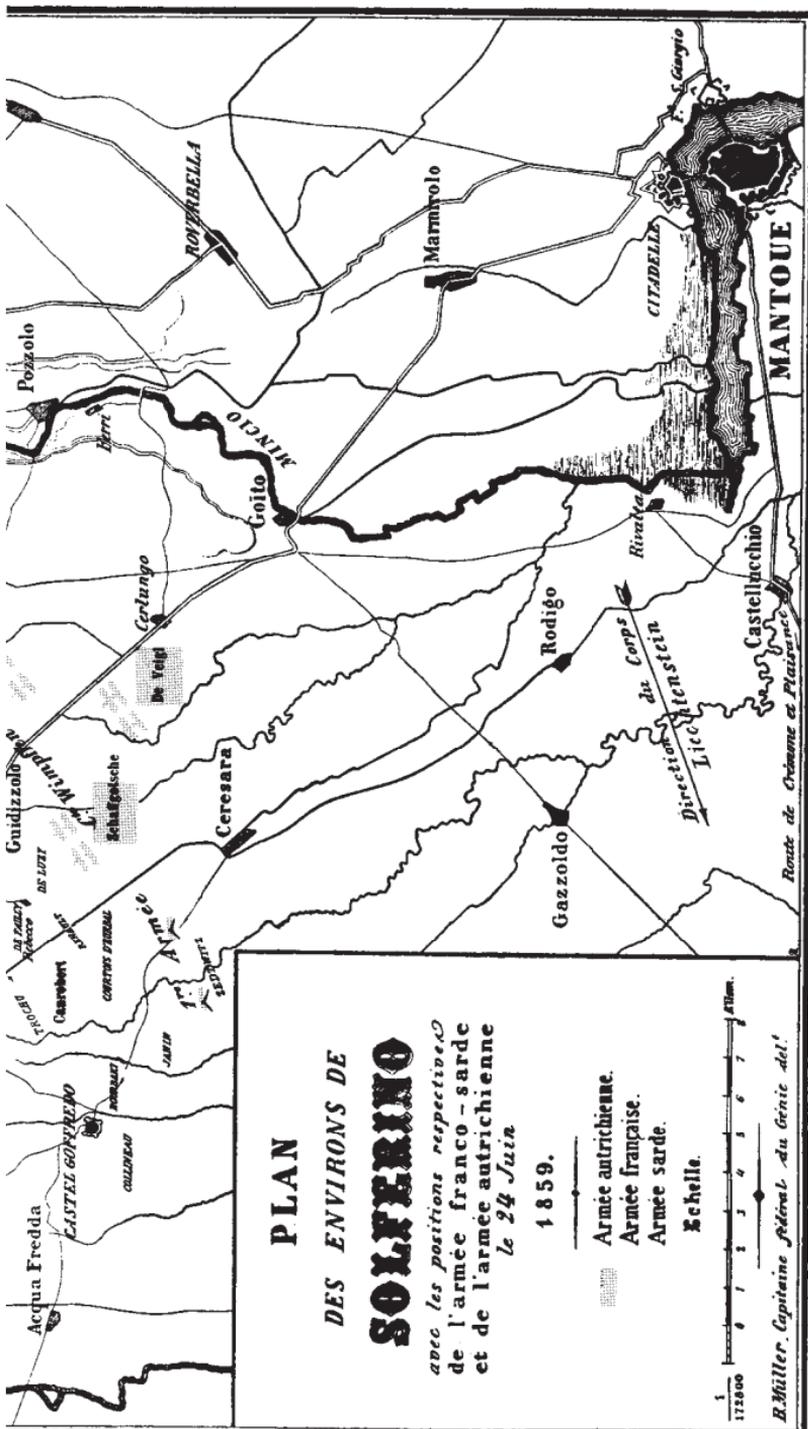
The French officers, marching in the lead, waving their swords and encouraging the soldiers behind them by their example, were hit again and again at the head of their battalions, for their decorations and epaulettes made them targets for the Tyrolean Light Infantry.

What tragic, dramatic scenes of every kind, what moving catastrophes were enacted! In the First African Light Infantry Regiment, beside Lieutenant-Colonel Laurans des Ondes who fell suddenly, mortally wounded, Second Lieutenant de Salignac Fenelon,

only twenty-two years old, broke an Austrian square, and paid with his life for his brilliant exploit. Colonel de Maleville, at the farm of Casa Nova, found himself outnumbered and his battalion's ammunition gone. Seizing the regiment's flag, he rushed forward in the face of terrific fire from the enemy, shouting: "Every man who loves his flag, follow me!" His soldiers, weak with hunger and exhaustion, charged behind him with lowered bayonets. A bullet broke de Maleville's leg, but in spite of cruel suffering he got a man to hold him on his horse and remained in command. Nearby, Hebert was killed commanding his battalion, giving his life to save an Eagle; and as the battle surged over his prostrate form, he found strength to cry to his men before he died: "Courage, boys!"

On the Tower Hill at Solferino, Lieutenant Moneglia, of the Light Infantry of the Guards, captured singlehanded six pieces of artillery, four of them with their teams. The Austrian Colonel who commanded them surrendered his sword. Lieutenant de Guiseul, carrying his regimental flag, was surrounded with his battalion by a force ten times the size of his own. He was shot down, and as he rolled on the ground he clutched his precious charge to his heart. A sergeant who seized the flag to save it from the enemy had his head blown off by a cannon-ball; a captain who next grasped the flag-staff was wounded too, and his blood stained the torn and broken banner. Each man who held it was wounded, one after another, officers and soldiers alike, but it was guarded to the last with a wall of dead and living bodies. In the end the glorious, tattered flag





**PLAN**  
**DES ENVIRONS DE**  
**SOLFERINO**

avec les positions respectives  
 de l'armée franco-sarde  
 et de l'armée autrichienne  
 le 24 Juin

1859.

- Armée autrichienne.
- Armée française.
- Armée sarde.
- Sella.



R. Müller, Capitaine Général Au Génie del'

Dressé d'après les indications de l'Auteur.

Net. & Gauguier à Gresse.

remained in the hands of a Sergeant-Major of Colonel Abattucci's regiment.

Major de la Rochefoucault Liancourt, a dauntless African cavalry man, charged the Hungarian squares, but his horse was riddled with bullets under him, and he fell, with two gunshot wounds, and was captured by the Hungarians, who reformed square.

At Guidizzolo, Prince Charles de Windisch-Graetz, a brave Austrian Colonel, tried vainly at the head of his regiment to recapture the Casa Nova position. The unfortunate Prince, like the generous noble hero that he was, braved certain death, and even when mortally wounded he continued to give orders. His soldiers held him in their arms, standing motionless under a hail of bullets, supporting him to the last. They knew they must die, but they would not leave their colonel whom they loved and respected. He soon breathed his last.

Field-Marschals Count Crenneville and Count Palffy were also severely wounded while fighting very bravely, and so were Field-Marshal Blomberg and Major-General Baltin, in Baron von Veigl's Corps. Baron Sturmfeder, Baron Pidoll, and Colonel von Mumb were killed. Lieutenants von Steiger and von Fischer fell bravely, not far from the spot where the young Prince of Isenburg, more fortunate, was picked up from the field with a spark of life still in him.

Marshal Baraguey d'Hilliers, followed by Generals Lebœuf, Bazaine, de Negrier, Douay, d'Altou and Forgeot, and Colonels Cambriels and Micheler, pushed into the village of Solferino. The village was defended by Count Stadion, and Field-Marschals Palffy and

Sternberg, under whose command the Bils, Puchner, Gaal, Koller and Festetics Brigades succeeded for a long time in repulsing the most violent attacks. General Camou, with his light infantry and riflemen, won distinction in these assaults, as did Colonels Brincourt and de Taxis, who were wounded, and Lieutenant-Colonel Hemard, who was twice shot through the breast.

General Desvaux, brave and imperturbable as ever, met the fierce onslaught of the Hungarian Infantry at the head of his cavalry in a fearful encounter. He was always at the head of his Division, throwing the steely strength of his squadrons against the Army Corps of de Veigl, Schwarzenberg, and Schaffgotsche, in support of General Trochu's vigorous offensive at Guidizzolo and at Rebecco. In the same sector, General Morris and General Partouneaux distinguished themselves, fighting against Mensdorff's cavalry.

Marshal de Mac-Mahon, with General de la Motte-rouge, General Decaen and the Cavalry of the Guard, succeeded in reaching the San Cassiano and Cavriana hills, thanks to the strong defense put up by General Niel, who stood firm on the plain of Medola, with Generals de Failly, Vinoy, and de Luzy, against the three strong divisions of Count Wimpffen's Army. De Mac-Mahon worked his way round the high ground that formed the key to these positions, and afforded an approach to the parallel lines of hills, and finally established himself opposite the place where Field-Marshal Clam-Gallas and Zobel's troops were concentrated. But the noble Prince of Hesse, one of the heroes

of Austria's Army, a worthy foe for the illustrious conqueror of Magenta, after having fought valiantly at San Cassiano, held the three slopes of Mount Fontana against continuous attacks. General Sevelinges had his fieldguns dragged up under the Austrian fire, with Grenadiers of the Guard to pull them, since the horses could not manage the sharp slope. A chain of Grenadiers calmly passed up ammunition to the artillerymen from their caissons, which had been left behind on the plain, so that the guns that had been moved forward to their unusual position on the heights might continue to pour their thunderbolts on the enemy. General de la Motterouge finally mastered Cavriana, in spite of fierce resistance and constantly renewed assaults by the young German officers, who led their detachments back into the fight again and again. General Maneque's Light Infantry refilled their empty cartridge-boxes from those of the grenadiers, but their ammunition was soon once more exhausted, and they then charged up the hills between Solferino and Cavriana with fixed bayonets. With General Mellinet's help, they succeeded in taking these positions in the face of considerable opposition. Rebecco, after changing hands repeatedly, was finally recaptured and held by General Renault.

In an assault on Mount Fontana, the Algerian sharpshooters had heavy casualties. Their Colonels, Laure and Herment, were killed, and their officers fell in great numbers, but this only served to redouble their fury. Vowing to avenge their dead, they rushed at their enemies with African rage and Mussulman fanaticism, killing frantically and without quarter or mercy, like

tigers that have tasted blood. The Croats would throw themselves to the ground, or hide in ditches, until their adversaries drew close—then rise suddenly and shoot them down at point-blank range.

At San Martino, Captain Pallavicini, an officer of Bersaglieri, was wounded; his soldiers lifted him in their arms and carried him to a chapel where he was given first aid. But the Austrians, who had been momentarily repulsed, returned to the charge and forced their way into the chapel. The Bersaglieri were not strong enough to resist them, and had to desert their commander; whereupon the Croats picked up heavy stones from the doorway and crushed the skull of the poor Captain, whose brains spattered their tunics.

From the midst of all this fighting, which went on and on all over the battlefield, arose the oaths and curses of men of all the different nations engaged—men, of whom many had been made into murderers at the age of twenty!

In the thickest of the fight, Napoleon's chaplain, the Abbé Laine, went from one field hospital to the next bringing consolation and sympathy to the dying. The death-dealing storm of steel and sulphur and lead which swept the ground shook the earth beneath his feet, and more and more martyrs were added to the human hecatomb as the firing lines ploughed the air with their deadly lightning. A Second Lieutenant of the line had his left arm broken by a chain shot, and blood poured from the wound. A Hungarian officer saw one of his men aiming at the boy; the officer stopped him, and then, going up to the wounded man, wrung his hand

compassionately and gave orders for him to be carried to a safer place.

The canteen women moved about the field under enemy fire like the soldiers. They were often wounded themselves as they went among the wounded men, lifting their heads and giving them drink as they cried piteously for water.<sup>1</sup> An officer of Hussars, weakened by loss of blood, was struggling to get clear of the body of his horse, which had fallen heavily on him when hit by a shell splinter. A run-away horse galloped by, dragging the bleeding body of his rider. The horses, more merciful than the men on their backs, kept trying to pick their way so as to avoid stepping on the victims of this furious, passionate battle.

An officer of the Foreign Legion was struck dead by a bullet, while his dog, which was deeply attached to him, was running at his side. This dog had come with him from Algeria, and was the pet of the entire regiment. The dog too was wounded a few steps further on, but found strength to drag itself back to die beside its master. In another regiment a goat, which had been adopted by a sharpshooter and was a favourite with all the soldiers, pushed fearlessly forward in the attack on Solferino, braving shot and shell with the troops.

How many brave soldiers, undeterred by their first wounds, kept pressing on until a fresh shot brought

<sup>1</sup> These may have been the women who were burned alive by the Mexicans on June 9th, 1862. They were chained to powder wagons along with ten soldiers, who were surrounded by a guerrilla band two and a half miles from Tejeria, when engaged in taking a supply of food and ammunition from Vera Cruz to the French camp.

them to earth, and they could fight no longer! In other sectors, whole battalions were forced to stand steady, awaiting the order to advance, under a murderous fire. They had to stand motionless, boiling with impatience, looking on while they were shot down one after another.

The Sardinians defended, and then attacked, the hills of San Martino, Roccolo, and Madonna della Scoperta, time after time, throughout the day. These positions were taken and retaken five or six times, and the Sardinians finally became masters of Pozzolengo, although they showed little coordination and worked largely as independent divisions. Their generals, Mollard, de la Marmora, Della Rocca, Durando, Fanti, Cialdini, Cucchiari, de Sonnaz, with their officers of all arms and of all ranks, were there with their King, under whose very eyes three generals, Perrier, Cerale, and Arnoldi, were wounded.

In the French Army, after the Marshals and Generals, mention cannot be omitted of the glorious deeds of the brave Brigadiers, the brilliant Colonels, the fearless Majors and valiant Captains, who did so much to bring about the victory of that famous day. It was, indeed, no small honour to have fought and defeated such warriors as Prince Alexander of Hesse, Stadion, Benedek, or Karl von Windisch-Graetz!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Concerning General Forey, let us borrow a few words about him from Colonel Edmond Favre's fine book "L'Armée prussienne et les manœuvres de Cologne en 1861".

"That very day the King invited us to dinner at Benrath Castle near Düsseldorf. Before he sat down at the table, the King took the hands of

“It seemed as if the wind was carrying us forward”, a simple soldier picturesquely expressed it, trying to give an idea of the spirit and enthusiasm of the comrades who went with him into battle. “The smell of powder, the noise of the guns, drums beating and bugles sounding, it all puts life into you and stirs you up!” Truly it did seem in that battle that each man was fighting as if his own personal reputation were at stake, as though it had been a matter of his own credit that the victory should be won.

There was certainly, in the non-commissioned ranks of the French Army, an unusual eagerness and bravery. Nothing could stop these men. They led their soldiers into the most dangerous, the most exposed parts of the fight, like men going to a feast. This quality of theirs is, no doubt, one factor in the superiority of the French Army to the armies of the other great nations of the world.

The Emperor Francis Joseph’s troops had fallen back; Count Wimpffen’s Army was the first to receive from its commander the order to retreat, even before Marshal Canrobert had brought all his men into action.

General Forey and General Paumgarten: ‘Now that you are friends,’ he said laughing, ‘sit there side by side and talk.’ Now Forey was the conqueror of Montebello, and Paumgarten had been in command against him; but now they could ask one another questions about all the details of the battle. One look at the Austrian General’s loyal smile was enough evidence that all bitterness was over. As for the French General, we all know that he had no reason for feeling any. Such is war; such is the life of a soldier. These two generals who were so friendly that autumn, will perhaps be fighting each other again next year, and then dine together again somewhere the year following!”

Count Schlick's army, in spite of Count Stadion's firm stand, was weakened by irresolute support from Field-M Marshals Clam-Gallas and Zobel (except for the Prince of Hesse's Division); it was forced to abandon all the positions which the Austrians had turned into a regular chain of fortresses.

Meanwhile the sky had darkened and heavy clouds covered the horizon. The wind broke furiously, twisting off the branches of the trees and bearing them away into space. A cold rain driven by the tempest, a regular cloud-burst, drenched the soldiers who were already weakened by hunger and exhaustion, and at the same time squalls arose bringing whirlwinds of blinding dust. So there were now the elements to fight as well as the enemy. Bowing under the storm, the Austrians nevertheless rallied to their officers' call; but about five o'clock the massacre was arrested, first in one place and then in another, by torrents of rain and hail, by thunder and lightning, and by darkness covering the field.

All through the fighting the Chief of the House of Hapsburg showed admirable calm and self-possession. When Cavriana was taken he was standing with Count Schlick and his aide, the Prince of Nassau, on a height called the "Madonna della Pieve", near a church surrounded with cypress trees. After the Austrian main body had given ground, and their left wing had no more hope of forcing the Allies' position, a general retreat was decided upon. The Emperor, at that solemn moment, resigned himself to going with part of his staff toward Volta, while the Archdukes and the Grand-

Duke of Tuscany withdrew to Valeggio. At some points the German troops were seized with panic, and for certain regiments, retreat lapsed into disorderly rout. Their officers, who had fought like lions, could not hold them back. Encouragement, abuse, sword-blows, nothing could stop the rout. Terrified, these soldiers, who had fought so bravely, now accepted blows and insults rather than abandon their flight.

The Austrian Emperor's despair was terrible. He had borne himself like a hero; he had seen shot and shell raining around him all day long; and now he could not help weeping in the face of this disaster. In his distress, he threw himself into the path of the fleeing men, calling them cowards. When calm succeeded these outbursts of vehemence, he gazed in silence at the scene of desolation, with great tears streaming down his cheeks, and he at last consented to leave Volta for Valeggio only after much urging by his aides.

In their consternation, Austrian officers threw themselves into the teeth of death, such was their anger and despair. But they sold their lives dearly. Some of them killed themselves in their grief and fury, unable to bear to survive this fatal defeat. Most of them rejoined their regiments covered with their own blood or with that of their enemies. Let us give to their valiance the praise it deserves.

All day long the Emperor Napoleon was to be seen wherever his presence seemed to be needed. He had with him Marshal Vaillant, Major-General of the Army, General Martimprey, Assistant-Major-General, Count Roguet, Count de Montebello, General Fleury,

the Prince de la Moskowa, Colonels Reille and Robert, the Imperial Escort, and the Squadron of the One Hundred Guards. Wherever there were the most difficult obstacles to be overcome, the Emperor would himself direct the battle, with no thought for the dangers that threatened him ceaselessly. On Mount Fenile, his surgeon, Baron Larrey, had his horse shot from under him, and several of the Hundred Guards were hit. He lodged at Cavriana in the house where the Austrian Emperor had been on the very same day, and from there he sent a dispatch to the Empress to tell her of his victory.

The French Army encamped on the heights it had taken during the battle; the Guard bivouacked between Solferino and Cavriana; the first two Corps remained on the hills around Solferino; the Third was at Rebecco, the Fourth at Volta.

Guidizzolo was held by the Austrians until ten o'clock at night. Their retreat was covered on the left wing by Field-Marshal von Veigl, and on the right by Field-Marshal Benedek, who held Pozzolengo until late into the night. He thus protected the retreat of Counts Stadion and Clam-Gallas, in which the Koller and Gaal Brigades and the Reischach Regiment did particularly well. The Brandenstein and Wussin Brigades, under the Prince of Hesse, had made for Volta, where they helped the artillery to cross the Mincio at Borghetto and Valeggio.

The Austrian stragglers were collected and taken to Valeggio; the roads were littered with baggage belonging to the different corps, or with pontoon trains and

artillery reserves, all pushing and crowding to get to the pass at Valeggio as fast as they could. Pontoon bridges, quickly placed in position, enabled the Army Train to be saved. The first detachments of slightly wounded men were by this time beginning to reach Villafranca. After them came the more seriously injured, and all that sad night they kept coming in droves. The doctors dressed their wounds, gave them a little nourishment, and sent them in railway carriages to Verona, where the congestion became horrible. But though the Army, in its retreat, picked up all the wounded men it could carry in military wagons and requisitioned carts, how many unfortunate men were left behind, lying helpless on the naked ground in their own blood!

Toward the end of the day, when the shades of night began to cover this immense field of slaughter, many a French officer and soldier went searching high and low for a comrade, a countryman or a friend. If he came across someone he knew, he would kneel at his side trying to bring him back to life, press his hand, staunch the bleeding, or bind the broken limb with a handkerchief. But there was no water to be had for the poor sufferer. How many silent tears were shed that miserable night when all false pride, all human decency even, were forgotten!

When the action started, field hospitals were set up in farms, houses, churches and convents, and even in the open under the trees. Here, officers wounded in the morning had been given some sort of treatment, and after them non-commissioned officers and soldiers. All the French surgeons showed tireless devotion to

duty; several took no rest at all for more than twenty-four hours. Two of them, working in the ambulance directed by Doctor Méry, Surgeon-in-Chief of the Guard, had so many amputations to make and so many dressings to apply that they fainted away. In another ambulance, one of their colleagues was so exhausted that he had to have his arms steadied by two soldiers as he went about his work.

During a battle, a black flag floating from a high place is the usual means of showing the location of first-aid posts or field ambulances, and it is tacitly agreed that no one shall fire in their direction. But sometimes shells reach these nevertheless, and their quartermaster and ambulance men are no more spared than are the wagons loaded with bread, wine and meat to make soup for the wounded. Wounded soldiers who can still walk come by themselves to these ambulances; but in many cases they are so weakened by loss of blood and exposure that they have to be carried on stretchers or litters.

Over the long stretch of broken country, twelve and a half miles long, over which the battle raged—after all the confused phases of the gigantic conflict—soldiers, officers and generals could have but a vague notion of the outcome of the numerous engagements that had taken place. Even while they were fighting, they could hardly tell what was going on beside them. This ignorance was made worse in the Austrian Army by the lack of proper and adequate general orders.

All the hills between Castiglione and Volta were alight with fires, fed with the wreckage of Austrian

caissons and with branches broken from the trees by shells and by the storm. Before these fires soldiers set their wet clothing to dry, while they slept on the stones or on the ground nearby. But there was no rest yet for such of them as were unwounded, for water had to be found to make soup and coffee, after a whole day without food and rest.

What harrowing experiences and cruel disappointments! Whole battalions were left without food; companies which had been ordered to drop their knapsacks had nothing at all. In some quarters there was no water, and the thirst was so terrible that officers and men alike fell to drinking from muddy pools whose water was foul and filled with curdled blood.

A group of Hussars, coming back to camp between ten and twelve o'clock at night, dead tired, after a fatigue in search of wood and water to make coffee, found so many dying men who begged for water along their way that they had emptied almost all their water-bottles to satisfy their needs. They managed, however, to make their coffee; but then, just as it was ready to drink, shots were heard in the distance and the alarm was sounded. The Hussars mounted quickly, and rode off in the direction of the firing, without taking time to swallow their coffee, which was spilt in their haste. They soon found that what they had taken for the enemy returning to the charge, was only firing from the French outposts, where sentinels had mistaken some of their own soldiers, looking for wood and water, for Austrians. After this alarm, the harassed cavalymen returned to throw themselves on the ground and sleep

all night without having taken any nourishment. As they made their way back, they again passed many wounded men crying out for water. A Tyrolean lying near their bivouac kept calling to them, but there was no water to give him. The next morning they found him dead, with his mouth full of earth and foam on his lips. His swollen face was green and black, and he had been writhing in fearful convulsions; the nails on his clenched hands were twisted backwards.

The stillness of the night was broken by groans, by stifled sighs of anguish and suffering. Heart-rending voices kept calling for help. Who could ever describe the agonies of that fearful night!

When the sun came up on the twenty-fifth, it disclosed the most dreadful sights imaginable. Bodies of men and horses covered the battlefield; corpses were strewn over roads, ditches, ravines, thickets and fields; the approaches of Solferino were literally thick with dead. The fields were devastated, wheat and corn lying flat on the ground, fences broken, orchards ruined; here and there were pools of blood. The villages were deserted and bore the scars left by musket shots, bombs, rockets, grenades and shells. Walls were broken down and pierced with gaps where cannonballs had crushed through them. Houses were riddled with holes, shattered and ruined, and their inhabitants, who had been in hiding, crouching in cellars without light or food for nearly twenty hours, were beginning to crawl out, looking stunned by the terrors they had endured. All around Solferino, and especially in the village cemetery, the ground was littered with guns, knap-



*The Attack on Solferino*



*"Compact columns of men throw themselves upon each other with the impetuosity of a destructive torrent that carries everything before it..."*  
(p. 18)

sacks, cartridge-boxes, mess tins, helmets, shakoes, fatigue-caps, belts, equipment of every kind, remnants of blood-stained clothing and piles of broken weapons.

The poor wounded men that were being picked up all day long were ghastly pale and exhausted. Some, who had been the most badly hurt, had a stupefied look as though they could not grasp what was said to them; they stared at one out of haggard eyes, but their apparent prostration did not prevent them from feeling their pain. Others were anxious and excited by nervous strain and shaken by spasmodic trembling. Some, who had gaping wounds already beginning to show infection, were almost crazed with suffering. They begged to be put out of their misery, and writhed with faces distorted in the grip of the death-struggle.

There were poor fellows who had not only been hit by bullets or knocked down by shell splinters, but whose arms and legs had been broken by artillery wheels passing over them. The impact of a cylindrical bullet shatters bones into a thousand pieces, and wounds of this kind are always very serious. Shell-splinters and conical bullets also cause agonizingly painful fractures, and often frightful internal injuries. All kinds of splinters, pieces of bone, scraps of clothing, equipment or footgear, dirt or pieces of lead, often aggravate the severity of a wound and double the suffering that must be borne.

Anyone crossing the vast theatre of the previous day's fighting could see at every step, in the midst of chaotic disorder, despair unspeakable and misery of every kind. Some regiments had dropped their knap-

sacks, and the contents had been rifled by Lombard peasants and men of the Algerian Sharpshooters, who snapped up whatever came their way. Thus, the Light Infantry of the Guard had left their packs near Castiglione, so that they could march light when they went to the help of Forey's Division attacking Solferino. They fought all day long, pushing further and further ahead, and finally spent the night near Cavriana. Next morning at daybreak they went back for their knapsacks, only to find them empty; everything had been stolen in the night. The loss was a cruel one for those poor soldiers. Their underclothes and uniforms were dirty and stained, worn and torn, and now they found all their clothing gone, perhaps all their small savings with it, besides things of sentimental value that made them think of home or of their families—things given them by their mothers, or sisters, or sweethearts. Looters stole even from the dead, and did not always care if their poor wounded victims were still alive. The Lombard peasants seemed especially greedy for boots, and wrenched them ruthlessly off the swollen feet of the dead.

There were solemn scenes and pathetic episodes, besides these dreadful incidents. Old General Le Breton went to and fro in search of his wounded son-in-law, General Douay. He had left his daughter, Mme Douay, amid the scenes of wild confusion a few miles away, in a state of fearful anxiety. Here Lieutenant-Colonel de Neuchèze lay dead, killed as he leaped to take command when he saw his chief, Colonel Vaubert de Genlis, thrown from his horse badly wounded. A

bullet had struck de Neuchèze's heart. Colonel Genlis was in a high fever, and only now was being given first-aid; and beside him lay Second Lieutenant de Selve de Sarran, of the Horse Artillery, who had only been out of Saint-Cyr for a month and had to lose his right arm. Here again was a poor Sergeant-Major of the Vincennes Light Infantry, with both legs shot through. I was to see him again in hospital at Brescia, and yet again in the train from Milan to Turin. He died as a result of his wounds, in the Mont-Cenis Tunnel. Lieutenant de Guiseul, who was believed to be dead, was discovered where he had fallen, unconscious, still holding his flag. Nearby, in the centre of a mass of dead—Austrian lancers and infantrymen, Turcos and Zouaves—lay the body of a Mussulman officer, Larbi den Lagdar, in his elegant Oriental uniform. The dark, weather-beaten face of the Lieutenant of Algerian Sharpshooters, lay on the breast of an Illyrian captain whose tunic still gleamed spotlessly white. These piles of human wreckage gave forth a stench of blood.

Colonel de Maleville, who had been wounded fighting heroically at Casa Nova, now breathed his last; Major Pongibaud died during the night and was buried. They found the body of the young Count de Saint Paër, who had risen to the command of his battalion only a week earlier. Second Lieutenant Fournier, of the Light Infantry of the Guard, had been gravely wounded the previous day, and now his military career was ended. He was only twenty years old; he had joined up as a volunteer, at the age of ten; at eleven he became a corporal, at sixteen a Second Lieutenant. He had been

in two African campaigns, and during the Crimean War was wounded at Sebastopol.<sup>1</sup> The last bearer of a name which was one of the most glorious of the First Empire was to die at Solferino—Lt. Colonel Junot, Duke of Abrantès, Chief of Staff of the former military commandant of Constantinople, the brave General de Faily.

The lack of water was more and more cruelly felt; the ditches were drying up, and the soldiers had for the most part only polluted and brackish water to quench their thirst. Wherever springs had been found, armed sentries were posted to keep the water for the sick. Near Cavriana, a swamp that had become foul served for two days to water twenty thousand artillery and cavalry horses. Some wounded, riderless beasts, after wandering all night long, dragged themselves towards the horselines as if asking their fellows for help, and were shot to put them out of their misery. One noble, beautifully caparisoned charger strayed into the middle of a French detachment, the saddlebag he carried still fixed to his saddle. It contained letters and objects that showed he must have belonged to the valiant Prince of Isenburg. A search for his master was begun, and the

<sup>1</sup> Second Lieutenant Jean-François Fournier, born at Metz, February 6, 1839. Enlisted as a volunteer in the Foreign Legion, June 4, 1849, and went to Algeria. Made corporal April 6, 1850, sergeant April 1, 1851, quartermaster corporal July 11, 1852, and quartermaster-sergeant in 1854. He went through the Crimean War as sergeant-major in 1855–56, and was made Second Lieutenant in the 42nd Regiment of the Line on November 20, 1855. He was transferred to the Second Regiment of the Light Infantry of the Guard on October 13, 1856, with the same rank. He was mortally wounded on June 24, 1859, and died on June 25th.

Austrian Prince was discovered among the dead bodies, wounded and unconscious from loss of blood. But he was immediately treated by the French surgeons and was eventually able to go home to his family, who had given him up for dead and had been wearing mourning for him for several weeks.

Some of the soldiers who lay dead had a calm expression, those who had been killed outright. But many were disfigured by the torments of the death-struggle, their limbs stiffened, their bodies blotched with ghastly spots, their hands clawing at the ground, their eyes staring widely, their moustaches bristling above clenched teeth that were bared in a sinister convulsive grin.

It took three days and three nights to bury the dead on the battlefield,<sup>1</sup> but in such a wide area many bodies which lay hidden in ditches, in trenches, or concealed under bushes or mounds of earth, were found only much later; they, and the dead horses, gave forth a fearful stench.

In the French Army a certain number of soldiers were detailed from each company to identify and bury the dead. Usually they picked out the men of their own units. They took the regimental number on the dead man's belongings, and then, with the help of Lombard peasants paid for the purpose, laid the body, clothed, in a common grave. Unhappily, in

<sup>1</sup> During three weeks following June 24, 1859, dead soldiers from both armies were picked up on the battlefield. It has been claimed, quite wrongly, that that one day, June 25, had sufficed to find and remove all the French and Austrian wounded. This is absolutely untrue.

their haste to finish their work, and because of the carelessness and gross negligence of some of the peasants, there is every reason to believe that more than one live man was buried with the dead. The decorations, money, watches, letters and papers found on the officers were later sent to their families; but it was not always possible to fulfill this duty properly, with such a vast number of bodies to be buried.

A son idolized by his parents, brought up and cherished for years by a loving mother who trembled with alarm over his slightest ailment; a brilliant officer, beloved by his family, with a wife and children at home; a young soldier who had left sweetheart or mother, sisters or old father, to go to war; all lie stretched in the mud and dust, drenched in their own blood! The handsome manly face is beyond recognition, for sword or shot has done its disfiguring work. The wounded man agonizes, dies, and his dear body, blackened, swollen and hideous, will soon be thrown just as it is into a half-dug grave, with only a few shovelfuls of lime and earth over it! The birds of prey will have no pity for those hands and feet when they protrude, as the wet earth dries, from the mound of dirt that is his tomb. Later someone will perhaps come back, throw on some more earth, set up a wooden cross over his resting place—and that will be all!

Austrian bodies lay in thousands on hills and earthworks, on the tops of mounds, strewn in groves and woods, or over the fields and plains of Medola.

Over the torn cloth jackets, the muddy grey great coats, or once white tunics, now dyed red with blood, swarmed masses of greedy flies; and birds of prey hovered above the putrefying corpses, hoping for a feast. The bodies were piled by the hundreds in great common graves.

How many young Hungarians, Bohemians, or Roumanians, enrolled only a few weeks earlier, had thrown themselves down, worn out and hungry once they were out of the range of guns, never to rise again! Some were only slightly wounded, but so weakened by loss of blood that they died miserably from exhaustion and hunger.

Among the Austrian prisoners, some were terrified because someone had thought fit to tell them that the French, and especially the Zouaves, were merciless demons. Some of them, indeed, when they arrived in Brescia and saw trees bordering a walk in the town, asked in all seriousness whether those were the trees from which they would be hanged. Several, on being shown kindness by French soldiers, repaid them in the strangest ways—poor blind, ignorant fellows! On the Saturday morning, a French rifleman saw an Austrian lying on the ground in a pitiful state, and went to him with a flask of water to give him a drink. The Austrian could not believe that he meant well by him and, seizing the musket lying beside him, he struck at the Frenchman with the butt with all the strength he had left. The charitable rifleman was left with his heel and leg bruised. A Grenadier of the Guard went to pick up another badly wounded

Austrian. The man reached for a loaded pistol which was beside him, and fired point-blank at his rescuer.<sup>1</sup>

“Do not be surprised by the harshness and roughness of some of our troops,” an Austrian officer told me, “we have savages from the most distant corners of the Empire; in a word, we have real barbarians in our army.”

Some French soldiers were minded to take reprisals on a few prisoners whom they took for Croats, saying angrily that “those tight-trousers”, as they called them, always killed the wounded. The prisoners were in reality Hungarians, who wear a uniform similar to that of the Croats but are much less cruel. I succeeded in explaining this distinction to the French soldiers and in getting the trembling Hungarians away from them. However, for the most part, with very few exceptions, the feeling of the French toward their prisoners was nothing but goodwill; thus, some Austrian officers were permitted to keep their swords or sabres, through the courtesy of French Army commanders. They were given the same food as the French officers, and their wounded were treated by the same doctors. One of them was even allowed to fetch his belongings. Many French soldiers shared their rations in a brotherly way

<sup>1</sup> At Marignan, a Sardinian sentinel stationed in an outpost was surprised by a detachment of Austrian soldiers, and they gouged out his eyes—to teach him, so they said, to be more observant another time. A straggler from the Bersaglieri also fell into the hands of a band of Austrians, who cut off his fingers and then set him free, telling him in Italian: “Go and get yourself a pension!” Let us hope that these two outrages (which are authentic) were almost the only ones of this kind committed during the Italian campaign.

with prisoners who were dying of hunger; others carried wounded men of the enemy army to field hospitals on their backs and gave them all sorts of care, showing remarkable devotion and profound sympathy. French officers nursed Austrian soldiers themselves; one of them bound up a Tyrolean's wounded head with his own handkerchief, because the man had nothing to cover it but a piece of old rag covered with blood.

I could mention any number of isolated acts and incidents to prove the high character of the French Army and the courage of its officers and men, but mention must also be made of the humanity of simple troopers.<sup>1</sup> Their kindness and sympathy towards de-

<sup>1</sup> The French soldiers showed the greatest respect for all property belonging to the people of the country. Their sense of discipline, their politeness, their sobriety and good behaviour during the Italian War deserve high commendation.

Proclamations like those of Marshal Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely or of General Trochu are worth quoting in these various connections, and they reflect glory on the men who addressed them to their soldiers.

"In the campaign now opening," said General Trochu in his proclamation of May 4, 1859, dated from Alexandria and read, on parade, to all the companies of his Division, "we will confront with ardour the hardest tests we may meet with, and they have already begun. We will be disciplined, and will conform to the regulations, which I shall enforce inflexibly. On the day of battle we will not allow the brave to be braver than us. We will not forget that the natives of the land are our allies; we will respect their customs, their property and their persons. We will wage war in a manner humane and civilized. If we do this our efforts will be honourable, God will bless them, and I who command you will count my title of Commander of the Second Division the most noble of my career."

On May 18, 1859, at Marengo, Marshal Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely addressed these words to the Imperial Guard: "Soldiers of the Guard, ... you will give the army an example of fearlessness in danger, of order and discipline on the march, of dignity and restraint in the country in which you

feated or captured enemies were as fine as their fearlessness and bravery. It is a recognized fact that really first-rate soldiers are gentle and polite, just as any other really distinguished people are; French officers are usually not only amiable, but chivalrous and generous. They well deserve the praise of General von Salm, who was made prisoner by the French at the battle of Nerwinde, and treated with every courtesy by the Marshal de Luxembourg. He said to the Chevalier du Rozel: "What a nation you are! You fight like lions, and once you have beaten your enemies you treat them as though they were your best friends!"

The Quartermaster's Department continued to collect the wounded, and remove them, whether their wounds had been dressed or no, on stretchers or chairs strapped to mule saddles, to field hospitals. From there they were sent to whatever town or centre was nearest to the place where they had been wounded or found. Every church, convent, house, public square, court, street or pathway in these villages was turned into a temporary hospital. Many sufferers were taken to Carpenedolo, Castel, Goffredo, Medola, Guidizzolo, Volta, and all the surrounding places, but the largest number went to Castiglione, whither the less severely injured had managed to drag themselves alone.

The long procession of Commissary carts filed in, loaded with soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and even commissioned officers, all ranks mixed up

are engaged. The memory of your own families will make you considerate of the people of the country and will keep alive your respect for property, and you may be sure that victory awaits you. ..."

together; cavalrymen, infantrymen, artillerymen, all bleeding, exhausted, torn, and covered with dust. Then came the mules, at a trot that made the miserable wounded they carried cry out again and again in pain. One man had a fractured leg, and it seemed almost completely severed from his body, so that each jolt of the cart made his suffering more agonizing. Another had a broken arm which he held and protected with the good one. A corporal, whose arm had been pierced through by the stick of a Congreve rocket, had pulled the stick out himself, and used it to walk to Castiglione with. Some died on the way, and their bodies were left beside the road to be buried later.

From Castiglione the wounded were supposed to go on to hospitals in Brescia, Cremona, Bergamo and Milan, to be given regular care, or undergo any amputations that might be necessary. But the Austrians had requisitioned and removed all the carts in the neighborhood, and since the French army's means of transport were absolutely insufficient for such a fearful number of wounded, they had to be kept waiting in the field ambulances for two or three days before they could be taken to Castiglione.

The crowding in Castiglione<sup>1</sup> became something

<sup>1</sup> Castiglione della Stiviere, lying six miles south-east of Brescia, has a population of about 5,300. It was before Castiglione that on August 5, 1796, General Bonaparte, with the Army of Italy, won an important victory over the Austrian Field-Marshal Wurmaser. This was two days after the town had been taken by General D'Augereau. Near Castiglione, on the Chiese, the Duke of Vendôme had beaten Marshal von Reventlow, who commanded the Imperial Troops in the absence of Prince Eugene, at the battle of Calcinato, on April 19, 1706.

unspeakable. The town was completely transformed into a vast improvised hospital for French and Austrians. On the Friday, hospital headquarters had been established there, and wagons full of lint, equipment and medicines had been unpacked. The townspeople gave all the blankets, linen and mattresses they could spare. The hospital of Castiglione, the Church, the San Luigi monastery and barracks, the Capuchin Church, the police barracks, the churches of San Maggiore, San Guiseppe, and Santa Rosalia, were all filled with wounded men, piled on one another and with nothing but straw to lie on. Straw had also been spread in the streets, courtyards and squares, and here and there wooden shelters had been thrown up or pieces of cloth stretched, so that the wounded pouring in from all directions might have a little shelter from the sun. Private houses were very soon taken over; the more well-off among their owners welcomed officers and soldiers, and busied themselves in providing what little they could to relieve their pain. Some ran wildly through the streets, looking for a doctor for their guests. Others went to and fro in the town distraught, begging to have the dead taken from their houses, for they did not know how to get rid of them. Doctor Bertherand, who had been doing amputations at Castiglione since Friday morning, gave his skilled services to many distinguished officers who were brought there, among them Generals de Ladmirault, Dieu, and Auger, and Colonels Brouetta and Brincourt. Two other surgeons-in-chief, Doctor Leuret and Doctor Haspel, two Italian doctors, and assistant surgeons Riolacci and



*Castiglione delle Stiviere (Chiesa Maggiore)*



*"I sought to organize as best I could relief in the quarters where it seemed to be most lacking, and I adopted in particular one of the Castiglione churches, on a height on the left coming from Brescia, and called, I think, the Chiesa Maggiore. Nearly five hundred soldiers were there, piled in the church, and a hundred more lay outside on straw in front of the church..."*  
(p. 63)

Lobstein, put on splints and made dressings for two days. They did not rest from their painful task even during the night. General Auger, of the Artillery, was first taken to Casa Morino where hospital headquarters were established for Marshal Mac-Mahon's corps to which he belonged, but he was brought later to Castiglione. This distinguished officer had his left shoulder fractured by a ball that became imbedded deep in the muscles of the arm-pit and stayed there for twenty-four hours. He died on the twenty-ninth, as a result of an operation that involved removal of the limb, which was attempted in order to extract the bullet, the wound having become gangrenous.

On the Saturday, the number of convoys of wounded increased to such proportions that the local authorities, the townspeople, and the troops left in Castiglione, were absolutely incapable of dealing with all the suffering. Scenes as tragic as those of the day before, though of a very different sort, began to take place. There was water and food, but even so, men died of hunger and thirst; there was plenty of lint, but there were not enough hands to dress wounds; most of the army doctors had to go on to Cavriana, there was a shortage of medical orderlies, and at this critical time no help was to be had. Somehow or other a volunteer service had to be organized; but this was very difficult amid such disorder; what was worse, a kind of panic seized the people of Castiglione, adding disastrously to the confusion and aggravating the miserable condition of the wounded by throwing them into a state of excitement.

This panic had been caused by an incident trivial enough in reality. As each corps of the French Army re-formed and re-organized, on the day after the battle, convoys of prisoners were formed and marched to Brescia through Castiglione and Montechiero. One of these detachments of prisoners, escorted by Hussars, was marching from Cavriana towards Castiglione in the afternoon. The townspeople, seeing it approaching from a distance, stupidly took it for the Austrian Army coming back in a body. The news was spread by peasants, by extra drivers in the baggage train of the army, and by the small pedlars who generally follow the troops in a campaign; and in spite of the absurdity and improbability of such a report, the townsfolk gave it credence when they saw these creatures plunge into their midst gasping with terror. Immediately houses were shut, their inmates barricaded themselves in, burned the tricolor flags that had decorated their windows, and hid in their cellars or attics. Some fled to the fields with their wives and children, carrying their valuables with them. Others, a little less nervous, stayed in their homes, but hastily took in the first Austrian wounded they found lying in the streets, and suddenly began lavishing thoughtfulness and care upon them. In the streets and on the roads, which were crowded with ambulances making for Brescia, and with food supplies coming from there for the army, baggage-wagons were hauled away at full speed, horses made off in all directions amid cries of fear and shouts of anger, limbers carrying baggage were overturned, and loads of biscuit were thrown into the

ditches beside the highway. Finally, the extra drivers, terror-stricken, unharnessed their horses and rode off at the gallop along the road to Montechiero and Brescia, sowing panic as they went, and causing unspeakable turmoil, running into the carts laden with food and bread which were regularly sent by the civil administration of Brescia to the camp of the Allied Army, involving all they met in their flight, and trampling underfoot the wounded who cried to them to pick them up. Many wounded men, deaf to all remonstrances, tore off their bandages and staggered out of the churches into the streets; with no clear idea where they could go.

Oh, the agony and suffering during those days, the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh of June! Wounds were infected by the heat and dust, by shortage of water and lack of proper care, and grew more and more painful. Foul exhalations contaminated the air, in spite of the praiseworthy attempts of the authorities to keep hospital areas in a sanitary condition. The convoys brought a fresh contingent of wounded men into Castiglione every quarter of an hour, and the shortage of assistants, orderlies and helpers was cruelly felt. In spite of the activity of one army doctor and two or three other persons in organizing transportation to Brescia by ox-cart, and in spite of the spontaneous help given by carriage-owners in Brescia, who came to fetch officer patients with their carriages, cases could not be evacuated nearly as quickly as new ones came in, and the congestion grew worse and worse.

Men of all nations lay side by side on the flagstone floors of the churches of Castiglione—Frenchmen and Arabs, Germans and Slavs. Ranged for the time being close together inside the chapels, they no longer had the strength to move, or if they had there was no room for them to do so. Oaths, curses and cries such as no words can describe resounded from the vaulting of the sacred buildings.

“Oh, Sir, I’m in such pain!” several of these poor fellows said to me, “they desert us, leave us to die miserably, and yet we fought so hard!” They could get no rest, although they were tired out and had not slept for nights. They called out in their distress for a doctor, and writhed in desperate convulsions that ended in tetanus and death. Some of the soldiers got the idea that cold water poured on already festering wounds caused worms to appear, and for this absurd reason they refused to allow their bandages to be moistened. Others, who were fortunate enough to have had their wounds dressed at once in field hospitals, received no fresh dressings at Castiglione during their enforced stay there; the tight bandages that had been put on to help them to stand the jolts of the road having been neither replaced nor loosened, these men were undergoing perfect tortures.

With faces black with the flies that swarmed about their wounds, men gazed around them, wild-eyed and helpless. Others were no more than a worm-ridden, inextricable compound of coat and shirt and flesh and blood. Many were shuddering at the thought of being devoured by the worms, which they thought they could

see coming out of their bodies (whereas they really came from the myriads of flies which infested the air). There was one poor man, completely disfigured, with a broken jaw and his swollen tongue hanging out of his mouth. He was tossing and trying to get up. I moistened his dry lips and hardened tongue, took a handful of lint and dipped it in the bucket they were carrying behind me, and squeezed the water from this improvised sponge into the deformed opening that had been his mouth. Another wretched man had had a part of his face—nose, lips and chin—taken off by a sabre cut. He could not speak, and lay, half-blind, making heart-rending signs with his hands and uttering guttural sounds to attract attention. I gave him a drink and poured a little fresh water on his bleeding face. A third, with his skull gaping wide open, was dying, spitting out his brains on the stone floor. His companions in suffering kicked him out of their way, as he blocked the passage. I was able to shelter him for the last moments of his life, and I laid a handkerchief over his poor head, which still just moved.

Although every house had become an infirmary, and each household had plenty to do in taking care of the wounded officers within its doors, I succeeded, by the Sunday morning, in getting together a certain number of women who helped as best they could with the efforts made to aid the wounded. It was not a matter of amputations or operations of any kind. But food, and above all drink, had to be taken around to men dying of hunger and thirst; then their wounds could be dressed and their bleeding, muddy, vermin-covered bodies

washed; all this in a scorching, filthy atmosphere in the midst of vile, nauseating odours, with lamentations and cries of anguish all around!

Before long a group of volunteer helpers was formed. The Lombard women went first to those who cried the loudest—not always the worst cases. I sought to organize as best I could relief in the quarters where it seemed to be most lacking, and I adopted in particular one of the Castiglione churches, on a height on the left coming from Brescia, and called, I think, the Chiesa Maggiore. Nearly five hundred soldiers were there, piled in the church, and a hundred more lay outside on straw in front of the church, with strips of canvas to protect them from the sun. The women entered the churches, and went from one man to another with jars and canteens full of pure water to quench their thirst and moisten their wounds. Some of these improvised nurses were beautiful and charming girls. Their gentleness and kindness, their tearful and compassionate looks, and their attentive care helped revive a little courage among the patients. The boys of the neighbourhood ran back and forth between the churches and the nearest fountains with buckets, canteens and watering pots.

The distribution of water was followed by issues of soup and beef-tea, which the quartermaster's services were obliged to make in enormous quantities. Immense bales of lint were placed at different points for anybody to use quite freely, but bandages, under-clothing and shirts were not to be had. Resources were so limited in this little town, through which the Austrian army had

passed, that even objects of prime necessity could not be obtained. I succeeded, nevertheless, in buying some new shirts through the good women who had already brought in all their old linen and given it to me, and on the Monday morning I sent my coachman into Brescia for provisions. He came back a few hours later with the carriage loaded with camomile, mallows, elder-flower, oranges, lemons, sugar, shirts, sponges, linen bandages, pins, cigars and tobacco. This made it possible to give out a refreshing drink of lemonade for which the men had been pining—to wash their wounds with mallow-water, to apply warm compresses, and change their dressings. Meantime, we had obtained some new recruits, first an ex-naval officer—then a couple of English tourists who came into the church from curiosity, and whom we seized and held practically by force. On the other hand, two more Englishmen showed the utmost helpfulness from the beginning and distributed cigars among the Austrians. We were also given help by an Italian priest—two or three casual travellers and onlookers—a Paris journalist, who afterwards assumed responsibility for the relief work in another church nearby—and a few officers whose detachment had been ordered to stand by in Castiglione.

Before long, one of these latter found that the scene made him ill, and our other volunteer helpers withdrew one by one, for they could no longer bear to look upon suffering which they could do so little to relieve. The priest followed the rest, but came back again, thoughtfully bringing aromatic herbs and flasks of salts to place under our noses.

One young French tourist, overcome by the sight of the living wrecks before him, burst into sudden sobs. A Neuchâtel merchant devoted himself for two whole days to dressing wounds, and writing farewell letters to their families for dying men. It became necessary, for his own sake, to restrain his zeal, and we had also to calm the sympathetic excitement of a Belgian, which had become such that we feared he might have an access of high fever, as had happened to a Second Lieutenant who joined us on arrival from Milan on his way to his regiment.

Some of the soldiers of the detachment left to garrison the town tried to help their comrades, but they also could not bear a spectacle which told upon their morale, making too deep an impression on their imagination.

An Engineer Corporal, who had been wounded at Magenta and had practically got over his wounds (he was now returning to his battalion, and his orders left him a few days' grace) went with us, and helped us bravely, though he fainted twice in quick succession. The French Quartermaster, who had just taken up his quarters in Castiglione, finally authorized the use of unwounded prisoners for hospital work; and three Austrian doctors came to help a young Corsican military surgeon who came and asked me several times for a certificate placing on record the zeal with which I had seen him work. A German surgeon, who had deliberately remained on the battlefield to bandage the wounds of his compatriots, devoted himself to the wounded of both armies. In recognition of this the Quartermaster's

department sent him back to rejoin the Austrians at Mantua three days later.

“Don’t let me die!” some of these poor fellows would exclaim—and then, suddenly seizing my hand with extraordinary vigour, they felt their access of strength leave them, and died. A young Corporal named Claudius Mazuet, some twenty years old, with gentle expressive features, had a bullet in the left side. There was no hope for him, and of this he was fully aware. When I had helped him to drink, he thanked me, and added with tears in his eyes: “Oh, Sir, if you could write to my father to comfort my mother!” I noted his parents’ address, and a moment later he had ceased to live.<sup>1</sup> An old sergeant, with several service stripes on his sleeve, said to me with the utmost suddenness, with conviction, and with cold bitterness: “If I had been looked after sooner I might have lived, and now by evening I shall be dead!” And by evening he was dead.

“I don’t want to die, I don’t want to die!” shouted a Grenadier of the Guard fiercely. This man who, three days earlier, had been a picture of health and strength, was now wounded to death. He fully realized that his hours were inexorably counted, and strove and struggled against that grim certainty. I spoke to him, and he listened. He allowed himself to be soothed, comforted and consoled, to die at last with the straightforward simplicity of a child.

<sup>1</sup> The parents lived at 3, rue d’Alger, in Lyons, and this young man who had joined the army as a volunteer was their only son. The only news they received of him was that which I gave them. Like many others, his name appeared among the “missing”.

Up at the end of the church, in the altar recess on the left, a trooper of the African Light Infantry lay on straw, uttering no complaint and hardly moving any longer. Three bullets had struck him, one in the right side, one in the left shoulder, and the third in the right leg where it had remained. It was Sunday night, and he said he had had nothing to eat since Friday morning. He was a revolting spectacle, covered with dry mud and clotted blood, his clothing torn and his shirt in shreds. We washed his wounds and gave him a little soup, and I covered him with a blanket. He carried my hand to his lips with an expression of inexpressible gratitude. At the entrance to the church was a Hungarian who never ceased to call out, begging for a doctor in heartbreaking Italian. A burst of grapeshot had ploughed into his back which looked as if it had been furrowed with steel claws, laying bare a great area of red quivering flesh. The rest of his swollen body was all black and green, and he could find no comfortable position to sit or lie in. I moistened great masses of lint in cold water and tried to place this under him, but it was not long before gangrene carried him off.

Close by was a Zouave, who wept and wept and had to be comforted like a little child. The fatigue following their exertions and the lack of food and rest joined with morbid excitement and the fear of dying unaided, developed at this stage, even in soldiers who knew no fear, a nervous and sensitive condition which led them to burst into moans and sobs. One of their uppermost thoughts, when their pain was not too dreadful, was the recollection of their mothers, and the fear of the grief

*l'armée française*  
armée française sur laquelle ils font pleuvoir une grêle incessante d'obus, de bombes et de boulets. Aux épais nuages de la fumée des canons et de la mitraille se mêlent la terre et la poussière que soulève, en frappant le sol à coups redoublés, cette énorme nuée de projectiles. C'est <sup>en affrontant</sup> ~~l'ennemi~~ <sup>le feu</sup> de ces batteries qui grondent en vomissant sur eux la mort, que les Français, comme un autre orage qui se déchaîne <sup>de la plaine</sup> ~~de la plaine~~, s'élancent à l'assaut des positions dont ils sont ~~devenus à l'empire~~.

67  
51  
Mais ~~c'est~~ pendant la chaleur torride du milieu du jour ~~que~~ les combats qui se livrent de toutes parts, deviennent de plus en plus acharnés.

Des colonnes serrées se ~~rencontrent~~ <sup>entrechoquent</sup> les unes sur les autres, avec l'impétuosité d'un torrent dévastateur qui renverse tout sur son passage. <sup>des</sup> régiments français ~~se précipitent~~ <sup>se précipitent</sup> en tirailleurs ~~sur~~ les masses autrichiennes ~~de plus en plus nombreuses et~~ menaçantes et qui, pareilles à des murailles de fer, <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup> soutiennent énergiquement l'attaque. <sup>13</sup> des divisions entières mettent sac à terre afin de pouvoir mieux

The text of the third edition, corrected by Dunant.

se lancer sur l'ennemi, la baïonnette en avant; un bataillon est-il repoussé, un autre lui succède immédiatement. Chaque mamelon, chaque hauteur, chaque crête de rocher voit se livrer des combats opiniâtres: ce sont des morceaux de morts sur les collines et dans les ravins. Autrichiens et Alliés se foulent aux pieds, s'entretoient sur des cadavres sanglants, s'assoient à coups de crosse, se brisent le crâne, s'éventrent avec le sabre ou la baïonnette; il n'y a plus de quartier, c'est une boucherie, un combat de bêtes féroces, furieuses et ivres de sang; les blessés même se défendent jusqu'à la dernière extrémité, celui qui n'a plus d'armes saisit à la gorge son adversaire <sup>ou le</sup> déchire avec ses dents. ~~La lutte~~ <sup>est</sup> ~~si terrible~~ <sup>si</sup> ~~qu'elle~~ <sup>qu'</sup> devient plus effrayante par l'approche d'un escadron de cavalerie; ~~il~~ <sup>ils</sup> passe au galop: les chevaux ~~parassent~~ <sup>parcourent</sup> sous leurs pieds ferrés les morts et les mourants; un pauvre blessé a la mâchoire emportée, un autre la tête écrasée, un troisième qu'on eût pu sauver, a la poitrine enfoncée. Aux hennissements des chevaux se mêlent des vociférations, des cris de

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*moins cruels que les hommes, vivent en vain de fouler les mourants; ils écrasent sous leurs pieds ferrés les morts et les mourants.*

"A Memory of Solferino", first published in Geneva in 1862, was a resounding success throughout the world. It has been translated into more than 17 languages. Dunant did not merely report on the course of the battle; he described the plight of wounded soldiers left to suffer, and the relief operation which he initiated on their behalf. He also proposed the creation of what later came into being as the Red Cross.

their mothers would feel when they heard what had become of them. On one young man's body was found, hanging round his neck, a miniature of an old woman who was no doubt his mother. His left hand seemed still to be pressing the miniature against his heart.

Over against the wall, about one hundred French soldiers and non-commissioned officers, wrapped in their blankets, were stretched in two lines, almost touching, between which it was just possible to pass. All these men had been bandaged. Soup had been issued. They were calm and peaceful, but all their eyes followed me, every head turning to the right if I went to the right, to the left if I went to the left. "Ah," said some, "you can see he is from Paris."<sup>1</sup> "No," said others, "he looks to me as if he came from the South." "You are from Bordeaux, Sir, aren't you?" asked a third. Each man would have it that I came from his province or from his town. The resignation generally shown by these simple troopers is worthy of remark and interest. Considered individually, what did any one of them represent in this great upheaval? Very little. They suffered without complaint. They died humbly and quietly.

It was seldom that the wounded Austrian prisoners sought to defy their conquerors. A few, however,

<sup>1</sup> In the course of the following year I had the satisfaction of meeting in Paris, particularly in the Rue de Rivoli, invalid soldiers, some of them with amputated limbs, who recognized me and stopped me to thank me for my care of them in Castiglione. "We called you the White Gentleman," one of them said, "because you were dressed all in white—and indeed, it *was* pretty hot!"

would not accept help, of which they were suspicious, and tore off their bandages, bringing on fresh bleeding. One Croat seized the bullet which had just been extracted from his wound, and flung it in the surgeon's face. Others remained sullen, silent, and impassive. For the most part they lacked the expansiveness, the cheerful willingness, the expressive and friendly vivacity which are characteristic of the Latin race. Nevertheless, most of them were by no means ungrateful or refractory to kindness, and sincere gratitude might be seen on their surprised faces. One boy of nineteen, who had been laid away with some forty of his nation in the furthest corner of the church, had been without food for three days. He had lost an eye, he was shaking with fever, could no longer speak, and had hardly the strength to drink a little soup; but our care brought him back to life, and twenty-four hours later, when it was possible to send him on to Brescia, he was sad, almost heartbroken, to leave us. In the one magnificent blue eye which remained to him was an expression of real and profound thankfulness, and he pressed the hands of the charitable women of Castiglione to his lips. Another prisoner in high fever drew all eyes to him. He was not yet twenty, but he was quite white-haired. His hair had gone white in the battle, from what he and his comrades said.<sup>1</sup>

How many young men of eighteen and twenty had

<sup>1</sup> I mentioned this fact at a meeting of the Ethnographical Society of Paris and it has been mentioned in the "Revue orientale et américaine" (January 1860), by M. R. Cortambert in his remarkable article "The Hair of Different Peoples".

come reluctantly here, from the depths of Germany or from the Eastern Provinces of the immense Austrian Empire—and some of them, perhaps, under rude compulsion—were forced to suffer not only physical pain, but also the griefs of captivity. And now they must endure the ill-will of the Milanese, who have a profound hatred for their race, for their leaders, and for their Sovereign. These men could count on little sympathy until they should reach French soil. Ah, poor mothers in Germany, in Austria, in Hungary and Bohemia, how can one help thinking of their agony, when they hear that their sons are wounded and prisoners in this hostile land!

But the women of Castiglione, seeing that I made no distinction between nationalities, followed my example, showing the same kindness to all these men whose origins were so different, and all of whom were foreigners to them. “*Tutti fratelli*”,<sup>1</sup> they repeated feelingly. All honour to these compassionate women, to these girls of Castiglione! Imperturbable, unwearied, unfaltering, their quiet self-sacrifice made little of fatigue and horrors, and of their own devotion.

The feeling one has of one's own utter inadequacy in such extraordinary and solemn circumstances is unspeakable. It is, indeed, excessively distressing to realize that you can never do more than help those who are just before you—that you must keep waiting men who are calling out and begging you to come. When you start to go somewhere, it is hours before you get

<sup>1</sup> “All are brothers”, they said.

there, for you are stopped by one begging for help, then by another, held up at every step by the crowd of poor wretches who press before and about you. Then you find yourself asking: "Why go to the right, when there are all these men on the left who will die without a word of kindness or comfort, without so much as a glass of water to quench their burning thirst?"

The moral sense of the importance of human life; the humane desire to lighten a little the torments of all these poor wretches, or restore their shattered courage; the furious and relentless activity which a man summons up at such moments: all these combine to create a kind of energy which gives one a positive craving to relieve as many as one can. There is no more grieving at the multiple scenes of this fearful and solemn tragedy. There is indifference as one passes even before the most frightfully disfigured corpses. There is something akin to cold calculation, in the face of horrors yet more ghastly than those here described, and which the pen absolutely declines to set down.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As it was more than three years before I decided to put together these painful recollections, which I had never meant to print, it will be understood that in the meantime they may have become a little blurred, and further, that they should be abbreviated as regards the scenes of pain and desolation which I witnessed. But if these pages could bring up the question (or lead to its being developed and its urgency realized) of the help to be given to wounded soldiers in wartime, or of the first aid to be afforded them after an engagement—if they could attract the attention of the humane and philanthropically inclined—in a word, if the consideration and study of this infinitely important subject could, by bringing about some small progress, lead to improvement in a condition of things in which advance and improvement can never be too great, even in the best-organized armies, I shall have fully attained my goal.

But then you feel sometimes that your heart is suddenly breaking—it is as if you were stricken all at once with a sense of bitter and irresistible sadness, because of some simple incident, some isolated happening, some small unexpected detail which strikes closer to the soul, seizing on our sympathies and shaking all the most sensitive fibres of our being.

When a soldier returns to the daily routine of an army in the field, after the fearful fatigues and frightful emotions which he must sustain on the day of a battle like Solferino, and on the day after, the recollections of his family and of his home become more impressive than ever. This is clearly depicted in the following lines, written from Volta, by a gallant French officer, to his brother at home in France: “You cannot imagine how the men are stirred when they see the Post Corporal appear to hand out letters. You see, what he brings us is news of France, news of home, news of our families and friends. The men are all eyes and ears as they stretch out their hands greedily towards him. The lucky ones—those for whom there is a letter—open it in hot haste and devour the contents. The disappointed move away with heavy hearts, and go off by themselves to think of those they have left behind. Now and then a name is called and there is no reply. Men look at each other, question each other, and wait. Then a low voice says ‘Dead’, and the Post Corporal puts aside this letter, which will return with the seals unbroken to the senders. How happy they were when they said: ‘He will be pleased to get this’, and when the letter comes back to them their poor hearts will be broken.”

The streets of Castiglione were quieter now. Deaths and departures had made room, and though fresh cart-loads of wounded continued to arrive, order was gradually established, and services began to function regularly. The crowding was not to be imputed to bad organization or lack of foresight on the part of the administrative services, but was the consequence of the unheard-of and unexpected number of the wounded, and the relatively very small effectives of doctors, helpers and orderlies. The convoys from Castiglione to Brescia now went more regularly. They were made up either of ambulance carts, or of heavy wagons drawn by oxen, which moved slowly, infinitely slowly, under the burning sun, amid a cloud of dust so thick that men walking on the road sank into soft, dry dirt over the ankle. Even when these unhandy vehicles were covered over with branches, they gave but little shelter from the burning heat of the July sky. The wounded, too, were packed almost on top of one another; it is easy to imagine the torments of that long journey! A friendly nod from a passer-by seemed to do these poor wretches good, and they were quick to return it with a grateful look.

In all the villages along the road leading to Brescia, the women were to be seen sitting before their doors, quietly making lint. When a convoy came in, they jumped up on the carts, changed the men's compresses, washed their wounds, put on fresh lint soaked in cold water, and poured spoonfuls of soup, wine, or lemonade into the mouths of those who had no longer the strength to lift their heads or raise their hands. The

transport wagons, which kept bringing provisions, forage, ammunitions and stores of all kinds to the French camp from France or from Piedmont, instead of returning empty, were filled up with invalids whom they carried to Brescia. In every small township through which the convoys passed, the parish authorities had drink, wine and meat prepared. At Montechiero, the three small local hospitals were managed by peasant women who cared intelligently as well as kindly for the wounded men placed there. At Guidizzolo, about one thousand wounded men were established decently, though quite temporarily, in an immense chateau; at Volta, an old convent, which had been transformed into barracks, gave shelter to hundreds of Austrians; at Cavriana, quarters were found, in the main church of this poor little town, for a number of crippled Austrians, who had lain for forty-eight hours protected only by the balconies of a tumble-down guard-house. In the field hospital at General Headquarters operations were performed with chloroform, under which the Austrians became insensible almost at once, while the French reacted with nervous contractions accompanied by intense excitement.

The inhabitants of Cavriana had almost no food or provisions left, and the men of the Guard fed them, sharing with them their rations and their mess tins. The whole countryside had been ravaged, and practically every kind of edible article had been sold to the Austrian troops or requisitioned by them. The French army, while it had plenty of field rations, thanks to the foresight of the Quartermaster's department, had the

greatest difficulty in obtaining butter, fat, and vegetables, by which the soldiers' rations are generally supplemented. The Austrians had requisitioned almost all the cattle in the locality, and maize flour was the only thing which the Allies could find easily in the districts where they were now encamped. However, anything which the Lombard peasants could still sell, to help feed the troops, was bought from them at very high prices, the estimates being always made so as to satisfy the seller; and requisitions by the French army for forage, potatoes, or other provisions were generously paid for, the local inhabitants being, moreover, largely indemnified for the inevitable damage caused by the battle.

The wounded men of the Sardinian army, who had been carried to Desenzano, Rivoltella, Lonato and Pozzolengo, were not so badly off as those at Castiglione. The two first-named towns, not being occupied by two different armies within a few days, were better supplied with foodstuffs; the field hospitals were in good condition, and the inhabitants, less perturbed and less frightened, gave active help in looking after the patients. Those who were sent on from there to Brescia were loaded on to decent wagons and laid on a thick layer of straw. They were protected from the sun by interlaced hoops, made of leafy branches, firmly attached to the wagons and covered over with a strong canvas cover.

Worn out with fatigue, and unable to sleep a wink, I called for my carriage on the afternoon of the twenty-seventh, and set off, at about 6 o'clock, to breathe the

fresh evening air in the open, and get a little rest by staying away for a time from the gloomy scenes which surrounded one on every side at Castiglione. I was fortunate in the day I selected, for (as I learned later) no troop movements had been ordered for the Monday. Quiet had therefore succeeded the fearful perturbations of the preceding days on the battlefield, which was now a melancholy sight. There was no longer any sign whatever of passion or enthusiasm. But here and there, dried puddles of blood showed red on the ground, and freshly turned earth covered with white lime, showed the last resting places of the victims of the twenty-fourth. At Solferino, where for centuries past a square tower had stood proud and impassive watch over the ground on which, for the third time, two of the greatest Powers of modern times had come to blows, they were still picking up quantities of wretched salvage, which lay everywhere, covering even the blood-stained crosses and tombstones of the cemetery.

I reached Cavriana about 9 o'clock. The panoply of war which surrounded the General Headquarters of the Emperor of the French was a unique and splendid sight. I was looking for Marshal the Duke of Magenta, with whom I had the honour of being personally acquainted. Not knowing exactly where his Army Corps were camped at this time, I stopped my carriage in a little square, opposite the house where the Emperor Napoleon had been staying since the Friday night. I thus happened unexpectedly upon a group of Generals, sitting on plain wicker chairs or on wooden stools, smoking their cigars in the fresh air before the impro-

vised palace of their Sovereign. While I was inquiring where Marshal de Mac-Mahon had been sent, these Generals in their turn questioned the Corporal who was with me, and whom they took for my orderly, as he was seated on the box beside the coachman.<sup>1</sup> They were curious to know who I might be, and to find out the purpose of the mission on which they supposed I was bound—for they could hardly be expected to suppose that a mere tourist would have ventured alone amid the camps, and then, having got as far as Cavriana, should be intending to go still further at so late an hour. The Corporal, who knew no more than they did, naturally remained impervious to their questioning, though he answered very respectfully; and the Generals' curiosity seemed to increase when they saw me set off again for Borghetto, where I expected to find the Duke of Magenta.

The Second Corps, which he commanded, had been ordered to proceed on the twenty-sixth from Cavriana to Castellaro, five kilometres away, and his Divisions were established to right and left of the road leading from Castellaro to Monzambano. The Marshal himself,

<sup>1</sup> This Corporal, who had been wounded at Magenta and was on his way back to his battalion after convalescence, had exerted himself admirably at Castiglione helping the orderlies. I accepted his offer to accompany me on my errand in the midst of the armies, where his rank as a non-commissioned officer might serve as the equivalent of a safe-conduct for me at such a time. On this same day, the twenty-seventh, two Englishmen, who had insisted on venturing inside the French lines, were taken by soldiers for German spies, and roughly handled all through the camp into which they had made their unfortunate entry—until, happily for them, they encountered the Marshal commanding the Army Corps, who promptly put an end to an adventure which, as a matter of fact, left the two islanders delighted!

with his staff, was at Borghetto. But it was already late at night, and as the information given me had been somewhat vague, after an hour's driving we mistook our way, and took a road leading to Volta. The result was that we came across the Army Corps of General (since three days Marshal) Niel, which was camped round the small town of Volta. The indeterminate noises which could be heard under the beautiful starlit sky—the bivouac fires in which whole trees were blazing—the lighted tents of the officers, and the sleepy murmurs of a camp between waking and sleeping—were a pleasant rest to my strained and over-excited imagination. Evening shadows and deadly silence had succeeded the various noises and emotions of the day, and the sweet, pure air of an Italian night was a joy to breathe.

My Italian coachman was taken with such panic, in the half-darkness, at the idea of being so near the enemy, that more than once I was obliged to take the reins from him, giving them to the Corporal, or driving myself. The poor man had fled from Mantua a week or ten days earlier, so as to avoid serving in the Austrian army, and had gone to Brescia as a refugee, where, in order to earn his living, he had taken service with a carriage dealer who employed him as a coachman. His panic had been greatly increased by a distant musket shot, which an Austrian discharged when he heard us coming—and then ran away and disappeared into the brushwood. When the Austrian Army retreated, a few soldiers had hidden themselves in the cellars of small villages, which had been abandoned by their inhabi-

tants and partially looted. These poor fugitives, alone and frightened, had at first been able to find more or less adequate food and drink in their underground retreats. Afterwards they had made off furtively into the fields, and wandered aimlessly there all night.

My Mantuan was quite unable to recover his nerve, and could no longer drive his horse straight at all. He kept turning his head from left to right, and from right to left, staring into all the bushes along the road with haggard eyes, and dreading at every moment to see some ambushed Austrian preparing to take aim at him. His frightened gaze searched every hedgerow, every hovel, and at every little turn of the road his fears redoubled. His fright became indescribable terror when the silence of the night was suddenly broken by another shot, from a vedette whom we had failed to see in the darkness, and he almost swooned at the sight of a big open umbrella, with holes in it from three cannon balls and several bullets, which came into view on the edge of a field near the track leading to Volta. I suppose the umbrella was part of the baggage of some French army canteen woman, who had lost it in the tempest on the twenty-fourth.

We retraced our steps in order to get on the right road for Borghetto. It was after eleven o'clock, and we set our horse galloping as fast as he could go. Our modest little carriage went careering through space, running noiselessly on the Strada Cavallara, when we were surprised by a fresh alarm: "Who goes there? Answer or I fire!" called out a mounted sentinel, all in a breath, at point-blank range. "France!" the Corporal called

back at once and gave his identity: "Corporal of the First Engineers, number seven Company...." "Pass", came the answer.

Finally, at a quarter to twelve we came, without further incident, to the first houses of Borghetto.<sup>1</sup> The whole town was plunged in silence and darkness, except that in the main street a little light was shining on the ground-floor, in a low-ceilinged room where officers of the Quartermaster's service were working. These officers, though interrupted in their work, and much surprised by my unexpected appearance at such an hour, showed me every courtesy. One of the paymasters, Mr. A. Outrey, offered me most cordial hospitality, without waiting to see that I was provided with recommendations from various General Officers. His orderly brought in a mattress, on which I threw myself down, in my clothes, to get a few hours' rest, after taking an excellent soup, which I enjoyed the more since I had eaten nothing to speak of for days. I slept quietly, without being suffocated by foul smells and harassed by flies (which, having had their fill of dead bodies, must need to come and torment the living) as I had been at Castiglione. The Corporal and the coachman installed themselves in the carriage, which remained in the street—but the unfortunate Mantuan was in a nervous

<sup>1</sup> Borghetto is a little town of some 2,000 inhabitants, on the right bank of the Mincio, opposite Valeggio. In 1848, the Sardinian troops, under the orders of King Charles-Albert, crossed the Mincio there in spite of the vigorous resistance of the Austrians and their commander, Field-Marshal Radetzky.

trance, and could not close an eye. I found him in the morning really more dead than alive.

On the twenty-eighth, at 6 o'clock in the morning, I was kindly and amiably received by the gallant and knightly Marshal Mac-Mahon, who was so justly known as the idol of his men.<sup>1</sup> At 10 o'clock I was in the henceforth historical house at Cavriana, which sheltered two great hostile Sovereigns on the one day of June 24. At 3 o'clock the same afternoon, I was on my way back to the wounded at Castiglione, who expressed their delight at seeing me again; and on June 30 I was at Brescia.

This graceful and picturesque town had been transformed, not like Castiglione into a great field ambulance, but into an immense hospital. The two cathedrals, the churches, palaces, convents, colleges and barracks—indeed, all the buildings in the town—were

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Magenta is very popular in the French army. His soldiers love him as much as they respect him. For example, in 1856, in Algeria, on the road to Constantine, two ex-Zouaves were inside a diligence, of which I occupied the coupé. They were on their way to Bathna, where they were going as workmen to cut down the forest trees. They were talking about the Near Eastern war, and about Marshal Mac-Mahon, in their picturesque way, and some of their remarks reached my ears: "This General," said one of them, "is there anyone like him? He was one who knew how to command! We are old soldiers, old grumblers, who have never been afraid, and yet we have both been in tears. You remember, when he addressed us, on the plain, when we were being dismissed at the end of our service? You remember how he said good-bye to us: 'Boys, you have served bravely under the flag, you are going back into civil life. Don't ever do anything to be ashamed of, remember you have a father, and that is me!'," that is what he said, his hand on his heart, 'And my purse is yours. Give me your hands, all of you.' You remember his throwing us his purse full of gold and saying to us: 'Share it out, but whatever you do don't quarrel.' And we all cried like a lot of girls!"



*The so-called "Committee of Five"*



*In 1863, one year after Dunant's book was published a private Committee organized a conference in Geneva to which 16 countries sent their representatives. Acting on Dunant's idea, the Conference recommended the setting-up of "Voluntary relief societies"*

full of the casualties from Solferino. Fifteen thousand beds had been improvised, in one way or another, from one day to the next. The generous townspeople did more than had ever been done anywhere in such circumstances. In the centre of the town, the old Basilica, known as "il Duomo vecchio" or the "Rotonde", with its two chapels, contained about 1,000 wounded men. Numbers of people went to see them, and women of all classes brought them quantities of oranges, jellies, biscuits, sweets and other dainties. The humblest widow, the poorest old crone, felt it her duty to go herself, with her tribute of sympathy and her modest offering. It was the same in the new Cathedral, a splendid white church with an immense cupola, in which hundreds of wounded were crowded together; and it was the same in the forty other buildings, churches or hospitals, which contained then some 20,000 wounded and sick.

The Town Council of Brescia rose at once to the occasion, and worthily discharged the extraordinary responsibilities which these solemn circumstances had placed upon it. The Council sat permanently, and secured the help and advice of the most notable citizens, who gave it much effective help. To direct the hospital work, the Council appointed, at the suggestion of the eminent Dr. Bartolomeo Gualla, a Central Committee, of which he took the chair, comprising Doctors Corbolani, Orefici, Ballini, Bonicelli, Cassa, C. Maggi and Abeni, who, with admirable zeal, worked tirelessly day and night. The committee appointed at the head of each hospital a special administrator, and a chief sur-

geon, who was assisted by several doctors and by a certain number of orderlies. By getting convents, schools or churches opened, the committee brought into existence, in the space of a few hours, as if by enchantment, hospitals provided with hundreds of beds, with spacious kitchen and laundry accommodation, with linen and everything else which might be useful or necessary. These measures were taken so readily, and so sympathetically, that after only a few days one was amazed by the orderliness and regularity with which these numerous improvised hospitals functioned. Such astonishment was only natural when one thinks that the population of Brescia, which is a town of 40,000 inhabitants, was all at once practically doubled, by the arrival of over 30,000 sick or wounded.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot refrain from recording here that the doctors—140 of them in all—showed, throughout the time when they were carrying out these difficult and fatiguing duties, sublime energy and devotion, unblemished by any kind of meanness or jealousy to spoil the excellent harmony in which they worked for the common good. They were helped by medical students and a few volunteers. Auxiliary committees were also organized, and a special committee was appointed to receive contributions in kind (bedding, linen, and pro-

<sup>1</sup> From June 15 to August 31, according to official figures, the sick and fever-stricken alone received in the Brescia hospitals numbered 19,665, more than 19,000 of these being men of the Franco-Sardinian Army. The Austrians, on their side, had at least 20,000 sick in their hospitals in Venetia, aside from the quantities of wounded who were also being nursed there.

visions of all sorts). Another committee was responsible for the central depot or store-house.<sup>1</sup>

In the vast hospital wards the officers were generally kept apart from the men, and the Austrian patients were not mixed up with the Allies. The lines of beds seemed all the same, but on a shelf above each man his uniform and service cap showed to which army he belonged. Steps had to be taken to prevent visitors from crowding in, since they disturbed and interrupted the work. Side by side with soldiers whose countenances were martial and resigned, could be seen others who muttered and complained. All those first days every wound seemed to be serious. In the French soldiers could be noted the lively Gallic character, decisive, adaptable and good-natured, firm and energetic, yet impatient and quick-tempered. Worrying little, and showing hardly any emotion, their light-heartedness made them better operation patients than the Austrians who, taking things less lightly, were much afraid of amputations and inclined to fret in their solitude. The Italian doctors, in their long black robes, looked after the French with every possible care; but the methods of some of them distressed their patients when they prescribed diet, blood-letting and tamarind water.

In the wards I found several of my wounded men from Castiglione, who recognized me. They were getting better care now, but their troubles were not over. Among them was one of those heroic Light Infantry-

<sup>1</sup> The first of these commissions was composed of Messrs. Pallavicini, Glisenti, Averoldi, Sienna, Zuccoli and Conter, and Canon Rossa; the second of Messrs. Basiletti, Caprioli, Rovetta and Da Ponte.

men of the Guard who had fought so bravely, whose wound I had dressed for the first time in Castiglione. He had a gunshot wound in the leg and lay on his palliasse with an expression of deep suffering on his face, burning, hollow eyes, and a livid yellow colour indicating that purulent fever had supervened and made his condition worse. His lips were dry, his voice trembled, and his soldierly valour had given place to a vague feeling of frightened and reluctant apprehension. He was afraid to let anyone come near his poor leg, which was already gangrenous. The French surgeon who performed amputations passed before his bed, and the patient took his hand and clutched it between his own hands, which burned like hot iron. "Don't hurt me—I am in frightful pain!" he exclaimed.

But the operation had to be done, and done quickly. There were a score of other wounded men to be operated that same morning, and 150 waiting to have their wounds dressed. There was no time to pause in pity over a single case, or wait for the man to make up his mind. The surgeon, a kind fellow, but cold and decisive, simply replied: "Leave it all to us." Then he quickly raised the blanket. The fractured leg had swollen to twice its normal size, evil-smelling pus was running freely in three separate places, and purple marks showed that a main artery had been cut, so that the limb could no longer receive its proper supply of blood. So there was nothing to be done, and the only remedy, if it could be called a remedy, was amputation, two-thirds of the way up the thigh. Amputation! Word of horror for this poor boy, who could see before

him only one alternative: imminent death, or else the wretched existence of a cripple. He had no time to screw up his courage for what was coming. "Oh God, oh God, what are you going to do?" he asked, shuddering. The surgeon made no reply. "Take him away, orderly", he said: "Hurry up!" But a heart-rending cry burst from the quivering throat. The clumsy orderly had taken hold of the motionless but terribly tender limb much too near the wound. The fractured bones had run into the flesh, and caused the patient terrible agony. His leg could be seen bending, all out of shape with the shaking it had got, as the man was carried to the operating theatre.

Ah, that fearful procession! It was like a lamb being led to the sacrifice.

The patient was at last at rest on the operating table, which was covered by a thin mattress. On another table beside him lay the instruments under a napkin. The surgeon, his mind on his task, had no eyes or ears for anything now but the operation. A young medical assistant held the patient's arms. The orderly took hold of the uninjured leg, and put out his full strength to pull the patient over to the edge of the table. The patient cried out in terror: "Don't drop me!" and threw his arms convulsively round the young doctor, who was standing ready to support him and was himself pale with emotion and almost as upset as the patient himself.

The operating surgeon had removed his coat, turned up his sleeves almost to the shoulder, and donned a white apron which covered him up to the neck. With

one knee on the ground and the terrible knife in his hand, he threw his arm round the soldier's thigh, and with a single movement cut the skin round the limb. A piercing cry rang through the hospital. The young doctor, looking into the suffering man's face, could see in his drawn features every detail of the frightful agony he was undergoing. "Be brave!" he said to the soldier under his breath, as he felt the man's hands stiffen against his back, "Two more minutes, and you will be all right."

The surgeon rose, and began to separate the skin from the muscles under it, which he thus stripped. Then he cut away the flesh from the skin, and raised the skin about an inch, like a sort of cuff. After that he returned to the main task, and with a vigorous movement cut right through the muscles with his knife, as far as the bone. A torrent of blood burst from the opened arteries, covering the surgeon and dripping on to the floor. The able practitioner, quiet and impassive, said nothing until all at once, through the silence, he said angrily to the clumsy orderly: "You fool, can't you compress an artery?" The orderly had had little experience, and did not know how to stop the haemorrhage by applying his thumb to the blood vessels in the right way. The patient, in an ecstasy of pain, muttered weakly: "Oh, that will do, let me die!" and cold sweat ran down his face. But there was still another minute to go through, a minute which seemed like eternity. The assistant, kind as ever, counted the seconds, and looking from the operator to the patient's face and back again, he tried to sustain his courage, and, seeing him shaking with terror, "Only one minute more", he said.

It was indeed now time for the saw, and I could hear the grating of the steel as it entered the living bone, and separated the half-rotten limb from the body.

But the pain was too much for that weak and exhausted frame. There was no more groaning, for the patient had fainted. The surgeon, having no more cries and moans to guide him, feared that his patient's silence might be the silence of death, and looked anxiously to make sure that there was still life in him. The cordials, which had been held in reserve, just succeeded in bringing a flicker of life back into the dull eyes, which were half-closed and staring. It seemed after all as if the dying man was going to live. He was broken and exhausted—but at least the worst of his suffering was over.

In the next hospital chloroform was sometimes used. In that case the patient, especially when a Frenchman, went through two quite distinct phases, passing from a stage of excitement which often attained to wild delirium, to complete depression and prostration; and he remained plunged, throughout the second stage, in a sort of deep lethargy. Some soldiers, who were addicted to the use of strong waters, are very hard to chloroform, and resist the strong anaesthetic for a long time. Accidents, and even death from chloroform, are not so rare as one might suppose, and it is sometimes in vain that you try to call back to life a man who was speaking to you only a few minutes earlier.

Imagine now what an operation of this kind was, when undertaken on the person of an Austrian knowing neither Italian nor French, who was led like a sheep to

the slaughter, unable to exchange a single word with his kindly tormentors. The French met with kindness from everyone. They were cheered, comforted and encouraged, and when the conversation was led to the battle of Solferino, although it was there they had received their cruel wounds, they grew excited and fell readily into argument. What were for them glorious recollections fired their enthusiasm, and seemed to alleviate their lot by taking their thoughts away from themselves. But the Austrians had no such good fortune. In the different hospitals where they had been deposited, I consequently insisted on seeing them, and in some cases almost broke into the wards. And how grateful the good fellows were for the few kind words and the pinch of tobacco I had to give them! On their resigned, quiet, gentle countenances were depicted feelings which they could not express in words. Their looks said more than any spoken thanks. The officers showed particular appreciation of the attention given them. Officers and soldiers alike were treated humanely by the people of Brescia, but with no pretence at friendliness. In the hospital where the Prince of Isenburg lodged, he and another German Prince had between them a small room that was fairly comfortable.

For several days running I handed out tobacco, pipes and cigars, in the churches and hospitals, where the smell of the tobacco, smoked by hundreds of men, was of great value against the pungent stench which arose as the result of crowding so many patients together in stifling hot buildings. The stocks of tobacco in Brescia were very soon exhausted, and more had to be brought

from Milan. Only tobacco could lessen the fears which the wounded men felt before an amputation. Many underwent their operation with a pipe in their mouths, and a number died still smoking.

An honourable inhabitant of Brescia, Mr. Carlo Borghetti, was so very kind as to drive me himself in his carriage to the different hospitals in the town, and he helped me to distribute our gifts of tobacco. The tobacco was packed by the merchant in thousands of little twists of paper, which soldiers volunteered to carry in enormous baskets. Wherever I went I had an enthusiastic welcome. Only one Lombard doctor, Count Calini, declined to allow cigars to be issued, in the San Luca military hospital for which he had been given responsibility. This was a sad blow to the poor patients, who cast greedy glances at the baskets of tobacco at the door. Everywhere else the doctors proved as grateful as the patients for gifts of this kind. I did not allow myself to be put off by this small disappointment; and I must say that it was the first obstacle I encountered and the first difficulty, if it can be called one, which arose in my path. Up to that moment I had had no annoyance of this kind, and what was even more surprising, I was not called upon even once to show my passport or the warm letters of recommendation from Generals<sup>1</sup> to other Generals of

<sup>1</sup> In particular from General the Marquis de Beaufort d'Hautpol, whose kind and amiable character was as well known as his brilliant military capacities. He was Chief of Staff of the Army Corps which had occupied Tuscany, and since then has been Commander-in-Chief of the Syrian expedition. General de Beaufort is the nephew of the late honourable Count de Bude, member of

which my pocket-book was full. I did not, therefore, accept defeat at the hands of Doctor Calini; and on the same afternoon, after a fresh attempt at San Luca, I succeeded in effecting a generous distribution of cigars among the good crippled fellows, who had been forced to endure the tortures of Tantalus through my innocent fault. When they saw me return, they could not help giving voice to exclamations and sighs of satisfaction and delight.

In the course of my wanderings I went through a succession of rooms on the second floor of an immense convent—a regular labyrinth turned into a hospital. The ground-floor and first-floor rooms were full of patients. In one of these lofty rooms I found four or five wounded men in high fever, in another ten or fifteen, and in a third as many as twenty. Each man lay on a bed, but they were all without help, and complained bitterly that it was hours since they had seen an orderly. They begged and implored me to get a little soup brought to them, instead of the icy cold water which was the only drink they had had. At the end of an interminable passage, in a room all by himself, a young fellow of the Bersaglieri was slowly dying of tetanus. He lay quite motionless on his palliasso, and though he still seemed to be full of life, and had his eyes wide open, he could neither hear nor understand, so he had simply been left to die.

Many French soldiers begged me to write to their

the General Council of the Ain, who died recently in Geneva in July 1862, mourned by all who knew him, and whose kind heart and noble and amiable qualities had endeared him to his many friends.

parents, or, in some cases, to their Captain, whom they thought of as taking the place of their far-off families.

In the St. Clement Hospital, a noble Brescian lady, Countess Bronna, devoted herself, with splendid self-denial, to the care of patients with amputated limbs. The French soldiers spoke of her with enthusiasm. The most repulsive details never made her falter. "*Sono madre*," she said to me with solemn simplicity. "I am a mother!" Those words revealed all the splendour of her sacrifice. A mother indeed!

I was stopped in the street, five times in quick succession, by burghers of Brescia, who begged me to come to their houses to interpret for French officers—Majors, Captains or Lieutenants—whom they had asked to take in, and to whom they gave the most anxious and affectionate care. Often, however, they could not understand a single word of what was said to them by a guest who could speak no Italian; and the wounded officer, almost invariably nervous and anxious, grew angry to find that he was not understood, to the despair of the entire family, whose members were showing him every kindness and saw their efforts received with impatience and ill-humour due to fever and pain. In another case, an Italian doctor wanted to bleed an officer; and the latter imagining that it was intended to cut off his limb, resisted with all his strength, and did himself infinite harm in his excitement. Reassuring explanations given in their native language was the only way to calm these victims of Solferino when such lamentable misunderstandings arose. How gently and patiently the people of Brescia

now sacrificed themselves, for those who had made such sacrifices for them and for their country, in order to deliver them from foreign domination! When a patient died, the grief of those about him was obviously sincere. It was infinitely touching to see the families who had adopted these men, religiously following the coffin of a French officer along the great cypress avenue, from St. John's Gate to his last home in the Campo Santo. The officer had been these people's guest for a few days only; yet they wept for him as one weeps for a friend, for a parent, or for a son—for him, whose name even they did not always know.

The soldiers who died in the hospitals were buried at night. Care was taken, in most cases at least, to note their names or numbers, which had been practically impossible at Castiglione.

All the towns in Lombardy made it a point of honour to claim their share of wounded men. At Bergamo and at Cremona the relief services were very well organized. The relief societies were helped by ladies' auxiliary committees, which gave admirable care to the large group of patients assigned to them. In one of the Cremona hospitals, an Italian doctor had said: "We keep the good things for our friends of the Allied Army, and give our enemies the bare necessities. If they die, so much the worse!"—and he added, to excuse these barbarous words, that he had heard from some Italian soldiers who had returned from Verona and Mantua, that the Austrians allowed the wounded of the Franco-Sardinian army to die uncared for. A noble lady of Cremona, Countess..., who had heard the



*The 1864 Diplomatic Conference in Geneva*



*“... formulate some international principle, sanctioned by a Convention inviolate in character, which, once agreed upon and ratified, might constitute the basis for societies for the relief of the wounded...” (p. 126)*

doctor's words and had been devoting herself to the hospitals with the utmost zeal, made haste to show her disapproval by declaring that she gave exactly the same attention to the Austrians as to the Allies, and made no difference between friends and enemies. "For," she said, "Our Lord Jesus Christ made no such distinctions between men in well doing." Though it may be that the men of the Allied Army, taken prisoners by the Austrians, were at the beginning rather roughly treated, the reports referred to were certainly inaccurate and exaggerated, and in no way justified such expressions as those used.

The French doctors not only did everything that was humanly possible without distinction of nationality; they grumbled and complained at their inability to do more. I must quote in this connection the words of Dr. Sonrier: "I cannot think without renewed sadness of the deepest kind," he said, "of a little ward of twenty-five beds at Cremona, which was assigned to the most seriously wounded of the Austrians. I can still see before me the gaunt, clay-like faces of these men, all colour gone from them as the result of exhaustion and pus-poisoning, imploring, with gestures and heart-rending cries, as a last mercy, that they might have a limb cut off which we had tried to save—with the result that they died in desperate agony while we looked on helplessly."

The head of the Commissariat at Brescia, and Dr. Gualla, Director General of the Brescia hospitals, with Dr. Commisetti, Chief Surgeon of the Sardinian Army, and Dr. Carlo Cotta, Medical Inspector for

Lombardy, were all equally devoted, and their names deserve honourable mention with those of the illustrious Baron Larrey, Chief Surgeon and Inspector of the French Army; Dr. Isnard, Chief Army Surgeon, who showed remarkable capacities, both professional and administrative; and eminent services were rendered at Brescia by Mr. Thierry de Maugras, and a whole cohort of brave and tireless French surgeons, all of whose names I should like to mention. Surely, if those who make the slaughter can claim a place on the roll of honour, those who cure, and cure often at the risk of their lives, are entitled to their due of esteem and gratitude.

An Anglo-American surgeon, Dr. Norman Bettun, Professor of Anatomy at Toronto, in Upper Canada, came down on purpose from Strasburg to help these devoted men, and medical students hastened to the spot from Bologna, Pisa, and other Italian towns. Besides the inhabitants of Brescia, a few French, Swiss and Belgian travellers, with the authorization of the administration, also came of their own accord to offer their services, and went into the hospitals, helping the patients and giving them small comforts, such as oranges, sherbet, coffee, lemonade and tobacco. One of these travellers gave a Croat a Florin for a German note. The Croat had been imploring everyone he saw to perform this transaction for him for a month past, for otherwise he could make no use of the small sum which represented his entire fortune.

At the San Gaetano hospital, a Franciscan monk distinguished himself by his zealous work for the sick;

and a young soldier from Piedmont, who was convalescent, and, coming from Nice, spoke both French and Italian, translated complaints or requests for the Lombard doctors. He was kept on as interpreter. At Piacenza, where the three hospitals in the town were directed by gentlemen and ladies acting as orderlies and nurses, one of the latter, a young lady whose family implored her to give up passing her days in hospitals owing to the pernicious and contagious fevers, nevertheless continued her self-imposed task, so zealously, so gently, and with such tender enthusiasm that all the soldiers worshipped her. "She brings joy into the hospital," they said.

Oh, how valuable it would have been in those Lombardy towns to have had a hundred experienced and qualified voluntary orderlies and nurses! Such a group would have formed a nucleus around which could have been rallied the scanty help and dispersed efforts which needed competent guidance. As it was, there was no time for those who knew their business to give the needful advice and guidance, and most of those who brought their own goodwill to the task lacked the necessary knowledge and experience, so that their efforts were inadequate and often ineffective.

In the face of so great an emergency, what could be done by a handful of enthusiasts, all isolated and dispersed? At the end of a week or ten days, the charitable zeal of the people of Brescia, sincere as it was, began to chill off. With a few most honourable exceptions, the people grew tired and weary. Moreover, inexperienced or injudicious townspeople

brought into the churches and into the hospitals food which was often unsuitable for wounded men, and it became necessary to forbid them the doors. The consequence was that many, who would have been willing to spend an hour or two with the patients, would not be bothered when it became necessary to have an authorization and go and ask for it. Foreigners, who would have been inclined to help and make themselves useful, encountered unexpected obstacles of one kind and another which were calculated to discourage them. But selected and competent volunteers, sent by societies sanctioned and approved by the authorities, would easily have overcome all these difficulties, and would have done infinitely more good.

For the first week after the battle, wounded men, of whom the doctors said under their breath, shaking their heads as they passed their beds: "There is no more to be done," received hardly any care, and were simply left to die. And this indeed was quite natural, seeing how few orderlies there were to handle the enormous numbers of wounded. It was, indeed, as logical and inevitable as it was sad and cruel, that these men should be left to die unaided, the precious time of the helpers available having to be kept for soldiers who might still be saved. Those who were thus condemned to death in advance were very many. The poor wretches on whom this inexorable verdict was pronounced were not deaf. They were quick to realize that they were abandoned, and they breathed their last, grieving and broken-hearted, unwept and unheeded. The death of some of them was made yet sadder and more bitter by the

misplaced pleasantries of a few young Zouaves, only slightly wounded, whose beds were close by and who left them no peace. In other cases a man might be dying in a bed next to that of a companion of misfortune who had himself just died, and he was obliged, while he felt his own strength ebbing, to watch his dead comrade so obscenely handled that he could readily see the kind of thing which was in store for himself. Such a man was still lucky if his eyes did not light on certain people who, knowing him on the verge of death, took advantage of his weakness to search his haversack and rob it of anything in it that took their fancy.

Another wounded man, left to himself, had letters from his family waiting for him at the Post Office for a week past. In them he would have found a last comfort, if only they had been brought to him. He asked the ward men several times to fetch them for him, so that he could read them before his last hour came; but the men would not be bothered, and answered harshly that they had other things to do and had no time for him. How much better it would have been for thee, poor sufferer, hadst thou met a sudden death from a bullet on the field of carnage, amid the splendid horrors which men call glory! Thy name at least had then been surrounded by a little honour, if thou hadst fallen beside thy Colonel, fighting for thy flag! Better even hadst thou been buried with life still in thee, by the rustics who were entrusted with internments on the battlefield, when they picked thee up lifeless and unconscious on the Cypress hill, or in the plain of Medola. Then at least thy fearful agony had been of no

long duration—whereas now 'tis but a succession of agonies that thou must bear, and there awaits thee, not the field of honour, but inexpressible suffering, and after that a cold and gloomy death with all its horrors. And last of all, it will be little wonder if thy name should figure only with the curt mention “missing” for thine only funeral orison.

What now has become of that deep intoxicating spirit by which the brave combatants were electrified, which stirred them so strongly, so mysteriously, to the very depths of their being, when the campaign began, and on the day of Solferino when they were risking their lives, and when their valour craved for the blood of men like themselves which they went forth raging to shed? Where now is the love of glory, where the martial ardour, which were a thousand times heightened by the proud and melodious accent of the military bands and the warlike tones of the resounding trumpets—which were but sharpened by the whistling of bullets, the thunder of bombs, and the metallic roaring of rockets and shells bursting and exploding, in those hours when enthusiasm, when the attraction of danger and fierce, thoughtless excitement, put out of men's minds all thoughts of their latter end?

In those Lombardy hospitals it could be seen and realized how dearly bought and how abundantly paid for is that commodity which men pompously call Glory! The battle of Solferino is the only one of this Nineteenth Century which can be compared, for the number of casualties it involved, with the battles of Borodino, Leipzig and Waterloo. After the battle of

June 24, 1859, the total of killed and wounded Austrians and Franco-Sardinians numbered three Field-M Marshals, 9 Generals, 1566 officers of all ranks (630 Austrians and 936 in the Allied Army), and some 40,000 non-commissioned officers and men.<sup>1</sup> Two months later, these figures (for the three armies together) had to be increased by 40,000, dead or in hospitals from sickness or fever, either as the result of the excessive fatigues undergone on June 24 and the days immediately preceding or following, or else owing to the pernicious effects of the summer climate and the tropical heat in the Lombardy plain—or, in some instances, owing to the accidents due to the soldiers' own carelessness. Leaving all questions of strategy and glory aside, this battle of Solferino was thus, in the view of any neutral and impartial person, really a European catastrophe.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been claimed in the French papers and other publications that when signing the Peace Treaty at Villafranca, Field-Marshal Hess admitted that the Austrians, at the battle of Solferino, lost 50,000 men, adding "the rifled guns of the French artillery blew our reserves to pieces." The authenticity of these words, quoted by several newspapers, may however be doubted.

<sup>2</sup> I will quote here Paul de Molènes, who was present at the battle of Solferino as a Field Officer in the French Army and whose noble heart led him to write the following lines which accord perfectly with our subject:

"After the battle of Marengo (1800), which however did not cause nearly as many casualties as the battle of Solferino, Napoleon I yielded to one of those sudden accesses of strong feeling which have nothing to do with the dictates of policy and are perhaps on a higher plane than even the inspirations of genius, one of those feelings which are the secret of heroic souls, which see sudden light under the Eye of God, in the loftiest and most mysterious spheres of the conscience. 'It is on the battlefield,' he wrote to the Emperor of Austria, 'amid the sufferings of vast numbers of wounded men, surrounded by 15,000 dead bodies, that I adjure Your Majesty to listen

The removal of the wounded from Brescia to Milan, which took place at night owing to the torrid heat of the day, was a dramatic and impressive sight: trains packed with wounded soldiers entered stations which were crowded with silent, sorrowful people in the pale glimmer of pine torches; the whole compact mass, all quivering with emotion and kindness, seemed almost to stop breathing, in order to listen to the stifled groans and moans which issued from those grim trainloads as they passed.

On the railway between Milan and Venice, the Austrians, in their gradual retreat during June to the Lake of Garda, had cut the line at several points between Milan, Brescia and Peschiera. But the railway had been quickly repaired and reopened to traffic<sup>1</sup> in order to facilitate the movement of stores, ammunitions and supplies for the Allied Army, and to permit the evacuation of the Brescia hospitals.

At each stopping place, long narrow huts had been

to the voice of humanity.' This letter, which has been given to us in its entirety by a celebrated historian of our time, has made a deep impression on me. He who wrote it was himself moved and surprised by it. Yet his surprise had not in it any vestige of the secret remorse which is felt on their waking (as they call it) by men who charge themselves with having lost their wits in giving free play to a sudden impulse of generosity. Napoleon I accepted, in the unexpected form in which it had come to him, a thought of which he understood and respected the source. The battle of "Solferino," Paul de Molènes adds, "set flowing once more the source of that thought which drew from the victor of Marengo his strange outcry of sadness and pity."

<sup>1</sup> This was due in particular to the activity and energy of Charles Brot, the Milan banker, the only member of the Board of Administration of the Lombard and Venetian Railways to remain in Milan.

erected to receive the wounded who, on leaving the carriages, were placed on beds, or on simple mattresses lined up one beside the other. Under these shelters stood tables heavily loaded with bread, soup, wine and, above all, water, as well as lint and bandages which continued to be constantly needed. The darkness was lighted by a mass of torches which were held up by the youth of the locality where the train had stopped; and the Lombard townspeople, acting as improvised orderlies, made haste to bring their tribute of regard and gratitude to the conquerors of Solferino. Without noise, in religious silence, they dressed the men's wounds, carrying them out of the train with fatherly care and laying them carefully on the couches prepared for them. The local ladies gave them refreshing drinks and eatables of all kinds, distributing them in the railway carriages to those whose convalescence was well advanced and were to go forward or proceed as far as Milan.

At Milan, where the wounded arrived at the Brescia station at the rate of one thousand every night<sup>1</sup> for several nights, the martyrs of Solferino were received with the same enthusiasm and unwearying affection as had been shown to those of Magenta and Marignan.

The gracious and lovely young ladies of the aristocracy, made lovelier still by the exaltation of passionate

<sup>1</sup> About the middle of June 1859 (i.e., before Solferino) the Milan hospitals already contained some 9,000 patients wounded in previous engagements. The Maggiore Hospital, the great civil hospital in Milan founded in the fifteenth century by Blanche Visconti (wife of Duke Sforza), alone contained nearly 3,000 of these.

enthusiasm, were no longer scattering rose-leaves from the beflagged balconies of sumptuous palaces to fall on glittering shoulder-straps, on silk and ribbons, and gold and enamel crosses; from their eyes now fell burning tears, born of painful emotion and of compassion, which quickly turned to Christian devotion, patient and self-sacrificing.

Every family which possessed a carriage came to fetch wounded men from the station. The number of vehicles thus sent by Milanese people on their own initiative was more than 500. Luxurious barouches and modest dogcarts alike were sent every evening to Porta Tosa, which was the entraining place for the Venice railway. Noble Italian ladies made it a point of honour to place the guests assigned to them in their carriages, themselves, after supplying them with mattresses, sheets and pillows. The men were carried from the train to these opulent vehicles by gentlemen of Lombardy, whose servants vied with their masters in zeal and helpfulness. As these privileged sufferers passed, the crowd cheered, and people raised their hats respectfully. Then they escorted the slowly moving carriages, bearing torches which lit up the sad countenances of the wounded men, who did their best to smile. The crowd went with them as far as the doors of the hospitable palaces and private houses, where the most assiduous care awaited the wounded.

Every family in Milan was bent on having French wounded under its roof, and no effort was spared to console the men for finding themselves far from their country, their families and their friends. The best

doctors gave them their care, in private houses as well as in hospitals.<sup>1</sup>The ladies of the highest society of Milan showed courageous and lasting kindness to the wounded, watching with unflinching constance over the rank and file as well as the officers. Madame Uboldi de Capei, Madame Boselli, Madame Sala, née Comtesse Taverna, and many other noble ladies, forgot their usual habits of elegance and comfort, and spent months at a time beside those beds of pain, becoming the Guardian Angels of the sick. All this kindness was shown without any ostentation. The unremitting care, consolation and attentions give by these ladies entitle them to the gratitude of the families of those to whom they gave such service, and to the respectful admiration of all and sundry. Some of them were mothers, whose mourning garments told of recent losses which they had

<sup>1</sup> In most cases, the people of Milan had, after a very few days, to send into the hospitals the soldier patients whom they had taken into their houses, because it was desired to avoid unnecessary dispersal of the help to be given, and unnecessary fatigue to the doctors, who could not undertake so many individual visits.

The general supervision of the Milan hospitals was entrusted to Dr. Cuvelier, who acquitted himself worthily of the difficult task assigned to him by the Chief Surgeon of the Army of Italy. The latter was ably assisted, after the battle of Solferino, by M. Faraldo, Commissary General of the Province Brescia, whose excellent work in this serious emergency, and fine character, deserve the highest praise.

The French Army, when it left Milan about the middle of June, going towards Brescia, left available behind it quarters for more than 8,000 wounded.

Mention must be made of the excellent organization of the French Army from the humanitarian point of view, which was the work especially of H. E. Marshal Randon, Minister of War, Marshal Vaillant, Major-General of the Army of Italy, and General Martimprey, Adjutant-General.

sustained. One of them said to Dr. Bertherand these sublime words, which are well worth quoting: "War," the Marchesa confided to him, "has bereft me of the eldest of my sons, who died eight months ago from a bullet wound received fighting in your army at Sebastopol. When I heard that French wounded were coming to Milan and that I could help to care for them, I felt that God was sending me his best consolation."

Countess Verri-Borromeo, President of the great Central Relief Committee,<sup>1</sup> took regular charge of the arrangements in the linen and lint depots, and despite her advanced years she found the time to give up several hours every day to reading to wounded men.

<sup>1</sup> Countess Giustina Verri, née Borromeo, died at Milan in 1860, deeply mourned by all who had had the good fortune to know her. The immense depots of lint and bandages in the Contrada San Paolo, which she directed so ably, were supplied, thanks to the despatch of large quantities from different towns and districts, and especially from Turin, where the Marchesa Pallavicino-Trivulzio acted in a capacity similar to that of Countess Verri at Milan.

Geneva and other Swiss towns, and certain towns in Savoy also, sent very large consignments of linen and lint to Turin through Dr. Appia, who took the initiative in this excellent work in Geneva. Fairly large sums of money were devoted to providing the wounded, without distinction of nationality, with all kinds of small comforts. Countess de G... proposed the formation of a committee for this purpose, and her suggestion, which was favourably received in Paris, was followed up in Geneva. From this neutral country, where very much sympathy was naturally felt for both belligerents, relief was forwarded to the official relief committees in Turin and Milan for impartial distribution among French, German and Italian wounded.

At Turin, the Marchesa Pallavicino-Trivulzio, with infinite kindness, generosity and devotion, acted as President of the main committee (*Comitato delle Signore per la raccolta di bende, filacce, a pro dei feriti*), and showed great activity in carrying out this great responsibility. Other committees had also been formed at Turin, where the townspeople did splendid work for the war sufferers.

All the palaces in Milan were full of patients. The Borromeo Palace contained 300. The Mother Superior of the Ursuline Convent, Sister Marina Videmari, directed in an exemplary spirit of charity a large hospital which was a model of order and cleanliness, and was served entirely by nuns of her convent.

Gradually, we began to see, setting off along the Turin road, small detachments of convalescent French soldiers, their faces bronzed by the Italian sun. Some of them had their arms in slings, others supported themselves on crutches, others bore the traces of serious wounds. Their army uniforms were torn and threadbare, but under them they wore fine linen, generously provided by wealthy Italians to replace their blood-stained shirts. "Your blood," said these Italians, "has been shed for the defence of our country. We would like to keep your shirts to remind us of it." Only a few weeks before, these had been strong healthy men—and now, one armless, another without a leg, a third with a blood stained bandage round his head, all bearing their suffering with resignation. But they will never be able again to follow the career of arms, or to help their families. Bitterly, sorrowfully, they can already picture themselves becoming objects of commiseration and pity, a burden to others, and a burden to themselves.

I cannot refrain from mentioning my encounter at Milan, when I returned from Solferino, with a venerable old gentleman, the Marquis Ch. de Bryas, former Deputy and former Mayor of Bordeaux. The Marquis, who possessed a very large fortune, had come to Italy on his own initiative for no other purpose than to help

the wounded soldiers. It was my good fortune to facilitate the departure of this noble philanthropist for Brescia. During the first fortnight of July the crowding and confusion were such at the Porta Tosa station, whither I accompanied him, that it was a matter of tremendous difficulty to reach the railway carriages. The Marquis, despite his age, his position and his official functions (for I believe that he had been entrusted by the French administration with a purely charitable mission) was quite unable to get a place in the train he was to take. This small incident may give some idea of the tremendous crowds which obstructed the station and its approaches.

How many interesting matters there are which will remain forever unknown! A fine spirit was shown by another Frenchman, almost entirely deaf, who had also come three hundred leagues to look after his compatriots. When he reached Milan, he saw that the Austrian wounded were left practically to themselves, and he devoted himself more especially to them, trying to help them in every possible way—thus returning good for the evil he had suffered forty-five years before at the hands of an Austrian officer. In 1814, when France was invaded by the armies of the Holy Alliance, the officer had been billeted on the parents of this Frenchman, who was a boy at the time and afflicted with an illness which disgusted the foreign officer. The Austrian took the poor boy and threw him roughly out of the house before he could be prevented, and this brutal incident produced a deafness which lasted all his life.

In one of the Milan hospitals, a Sergeant of the

Zouaves of the Guard, a proud and powerful-looking fellow who had had a leg amputated, and had undergone the painful operation without a word of complaint, fell, after a little time, into a profound melancholy, though his condition improved and his convalescence progressed satisfactorily. His constantly increasing melancholy was quite inexplicable. One day, a nun found him with tears in those eyes which perhaps had never wept before—and she so plied him with questions, that he ended by confessing to the good Sister that he was the only support of his aged and invalid mother to whom, when he was well, he sent five francs every month which he saved out of his pay. Now he found that he could not help her, and knew that she must be in very great need of money since he had not been able to send his usual little contribution. The nun was moved to pity, and gave him a five-franc piece, the equivalent of which was at once forwarded to France. But when Countess T..., who had interested herself in this brave and worthy man, was informed of the reason of his strange melancholy, and wished to give him a small sum for his mother and himself, he would not take it. He simply thanked the lady and said: "Please keep this money for others who need it more than I do. As for my mother, I hope to send money to her as usual next month, for I expect to be able to work soon."

One great lady of Milan, the bearer of a historic name, had placed one of her palaces at the disposal of the wounded, with 150 beds in it. Among the soldiers assigned to this magnificent palace was a Grenadier of

the Seventieth who had lost a limb and was in danger of death. The lady, in her efforts to comfort the wounded man, spoke to him of his family, and he told her that he was the only son of a peasant couple in the Department of the Gers, and that his only grief was to leave them in extreme distress, since he was the only one who might have provided for them. He said also that it would have been an immense consolation for him to be able to kiss his mother before he died. The lady, without saying anything to the man, suddenly resolved to go on a journey. She left Milan by rail and went to the Gers, to his family, whose address she had obtained. There she left 2,000 francs to the wounded man's invalid father, and carried his poor peasant mother off with her to Milan. Six days after the lady's talk with the Grenadier, mother and son were in each other's arms, weeping and blessing their benefactress.

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But why have I told of all these scenes of pain and distress, and perhaps aroused painful emotions in my readers? Why have I lingered with seeming complacency over lamentable pictures, tracing their details with what may appear desperate fidelity?

It is a natural question. Perhaps I might answer it by another:

Would it not be possible, in time of peace and quiet, to form relief societies for the purpose of having care given to the wounded in wartime by zealous, devoted and thoroughly qualified volunteers?

\* \* \*

Since the hopes and aspirations of the Society of the Friends of Peace must be abandoned, like the dreams of the Abbé de St-Pierre and the noble aspirations of such men as the Count de Sellon;

Since we may repeat the words of a great thinker who said: "Men have reached the point of killing without hating each other, and the highest glory, the finest of all the arts, is mutual extermination";

Since it has actually been stated that "war is divine," according to Count Joseph de Maistre;

Since new and terrible methods of destruction are invented daily, with perseverance worthy of a better object, and since the inventors of these instruments of destruction are applauded and encouraged in most of the great European States, which are engaged in an armament race;

And since finally the state of mind in Europe combines with many other symptoms to indicate the prospect of future wars, the avoidance of which, sooner or later, seems hardly possible;

In view of all this, why could not advantage be taken of a time of relative calm and quiet to investigate and try to solve a question of such immense and worldwide importance, both from the humane and Christian standpoint?

\* \* \*

I am sure that once people begin to think about a

matter of such general interest as this, it will lead to reflections and writings by people abler and more competent than I am. But meantime, is it not clear that in order to try and reach this noble goal, the first necessity is that the idea should be presented to the different branches of the great European family, and that it should secure the attention and the sympathy of all lofty souls, of all hearts which can be stirred by the sufferings of their fellow-men?

Societies of this kind, once formed and their permanent existence assured, would naturally remain inactive in peacetime. But they would be always organized and ready for the possibility of war. They would have not only to secure the goodwill of the authorities of the countries in which they had been formed, but also, in case of war, to solicit from the rulers of the belligerent states authorization and facilities enabling them to do effective work.

The societies, therefore, should include, in each country, as members of their governing board, men enjoying the most honourable reputation and the highest esteem. The committees would appeal to everybody who, for sincerely philanthropic motives, would undertake to devote himself for the time to this charitable work. The work itself would consist in bringing aid and relief (in agreement with the military commissaries, i.e., when necessary with their support and under their instructions) onto the battlefield whenever battle was joined, and subsequently to continue to care for the wounded in the hospitals until their convalescence was complete.

Spontaneous devotion of this kind is more easily to be found than one is inclined to think. There are plenty of people who, once they were sure they could be useful and convinced that they could do real good, with the encouragement and facilities given by the administrative authorities, would certainly be prepared to go, even at their own expense, and undertake for a limited time such an eminently philanthropic task. In this age, which is often called selfish and cold, what an attraction it would be for noble and compassionate hearts and for chivalrous spirits, to confront the same dangers as the warrior, of their own free will, in a spirit of peace, for a purpose of comfort, from a motive of self-sacrifice!

History can show examples to prove that there is nothing chimerical in counting upon such sacrifices. To give but two or three illustrations, is it not true that Saint Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, came from the other end of his diocese to the city of Milan at the time of the plague, in 1576, facing the contagion in order to bring to all relief and encouragement? This example was imitated in 1627 by Frederico Borromeo. And again, Bishop Belzunce de Castel-Moron distinguished himself by the heroic devotion which he showed when the plague ravaged Marseilles in 1720 and 1721.

Then there was John Howard, who went all over Europe visiting prisons, lazarets and hospitals, and bringing about sanitary reforms in them. Howard died in 1790, having caught a fever from a peasant when staying among the plague-stricken of the Crimea.

Sister Marthe, of Besançon, won renown for what she did between 1813 and 1815 for the wounded of the armies of the Coalition as well as for those of the French Army; and before her, another nun, Sister Barbe Schyner, distinguished herself at Freiburg, in 1790, by her work for the wounded of the army which was invading her country, as well as for her compatriots.

But I would single out for special mention two cases in our own time, connected with the war in the Near East, and yet more closely related to the subject under consideration. In the Crimea, while the good nuns looked after the sick and wounded of the French Army, the Russian and English armies hailed the arrival, the one from the north and the other from the east, of two noble legions of generous nurses led by two Blessed Ladies. Soon after the war broke out, the Grand Duchess Helen Pawlowna of Russia, née Princess Charlotte of Wurtemberg, widow of the Grand Duke Michael, left St. Petersburg with nearly 300 ladies, who went with her to act as nurses in the Crimean hospitals, where they earned the blessings of thousands of Russian soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

On the other side, Miss Florence Nightingale, who was familiar with the hospitals in England and with the

<sup>1</sup> During the war in the Near East, in the winter of 1854-55, the Emperor Alexander II of Russia, visited the Crimean hospitals. This mighty potentate, whose good heart and humane and generous soul are well known, was so deeply impressed by the fearful sights which met his eyes, that he at once determined to conclude terms of peace, being unable to bear the thought of the continuance of a series of massacres which brought so many of his subjects to such a terrible pass.

principal charitable and philanthropic establishments on the Continent, and who had given up the pleasures of opulence in order to devote herself to doing good, received a pressing appeal from Lord Sidney Herbert, Secretary at War of the British Empire, asking her to go and look after the English soldiers in the Near East. Miss Nightingale, who has attained a great popularity, did not hesitate in undertaking this fine work, with which she knew that her Sovereign sympathised. She left for Constantinople and Scutari in November, 1854, with thirty-seven English ladies, who, as soon as they arrived, set to work caring for the many wounded of the battle of Inkermann. In 1855, Miss Stanley joined her with fifty others, and this enabled Miss Nightingale to go to Balaclava and inspect the hospitals there. All that she accomplished during those long months of sublime self-sacrifice, through her passionate devotion to suffering humanity, is well known.<sup>1</sup>

How many such sacrifices have been made, most of them obscure and forgotten! And how many of them were made in vain, because they were isolated efforts and lacked the support of organized groups of sympathisers!

If an international relief society had existed at the time of Solferino, and if there had been volunteer

<sup>1</sup> The picture of Miss Florence Nightingale, going in the night, with a little lamp in her hand, through the immense wards of the military hospital, noting the condition of each patient so as to get them the necessary requirements and comforts, will remain imprinted forever in the hearts of the men who were the object of her splendid charitable work, and of those who saw it. The tradition of her heroic and holy self-sacrifice will be preserved forever in the annals of History.

helpers at Castiglione on June 24, 25 and 26, or at Brescia at about the same time, as well as at Mantua or Verona, what endless good they could have done!

It cannot be thought for a moment that a host of active, zealous and valiant helpers would have been able to achieve nothing on that field of destruction during the dreadful night between the Friday and the Saturday, when groans and heart-rending prayers were rising from the throats of thousands of wounded men, who were enduring the most fearful agonies, and suffering from the unthinkable torments of thirst!

If the Prince of Isenburg, and thousands of other hapless warriors, had been raised sooner by compassionate hands from the wet and blood-stained earth on which they lay senseless, the Prince would not be suffering still today from wounds which became serious and dangerous during the hours when he lay there helpless. If his horse had not led to his being accidentally discovered among the dead, he would certainly have perished for lack of aid, as did many other wounded men, God's creatures like him, men whose deaths might mean just as much to their families as his death would have meant to his.

It must not be thought that the lovely girls and kind women of Castiglione, devoted as they were, saved from death many of the wounded and disfigured, but still curable, soldiers to whom they gave their help. All they could do was to bring a little relief to a few of them. What was needed there was not only weak and ignorant women, but, with them and beside them, kindly and experienced men, capable, firm, already

organized, and in sufficient numbers to get to work at once in an orderly fashion. In that case many of the complications and fevers which so terribly aggravated wounds originally slight, but very soon mortal, might have been avoided.

If there had been enough assistance to collect the wounded in the plains of Medola and from the bottom of the ravines of San Martino, on the sharp slopes of Mount Fontana, or on the low hills above Solferino, how different things would have been! There would have been none of those long hours of waiting on June 24, hours of poignant anguish and bitter helplessness, during which those poor men of the Bersagliere, Uhlans and Zouaves struggled to rise, despite their fearful pain, and beckoned vainly for a letter to be brought over to them; and there would never have been the terrible possibility of what only too probably happened the next day—living men being buried among the dead!

If there had been available for the wounded improved means of transportation better than those now existing,<sup>1</sup> there would have been no need for the painful amputation which one Light Infantryman of the

<sup>1</sup> Improved means of transport, which would prevent the frequent accidents which happen between the battlefield and the field hospitals, would mean a reduction in the number of amputations, which is in itself something from the humanitarian standpoint. Further, by reducing the number of cripples, a saving would be effected in the expenses of a Government which has to provide pensions for disabled soldiers.

Several doctors have recently made special investigations of this question of the transportation of wounded men. Dr. Appia, for example, has worked out a simple, light, and elastic machine which deadens shock and is

Guard had to undergo at Brescia. The need for that operation arose from deplorable lack of attention when he was being carried from the regimental flying ambulance to Castiglione. If this man did not die under the operation, as many soldiers did, he could thank his own strong and healthy constitution for it.

When we see young fellows disabled, with a leg or an arm gone, returning sadly to their homes, must not this give rise to remorse and regret that we have made no attempt to prevent such fatal consequences resulting from wounds which could have been cured, by effective aid sent and given in time? Think of the wounded men who were abandoned in the field hospitals at Castiglione, or in the hospitals at Brescia, many of whom could not make themselves understood at all in their native languages! Would these men have breathed their last cursing and blaspheming, if there had been somebody with them to understand and listen and console them?<sup>1</sup>

It must not be thought that, in spite of all the zeal shown by the people of Brescia and in the towns of Lombardy, there was not a tremendous lot of work left to do. There was never a war in any century where such goodwill was shown and such a fine charitable spirit displayed. Yet the sacrifices made, generous and

particularly useful in fracture cases. Dr. Martres has happily also given attention to this matter, which would be a most suitable subject of study for the societies which I would like to see formed.

<sup>1</sup> During the Italian war there were some soldiers whose home-sickness was such that they died of it, without being otherwise sick or in any way wounded.

remarkable as they were, were altogether inadequate, and bore no proportion to the extent of the needs. All that was done, moreover, was done for the wounded of the Allied Army, and nothing for the poor Austrians. It represented the gratitude of a people rescued from oppression, and this explains the temporary delirium of enthusiasm and kindness. There were in Italy, it is true, plenty of brave women whose patience and perseverance knew no weariness—but, alas! there were few of them left at the end. The public grew tired; contagious fevers frightened away those who had at first been anxious to help; and helpers and orderlies, wearied or discouraged, did not justify expectations for long.

For work of this kind, paid help is not what is wanted. Only too often hospital orderlies working for hire grow harsh, or give up their work in disgust or become tired and lazy. On the other hand, immediate action is essential, for help which will save a wounded man today will not save him tomorrow, and if time is lost gangrene takes hold and carries off the patient.<sup>1</sup> There is need, therefore, for voluntary orderlies and volunteer nurses, zealous, trained and experienced,

<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the Italian campaign, before any fighting began, Mme N... had proposed in a Geneva drawing room, the formation of a committee to send aid to the wounded. Many of those to whom she spoke found her proposal premature, and I myself could not help saying, "How can one think of making lint before a single man has been wounded?" And yet, as soon as the first engagements took place, how valuable that lint would have been in the hospitals of Lombardy and Venetia! It is by seeing for myself the things of which I tell, that I was led to change my views and to present my reflections on the subject. I pray God that they may get a better welcome than I gave in 1859 to Mme ...'s proposal.

whose position would be recognized by the commanders or armies in the field, and their mission facilitated and supported. The personnel of military field hospitals is always inadequate, and would still be inadequate if the number of aids were two or three times as many, and this will always be the case. The only possible way is to turn to the public. It is inevitable, it will always be inevitable, for it is through the cooperation of the public that we can expect to attain the desired goal. The imploring appeal must therefore be made to men of all countries and of all classes, to the mighty ones of this world, and to the poorest workman: for all can, in one way or another, each in his own sphere and within his own limitations, do something to help the good work forward. Such an appeal is made to ladies as well as to men—to the mighty princess seated on the steps of the throne—to the poor devoted orphan serving maid—to the poor widow alone in the world and anxious to devote her last strength to the welfare of her neighbour. It is an appeal which is addressed equally to General and Corporal; to the philanthropist and to the writer who, in the quiet of his study, can give his talent to publications relating to a question which concerns all the human race and in a more particular sense, concerns every nation, every district, and every family, since no man can say with certainty that he is forever safe from the possibility of war. If an Austrian and a French General can sit next to each other at the hospitable table of the King of Prussia, and talk like good friends, what could there be to prevent them from investigating and discussing together a question so worthy to arouse their interest and attention?

On certain special occasions, as, for example, when princes of the military art belonging to different nationalities meet at Cologne or Châlons, would it not be desirable that they should take advantage of this sort of congress to formulate some international principle, sanctioned by a Convention inviolate in character, which, once agreed upon and ratified, might constitute the basis for societies for the relief of the wounded in the different European countries? It is the more important to reach an agreement and concert measures in advance, because when hostilities once begin, the belligerents are already ill-disposed to each other, and thenceforth regard all questions from the one limited standpoint of their own subjects.<sup>1</sup>

Humanity and civilization call imperiously for such an organization as is here suggested. It seems as if the matter is one of actual duty, and that in carrying it out the cooperation of every man of influence, and the good wishes at least of every decent person can be relied upon with assurance. Is there in the world a prince or a monarch who would decline to support the proposed societies, happy to be able to give full assurance to his soldiers that they will be at once properly cared for if they should be wounded? Is there any Government that would hesitate to give its patronage to a group endeavoring in this manner to preserve the lives of useful citizens, for assuredly the soldier who

<sup>1</sup> Small conferences are convoked for the express purpose of dealing with questions of obviously much less importance, and there are international societies dealing with industry, philanthropy, public utility, and conferences of scientists, jurists and agriculturists, statisticians, economists, etc.

receives a bullet in the defense of his country deserves all that country's solicitude? Is there a single officer, a single general, considering his troops as "his boys," who would not be anxious to facilitate the work of volunteer helpers? Is there a military commissary, or a military doctor, who would not be grateful for the assistance of a detachment of intelligent people, wisely and properly commanded and tactful in their work?<sup>1</sup>

Last of all—in an age when we hear so much of progress and civilization, is it not a matter of urgency, since unhappily we cannot always avoid wars, to press forward in a human and truly civilized spirit the attempt to prevent, or at least to alleviate, the horrors of war?

The practical execution of this proposal, on a large scale, would certainly call for somewhat considerable funds, but there would never be difficulty about the necessary money. In wartime, all and sundry would hasten to give their contributions or bring their mite in response to the committee's appeals. There is no coldness or indifference among the public when the country's sons are fighting. After all, the blood that is being spilled in battle is the same that runs in the veins of the whole nation. It must not be thought, therefore, that there is any danger of the enterprise being checked by obstacles of this kind. It is not there that the difficulty

<sup>1</sup> With the kind of societies we have in view, possible waste and injudicious distribution of funds and relief material would largely be avoided. In the Crimean War, for example, large consignments of lint prepared by Russian ladies were sent to Crimea from St. Petersburg; but the bales of lint found their way to the paper manufactories which annexed them for their own purposes.

lies. The whole problem lies in serious preparation for work of this kind, and in the actual formation of the proposed societies.<sup>1</sup>

If the new and frightful weapons of destruction which are now at the disposal of the nations, seem destined to abridge the duration of future wars, it appears likely, on the other hand, that future battles will only become more and more murderous. Moreover, in this age when surprise plays so important a part, is it not possible that wars may arise, from one quarter or another, in the most sudden and unexpected fashion? And do not these considerations alone constitute more than adequate reason for taking precautions against surprise?

<sup>1</sup> "... People must be made to see," the Honourable General Dufour was good enough to write to me on October 19, 1862, "by the kind of vivid examples which you report, the cost in torments and in tears of the glory of the battlefield. It is only too easy to see only the dazzling side of war and to close one's eyes to its sorrowful consequences.... It is an excellent thing," went on the illustrious Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the Swiss Confederation, "to draw attention to this humanitarian question, and your paper seems to me eminently calculated to attain this end. Careful and thoughtful consideration may produce a solution through the cooperation of philanthropists in all countries..."

## *Dunant's ideas—the test of time*

*In "A memory of Solferino" Henry Dunant did not merely describe a terrible battle and recall the events of the following days and the part which he played in them; he also put forward ideas and proposals for the future, aimed at preventing a repetition of the suffering which he had witnessed at Solferino. These ideas, at once daring and modest, and the speed with which they were realized, turned Dunant's work into more than just another account of war. The book is still well worth reading, and is indispensable to an understanding of the world-wide organization known as the Red Cross.*

*The aim of Dunant's proposals was twofold: on the one hand, to create in all countries voluntary "relief societies for the purpose of having care given to the wounded in wartime" and, on the other, to formulate an "international principle, sanctioned by a Convention inviolate in character," which would serve as the basis and support for the relief societies. What has become of these proposals in the hundred years and more which have elapsed since then?*

*In 1863, four years after the battle of Solferino and a year after Dunant's book was published, a private Committee consisting of General Dufour, Gustave Moynier, physicians Théodore Maunoir and Louis*

*Appia, and Henry Dunant himself, organized a conference in Geneva, to which 16 countries sent their representatives. The conference recommended that national relief societies be set up, and asked the governments to give them their protection and support. In addition, the conference expressed the wish that in wartime belligerent parties declare lazarets and field hospitals neutral, i.e. inviolate, that similar protection be extended to army medical staff, voluntary helpers and the wounded themselves, and finally that the governments choose a common distinctive sign marking persons and objects to be protected.*

*In 1864, the Federal Council convened a Diplomatic Conference in Geneva, with plenipotentiaries from 16 countries taking part; this conference drew up the "Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field", which was signed on 22 August of that year and ratified by almost all the States in the years that followed. The Convention formalized the recommendations of the 1863 conference and stated the principle—crucial for the whole undertaking—that wounded and sick soldiers must be taken in and cared for without distinction of nationality. As a tribute to Switzerland, the heraldic sign of a red cross on a white ground—in effect, the Swiss flag with the colours reversed—was chosen as the emblem guaranteeing protection and assistance.*

*From the resolutions of the 1863 conference and on the basis of the Geneva Conventions, there gradually developed the humanitarian organization called the "International Red Cross" and the substantial body of*

*universally recognized rules which make up the Geneva Conventions for the protection of war victims. In other words, there is now a world-wide organization and a set of conventions; the one stands for humanitarian assistance and the other for legal protection, and the two go hand in hand and complement each other. Combined, they constitute the force which has given protection, comfort and consolation to thousands of people caught up in the worst imaginable catastrophes.*

*Even before the Geneva Convention was adopted, the "Committee of Five" decided, while maintaining its specifically Swiss character, to become the "International Standing Commission for Aid to Wounded Soldiers" and set itself the tasks of encouraging the setting-up of National Red Cross Societies, facilitating their work and, in the event of war, acting as a neutral intermediary to ensure the protection of war victims and give assistance wherever needed. This Committee subsequently became the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).*

*During the two World Wars, the ICRC's main concern was the plight of prisoners of war: its delegates visited prisoner-of-war camps, and a central information agency was set up in Geneva, forwarding millions of messages between the prisoners and their families. During World War II the ICRC extended its protection and assistance activities to civilians, in particular to civilian internees and the civilian population in occupied territories. Since the First World War, the ICRC has also done a major part of the work of making the Geneva Conventions as thorough and comprehen-*

*sive as possible. The revisions of the texts as well as the new provisions adopted in 1929 and 1949 (which we will turn to later), were largely the work of the Committee.*

*A large number of National Red Cross Societies were founded immediately after 1863-1864, and others later, as different conflicts broke out. The movement spread well beyond the frontiers of Europe, as is apparent from the fact that besides Red Cross Societies, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun\* Societies, with corresponding emblems, were founded. At present, the Red Cross movement comprises 137 National Societies with about 250 million members. Moreover, there are 50 million young people between the ages of 10 and 18 in the Red Cross Youth Sections.*

*The National Societies' field of activity now extends far beyond the tasks laid down by Henry Dunant and the 1863 conference. Medical aid on behalf of wounded and sick soldiers has developed into assistance to all war victims, covering prisoners, civilian wounded and sick, internees and deported persons, evacuees, refugees, homeless persons and populations of occupied territories.*

*The development of Red Cross work in time of war has led to the expansion of its peacetime activities: volunteers who have done valuable work for the Red Cross in times of adversity do not want to—and indeed should not—remain inactive in less difficult periods. On the contrary, it is only right that they should be*

\* Since 1980 this sign has no longer been used.

*allowed to make their contribution to the day-to-day humanitarian work which needs to be done in the industrialized countries and the Third World alike. This is how National Societies' "peacetime activities" took shape, and action started being taken on behalf of the sick, wounded and disabled, the aged and young children, the victims of disasters within national borders or abroad. To these peacetime medical and social activities was added, at the end of World War I, the work of Red Cross Youth, which teaches young people the ideals of help and service, and aims to promote friendship and understanding among the youth of all nations.*

*Since 1919, National Red Cross Societies have been grouped into a world federation, the League of Red Cross Societies\*. Unlike the International Committee of the Red Cross (whose members must be Swiss citizens—a guarantee of independence, neutrality and impartiality), the League is a forum where the representatives of Red Cross Societies throughout the world meet on an equal footing to share their experiences and help one another. The League's main tasks are to encourage the development of the many recently-created National Societies and to promote and co-ordinate the activities of all member Societies, in particular their relief work in case of natural disasters.*

*In 1928, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League and the National Societies joined together in an umbrella organization under the name of*

\* Since 1981: League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

*“International Red Cross”. The organization’s statutes set out the respective spheres of action of the Committee and the League, as well as their bilateral relations. They also provide for an “International Conference”, made up of representatives of the recognized National Societies, the ICRC, the League and States party to the Geneva Conventions, to ensure the unity of the action taken by the component bodies of the Red Cross.*

*Just as the Red Cross institutions have changed over the years in accordance with new needs, the 1864 Convention has also been adapted to changing circumstances and supplemented by new legal instruments. In 1899, a new convention “for the Adaptation to Maritime Warfare of the Principles of the Geneva Convention of August 22 1864” was signed by the representatives of the States taking part in the first International Peace Conference, held at The Hague. The 1864 Geneva Convention was revised in 1906, and for the first time voluntary relief societies were mentioned in it. The second Peace Conference (The Hague, 1907) adopted the “regulations concerning the laws and customs of war on land” which prohibit means of waging war which cause cruel and unnecessary suffering, and stipulate humane treatment of prisoners of war and the observance of certain fundamental rights of inhabitants of occupied territories. In 1929, a Diplomatic Conference convened by the Federal Council undertook to revise the 1906 Geneva Convention and adopted the “Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War”, which added to and set out in greater detail the rules contained in the*

*regulations of The Hague on war on land, taking into account experience of World War I.*

*In 1949 another Diplomatic Conference, also convened by the Swiss government, undertook an extensive revision of the Law of Geneva already in force and added a new legal instrument, the "Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War". This Convention again relates to the regulations of The Hague on war on land, but it also covers some new ground, such as the protection of civilian hospitals and civilian medical transports, the setting-up of hospital and safety zones, legal status of foreigners on the territory of a party to a conflict, and the treatment of civilian internees and populations of occupied territories. Another important aspect of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 is that they must be implemented by States party to them in all cases of armed conflict, that is, even when war has not been declared or when the state of war has not been recognized by a party to the conflict. In addition, some fundamental rules have to be observed in the case of armed conflict not of an international character (civil war) taking place on the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties. By June 1977, 143 States, including the great powers, were party to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949.*

*The 1949 Geneva Conventions were supplemented in 1977 by two Additional Protocols, adopted by the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts, which had been meet-*

*ing in Geneva since 1974 on invitation by the Federal Council. Protocol I deals with international armed conflicts, and Protocol II with non-international armed conflicts. They contain 130 articles in all, which include—besides provisions on giving protection and assistance to the wounded, prisoners and the sick—rules relative to the conduct of war, aimed primarily at avoiding unnecessary suffering, and giving to the civilian population greater protection from the effects of war. The Additional Protocols have been at the disposal of States party to the Geneva Conventions since 1977 for accession, or for signature and ratification.*

*In the years ahead the ICRC, the League and the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will be faced with monumental tasks and difficult problems. To surmount these difficulties, institutions must let themselves be guided by the spirit of the Geneva Conventions and the Principles of the Red Cross—in other words, by the spirit of unconditioned humanitarian commitment and impartial, disinterested aid. It will also be essential to respect the principle of neutrality which prohibits the Red Cross from becoming involved in hostilities or political and ideological controversies. Humanity, impartiality and neutrality are the guarantees of the Movement's unity and universality, and the Red Cross can only find the strength to fulfil its humanitarian tasks if it continues to be a united, world-wide organization.*

*Professor Hans HAUG  
Former President of the Swiss Red Cross*

## *Convention*

for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded in armies in the field

*The Swiss Confederation;* His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Baden; His Majesty the King of the Belgians; His Majesty the King of Denmark; Her Majesty the Queen of Spain; His Majesty the Emperor of the French; His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Hesse; His Majesty the King of Italy; His Majesty the King of the Netherlands; His Majesty the King of Portugal and of the Algarves; His Majesty the King of Prussia; His Majesty the King of Würtemberg, being equally animated with the desire to soften, as much as depends on them, the evils of warfare, to suppress its useless hardships and improve the fate of wounded soldiers on the field of battle, have resolved to conclude a convention to that effect, and have named for their plenipotentiaries, viz:

*The Swiss Confederation:* Guillaume Henri Dufour, Grand Officer of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour, General in Chief of the federal army, Member of the Council of States; Gustave Moynier, President of the International Relief Committee for wounded soldiers and of the Geneva Society of Public Utility; and Samuel Lehmann, federal Colonel, Doctor in Chief of the federal army, Member of the National Council.

# Convention

*pour l'amélioration du sort des Militaires  
blessés dans les armées en campagne.*

*Sa Confédération Suisse, Son Al-  
tesse Royale le Grand-Duc de Bade, Sa  
Majesté le Roi des Belges, Sa Majesté le Roi  
de Danemark, Sa Majesté le Roi d'Espagne, Sa  
Majesté l'Empereur des Français, Son Altesse  
Royale le Grand-Duc de Saxe, Sa Majesté le  
Roi d'Italie, Sa Majesté le Roi des Pays-Bas ;  
Sa Majesté le Roi de Portugal et des Algarves ;  
Sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse, Sa Majesté le Roi  
de Wurtemberg, également animés du désir d'adoucir, au-  
tant qu'il dépend d'eux, les maux inséparables de la guerre,  
de supprimer les rigueurs inutiles et d'améliorer le sort  
des militaires blessés sur les champs de bataille, ont résolu  
de conclure une Convention à cet effet et ont nommé pour  
leurs Plénipotentiaires, savoir :*

*Sa Confédération Suisse :  
le Sieur Guillaume-Xavier Dreyfous, Grand-  
Officier de l'Ordre Impérial de la Légion*

The 1864 Convention consists of no more than 10 articles on the protection of wounded soldiers and those who care for them. Today, there are four Conventions comprising more than 400 articles to protect not only wounded or sick soldiers but also prisoners and civilians in enemy hands.

insérés dans cette Convention.

Article 9

Les hautes Puissances contractantes sont convenues de communiquer la présente Convention aux Gouvernements qui n'ont pu envoyer des Plénipotentiaires à la Conférence Internationale de Genève, en les invitant à y accéder; le protocole est à cet effet la fait ouvrir.

Article 10

La présente Convention sera ratifiée, et les ratifications en seront échangées à Genève, dans l'espace de quatre mois, ou plus tôt si faire se peut.

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires respectifs l'ont signée et y ont apposé le cachet de leur armée.

Fait à Genève, le vingt-deuxième jour du mois d'Août de l'an mil huit cent soixante-quatre.

Genève

*(Signature)*

*(Signature)*

*(Signature)*

*(Signature)*

*(Signature)*

*(Signature)*

*(Signature)*

Twelve States put their seals to the First Geneva Convention. Today, 87 States—including the great powers—have acceded to the four Conventions of 1949

*His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Baden:* Robert Volz, Knight of the Order of the Lion of Zaehringen, M.D., Medical Councillor at the Direction of Medical Affairs; and Adolphe Steiner, Knight of the Order of the Lion of Zaehringen, Chief Staff Physician.

*His Majesty the King of Belgians:* Auguste Visschers, Officer of the Order of Léopold, Councillor at the Council of Mines.

*His Majesty the King of Denmark:* Charles-Emile Fenger, Commander of the Order of Danebrog, decorated with the silver cross of the same Order, Grand Cross of the Order of Léopold of Belgium, etc., His Councillor of State.

*Her Majesty the Queen of Spain:* Don José Heriberto García de Quevedo, Gentleman of Her Chamber on active service, Knight of the Grand Cross of Isabella the Catholic, Numerary Commander of the Order of Charles III, Knight of the first class of the Royal and Military Order of St. Ferdinand, Officer of the Legion of Honour of France, Her Minister Resident to the Swiss Confederation.

*His Majesty the Emperor of the French:* Georges-Charles Jagerschmidt, Officer of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour, Officer of the Order of Léopold of Belgium, Knight of the Order of the Red Eagle of Prussia of the Third class, etc., etc., Sub-Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Henri Eugène

Séguineau de Préval, Knight of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour, decorated with the Imperial Order of the Medjidié of fourth class, Knight of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus of Italy, etc., etc., military Sub-Commissioner of first class; and Martin François Boudier, Officer of the Imperial Order of the Legion of Honour, decorated with the Imperial Order of the Medjidié of the fourth class, decorated with the medal of Military Valour of Italy, etc., etc., doctor in chief of second class.

*His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Hess:* Charles Auguste Brodruck, Knight of the Order of Philip the Magnanimous, of the Order of St. Michael of Bavaria, Officer of the Royal Order of the Holy Saviour, etc., Chief of Battalion, Staff Officer.

*His Majesty the King of Italy:* Jean Capello, Knight of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, His Consul General of Switzerland; and Felix Baroffio, Knight of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, Doctor in Chief of medical division.

*His Majesty the King of Netherlands:* Bernard Ortuinus Théodore Henri Westenberg, Officer of His Order of the Crown of Oak, Knight of the Orders of Charles III of Spain, of the Crown of Prussia, of Adolphe of Nassau, L.D., His Secretary of Legation at Frankfort.

*His Majesty the King of Portugal and of the Algarves:* José Antonio Marques, Knight of the Order of Christ,

of Our Lady of the Conception of Villa-Viçosa, of Saint Benedict of Aviz, of Léopold of Belgium, etc., M.D., Surgeon of Brigade, Sub-chief of the Department of Health at the Ministry of War.

*His Majesty of the King of Prussia:* Charles Albert de Kamptz, Knight of the Order of the Red Eagle of second class, etc., etc., His Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Swiss Confederation, Private Councillor of Legation; Godefroi Frédéric François Loeffler, Knight of the Order of the Red Eagle of third class, etc., etc., M.D., Physician in Chief of the fourth Army Corps; Georges Hermann Jules Ritter, Knight of the Order of the Crown of third class, etc., etc., Private Councillor at the Ministry of War.

*His Majesty the King of Würtemberg:* Christophe Ulric Hahn, Knight of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, etc., Doctor of Philosophy and Theology, Member of the Central Royal Direction for Charitable Institutions:

Who, after having exchanged their powers, and found them in good and due form, agreed to the following articles:

Art. 1

Ambulances and military hospitals shall be recognized as neutral and, as such, protected and respected by the belligerents as long as they accommodate wounded and sick.

Neutrality shall end if the said ambulances or hospitals should be held by a military force.

#### Art. 2

Hospital and ambulance personnel, including the quarter-master's staff, the medical, administrative and transport services, and the chaplains, shall have the benefit of the same neutrality when on duty, and while there remain any wounded to be brought in or assisted.

#### Art. 3

The persons designated in the preceding Article may, even after enemy occupation, continue to discharge their functions in the Hospital or ambulance with which they serve, or may withdraw to rejoin the units to which they belong.

When in these circumstances they cease their functions, such persons shall be delivered to the enemy outposts by the occupying forces.

#### Art. 4

The material of military hospitals being subject to the laws of war, the persons attached to such hospitals may take with them, on withdrawing, only the articles which are their own personal property.

Ambulances, on the contrary, under similar circumstances, shall retain their equipment.

## Art. 5

Inhabitants of the country who bring help to the wounded shall be respected and shall remain free. Generals of the belligerent Powers shall make it their duty to notify the inhabitants of the appeal made to their humanity, and of the neutrality which humane conduct will confer.

The presence of any wounded combatant receiving shelter and care in a house shall ensure its protection. An inhabitant who has given shelter to the wounded shall be exempted from billeting and from a portion of such war contributions as may be levied.

## Art. 6

Wounded or sick combatants, to whatever nation they may belong, shall be collected and cared for.

Commanders-in-Chief may hand over immediately to the enemy outposts enemy combatants wounded during an engagement, when circumstances allow and subject to the agreement of both parties.

Those who, after their recovery, are recognized as being unfit for further service, shall be repatriated.

The others may likewise be sent back, on condition that they shall not again, for the duration of hostilities, take up arms.

Evacuation parties, and the personnel conducting them, shall be considered as being absolutely neutral.

## Art. 7

A distinctive and uniform flag shall be adopted for

hospitals, ambulances and evacuation parties. It should in all circumstances be accompanied by the national flag.

An armlet may also be worn by personnel enjoying neutrality but its issue shall be left to the military authorities.

Both flag and armlet shall bear a red cross on a white ground.

#### Art. 8

The implementing of the present Convention shall be arranged by the Commanders-in-Chief of the belligerent armies following the instructions of their respective Governments and in accordance with the general principles set forth in this Convention.

#### Art. 9

The High Contracting Parties have agreed to communicate the present Convention with an invitation to accede thereto to Governments unable to appoint Plenipotentiaries to the International Conference at Geneva. The Protocol has accordingly been left open.

#### Art. 10

The present Convention shall be ratified and the ratification exchanged at Berne, within the next four months, or sooner if possible.

In faith whereof, the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the Convention and thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Geneva, this twenty-second day of August, in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four.

Printed in Switzerland

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Drawing by Claude Humbert, Geneva



**Mission**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.



# ICRC

*Who better than Henry Dunant to shake the reader with a gripping account of the suffering of the thousands of wounded soldiers left untended after the battle of Solferino? In this work, Dunant succeeds in taking the vital step between that vision of devastation and an impassioned appeal on behalf of the victims of combat.*

*The horrors witnessed by Dunant after the battle of Solferino on 24 June 1859 and his ensuing humanitarian appeal are at the origin of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, which today comprises 186 National Societies with millions of members, as well as the two international bodies – the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.*

*This is a truly poignant book.*



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