



“His master came to him and gripped him by the collar.”

LITTLE PIERRE.

From the French.

PIERRE was twelve years old. He was an orphan who had lost his parents when he was very young, so that he could not remember them. At the farm where he was employed he saw Maître François and his wife 'spoiling' their son, a sly, untruthful, good-for-nothing fellow, while for him—poor little Pierre—they had not so much as a kind word. He had to rise very early in the morning, and to work hard all day long. He had scarcely anything to eat. His bed was a truss of straw. Many a night he lay awake and cried. Then Médor, the farm-dog, would come and lie down beside him, and the boy would hug the kind animal. They were companions in misfortune. Neither had a happy life, but they loved and comforted one another.

One evening, when Pierre came in from the fields, he heard the sound of excited voices—those of the farmer and his son—within the house. As soon as he appeared at the door, his master came to him and gripped him by the collar.

'What have you done with the money you stole?' demanded Maître François, harshly.

'I,' exclaimed Pierre indignantly; 'I am not a thief! I have taken nothing of yours.'

'You have taken a new gold piece, you young scoundrel!' blustered the farmer. 'What have you done with it?'

'Indeed,' protested Pierre, 'I have taken nothing!'

The farmer, pale with rage, shook the child roughly.

'My son saw you do it,' he said.

'Yes, I saw him,' muttered the farmer's son.

'Oh!' cried Pierre, turning towards the other boy, 'how can you say such a thing? You know very well that it is untrue!'

'So you deny it, do you?' said the farmer. 'You dare to call my son a liar? Be off with you! Go wherever you like. You shall not live here any longer. Be off at once, and never show your face at this farm again!'

Pierre was glad enough to be released from the man's savage grip. He ran away as fast as possible. He knew who the real thief was—the farmer's wicked son. He had taken the money, and when the theft was discovered had accused the innocent little farm-boy. But Pierre knew that it would be of no use to tell the farmer this—he would never believe it.

Pierre ran into the wood. At first he felt glad to get away from the cruel people at the farm. But as darkness came on he felt very lonely and wretched. Of course he was hungry, and, although it was summertime, the night was rather chilly.

Pierre sat down on the ground, covered his face with his hands, and sobbed. Perhaps, he thought, he was going to die of starvation. Well, then, at any rate, he would suffer no more. And he might find his mother and father in heaven, and they would love him. Nobody had ever loved him except Médor.

At that very instant, Pierre felt a damp warm touch on his hand—it was the affectionate touch of Médor's tongue! The faithful creature had followed his friend.

Pierre felt better at once.

'Oh, Médor! Médor!' he cried, 'you love me! Thank you for coming! Oh, dear, dear Médor!'

He flung his arm over the dog. They cuddled up close together, and kept each other warm. By-and-by, both fell asleep.

(Concluded on page 327.)

A YEAR IN A GARDEN.

VIII.—AUGUST.

IT was the first day of the summer holidays, and to the children the lure of the garden was strong. They were sitting on an old bench, watching the dragon-flies that haunted the garden. One, a gorgeous creature in yellow and speckled white and brown, settled for a few moments on the rose trellis, slowly swinging its long body to and fro in the light breeze while they examined it.

A queer, small, singing noise caught Babe's quick ear. Instantly she stooped down in the direction from where she fancied it came; there were several freshly-bored holes in the back of the bench, and from one of these it seemed to her that the singing noise came. As they looked, a small, thin, solitary wasp emerged from the hole, and then they noticed, at the entrance, slightly to one side, the huddled-up body of a spider. The wasp was laying eggs in the tunnel she had made, and had placed the spider, stung but not yet quite dead, for food for the young larvæ as they came out of the eggs. The bench was so old that the piece of wood was easily broken off; this the children placed in a box, covering the whole with a piece of glass, so that they would be able to watch the wasp's operations more safely. They removed the piece of rotten wood very gently, but the wasp buzzed out again as soon as they had got the glass on the box. She was very angry to find the glass that imprisoned her; she flew around, searching for a way out, and when she had found one she flew away and never came back. Presently the spider began to move its legs feebly. Billy took him out of his cramped position and laid him on a flat corner of the box, and two hours later he had so far recovered that he was able to crawl away.

A summer storm of wind and rain the next day drove a dragon-fly into the tool-shed for shelter. When the children found it the beautiful colours were faded, the exquisite wings were outstretched but still, and the insect was dead. Billy made a little box with a glass lid for it, and said it should be the beginning of a natural history museum.

To the caterpillars' houses they added a spiders' house this month. The nest Billy found in the hedge; he found two, and opened one to show Babe the little yellow silken cradle and the tiny yellow eggs; the other nest they placed at the bottom of the box and fastened gauze over the top. Babe was not much interested in this latest addition to their collection of garden families, for the outer case was a rather disagreeable-looking bundle of small dead flies spun up into a strong web.

THE STORY OF SOME ORDERS AND DECORATIONS.

V.—ORDERS OF MERIT.

(Concluded from page 300.)

ANOTHER Order that we owe to Queen Victoria is

THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

Her Majesty felt that the then existing means of rewarding the distinguished services of naval and military officers who had been honourably mentioned in dispatches were very limited, and so for such acts as might

yet not be quite deserving of the V.C. she instituted and created, in 1886, this new Order of distinction. It is given only to Naval and Military officers—to quote the Royal Warrant instituting it—‘for individual instances of meritorious or distinguished service in war,’ the same Warrant further declaring that only those shall be eligible who have been ‘mentioned in dispatches for meritorious or distinguished services in the field or before the enemy.’ But although resembling the V.C. in many particulars, it is in no sense a sort of second class to it. The two Orders are similar in that they are both shared by Navy as well as Army, and both also are generally referred to by their initials, these being placed after the name of the recipient.

Like the V.C., too, the decoration of the D.S.O. takes the form of a Maltese cross. It is of gold and enamelled white, having on one side, upon a crimson centre, a golden imperial crown surrounded by a wreath of laurel, and on the other the royal cypher V.R.I. also on red, and equally surrounded by a laurel wreath. The decoration is worn hanging by a blue-edged red ribbon on the left breast.

The instances are numberless of gallant deeds which have earned the D.S.O.; but there is one man who is neither sailor nor soldier who perhaps it may surprise you to learn should have gained such a decoration—this is one of the many chaplains who have shown themselves to be real soldiers. The Rev. Percy Guinness, having heard that men were wounded and left behind in a cave, insisted on going alone to comfort and help them, by first binding up their wounds and then praying with them. Nor did this gallant man breathe one word of how, in order to reach them, he had ridden under such heavy shell fire that the very road over which he had to pass was actually ploughed up by the shells!

The companion medal, as one may call it, of the D.S.O., is the D.C.M., or

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL,

awarded for ‘distinguished conduct in the field.’ It was instituted in 1862, in place of that formerly known as ‘for meritorious service,’ which had been issued as the reward for ‘gallant conduct’ in the Crimean War. It then carried with it, according to the rank of the recipient, a money gratuity; but in its later form it was decided that the medal be given to non-commissioned officers and men without the gratuity. In 1881 a Royal Warrant provided that for any further act of gallantry a bar might be added to the medal; so you see, like the V.C., a double award can be earned.

The medal bears on one side the royal arms of the United Kingdom, being further decorated with cannon, arms, cannon-balls, and helmets; while on the reverse side is written, ‘For distinguished conduct in the field.’ It is worn on a crimson ribbon with a blue stripe down the centre.

This decoration has been as freely earned in the Great War as its counterpart, the D.S.O., and among those who have gained it are many members of Dominions Forces. It is a grand list, and is not entirely composed by any means of men who have always been brought up as soldiers, as will be seen from the only two instances we can spare space to mention. One of these was a man in the service of the Kensington Borough Council, who worked as a street-sweeper. He volunteered shortly after the War broke out, and has not only been twice mentioned in dispatches, but has been awarded

two medals, one being the D.C.M. The other case is that of a London Post Office hero who, up to that time, was the first Central Telegraph Office man to win the D.C.M.—and this is how Private Hastings gained the distinction. There was a small arch over which the enemy intended to force their way; our men were scarce, and enough could not be spared to hold it; so the Colonel sent for Hastings, whom he knew to be a ‘crack shot,’ and asked if he would volunteer to hold that bridge with the help of one other man.

‘I will do my best, sir,’ replied Hastings, modestly.

‘You will do the shooting,’ continued the Colonel, ‘and your companion can report to me every few minutes.’

The regiment then moved off, leaving the two young men alone. They proceeded to dig a shallow trench, and after putting up some barbed wire at the end of the bridge, lay down to await events.

With straining eyes and ears they gazed into the darkness and listened for every sound, trembling meanwhile with excitement and cold. At last the enemy came, and Hastings proved to them that he was indeed a ‘crack shot,’ for when at dawn they retired with their wounded, they left, as we are graphically told, ‘twenty-three silent witnesses of the courageous tenacity of a London telegraphist.’ When King George visited France later, he personally decorated, among many officers and men, Private Hastings, pinning on his breast the D.C.M.

There are men too—a good many of them—who have won the double D.C.M., which, as we have already said, takes the form of a clasp attached to the medal. Those who have actually earned this honour twice over during the Great War, have won it sometimes for conspicuous gallantry only, sometimes for having proved full of resource in a difficult position as well as being brave.

The corresponding medal of the sister service is a new one, created soon after the outbreak of the Great War:

THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL

is its name, and it was instituted by the King in October, 1914, for reward to chief petty officers, petty officers, men and boys of all branches of the Royal Navy, for non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Marines, and to all other persons holding corresponding positions in His Majesty’s Service afloat for ‘distinguished conduct in war.’

The ribbon consists of three stripes of equal width, the outside ones being blue and the centre, red.

Yet another naval medal is an old friend under a new name. It is now called

THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS,

but was formerly known as the ‘Conspicuous Service Cross,’ founded in 1901 by King Edward to reward ‘Distinguished service before the enemy.’ Its grant is conferred on all men below the rank of Lieutenant-Commander who are ineligible for other existing Orders. Under its new name it has already rewarded some very gallant deeds; we find, for instance, that it has on many occasions been given in recognition of bravery and devotion to duty in mine-sweeping and mine-laying operations. The decoration itself consists of a silver cross, one side of which is plain, while in the centre of the other is the Imperial and Royal cypher E.R.I. surmounted by an imperial crown.

The ribbon has three stripes of equal width—blue in the centre and white on either side.

In addition to these is the

CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY MEDAL,

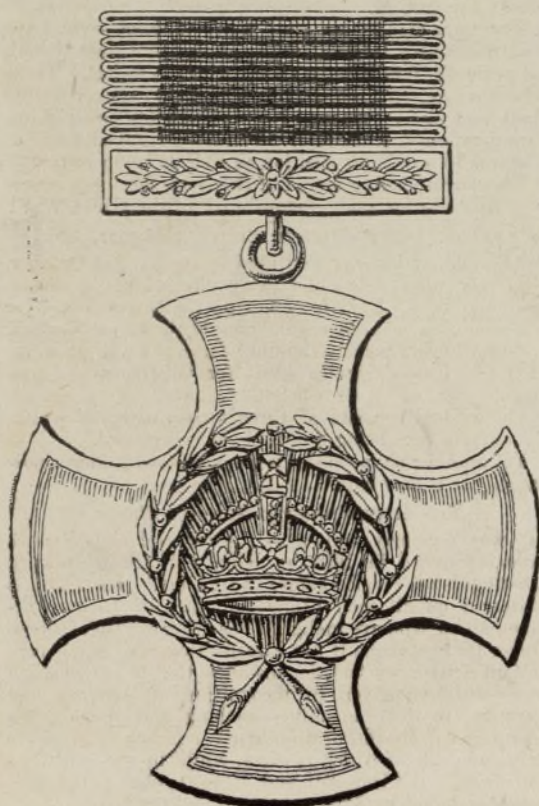
which we often notice being awarded. This is also a naval decoration, and was instituted in 1874 by Queen Victoria for the 'reward of such petty officers, seamen, and marines as might at any time and in any place distinguish themselves by acts of bravery in action with the enemy.' The medal is round and of silver, bearing on one side the diademed head of Queen Victoria and the inscription 'Victoria Regina,' while on the other is a wreath of laurel encircling the words 'For Conspicuous Gallantry,' the whole being surmounted by a crown.

We now turn to quite a different kind of Order—a newer one, but at the same time one of the most highly prized—this is

THE ORDER OF MERIT,

which is partly military, partly naval, and partly civil. It was instituted by King Edward VII. in June, 1902, for the decoration of such British subjects as 'may have rendered exceptionally meritorious service in our Navy and our Army, or who may have rendered exceptionally meritorious service towards the advancement of Art, Literature, and Science.'

This Order carries neither title nor precedence, but its members are privileged to place the two letters O.M.



The Badge of the Distinguished Service Order.



The Badge of the Order of Merit.

after their name. The membership is limited to twenty-four, a number it has never yet reached.

The Badge of the Order is a red and blue enamelled cross of eight points, with the words 'For Merit' inscribed on a blue centre surrounded by a laurel wreath. The reverse side bears the royal imperial cypher in gold, the whole being surmounted by an imperial crown. It is worn on a Garter blue and crimson ribbon.

Earl Roberts was one of the first to receive the honour, it being conferred on him in August, 1902. Another distinguished and early member was the 'Lady of the Lamp'—the late Miss Florence Nightingale—to whom the Order was presented by King Edward VII. in 1907, and then for the first time conferred upon a woman.

We find other familiar names such as Field-Marshal Lord French, Lord Fisher, Sir William Crookes, Sir Edward Elgar, and one of the most recent recipients of the honour, the late Henry James, the well-known American novelist, who, in 1915, became a naturalised British subject, partly because of his long residence in England, and partly on account of his love and sympathy for her 'decent and dauntless people,' which made him desire to throw in his lot with her in this time of trouble, and to become a liege subject of his Majesty King George.

CONSTANCE M. FOOT.



"He was on the very edge of a deep ravine."

SAVED BY HIS HORSE.

NOT long ago, one of the newspapers quoted a letter home from a soldier on the Salonika Front, relating a wonderful instance of sagacity on the part of a horse. The soldier, an artillery-man, was sent out one dark and rainy night on mounted patrol. He got lost in the mountains, and came to a deep ravine, but did not know it until his horse snorted and came to a sudden halt. He coaxed her on and tried to advance, but she would go no further. He flashed his electric torch on the ground in front of him to see what was the obstacle which the mare refused to pass, and found he was on the very edge of a deep ravine, with a sheer drop of three hundred feet or more. The sensible horse had saved his life.

WANDERERS IN THE WAR.

By A. A. METHLEY.

(Continued from page 307.)

THE boy had determined that morning that they would travel due south, on the chance of catching up with the Bernards once more, but this proved to be much more easily said than done. The sun, which he had hoped would be a guide, always seemed to be directly overhead, his map was packed in a bundle that was far away on the donkey-cart, and there seemed to be no sign-posts or mile-stones to give an idea of direction or distance.

Now, at the cross-roads, he felt at his wits' end, and looked this way and that with a frown of anxiety.

Val, who had seated herself on a grassy bank, eyed her brother's troubled face with amusement. 'I believe we ought to be able to tell by the moss on the trees,' she volunteered. 'There's moss on the north side, and not on the south—or else it's the other way about. I can't remember, but anyway, even if we did know, it wouldn't be much use here, for these trees seem to have moss all round.'

She leaned back, gazing up at the green towering trunks with a laugh; but Roger did not join in her merriment, for somehow the silence and loneliness of the country through which they were passing made him feel vaguely restless and uneasy. He wished heartily that he and Val had not parted from the Bernards, and for the sake of human companionship would gladly have welcomed even the dusty, miserable fugitives of yesterday. 'We'd better get on now, Val, if you're rested,' he said, and then the little girl struggled to her feet, and clinging to her brother's arm, began to limp along the sandy track which they had chosen. Before long it led them to the heathery summit of a small hill. Val sat down again with Bob at her side, and Roger stood on the highest point, looking round eagerly with one hand shading his eyes against the dazzling rays of the mid-day sun.

Below there was a valley with a broad white high road running through it, and this sloped to a hamlet that was situated about half a mile away among some trees. It was only quite a small place, not big enough to be called a village, but a pointed church spire could be seen and a cluster of cottages with whitewashed

walls and red-tiled roofs. Roger's face brightened as he gazed downward, for at least there would be some one to tell them the best way to go, and it might be possible to hire some sort of a cart, so that poor, lame little Val would not have to walk any further. 'Look, Val, we must get down there,' he said. 'And I know which is North now. Can't you see the weather-cock on the church spire?'

'No, I can't see it.' Val stared with narrowed eyes at the distant building, and then, dazzled with the sun-glare, turned her head in the opposite direction. Suddenly she caught her brother's arm, and leaned forward eagerly. 'Look, Roger, look, look!' she cried. 'Soldiers! There, coming along the road! Oh, do let's get down the hill and see them pass.'

It was not very far to the road, especially as they took a short cut across a field and through a little copse, and they reached the highway just as the first of the marching men, in a white swirl of dust, tramped past. Roger seized Bob's collar, and the three stood knee-deep in the thickly powdered grass and bracken, watching as regiment after regiment, and battery after battery, filed by.

To Val it was all only a brave, wonderful show, these lines of sun-burnt men, with their red trousers, blue coats, and gleaming bayonets; but Roger, who was three years older, and whose keen eyes had been able to see the weather-cock on the church spire, realised, with a pang of dismay at his heart, what it all meant.

For the soldiers were marching towards the south, not towards the north; they were retreating, not advancing, retiring before the enemy instead of going forward to victory.

Even if the direction taken by the troops had not told him the truth, the boy would have known that something was wrong, for the haggard faces and dejected aspect of the men spoke of disaster—of something more than the necessary fatigue and hardship of a campaign. Even the horses seemed to hang their heads hopelessly, and there were no garlands or green branches now to decorate the grim cannons as they rattled past. On some of the gun-carriages wounded soldiers were sitting, with stained bandages round their heads or limbs, and many of the guns themselves showed the marks of bullets.

It was an army in retreat—perhaps one of the most terrible sights that it is possible to witness. Roger felt a lump rising in his throat as he watched the long lines of broken, exhausted men, and tears welled up into Val's blue eyes, although as yet she did not know what it all meant.

Not far from where the boy and girl were standing, the road turned sharply, bringing the village into full view, and as they approached it the soldiers seemed to rouse themselves in a measure from their stupefied weariness. A command was given, the pace quickened, their backs straightened, and then away in front some one began to sing:

'Allons, enfants de la patrie;
Le jour de gloire est arrivé.'

The words of the Marseillaise rang out loud and clear on the sultry, dust-laden air, and the tune seemed to run backward through the ranks as one hoarse voice after another took up the strain.

Roger recognised the song with a thrill of excite-

ment, and turned quickly to his sister. 'What is it? What does it mean?' he cried. 'That thing they are singing. I've heard it before. Tell me what it is in English.'

'I don't know all of it, only bits,' Val replied, 'but the beginning is something about 'The Day of Glory has come.' Listen! they are singing that now again, 'Le jour de gloire est arrivé.'

When the soldiers had all passed by, and the choking clouds of dust had settled again, Roger and Val set off once more; but when they reached the hamlet they found to their amazement that it was deserted. The troops had marched straight through, and now the short cobbled street was empty, no sound of voices was to be heard, and every door and window was barred and shuttered.

A strange melancholy seemed to brood over everything, and instinctively the boy and girl lowered their voices, and stepped softly as they made their way between the lifeless, silent houses, and past the closed inn, where dust lay thick on the green bush above the bolted door.

The church stood a little apart, and near it was a trim, whitewashed cottage, where perhaps the village priest still remained at his post; but for the rest it was clear that the people had fled away southward, to escape from an enemy who might even now be near at hand.

Roger had known, ever since Jules arrived at St. Denis with his bad news, that the Germans were invading France; but he had known too that the French armies were still fighting, and acting as a barricade between the fugitives and the foe. Now that barricade had been withdrawn, and he felt, as he and Val stood in the desolate, abandoned village, that they were left behind and alone in an empty and hostile world.

The Germans might be close at hand, following on the heels of the retreating French, or they might still be far away. He had no means of telling what had happened, but again and again he found himself glancing hurriedly over his shoulder towards that north at which the golden arrow-head of the weather-cock on the church spire still pointed.

One time, looking back, he saw—or thought that he saw—the figure of a horseman standing on the summit of the hill from which he and Val had seen the approaching troops. It was a horseman with a strangely shaped helmet on his head, and a long spear that pricked up, dark and slender, against the sky. The boy rubbed his eyes so as to be able to see more clearly, but the vision had vanished when he looked again, and Val, who had turned swiftly at his exclamation of surprise, saw nothing.

'What was it, Roger?' she asked, but her brother shook his head and answered vaguely. He had thought that he saw something up on the hill, but it must have been a mistake—there was no one there really; and having left the village, they turned into a narrow, tree-shaded road, and the hill, with whatever had or had not been on it, was out of sight.

After that they walked on slowly for a little time, and then sat down beside a silvery rippling stream for a rest and lunch.

Val was very quiet during the meal, for she felt that something was wrong—terribly wrong, although she did not understand what it could be. At last she turned to Roger with an anxious face, and an eager question on her lips: 'Look here, Roger, I want you to tell me

what it all means. Is there anything the matter? Anything that I don't know?'

The boy hesitated for a moment before he answered. 'It means—well, I'm afraid it means that the French army—or part of it—has been defeated,' he said. 'But we knew that before—Jules told us—and they've had to retreat.'

'Yes, I see.'

'But they will stop soon, and then there will be another battle. The Germans are certain to be beaten in the end—every one knows that.'

'Oh, of course they will be beaten; you should have heard what Suzanne's grandson said, Roger, but—but—I suppose the Germans will come this way. They may not be far off now.'

She glanced backward, with the swift, uneasy gesture of a fugitive, and quickened her limping steps.

'Oh, don't you worry, old girl,' Roger laughed, and tried to speak cheerfully and carelessly. 'The Germans won't hurt us if they do come. Why should they? We're not soldiers. And anyway we are sure to get to a town or something long before they catch up.'

'Yes,' Val was looking over her shoulder again. 'Roger, just fancy if we should be anywhere and see a real battle. Wouldn't it be frightfully exciting. Even Father hasn't ever seen one. I asked him once, and he said 'no.' Perhaps it's rather lucky about my foot after all. If it hadn't been lame, we should never have got lost last night, and we should have been tramping along by the silly old donkey-cart now, instead of being here by ourselves.'

Roger did not answer, for he could not share Val's light-hearted irresponsibility. 'Take care of Val.' His father's words seemed once again to be ringing in his ears, and he would have given everything he possessed for a sight of the lumbering donkey-cart, and of old George Bernard's grim, deeply lined face. He was beginning to feel as if he and his little sister had been plodding alone through woods and along poplar-bordered roads for ever, and as if St. Denis-sur-Meuse must be thousands of miles away. As for Monkton Ashe and school—surely it must have been another Roger Mervyn altogether who once upon a time played tennis on the Rectory lawn, won the half-mile race, and worked at Latin and mathematics at his ink-stained desk in the big class-room. He wondered vaguely whether he would ever be able to take up the threads of his old life again, or whether the games and the lessons, and the interests of the past, would always seem as trivial and unimportant as they did to-day.

'Suzanne saw a battle once,' Val went on, after a long pause. 'At least, she saw the smoke and heard the noise of the shots. It was more than forty years ago, so perhaps she has forgotten a good bit, but she never would tell us much about it. Roger, what's that? Hark! Is it thunder? Or —'

The girl broke off, leaving her sentence unfinished, and stood up, listening with parted lips and wide, intent eyes. Roger nodded; for this time the dull, muffled roar was quite unmistakable. It came from the north, and it was much louder—and much nearer—than it had ever been before. He felt certain that, even if he had been hearing it now for the first time, he should have recognised the sound instantly for what it was. 'It's not thunder,' he said slowly. 'It's the guns again. Come, Val, hurry up.'

(Continued on page 322.)



"The three stood in the bracken, watching as regiment after regiment filed by."