

the Christian world reflected in the glass of the Legion, and in the sky of freedom the reflection of the world of Mohammed. It was as though the Muezzin were calling to him.

"When am I going?" said Jean. "I'm going now."

It was a little after six o'clock, the barracks did not shut till twelve—nearly six hours of time.

He rose, and Lacoste rising also, they took their way back down the lane. They reached the barracks and passed the gate where a sentry was standing, and where légionnaires were still coming out—men who had been delayed from their evening walk by extra cleaning or washing to be done.

CHAPTER XXVIII

GOOD LUCK!

THE suddenly come to decision had something dramatic about it. A thing plotted and planned to time has lost some of its freshness at the moment of execution; all the same, the execution of Jean's design promised nothing of the dramatic or pictorial, at least in its first stages.

He simply would not go back to barracks that night. He had all his money on him, and he had nothing to go back for.

It is not realised that when France enlists a man for the Legion she strips him of his clothes. You cannot keep your civilian clothes in the Legion, you are forced to sell them or give them away, and the cruelty of this lies in the fact that when you have done your five years' service, if "bad conduct"

does not turn it into ten, you have no clothes fit to wear.

You have to take off your uniform, and as you can't walk about naked, they give you a suit of clothes for civil life that no civilian above the rank of a dustman would look at twice. They give you, also, a third-class ticket to any town in France, and a franc a day for food on the journey—a franc a day, which is not much to live on unless you have saved money from your five years' hard labour at a halfpenny a day.

So you come back.

Dressed like that and with the fact that you are an ex-légionnaire, you cannot get work. It is the clothes chiefly, and that is perhaps why France strips a man of his clothes to begin with. And that is why Jean did not bother to return to the barracks—he had nothing to return for.

In Daya Street they walked slowly, taking the direction of the gate.

Though Lacoste was reconciled to the business, there were several things that troubled his mind. It was a curious mind, simple, entirely good, naïvely romantic—the story of Karan had taken a great hold upon it.

As the clear eyes of a child see sometimes farther into the depths of things than the clouded eyes of a man, he saw, without entirely comprehending, the division that the Legion had created between Jean and his girl. Jean, this evening, had said never a word about her, all about his pictures and painting, but never a word of the girl. Had he forgotten her and would he, if he escaped, still forget her?

Lacoste, without knowing it, had struck upon one of the tragedy makers of life. The difference between the artist and the man. The man whose

heart can bleed, the artist who can use blood as a pigment—even his own blood.

The Legion had divided Jean from Karan in two ways. It held their bodies apart and accentuating by starvation his passion to create, it had made Karan a secondary object, at all events for the moment.

“And the girl?” said Lacoste. “When you get away will you go to her?”

“Karan? Oh, yes, she is there, over in that place I told you of—Beljazi. I will go there. I will be able to live there, for that, thank God, is beyond the reach of France. Did I not tell you, Lacoste, that though my father was French in origin he was a naturalised Englishman, my mother was English? I have a little money he left me in the English funds, and I can draw enough to live on—in a very small way; but what does one want more than that?”

Lacoste went on to the other question that was in his mind.

“You told me you would go to Mansour to leave your uniform and get civilian clothes—but the uniform. If that were lost, or any part of it, you know what would happen if you were recaptured—it would mean a court-martial at Oran, and condemnation to the Zephyrs.”

“I told you I would not be retaken alive,” said Jean.

“When you change your clothes, if Mansour can supply you, what then?”

“I shall go to the station and take a ticket for Oran, perhaps—I don’t know—or walk some of the distance and then find a morning train at some station—I don’t know. My plans must make themselves. Perhaps I shall bide for a while in Sidi. It

is all in the hands of Fate, but I am sure of one thing. I shall get away."

"I shall walk with you as far as Mansour's," said Lacoste.

"No," replied the other, "only as far as the opening of the lane. It might be dangerous for you to be seen with me when I go into that place—if anything happened."

Lacoste said nothing more. His heart was troubled, but he did not wish to depress his friend, and he hid the trouble.

"Good luck!" he said, when they reached the lane opening. He gripped Jean's hand, and they parted.

CHAPTER XXIX

MANSOUR

A FEW minutes later Jean entered Mansour's. The boy, serving coffee to an Arab, turned as Jean came in.

Yes, Mansour was in the back shop and there, next moment, Jean found him.

Mansour was seated on a rug smoking a cigarette and going over accounts in a narrow, black-covered book which he put away at the sight of the légionnaire. He pointed to another rug, and Jean sat down and took a cigarette.

"Mansour," said Jean, "you know all about me except one thing—the reason why I came into the Legion."

"It does not matter," said Mansour.

"It does," said Jean; "for I am leaving the