

## Dreyfus as He is To-Day.

After the conviction of ex-Captain Alfred Dreyfus and his removal to Devil's Island there arose in France that controversy over his case which convulsed the nation and radiated its disturbing influences throughout the nations of the world. It is hardly too much to say that the one intelligent and educated man in the whole world, who was completely shut off from knowledge of the strife between the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards was the cause and centre of it all. Girt about with such barriers as have shut off no other prisoner of modern times, he knew nothing of the events in France.

On the other hand, the world knew nothing of him; how he fared, to what treatment he was subjected, how he was bearing himself in the ordeal of his island imprisonment. There were long periods when the public did not know whether he still lived. More than once his death was rumored; there were whispers of suicide. Thousands believed that whatever the outcome of the struggle in his behalf he would never be permitted to return to France alive. But whether for the honor of a dead man or the recovery of a living one, his partisans kept up the fight.

All these years Dreyfus himself was keeping the record of his weary days. With inexhaustible faith he believed that one day he would obtain justice.

'I shall have the necessary patience,' he writes in his diary. 'The machinations of which I am the victim must be discovered; it must be so. \* \* \* Sooner or later in life everywhere is bound to come out.'

This diary, together with his account of his trial, condemnation, retrial, conviction and pardon make up the book, 'Five Years of My Life,' the first public utterance by Dreyfus himself since his arrest in 1894. From this remarkable bit of history the following extracts are taken as typical of the victim's own view of the ordeal through which he has passed.

After describing the now historical court-martial and conviction and degradation he tells us how he was sent to the Isle de Re and from there to the Isle du Diable. Here he was imprisoned in a stone hut with armed guards always on duty. By day he was permitted to walk about in a half-acre space. His correspondence was rigidly censored, and even his wife's letters were forwarded only after every reference to his case had been excised. All his cooking and washing he had to do himself. It was life reduced to its lowest and most wretched terms. Of his existence on the island he writes:

'Since I landed a month ago I have remained locked in my pen without once leaving it in spite of all the bodily fatigue of my painful journey. Several times I all but went crazy; I had congestion of the brain, and I conceived such a horror of life that the temptation came to me to have no care of myself and so put an end to my martyrdom.'

'At 10 o'clock they bring me my day's food—a bit of canned pork, some rice, some coffee berries in filthy condition, and a little moist sugar. I have no means of roasting the coffee, which in bitter derision is given to me raw. I throw it all into the sea. Then I try to make a fire. After several fruitless efforts I succeed. I heat water for my tea. My luncheon is made up of bread and tea.'

'Saturday, April 20, 1895. 11 o'clock in the morning—I have finished my cooking for the day. This morning I cut my piece of meat in two; one piece is to boil; the other for a steak. To cook the latter I have contrived a grill from an old piece of sheet iron which I picked up in the island.'

'For drink I have water. My food is all prepared in old tin cans. I have nothing with which to clean these properly, and have no plates.'

'My days are interminable! every minute of every hour a long drawn out weariness.'

'I am incapable of any considerable physical exertion; moreover, from 10 in the morning until 3 in the evening the heat makes it impossible for me to go out. I cannot work at my English all day long, my brain will not stand it, and I have nothing to read. My only resource is a perpetual companionship with my thoughts.'

'Wednesday, May 1, 1895. Oh, the horrible nights! Yet I rose yesterday as usual, at half past 5, toiled all day long, took no siesta, and toward evening sawed wood for nearly an hour, until I trembled with fatigue. Yet I could not sleep until long past

'If only I could read or work through the evenings! The lantern of the guard post, which is insufficient for my walking pursuits, is still too strong for me when I am in bed.'

'Saturday, Sunday, Monday, May 11, 12, 13.—Bad days. Fever, stomach trouble, disgust for everything. And what is going on in France all this time? At what point are the investigations?'

'Sunburn, too, on my feet, because I went out without my shoes for a few seconds.'

Entries in the diary through the summer relate how the prisoner was kept confined in his hut much of the time in the extremely hot weather, because convicts were at work on the island and it was feared that he might communicate with them. He suffered greatly from the bites of mosquitoes and other poisonous insects, from heat, fever, and stomach trouble. By fall he was very weak, hardly able to walk or write; and incapable of any continued mental exertion. He wrote:

'Oct. 6, 1895.—Awful heat. The hours are leaden.'

'Oct. 14, 1895.—Violent wind. Impossible to go out. The day is of terrible length. I no longer know how I live. My brain is crushed. Violent heart spasms. The sultry weather takes away all energy. They will certainly end by killing me through repeated sufferings or by forcing me to seek in suicide an escape from insanity. The opprobrium of my death will be upon Commandant du Paty, Bertillon, and all those who have imbrued their hands in this iniquity.'

'Each night I dream of my wife and children. But what terrible awakenings! When I open my eyes and find myself in this hut I have a moment of such anguish that I could close my eyes forever, never to see or think again.'

As time went on Dreyfus became weaker and weaker. There were long weeks when he wrote nothing in his diary. Then, in the fall of 1896 when the weather was so deadly that many of the guards broke down under it the authorities instituted what appears like a deliberate attempt to hasten the prisoner's death. He describes it thus:

'Monday, Sept. 7, 1896.—Yesterday evening I was put in irons. Why, I know not. Since I have been here I have always scrupulously observed the orders given me. How is it I do not go crazy during the long, dreadful night? What I suffer is horrible, yet I no longer feel anger against those who torture an innocent man; I feel only a great pity toward them.'

'These nights in irons! I do not even speak of the physical suffering, but what moral ignominy, and without any explanation, without knowing for why or for what cause. Nearly two years of this have worn me out. I can do no more. The very instinct of life falters; it is too much for mortal man to bear.'

The diary ends on Sept. 10, 1898, with the entry of an appeal by letter to the president of France for justice. Thereafter Capt. Dreyfus's narrative continues. He tells how for two months and a half he was confined to his hut without a minute's exercise, when the heat was so great that his guards had to keep their quarters sluiced out with water; for nearly two months he slept in irons every night, the ankle rings being so tight that they tore his flesh. In spite of all this he writes to his wife, whose courageous letters were his strongest support:

'A pure soul that has a sacred duty to fulfill must rise above suffering. Have courage; have courage! Look straight before you, neither to the right nor to the left, but steady to the end. I know well that you, too, are but human. Yet when grief becomes too great, when trials still too come seem to hard for you to bear, look into the faces of our children and say to yourself that you must live, to be with them and care for them until the day when our country shall acknowledge what I have been and am.'

'What I wish to repeat to you with a voice that you must always hear is "Cour-

age, courage!" Your patience, your resolution, that of all of us must never tire until the full truth is revealed.'

'I cannot fill my letters full enough of the love that my heart holds for you all. That I have been able to withstand so much agony of soul, such misery and strain, is because I have drawn strength from the thought of you and the children.'

'ALFRED.'

Matters went from bad to worse for a time; then the treatment of Dreyfus became somewhat less rigorous, until finally on June 5, 1899, the following note was put into his hands:

'Please let Capt. Dreyfus know immediately of this order of the Supreme Court: "The court quashes and annuls the sentence pronounced on the 22d day of December, 1894, upon Alfred Dreyfus, by the first court martial of the Military Government of Paris, and remands the accused party to a court martial at Rennes, &c."'

His return to France, in close confinement on the warship *Sfax* followed. Once in France he learned the history of the fight for the revision of his case and was ready to face his accusers at the second court martial at Rennes. He writes:

'Of my own story I knew nothing. As I said, I was still back in 1894, when the bordereau was the only document in the case, with the sentence of the court martial, with that appalling parade of degradation, with the cries of "Death to the traitor" from a deluded people. I believed in the loyalty of Gen. de Boisdeffre; I believed in the Chief Magistrate of the State, Felix Faure; I thought both eager for justice. Thereafter a veil had fallen before my eyes, growing more impenetrable every day.'

It was sometime after he landed before he was allowed to see his wife, and of their first meeting, in prison, he says:

'It is impossible for words to express in their intensity the emotions which my wife and I both felt at seeing each other again. Joy and grief were blended in our hearts. We sought to read in others faces traces of our sufferings; we wished to tell each other all that we felt in our souls, to reveal all the feelings suppressed and stifled during these long years; but the words died

away on our lips. We had to content ourselves with trying to throw into our looks all the strength of our affection and of our endurance. The presence of a Lieutenant of infantry who was stationed there prevented any intimate talk.'

Then came the retrial and the conviction of which he writes:

'In spite of the plainest evidence against all justice and equity, I was condemned. Two votes, however, were given for me. As to the sentence which five judges dared to pronounce, I do not accept it.'

The offer of pardon and his acceptance of it Dreyfus explains thus:

'A pardon was offered me on condition that I withdraw my demand for revision. Although expecting nothing from my demand, I hesitated to withdraw it, for I had no need of pardon. I thirsted for justice. But on the other hand my brother told me that my health already greatly shaken, left little hope that I could resist much longer under the conditions in which I should be placed; that liberty would give me greater opportunity to strive for the reparation of the atrocious judicial error of which I was still the victim, since it would give me time, and time was the only object of my appeal to the military tribunal of revision. Mathieu added that the withdrawal of my demand was counselled and approved by the men who had been, in the press and before the world, the chief champions of my cause.'

'Finally I thought of the sufferings of my wife and family, of the children whom I had not yet seen and whose memory had haunted me day and night since my return to France. Accordingly I agreed to withdraw my appeal, but at the same time specified unmistakably my absolute and unchangeable intention to follow up the legal revision of the sentence at Rennes.'

Teacher—Tommy, what are you doing to that little boy?

Tommy—Nothing. He wanted to know if you take three from five how many will remain, and I took three of his apples to show him, and now he wants them back.

Teacher—Well, why don't you give them back to him?

Tommy—'Cause then he would forget how many are left.—Chicago News.



THE PLOTTERS.