







“Brother,” he said, “give me absolution. It is sweet to die in your arms, and you will console *them*----” Then he fainted again.

Finally they reached the hut where the general of the division had taken refuge. When he saw Mark, he cried: “Here you are, my brave lieutenant!” And taking off his own Cross of the Legion of Honor, he placed it on the wounded soldier.

The surgeon examined Mark; he had three bayonet wounds, and the case was serious and critical.

“John, take me to the old church,” whispered Mark.

The village church was turned into a hospital, but the sanctuary was left untouched, and at midnight John began his three Masses. Mark had made his confession, and was now ready to receive his God in Holy Communion. It was a strange scene, more like a Mass in some ancient catacomb than anything else. The wounded and suffering men joined fervently in the prayers, and during the Elevation there was solemn silence: every moan was hushed.

Next day Mark was better, and was able to be moved to an ambulance. A fortnight afterwards he went home to recruit his health. The father and mother wept with joy. “John has saved our Mark,” said the mother. “I knew well that through him God would bless and preserve our child.”

John continued with the army until the war was over, and then returned to his humble country parish. Mark recovered his health, and rejoined his regiment with the rank of captain. They still live, devoted brothers and friends, ever rejoicing that the Infant Jesus heard both of their childish prayers.