

# TATALIER'S TOOTHACHE

BY JEAN GAUMENT AND CAMILLE CE

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ONCE upon a time there was a poor man whose name was Tatalier and who had toothache. During the forty-four years he had been in the world he had had pain in the ivories in his square jaws, just like the fingers of an insane artist on the yellow keys of a piano out of tune. His canines sounded little sharp notes like the points of needles; his molars poured out great wails whose circumference was everywhere and whose centre was nowhere. His wisdom teeth played the bass, and his incisors, long since departed, mingled their absent voices in the hymn of torment.

The teeth of Tatalier occupied his life. They filled all his hours with sufferings, dull or lively shooting pains, and pains all round, the blow of a hammer, the stab of a knife, the rasp of a saw, the twist of a screw. While he was busy about his work picking apples, cutting wood, or burning heaps of dead leaves, his pain, hypocritical or cruel, cut off short the song which he had begun. Then he would take the pipe out of the corner of his mouth, spit on the earth, and pointing his finger in his open mouth, he would exclaim: 'It's the big one at the back — or the little one in the middle.' Then he resigned himself and the dance began.

He had tried everything. He had put pinches of pepper in each cavity, a plug of cloves, a little piece of tobacco. He had bathed his gums with marshmallow water. He had stuffed into his ears wads of paper moistened in warm water.

Often he had tried to pull the tooth; he cut at it with his knife. He shook it in vain between his fingers. He had followed everybody's advice; had tried all remedies, had tried everything that anyone could do — except going to a dentist. For a dentist is rather expensive, and Tatalier was poor.

Now there was at this time a dentist at Bourg-Achard. He was a timid little chap, who had nothing on the little door of his little house but a little plate of steel, such as there is on the tombstone of a miser. The little dentist had a little office, with a chair. He had his pincers and he had his drill; he had cement and he had drugs. He had his little boxes with his name printed on them, in which people carried off as souvenirs the tooth embedded on gory cotton wool. He had a professional manner; he had science. He even had honesty — but he had no patients.

There came sometimes on market days a fellow in the clutches of pain, haggling ferociously over the price of having an 'extraction.' In vain the little dentist used to hint that the tooth was still good.

'I can save it for you.'

'Not on your life.'

'Some gas, at least, to save you pain.'

'A cup of coffee an hour later will be better for my business.'

Five minutes after the rescued man spat his blood into the basin and his forty sous into the hand of the dentist.

'That's easy money!'

And until the next Saturday the little dentist sadly dug in his little garden and eked out his little livelihood.

But the war came along, and Tatalier was mobilized as a reservist, to guard the roads far behind the lines. They gave him a *képi*, and they gave him a rifle. They gave him a sentry box, and when he was installed in it his teeth started to rumble again in his jaws like a purring cat. The pain reached his neck and his forehead, and down to his shoulders. It invaded every corner of Tatalier, and for two weeks he watched the motors go here and there, while the toothache raged. It raged under the hot sun of August, and under the cool nights of summer. It raged so that he could n't drink and he could n't eat, and he could n't smoke; and it raged until he was nearly crazy and, in the end, he reported 'sick.'

Now, the little dentist having been mobilized and assigned to a nearby hospital where nobody ever had toothache, it came about that Tatalier fell in with the dentist, and the dentist, for charity's sake, and to pass the time, set himself to work fixing up the mouth of Tatalier. Tatalier put his head back on the head-rest of the chair, and the dentist first ploughed out the roots the way one pulls out stumps from fallow ground. From time to time, to be polite, Tatalier would offer confused explications:

'It's the cider — and then it's tobacco, and yet a fellow must smoke.'

Each pain went away, one after another, with his tooth. He greeted them as they appeared on the end of the pincers.

'To think that it is so little and that it makes so much trouble.'

For six days the little dentist polished up the profound cavities and filled them with good cement. He filed the broken edges, strengthened the soft gums, and blew out all the pain the way one blows out a candle; and on the seventh day Tatalier climbed out of the chair, with a new mouth, and a soul which soared toward new life.

The war over, Tatalier, wounded and decorated, returned to Bourg-Achard, and the little dentist, decorated and wounded, went back, too. But in the houses where Tatalier cut wood in the courtyards, where he picked apples in the gardens, and where he burned the dead leaves on a heap, he recognized the joy of existence. He was singing from morning till night, when he could smoke his pipe and eat meat without having his teeth set raging. With a sweet but stubborn endurance he bullied the people who came, holding their hands on their jaws or with a handkerchief knotted round their faces, like the ears of a donkey.

'You have a toothache, Nicodemus? Go to a dentist.'

He encouraged them with his example, cheering them up. He took them to the very gate with authority, and did not go discreetly away until he had installed in the chair the patient, who was almost comforted already.

'No, Monsieur le dentiste, no — you need not thank me. What I am doing is for the good of humanity.'

Tatalier was joyous. Who will pretend that happiness is not of this world?

# PUT EUROPE ON ITS FEET

BY CARL THALBITZER

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IN trying to find a way to set Europe again upon its feet, we must first of all be clear as to what conflicting interests we are to encounter; for we must proceed on the assumption that every government is intent first and foremost upon protecting its individual welfare and guaranteeing it for the future. If we confine ourselves to England, France, and Germany, this part of our problem works out about as follows.

England's immediate interest is to get out of her present business depression. That is why her government is trying to destroy German competition by levying a fifty per cent tax upon imports from that country. It is proposed to go still further — to pass an anti-dumping law and grant tariff protection to so-called 'key industries.' When Great Britain has throttled German exports, her hands will be free to push her commerce in the rest of the world. England attaches little importance to the other sanctions, such as the occupation of German territories along the Rhine. England's policy toward Germany has the following drawbacks, from the point of view of her own interests: it lessens the purchasing power of the German market; it encounters opposition from Allied and neutral governments; and it injures English consumers by raising the price of German commodities, and thus the price level in

general. These drawbacks seriously impair, in the opinion of the people, the advantages which England may derive from the fifty per cent tax on imports from Germany. Necessarily, the financial results will be very small; for not only will imports from Germany sink to a minimum, but the proceeds of the tax will have to be distributed *pro rata* to all the governments having indemnity claims against Germany. None the less, England regards the destruction of German competition as her primary interest, and were that not throttled, considers the war would have been fought in vain. In view of the utter impoverishment of Germany, its market is not likely to prove important for Great Britain for some time to come. That country's eyes are directed to neutral — and, in particular, oversea — markets. Consequently, the country's first interest is to prevent German rivals from entering those markets. England believes that she can use the sanctions of the Treaty to free her hands for energetic competition in these other markets, where her unrivaled commercial connections enable her more than to hold her own against America and Japan. However, Germany's industrial ruin will drag down with it the prosperity of a great part of the continent and thereby endanger important British interests. That, however, is an in-