

The First Nobel Peace Prize Henry Dunant (Founder of the International Red Cross) and his 'Memoires'⁹

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SUMMARY

To celebrate the memory and work of Henry Dunant, on the centenary of the presentation of the first Nobel Peace Prize, rightly awarded to Dunant for his having founded the institution of the International Red Cross, this paper presents the reader with some insights into his activities and sufferings, his trials and tribulations, and the hope and strength of his character. The ceaseless efforts made by Dunant to bring about the Institution which today represents Hope for so many suffering people who are silent victims of wars and atrocities, are fleetingly presented. The authors' intention is to give due recognition to Dunant for his work, and to highlight the humanity and the moral and social worth of the face behind the International Red Cross.

RÉSUMÉ

Pour célébrer la mémoire et le travail de Henry Dunant à l'occasion du centenaire du Premier Prix Nobel qui lui a été, à juste titre, attribué pour avoir fondé la Croix Rouge, cet article présente au lecteur les activités, les souffrances et les difficultés ainsi que l'espoir et la force de caractère de cet homme.

The note-books containing the 'Memoires' of Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, were discovered some sixty years following his death (1910).

These autobiographical writings remained hidden for years in the Dunant family granary, after Maurice, his nephew, had inherited the innumerable note-books which filled his uncle's hospital room at Heiden. These books were subsequently put away in the stores of the Public Library at the University of Geneva and forgotten about.

In the 1970's the Institut Henry Dunant, wishing to compile a 'bibliography' of the founder of the Red Cross, engaged someone to search for all the documents published by H. Dunant. It was in these circumstances that, at the bottom of three boxes full of publications, 102 note-books were found, containing notes and details related to various works, together with notes, citations and references collected by Dunant with the obvious intention of writing his *Memoires*.

Bernard Gagnebin, Professor of the Arts Faculty at the University of Geneva, together with other researchers, studied, collected and presented the material from about 30 different note-books in a single text, trying to give the *Memoires* a certain chronological order and interpret them without substantially changing the stories and recollections. They divided the work into 34 chapters, using nine chapter headings originally thought of by Dunant.

Only some of these manuscripts have been definitively edited in the past, by Prof. Rudolf Muller, who was working on the origins of the Red Cross¹. Of these chapters, written in the third person, Maurice Dunant, Henry's nephew, published extracts in 1918 under the title *The beginnings of the Red Cross in France, with diverse unpublished details*.



Henry Dunant à l'époque de la fondation de la Croix Rouge

The History of Medicine research group at the University of Florence, under the leadership of Prof. Paolo Vanni, in co-operation with the Red Cross International Muséum, has translated these *Mémoires* into Italian from the original French, and annotated them with explanations and comments on their historical context. This was to celebrate the memory and work of Dunant on the centenary of the presentation of the first Nobel Peace Prize, rightly awarded to Dunant for his having founded the International Red Cross.

While doing this, the authors discovered an unpublished fragment of nineteenth century history, which refers to Dunant's mystical crisis in the aftermath of the battle of Solferino² and the Paris Commune. These are pages which are rich in details experienced or described by journalists of the period, collected and narrated by Dunant with a zeal to relate the truth through simplicity and rigour. Dunant's love of writing was poured into these pages at different stages of his life, but especially at its end, when, elderly and embittered, he whiled away his lonely and solitary days.

In these *Mémoires* his aim was to demonstrate that he, not others, was the founder of the Red Cross. He had the idea and saw it through and did not want to be forgotten. Unfortunately, both circumstances and the people of his time gave him a foretaste of what the future had in store. Following his bankruptcy, the lack of interest and unbelievable indifference on the part of those who knew him, isolated him and distanced him more and more, even from his dearest friends.

From the few manuscripts, (in comparison to the large number found in the library at Geneva), a complete work emerges. The chronological succession of the events narrated is not perfect and the writing style, which is in the first person, alternating at times with the third person, can disorientate at first. Nonetheless, the lively and spontaneous content cannot fail to involve the reader.

Henry Dunant was born on 8th May 1828, in Geneva, into a well-to-do Calvinist family. In his *Mémoires*, he recounts his happy childhood, his father's estate outside Geneva and his grand-parent's lovely estates (one of his grandfathers was mayor of Avully, the other was the director of the hospital in Geneva), with the gardens, fruit trees and feasts, (his mother was always worrying about the children having indigestion):

'... and so, arriving at Avully, after two hours in the carriage the five children ran off in all directions and the fun began. This was only the beginning, because Granny had an excellent cook and her liver pâté, her cakes were real miracles/wonders...'

His parents always loved to help the needy. They

opened up the gates of the estates in Geneva so that they too could enjoy the fresh air and the beauty of the garden. They used to take their children to visit those in prison at the pénal colony in Toulouse.

Dunant was an extremely sensitive person with a noble heart and he had had an excellent education. He relates that by the age of ten, he already felt that he was a little aristocrat, in the positive sense of a man that was good in the aristocracy of that period.

Even during his childhood he always felt compassion for the unfortunate. He was deeply disturbed by those he saw chained and working in hard labour at the Toulouse pénal colony and deplored their state. His mother, a pious and devout woman, developed his sense of brotherly love and went with him to visit the poor and sick. This was at a time when ideas were ripening against slavery.

The writings of the American H Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852 and translated into several languages, was in circulation at the time. Furthermore, the charitable figure of Florence Nightingale, heroine of the Crimean War, shone brightly before him. Dunant, the boy, was to meet both of these young women and to remain fascinated by them.

Subsequently, when he became a member of the Society of Charity, he was to sacrifice his free time in order to visit the needy, the infirm and those in prison. Later he was to gather friends around him to study the Bible and to re-awaken 'God's will' in young people. These Thursday meetings quickly became the 'Christian Movement of Young People'. Today we know that, through his action and his correspondence, and even more so, with his famous circulars, he contributed to the foundation of the Universal Alliance of the Union of Young Christians.

At the age 25, he was employed at the bank of an exchange-agent in Geneva and, shortly afterwards, was sent on a temporary mission to Algeria by the Geneva Company for the Silk Colonies. At once his inventive spirit set to work. He proposed making Algeria fertile and industrialised, and encouraged the acquisition of land concessions in the province of Constantine (NE Algeria). He wanted Algeria to become the granary of France. In order to achieve this, hundreds of hectares of land were necessary as well as docks, stores and mills but the banks were deaf to his requests. Dunant stayed in Tunisia for a few weeks and this sojourn enabled him to discover a fascinating land in which no slavery existed, whereas it continued to be a reality in the United States of America.

His *Information on the Regency of Tunisia* turned into a violent diatribe against slavery in America. The book calls

on Man's conscience to put an end to the horrible commerce and the transgression of Man's natural rights.

Having received no reply to his request for funds for his project, he decided to ask the Emperor Napoléon III directly for support. He wrote an extravagant book in his honour entitled *The Empire of Charlemagne restored or the Holy Roman Empire rebuilt by Napoléon III*, then he went to the north of Italy to meet the Emperor. In June 1859 he arrived in the public square of Pontremoli and met the Prince Napoléon and his Chief of Staff. Following this he got into his rented carriage and headed for Castiglione, where over the next few days, he was horrified to bear witness to one of the bloodiest battles of the century.

'On the 25th June 1859, the sun revealed one of the most terrible sights that one could imagine... Some 20,000 injured people lay in agony on the battlefield at Solferino without anyone to tend them or care for them or offer any medical help whatsoever.'

He wrote *A Memory of Solferino* so as to reawaken 'the conscience of the Great' to the problem of the injured on the battlefields of the world.

'The corpses of men and horses were scattered all over the battlefield. They lay under the wheels, in the ditches and trenches, in the ravines, in the bushes, on the plains and, above all on the outskirts of the town of Solferino... The crops were destroyed, the harvests down-trodden, the hedges ripped out and the orchards laid waste. From time to time one came upon blood baths; the towns and villages were deserted and bore all the signs of musketry, bombs, grenades, howitzers...'

He made himself useful by transporting and assisting the injured in the days following the battle. He, a citizen of Geneva, having come upon the battle scene by chance, a stranger to the battle itself, was to remain stunned by the horror that he witnessed, and as a result, to dedicate his entire life to the task of organising and assisting the injured in battle: he who is injured cannot be considered an enemy, given his/her defenceless state, he can only be considered from a humane point of view and, hence, neutral. With référence to the soldier, pointless aggression and insult is added to injury.

'À San Martino, un officier de bersagliers, le capitaine Pallavicini est blessé, ses soldats le reçoivent dans leur bras, ils le portent et le déposent dans la chapelle où il reçoit les premiers soins, mais les Autrichiens, momentanément repoussés, reviennent à la charge et pénètrent dans cette église: les bersagliers, trop peu nombreux pour résister, sont forcés d'abandonner leur chef, aussitôt des Croates, saisissant de grosses pierres qui se trouvent à la porte, en écrasent la tête du pauvre capitaine dont la cervelle rejaillit sur leur tuniques.'¹⁴

Dunant's greatness lies in the fact that once he had conceived his plan, cleverly and with diplomacy, he pushed forwards, working towards the spreading of his ideas as well as organising and having them legally recognised: the injured soldier is simply a person in need of assistance; if he is not helped, then he is destined to die on the battlefield amid atrocious suffering and totally abandoned.

In *A memory of Solferino*, Dunant points out that the condition of the injured and wounded is tragic:

'La figure noire de mouches qui s'attachent à leurs plaies, ceux-ci (les blessés) portent de tous côtés des regards éperdus qui n'obtiennent aucune répose; la capote, la chemise, les chairs et le sang ont formé chez ceux-là un horrible et indéfinissable mélange où les vers se sont mis; plusieurs frémissent à la pensée d'être rongés par ces vers, qu'ils croient voir sortir de leur corps, et qui proviennent des myriades de mouches dont l'air est infesté. Ici est un soldat, entièrement défiguré, dont la langue sort démesurément de sa mâchoire déchirée et brisée; il s'agite et veut se lever, j'arrose d'eau fraîche ses lèvres desséchées et sa langue durcie; saisissant une poignée de charpie, je la trempe dans le seau que l'on porte derrière moi, et je presse l'eau de cette éponge dans l'ouverture informe qui remplace sa bouche. Là est un autre malheureux dont une partie de la face a été enlevée par un coup de sabre: le nez, les lèvres, le menton ont été séparés du reste de la figure; dans l'impossibilité de parler et la moitié aveuglé il fait des signes avec la main, et par cette pantomime navrante, accompagnée de sons gutturaux, il attire sur lui l'attention; je lui donne à boire et fais couler sur son visage saignant quelques gouttes d'eau pure. Un troisième, le crâne largement ouvert, expire en répandant ses cervelles sur les dalles de l'église; ses compagnons d'infortune le repoussent du pied parce qu'il gêne le passage, je protège ses derniers moments et recouvre d'un mouchoir sa pauvre tête qu'il remue faiblement encore.'¹⁵

In the days following the battle of Solferino, as if 'spurred on by an *internor* force' he came up with the idea of a form of assistance at an international level which could act as host to the injured, and which would have an internationally recognised symbol capable of protecting both the injured soldier and the help-bringing party, as well as the inhabitants and the innocent bystanders and victims of battle-zones. It was with this in mind that he wrote *Un souvenir de Solferino (A Memory of Solferino)*. Having printed and distributed his book, he set to work making sure that the mighty of the time got a copy of it. He sent it to the reigning houses of Europe and to all those who could support and help him in his

effort. Three humanitarian societies based in Geneva came to his aid.

In his *Mémoires*, Dunant lists in painful détail:

'On a time-scale, first was the vénérable Mr. Rivier-Vieusseux of Lausanne, président of the Waldensian Society for Public Utility; then came Mr Gustave Moynier, président of the Geneva Society for Public Assistance, and lastly, the Society for the Progress of Social Sciences of Neuchatel, in the persons of Professor Frédéric Godet and Mr Jean de Merveilleux, secretary of the same Society.'

In February 1863, at the Geneva Society for Public Assistance, which had G. Moynier as its président, the 'Commission of Five' was set up. This was made up by four citizens of Geneva - Moynier, Appia, Maunier and Dunant and the général président, Dufour.

Dunant reports:

'In the name of and under the authority of the 1863 International Assembly, the Geneva Commission made up of five members, became an International Committee....'

In the same year, Dunant went to the Berlin Congress of Statistics which was held from 6-12th September 1863 and asked his Dutch friend, Dr Basting, to read a short summary of his ideas in German, taking advantage of a session during the congress which was devoted to the topic of 'Military and Civilian Health Statistics' and was attended by numerous doctors. Many of these joined immediately and he was able to get a copy of his *A Memory of Solferino* to the ministers and reigning houses which were not familiar with it, including the houses of Spain, Bavaria and Saxony.

After publication of his work, from 1863 on, a huge activity began, related to assemblies, meetings, conférences etc. He never avoided dinners and meetings of high society, where he could speak to ministers and nobles who were of importance and in a position to further his ideas in the aristocratic courts of Europe.

Following the Berlin Congress on Statistics, the Geneva Committee organised the first diplomatic Conférence (26th October 1863), in which the right to neutrality was affirmed solely for those bringing aid to the injured. The Geneva Committee then organised an international congress. After the preparatory meetings, came the International Conférence, with Resolutions which recognised the neutrality of the injured, of the helpers or relief workers and the inhabitants of battle-zones.

'The assembly deliberated in seven sittings, from 6-22nd August 1864. Initially, the vénérable General Dufour declared the Conférence open and explained the purpose behind the Congress, in an éloquent speech

which was filled with passion. He made it clear that the delegates of the governments were to examine the promises expressed during the 1863 meeting, in relation to the neutrality of ambulances, médical personnel and the injured. Many delegates, since they did not have full powers, requested them during the course of the Conférence and thus at the end of it, the plenipotentiary delegates of twelve nations were in a position to sign the Geneva Convention.

In La Commune, on 22nd August, when proceeding to the peaceful act of the signing of this humanitarian treaty, the city of Geneva was in tumult and restless on the occasion of an élection ...'

The Geneva Convention was a real success for Dunant. He did everything in his power to achieve his objective of keeping the two basic strands of the initiative: assistance for the injured military personnel who belonged to the National Red Cross Committees and the légal part undersigned by the international powers.

Dunant said

'The two initiatives, that of the Red Cross and that of the définition of the diplomatic treaty, which have the same origin, are intimately linked from the outset, during their development and as they continue to be sought after, in a simultaneous fashion.'

Henry Dunant was received by King John of Saxony, and was to prove a valued guest in the ruling House of Prussia. He was invited by the Empress Eugénie, by Napoléon III, by prelates and bishops such as Father Giacinto⁶, the Bishop of Paris and the Abbot of Madeleine⁷... he was also présent in many drawing rooms with such renowned ladies as the Countess Borromeo or assisted by the Countess Gasparin and, later by Madame Kastner.

Henry Dunant spread his ideas incessantly and with unceasing effort, to such a degree that in 1867, he found himself completely ruined financially. He completely forgot his business affairs, which ended up totally out of control. Speaking of himself in the third person he says that

'He dedicated all his time, all his resources to the international task of the Red Cross and he entrusted his (business) activities to an unscrupulous partner.'

In 1867, the Geneva Crédit Bank, which had financed the undertakings in Algeria, brought a légal action against Dunant, which led him to bankruptcy. The sentence of the Civil Court of Geneva appeared on the front page of the 'Geneva Newspaper'- quite an unusual event-accusing him of being responsible for the bankruptcy as well as having, knowingly, duped his colleagues. For the remainder of his life, Dunant was to protest his

innocence against this sentence, never ceasing to repeat, 'I did not dupe my colleagues, it is I who have been tricked!' But his life and more especially his work, was at a turning point. For him, it was the beginning of a hard life, and misery and persecution did not abandon him ever again until his death in Heiden, in 1910. The following extract from his autobiography, presented here in verse form, is quite clear:

Mémoires Ch XXV MISERE
'J'ai connu ces temps misères de la vie de Paris, dont j'avais la dans enfance et ma jeunesse de récits pittoresques faits par des romanciers; descriptions que je considérais alors comme des choses fantastiques.
Moi aussi, après mes revers de fortune vivant de la vie des plus humbles et supportant sortes de privations J'ai été de ceux "qui dévorent dans la rue par petites bouchées un pain d'un sou cache dans leur poche"
J'ai été de ceux qui noircissent leurs habits d'une plumée d'encre et blanchissent leur col de chemise avec de la craie. Comme ceux pauvres hommes qui mettent du papier dans un chapeau usé râpé devenu trop grand et dont les souliers prennent l'eau J'ai été de ceux qui se voient le crédit coupé à la gargote où ils dînent et la clé du garni où ils logent refusée le soir en rentrant faute de pouvoir payer le terme du loyer

J'ai dû passer une fois deux nuits de suite à la belle étoile n'osant pas rentrer dans mon garni (situé dans l'un des plus modestes quartiers de Paris où j'ai habité trois ans), faute d'être en mesure de solder mon terme et afin de pouvoir me reposer et sommeiller un peu car j'étais accablé de fatigue je n'eus d'autre ressource que de me rendre dans la salles d'attente de l'une des grandes gares,

ouvertes toute la nuit
à cause des nombres trains de nuit
qui arrivent et qui partent de Paris...'

To understand the meaning of failure in the 19th century Calvinist world, we can read what Fernand Grignon wrote in *Henry Dunant; L'épopée de la Croix Rouge ou l'Aventurier de la charité* (Paris Gallimard 1943): 'When a man makes an affront on the world of Finance, there is no respite for him. His moral ruination lasts as long as he lives. Calumny, bitter hostility, wickedness, maliciousness and calculation all that the Bible attributes to Satan is put into action against him. In Geneva, what is moral is safe, in so far as Finance is safe. Beyond this unwavering norm, nobody is safe. Even the Church Pastors bow their Theology before the shield.'

When the Franco-German war exploded in June 1870, the author of *In Memory of Solferino* was in Paris, secretary of the Providential Society, organised by him to assist the suffering military during the terrible cold of that very severe winter.

The pages which he wrote about La Commune de Paris and the Siège of Paris are among the most interesting and original in the *Mémoires*. Once again he bore witness to the horrors of war and once again he tried to alleviate suffering, drawing close to the warring parties to try to make them respect the humanitarian principles of the Geneva Convention⁸. The following passage illustrates these horrors in a startling manner:

'Mardi 23 Mai

Dans la rue d'Hautefeuille; "Rends-toi" crient plusieurs soldats à un tout jeune homme - seize ans à peine "Non! Non!" répond-il, et en continuant à se défendre, il se fait tuer sur les marches de l'escalier extérieur d'une église. Un autre de quinze ans, un vrai gamin de Paris nargue les soldats qui vont le fusilier...et tombe pour ne plus se relever.'

Collecting fragments scattered through a dozen notebooks, Gagnebin was able to reconstruct the weekly horror, day by day, together with its héritage of horror, its ruins and rubble and the ruddy sky.

Despite his precarious financial condition, Dunant tried to continue his efforts. In 1872, in England, he made a speech on the conditions and treatment of prisoners of war (the subject of the Third Geneva Convention in 1929) and the High Court of Arbitration. In England he met Madame Kastner, an exceptional lady who helped him to survive and became his friend. However the persecution to which he was continuously subjected, once again took the upper hand. He found himself homeless, wandering through the streets of Paris and sleeping in railway stations.

At long last, in 1895, a Swiss journalist George Baumberger, found him in Heiden at the 'Paradiso' Hospice. Thanks to this discovery made by the Press, Dunant was once again famous and the world could not but award him the first Nobel Peace Prize, in 1901, jointly with Passy.⁹

With the money from the Nobel Peace Prize, Dunant was to finance works of charity; the rest of his money he was to leave to those few friends who had helped him towards the end of his life. His real worth, which lay in his interior qualities, he was to leave to mankind. His philanthropic nature had founded the Red Cross, a shining light in the midst of civilisation and which today is renowned throughout the world.

The *Mémoires* of H. Dunant, according to Gagnebin, may not be a perfect example of 'historical correctness'; nonetheless one cannot deny its merit in bringing to light for the general public, the noble figure of the founding father of the Red Cross (10, 11)

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- 4 Dunant H, *Un Souvenir de Solferino* CICR Publications Geneva 1950-1990 p 21
- 5 Dunant H, *Un Souvenir de Solferino* CICR Publications Geneva 1950-1990 p 56
- 6 Père Hyacinthe Loyson , a famous preacher who took up the cause with much sympathy.
- 7 Mgr. Georges Darboy, Archbishop of Paris and L'Abbé Deguerry, curé de la Madeleine who were executed during 'la semaine infernale', May 1871
- 8 Cima A, *Tutti Fratelli* : (Video tape) Edited by the Red Cross International Muséum. Castiglione delé Stiviere (Mn). 1999
- 9 Frédéric Passy (1822-1912) French economist, studied law but abandoned it for journalism and the study of economics and problems of peace. In 1867 he founded the International League for Permanent Peace, later known as the French Society of the Friends of Peace. He served as its general secretary until 1899, when, in association with Sir William R Cremer he founded the Inter-Parliamentary Union of Arbitration. He was a member of the chamber of deputies from 1874-1899. His best known work is *Historique du mouvement de la paix*.
- 10 Candaux JD *Pour une nouvelle lecture des Mémoires d'Henry Dunant*, 1978, Revue Suisse d'Histoire, 28 fasc. 1/2. p 1-25.

11 Gagnebin B and Gazay M. *Encounter with Henry Dunant*. Librairie de l' Université. Georg et Cie SA Genève. 1963

Translations of French text

'At San Martino, Captain Pallavicini, an officer of Bersaglieri, was wounded; his soldiers lifted him in their arms and carried him to a chapel where he was given first aid. But the Austrians, who had been momentarily repulsed, returned to the charge and forced their way into the chapel. The Bersaglieri were not strong enough to resist them and had to desert their commander, whereupon the Croats picked up heavy stones from the doorway and crushed the skull of the poor Captain, whose brains spattered their tunics.

With faces black with the Aies that swarmed about their wounds, men gazed around them, wild eyed and helpless. Others were no more than a worm-ridden inextricable compound of coat and shirt and flesh and blood. Many were shuddering at the thought of being devoured by the worms, which they thought they could see coming out of their bodies (whereas they really came from the myriads of flies which infested the air) There was one poor man, completely disfigured, with a broken jaw and his swollen tongue hanging out of his mouth. He was tossing and trying to get up. I moistened his dry lips and hardened tongue, took a handful of lint and dipped it in the bucket they were carrying behind me, and squeezed the water from this improvised sponge into the deformed opening that had been his mouth. Another wretched man had had part of his face - nose lips and chin- taken off by a sabre cut. He could not speak and lay half-blind, making heart-rending signs with his hands and uttering guttural sounds to attract attention. I gave him a drink and poured a little water on his bleeding face. A third, with his skull gaping wide open, was dying, spilling out his brains on the stone floor. His companions in suffering kicked him out of their way as he blocked the passage. I was able to shelter him for the last moments of his life and I laid a handkerchief over his poor head which still just moved.'

Mémoires Ch XXV MISERY

'I came to know those times full of the misery of Paris life;

I had read of them in my childhood and youth, picturesque descriptions and dramatic accounts written by novelists;

descriptions which, at the time, I thought of as the output of the imagination.

I too, when the tide of my good fortune turned, lived the life of the most humble

putting up with all sorts of deprivations.
I became one of those "who devour morsels of bread in
the street,
a coin's worth, hidden in their pockets."
I too, have been one of those who blacken his clothes
with ink
and whitens his shirt collar with chalk.
Just like those poor fellows
who stuff paper into an old worn out and ruined hat,
which has become too big,
or into their shoes which let the water in.
I have been one of those who finds his credit cut where
he dines,
and in the evening, the key of the B and B where he
stays, denied him
at his return because he has fallen foul of his payments.
These same fellows often fall asleep without the light
and their heating gives off more smoke than heat.
They ruin their stomach with food which is little and
far-between, and is not of good quality.
The hardest thing to accept, even if it is a material loss,
when one has simple but delicate desires, is to see one's
own clothes destroyed without being able to replace
them

Once, I even had to spend two nights, one after another
beneath the stars,
not daring to return to my B and B
(in one of the humblest neighbourhoods of Paris where
I lived for three years)
because I couldn't pay my rent,
and, so as to rest and doze a little,
since I was completely exhausted,

all I could do was
betake myself into the waiting rooms of one of the
biggest train stations
which was open all night
given the many trains which arrive in and leave Paris'

CH XXXI THE WEEK OF HELL

Tuesday 23 May

In Rue d'Hautefeuille: "Give yourself up!" several soldiers
shouted to a very young fellow-just sixteen years old,
"No! No!" he replied, and while continuing to defend
himself, he got himself killed on the steps leading up to
the entrance of a church.

Another fifteen year old, a real Parisian urchin dared the
soldiers who were going to shoot him ... he fell down
never to rise again.'

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1867. Catastrophe ! ruiné !

Ce fut pour moi une catastrophe ; et, cette catastrophe arriva dans les meilleurs jours de la vie de l'homme, c'est-à-dire que je n'avais pas encore tout-à-fait quarante ans. Je n'étais pas ^{même} entré dans ma trente neuvième année quand tout croula autour de moi. Tout s'assombrit ; et sans perdre complètement courage, je me sentis soudain défaillir. Je perdais cette élasticité, ce ressort, cette confiance, que j'avais possédée jusqu'alors, pour tomber dans un noir chagrin.

1867. Catastrophe ! Ruined !

It was a catastrophe for me, a catastrophe striking during a man's best years, that is, before I was quite forty years old. My thirty-ninth year had not even begun when everything around me crumbled and darkened. Although I did not lose courage entirely, I suddenly felt myself giving way. I lost my former flexibility, my spring, my energetic confidence, and became fretful and morose.

From the "Memory" the page regarding the bankruptcy