

When *La Libre Parole* announced that treason had been committed by a Jew, the public needed no further evidence of guilt. When the real traitor had been discovered, and even when he confessed, the Jews were blamed. They had bought Esterhazy. He was their straw man. Delivery of documents to an agent of a foreign power had been in all previous cases classified by the courts as espionage punishable by a limited term in prison, but in the case of the Jew it had been declared high treason, punishable by lifelong deportation. Devil's Island had been given up as a place of deportation because of its inhuman conditions; it was good enough for Dreyfus. The wives of deportees had the privilege of joining their husbands, but a special order deprived Mme. Dreyfus of this privilege.

So it had gone, but now it had come to an end. On July 12, 1906, the High Court set aside the sentence of the court-martial at Rennes and declared that its verdict of "Guilty" had been erroneous. The court announced that there existed no incriminating evidence of any kind against Dreyfus and that a retrial, since there never had been any facts to try, was unnecessary. The court found that Dreyfus had renounced his right to an indemnity and ordered that its verdict be posted in Paris and Rennes, printed in the official gazette and in another fifty French papers of Dreyfus' choosing, at the expense of the treasury.

President Ballot-Beaupré then elaborated on the reasons for the verdict, a summary unprecedented in its elimination of even the slightest reason for doubt or suspicion. His reading lasted an hour. The case was closed.

The Government without delay undertook the rehabilitation of Dreyfus and of Picquart. It resolved to submit to the Chamber a bill promoting Dreyfus to *chef d'escadron* and conferring on him the distinction of a Knight of the Legion of Honor. Dreyfus, but for the affair, would have been a lieutenant colonel. He was dissatisfied with the promotion and decided to ask for his retirement instead. Picquart was recommended for the rank he would have achieved normally by now—brigadier general.

Next day both Chambers voted the reintegration into the Army of the two officers "to liberate the conscience of France." Only twenty-six deputies voted against. In the Senate, General Mercier rose to protest. He accused the High Court of partiality. A chorus of indignant shouts prevented him from finishing.

The Supreme Council of the Legion of Honor ratified unanimously

the Government's proposal to decorate Dreyfus, "an appropriate reparation for a soldier who had endured a martyrdom without parallel."

On July 22, 1906, a military parade took place in a small yard of the Ecole Militaire. It was not made public; only a few friends were invited. Most of the men who had fought hardest for this day received no invitation. Picquart watched from one window, Mme. Dreyfus from another.

Dreyfus arrived at half past one and quietly chatted with a group of officers. A trumpet sounded a call. Two *escadrons de cuirassiers* formed a rectangle. A captain went to escort Dreyfus, who was in full dress. They stepped briskly along the line of *cuirassiers*. Suddenly the blood rushed to Dreyfus' face. For a moment reality dissolved and there came in its place more sharply and clearly than reality itself the frightful degradation that had been visited upon him twelve years before in this very school. His whole body trembled and he almost fainted. No one noticed. He kept on walking mechanically, rigidly, fixed in the manner that was so distressing to those who felt sympathy for him.

Brigadier General Gillain passed before the troops and drew his sword. Dreyfus was led to a position in front of him. Four calls sounded from the trumpet.

"In the name of the President of the Republic, and on the basis of the power conferred on me, Commander Dreyfus, I make you a Knight of the Legion of Honor," the general announced, and touched his sword three times to Dreyfus' shoulders. He pinned the cross on Dreyfus' black dolman and kissed him on both cheeks. "You once served in my division," the general said. "I am glad that I was entrusted with the mission that I have just accomplished."

The last trumpet calls rang out. People cried, "Long live the Army! Long live truth!" The general and Dreyfus stood to attention as the troops marched off to the sound of fanfares. Visitors came to shake hands with Dreyfus. Suddenly a boy ran up to embrace him. It was his son Pierre. Only then did Dreyfus burst into tears.

Alfred mounted into an open carriage flanked by Mathieu and his son. They rode out of the yard. There was a surprise. Two hundred thousand people had gathered spontaneously in the streets. It was a friendly crowd. Happiness radiated on all the faces. Hats were raised to Dreyfus. "Long live Dreyfus! Long live justice!" With one hand he waved greetings and thanks, a smile on his pale face.