

bullied and ordered him around like a servant. If it was possible that he had a little courage during the day, at night that little bit left him. It was next to impossible to make him leave the house after dark.

Leon did not inherit cowardice. No one in the village of Camille dared to say that. His father, Gaspard Suchet, had a reputation for bravery that no one could deny. In the Franco—Prussian war he was twice promoted for bravery. Leon Suchet's grandfather was also a soldier.

It sorely grieved Gaspard Suchet that his eldest son was the first Suchet that ever turned out to be a coward. When he first noticed Leon's cowardly character, he forced himself to believe that he would in time outgrow it. Leon's frail constitution and delicate health was much to blame for his cowardice, Gaspard thought. As Leon grew older and stronger if there was any change in him it was for the worse.

One evening in May when Leon lacked but a month of being fourteen years old, an accident happened to him which changed the whole course of his life. He was coming home through some woods near the village, carrying his little sister, when a large owl flew past him. He let his sister fall heavily to the ground and stood motionless, almost paralyzed with fright. He had hardly recovered his wits when he reached home to tell what had happened.

His sister was found to be seriously hurt.

When Gaspard Suchet came home that night he said to Leon what, he afterwards declared, no father should say to his son. The next morning Leon was missing. A week