

**VALENTIN. A FRENCH  
BOY'S STORY OF SEDAN;  
IN TWO VOLUMES; VOL. II**

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Valentin. A French boy's story of Sedan; In two volumes; Vol. II by Henry Kingsley

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**HENRY KINGSLEY**

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# VALENTIN.

A

*French Boy's Story of Sedan.*

By HENRY KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF 'GEOFFREY HAMLINS,' 'OLD MARGARET,' 'THE BARVEYS,'  
'MOBBY MILLS,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

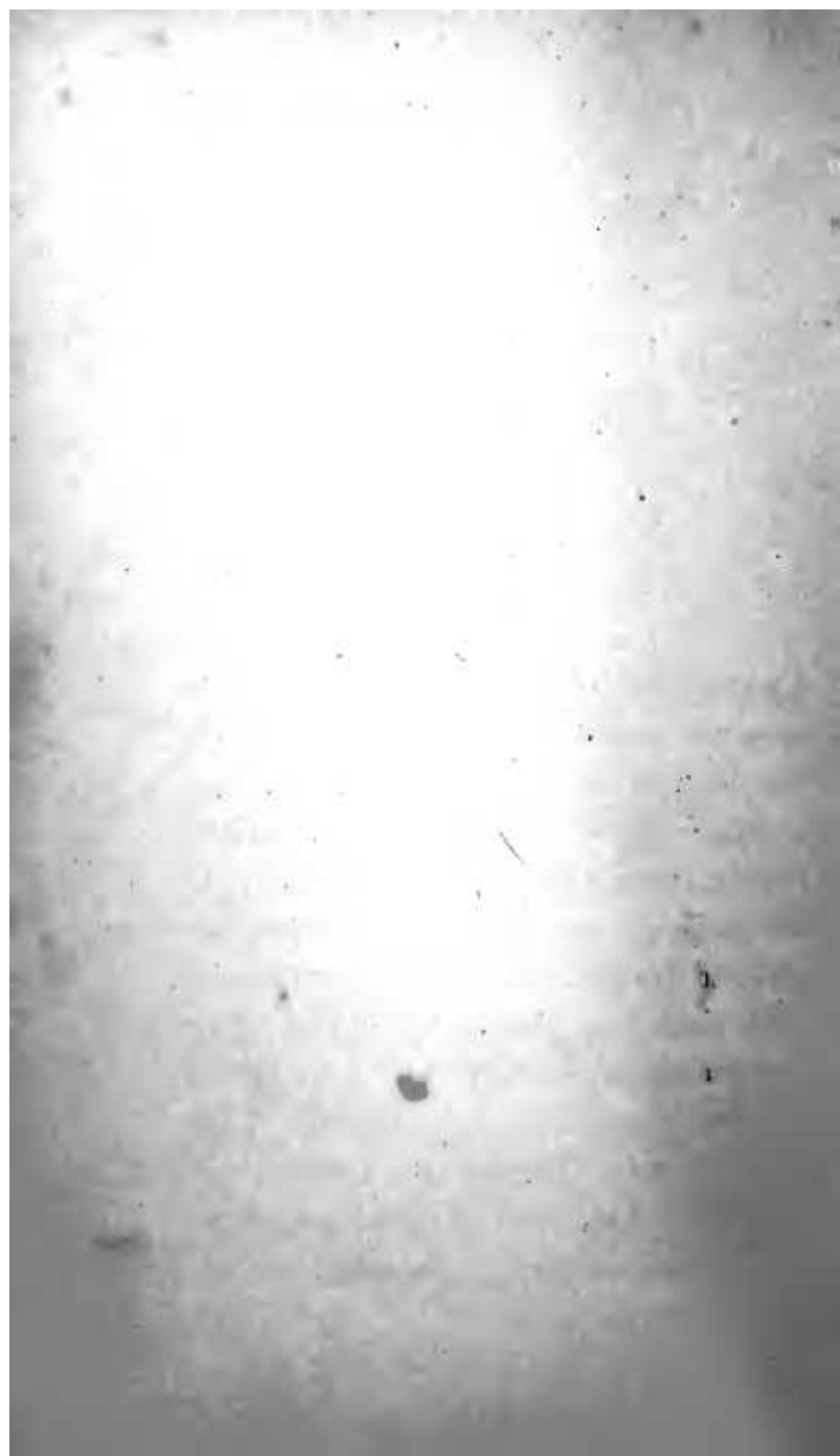
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# VALENTIN.

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## CHAPTER I.

I HAVE now come to the end of my long summer's holiday, and take an entirely new position before you. I am from henceforth no longer the wandering French boy, but the young French student. Your English judges, I see, always tell the jury entirely to dismiss from their minds the very facts which they have been thinking of for the last three weeks, in all probability; which seems to a Frenchman odd. I ask you, as a young English gentleman, to dismiss from your mind all that I have written to you previously. According to your



English law of jurisprudence, that is entirely logical. You are now to know nothing whatever of Mère Mathilde and Mère Terese, of Marie, of Jacques Cartier, of Mark. Still less are you to know anything whatever about Von Alvensleben, of the Archduke, of the Emperor, of Von Moltke, of Von Bismarck. You must dismiss these people from your minds altogether. I have told you about these people, but it is not in evidence. Writing for the English, I adopt the English course of procedure.

It was extremely wet on the night when Mark and I got back to Givonne. We did not arrive there until past eleven. My father, who had not expected us at all, was still up, and let us in. To my unutterable surprise he kissed Mark before he kissed me. Then he called for Jacques Cartier, who came half dressed out of the conciergerie, and he handed over Mark to the tender mercies of Jacques, saying :

‘ Get the boy some supper, and let him

sleep with you. Valentin, come to my study.'

My father might be stern, but he was never unkind. Yet I was a little afraid when he took me into his study counting-house, and ordered me to sit down. I feared that I had in some way offended him. I asked if my mother was well.

'She is not well, my pretty boy,' said my father; 'she and I are at variance on one matter, and she loves me and her country so well, that the little dispute has made her ill.'

When he called me 'pretty boy' (I am, as a matter of detail, not pretty at all), I knew that he was friends with me. I said,

'I am sorry that you are at variance with my mother, sir. Could I say no word to mend affairs?'

'Yes,' said my father, 'you *might* say a *word*; but it would have an entirely opposite effect. Now you must sit still, child, and be examined. Are you hungry?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Here is supper, then. Here is sausage, bread, and wine. Eat and answer. You cannot lie.'

I did both eat and answer.

'Have the Germans begun their star forts outside Luxemburg?'

'No, father; there is nothing beyond the glacis.'

'What asses!' said my father, 'they are going to observe neutrality; lucky for them if the French do. Why, child,' he continued, 'if either party respects the neutrality of that wretched little province in the struggle which is coming, the world will see an amount of chivalry and honour such as she has never seen before.'

I could not understand him then, but I can understand him now. Had the Archduke crossed that sacred territory, the matter would have been over sooner. Had the French, on the other hand, pushed across this territory and threatened the line of