LANG ANDREW

THE RED BOOK OF HEROES

Andrew Lang
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The Red Book of Heroes:

Содержание

Mrs. Lang
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PREFACE

'Life is not all beer and skittles,' said a reflective sportsman, and all books are not fairy tales. In an imperfect state of existence, 'the peety of it is that we cannot have all things as we would like them.' Undeniably we would like all books to be fairy tales or novels, and at present most of them are. But there is another side to things, and we must face it. '"Life is real, life is earnest," as Tennyson tells us,' said an orator to whom I listened lately, and though Longfellow, not Tennyson, wrote the famous line quoted by the earnest speaker, yet there is a good deal of truth in it. The word 'earnest,' like many other good words, has been overdone. It is common to sneer at 'earnest workers,' yet where would we be without them, especially in our climate?

In a Polynesian island, where the skies for ever smile, and the blacks for ever dance, earnestness is superfluous. The bread-fruit tree delivers its rolls punctually every morning, strawberries or other fruits, as nice, spring beneath the feet of the dancers; the cavern in the forest provides a roof and shelter from the sun; the sea supplies a swimming-bath, and man, in time of peace, has only to enjoy himself, eat and drink, laugh and love, sing songs

and tell fairy tales. His drapery is woven of fragrant flowers, nobody is poor and anxious about food, nobody is rich and afraid of losing his money, nobody needs to think of helping others; he has only to put forth his hand, or draw his bow or swing his fishing-rod, and help himself. To be sure, in time of war, man has just got to be earnest, and think out plans for catching and spearing his enemies, and drill his troops and improve his weapons, in fact to do some work, or have his throat cut, and be put in the oven and eaten. Thus it is really hard for the most fortunate people to avoid being earnest now and then.

The people whose stories are told in this book were very different from each other in many ways. The child abbess, Mère Angélique, ruling her convent, and at war with naughty abbesses who hated being earnest, does not at once remind us of Hannibal. The great Montrose, with his poems and his scented love-locks, his devotion to his cause, his chivalry, his death, to which he went gaily clad like a bridegroom to meet his bride, does not seem a companion for Palissy the Potter, all black and shrunk and wrinkled, and bowed over his furnaces. It is a long way from gentle Miss Nightingale, tending wounded dogs when a child, and wounded soldiers when a woman, to Charles Gordon playing wild tricks at school, leading a Chinese army, watching alone at Khartoum, in a circle of cruel foes, for the sight of the British colours, and the sounds of the bagpipes that never met his eyes and ears.

But these people, and all the others whose stories are told, had

this in common, that they were in earnest, though we may be sure that they did not go about with talk of earnestness for ever in their mouths. It came natural to them, they could not help it, they liked it, their hearts were set on two things: to do their very best, and to keep their honour. The Constant Prince suffered hunger and cold and long imprisonment all 'to keep the bird in his bosom,' as the old Cavalier said, to be true to honour. 'I will carry with me honour and fidelity to the grave,' said Montrose; and he kept his word, though his enemies gave him no grave, but placed his head and limbs on spikes in various towns of his country. But now his grave, in St. Giles's Church in Edinburgh, is the most beautiful and honourable in Scotland, adorned with his stainless scutcheon, and with those of Napiers and Grahams, his kindred and his friends.

> "The grave of March, the grave of Gwythar,
> The grave of Gugann Gleddyvrudd,
> A mystery to the world, the grave of Arthur,"

says the old Welsh poem, and unknown as the grave of Arthur is the grave of Gordon. The desert wind may mingle his dust with the sand, the Nile may sweep it to the sea, as the Seine bore the ashes of that martyr of honour, the Maid of France. 'The whole earth is brave men's common sepulchre,' says the Greek, their tombs may be without mark or monument, but 'honour comes a pilgrim grey' to the sacred places where men cannot go in pilgrimage.

We see what honour they had of men; the head of Sir Thomas More, the head of Montrose, were exposed to mockery in public places, the ashes of Jeanne d'Arc were thrown into the river, Gordon's body lies unknown; but their honour is eternal in human memory. It was really for honour that Sir Thomas More suffered; it was not possible for him to live without the knowledge that his shield was stainless. It was for honour rather than for religion that the child Angélique Arnauld gave up amusement and pleasure, and everything that is dear to a girl, young, witty, beautiful, and gay, and put on the dress of a nun. Later she worked for the sake of duty and religion, but honour was her first mistress, and she could not go back from her plighted word.

These people were born to be what they were, to be examples to all of us that are less nobly born and like a quiet, easy, merry life. We cannot all be Gordons, Montroses, Angéliques, but if we read about them and think about them, a touch of their nobility may come to us, and surely our honour is in our own keeping. We may try never to do a mean thing, or a doubtful thing, a thing that Gordon would not have been tempted to do, though we are tempted, more tempted as we grow older and see what the world does than are the young. I think honour is the dearest and the most natural of virtues; in their own ways none are more loyal than boys and girls. Later we may forget that no pleasure, no happiness, not even the love that seems the strongest force in our natures, is worth having at the expense of a stain on the white rose of honour. Had she been a few years older, Angélique might

have failed to keep the word which was extorted from her as a child, but, being young, she kept it the more easily. What we have to do is to try to be young always in this matter, to be our natural selves and unspotted from the world. Certainly some people are a little better, and so far a little happier, because they have seen the light from Charles Gordon's yet living head, and been half heart-broken by his end, so glorious to himself, so inglorious to his fellow countrymen. For his dear sake we may all do a little, sacrifice a little, to help the Homes for Boys which have been built to his memory, and to help the poor boys whom he used to help, making himself poor, and giving his time for them.

We read in the book, 'A Child's Hero,' how the brave Havelock won the heart of a little child who never saw him. She heard the words 'Havelock is dead,' and laid her head against the wall and burst into tears. Other children may feel the same devotion for these splendid people, for Hannibal, so far away from us, giving his whole heart and whole genius and his life for his wretched country, for men who would not understand, who would not aid him:

> "Their old art statesmen plied,
> And paltered, and evaded, and denied"

till their country was vanquished. Bad as that country was, for Hannibal's own sake we are all on the side of Hannibal, as we are on the side of Hector of Troy. 'Well know I this in heart and

soul,' said Hector to his wife, when she would have kept him out of the battle, 'that the day is coming when holy Ilios shall perish, and Priam, and the people of Priam of the ashen spear, my father with my mother, and my brothers, many and brave, dying in the dust at the hands of our foemen; but most I sorrow for thee, my wife, when they lead thee weeping away, a slave to weave at thy master's loom and bear water from thy master's well, and the passers-by, as they see thee weeping, shall say, "This was the wife of Hector, the foremost in fight of the men of Troy, when they fought for their city." But may I be dead, and the earth be mounded above me, ere I hear thy cry and the tale of thy captivity.'

So he went back into the battle, and never again saw his wife and child. It was in the spirit of Hector that Hannibal planned and fought and toiled, till as an old man he bit on the poison ring, and died, and was free from the Roman captivity that threatened him.

Honour and courage were the masters of the men and women whose stories are told in this book, but of them all none dared a risk so horrible as brave Father Damien in the Isle of Lepers. For his adventure among dreadful people who must give him their own dreadful disease, a Montrose or a Havelock might have had little heart, for his task had none of the excitement and glitter of the soldier's duty in war. But they are all, these men and women, good to live with, good to know, good to go with, weary camp followers as we are of the Noble Army of Martyrs, and unworthy of a single leaf from the laurel crown.

A. Lang.

THE LADY-IN-CHIEF

Everybody nowadays is so used to seeing in the streets nurses wearing long floating cloaks of different colours, blue, brown, grey, and the rest, and to having them with us when we are ill, that it is difficult to imagine a time when there were no such people. In the stories that were written even fifty years ago you will soon find out what sort of women they were who called themselves 'nurses.' Any kind of person seems to have been thought good enough to look after a sick man; it was not a matter which needed a special talent or teaching, and no girl would have dreamed of nursing anybody outside her own home, still less of giving up her life to looking after the sick. It was merely work, it was thought, for *old* women, and so, at the moment when the patient needed most urgently some one young and strong and active about him, who could lift him from one side of the bed to the other, or keep awake all night to give him his medicine or to see that his fire did not go out, he was left to a fat, sleepy, often drunken old body, who never cared if he lived or died, so that *she* was not disturbed.

The woman who was to change all this was born in Florence in the year 1820 and called after that city. Her father, Mr. Nightingale, seems to have been fond of giving his family place-names, for Florence's sister, about a year older than herself, had the old title of Naples tacked on to 'Frances,' and in after life was always spoken of as 'Parthy' or 'Parthenope.' By and by a

young cousin of these little girls would be named 'Athena,' after the town Athens, and then the fashion grew, and I have heard of twins called 'Inkerman' and 'Balaclava,' and of an 'Elsinora,' while we all know several 'Almas,' and may even have met a lady who bears the name of the highest mountain in the world – of course you can all guess what *that* is?

Mr. and Mrs. Nightingale did not stay very long in Italy after Florence's birth. They grew tired of living abroad, and wanted to get back to their old home among the hills and streams of Derbyshire. Here, at Lea hall, Florence's father could pass whole days happily with his books and the beautiful things he had collected in his travels; but he looked well after the people in the village, and insisted that the children should be sent to a little school, where they learned how to read and write and count for twopence a week. If the poor villagers were ill or unhappy, his wife used to visit them, and help them with advice as well as with money, and we may be quite sure that her little daughters often went with her on her rounds.

So the early years of Florence's childhood passed away amidst the flowery fields and bare hills that overlooked the beautiful river Derwent. The village, built of stone like so many in the North Country, lay far below, and on Sundays the two little girls, dressed in their best tippets and bonnets, used to walk with their father and mother across the meadows to the tiny church at Dethick. Here nearly two hundred and fifty years ago one Anthony Babington knelt in prayer, though his thoughts often

wandered to the beautiful Scottish queen, shut up by order of Elizabeth in Wingfield manor, only a few miles away. Of course Parthy and Florence knew all about him, and their greatest treat was a visit to his house, where they could see in the kitchen a trap-door leading to a large secret chamber, in which a conspirator might live for weeks without being found out. A great deal of the house had been pulled down or allowed to fall into decay, but the bailiff, who lived in the rest, was always glad to see them, and would take them to all kinds of delightful places, and up little dark narrow winding stairs, at the end of which you pushed up another trap-door and found yourself in your bedroom. What a fascinating way of getting there, and how very, very silly people are now to have wide staircases and straight passages and stupid doors, which you *know* will open, instead of never being sure if the trap-door had not stuck, or some enemy had not placed a heavy piece of furniture upon it!

But much as the Nightingales, big and little, loved Lea hall, it was very bare and cold in winter, and Florence's father determined to build a new house in a more sheltered place. Lea Hurst, as it was called, was only a mile from the hall, and, like it, overlooked the Derwent; but here the hills were wooded and kept out the bitter winds which had howled and wailed through the old house. Mr. Nightingale was very careful that all should be done exactly as he wished, therefore it took some time to finish, and *then* the family could not move in till the paint and plaster were dry, so that Florence was between five and six when at last

they took possession.

No doubt the two little girls had much to say about the laying out of the terraced gardens, and insisted on having some beds of their own, to plant with their favourite flowers. They were greatly pleased, too, at discovering a very old chapel in the middle of the new house, and very likely they told each other many stories of what went on there. Then there was a summer-house, where they could have tea, and if you went through the woods in May, and could make up your mind to pass the sheets of blue hyacinths without stopping to pick them till you were too tired to go further, you came out upon a splendid avenue, with a view of the hills for miles round. This was the walk which Florence loved best.

It seems, however, that Mr. Nightingale could not have thought Lea Hurst as pleasant as he expected it to be, for a few months later he bought a place called Embley, near the beautiful abbey of Romsey, in Hampshire. Here they all moved every autumn as soon as the trees at Lea Hurst grew bare; and when the young leaves were showing like a green mist, they began the long drive back again, sometimes stopping in London on the way, to see some pictures and hear some music, and have some talk with many interesting people whom Mr. Nightingale knew. And when they got home at last, how delightful it was to ride round to the old friends in the farms and cottages, and listen to tales of all that had happened during the little girls' absence, and in their turn to tell of the wonderful sights they had witnessed, and the adventures that had befallen them! Best of all were the

visits to the families of puppies and kittens which had been born during their absence, for Florence especially loved animals, and was often sent for by the neighbours to cure them when they were ill. The older and uglier they were, the sorrier Florence was for them, and she would often steal out with sugar or apples or carrots in her pocket for some elderly beast which was ending its days quietly in the fields, stopping in the woods on the way to play with a squirrel or a baby rabbit. The game was perhaps a little one-sided, but what did that matter? As the poet Cowper says,

> Wild, timid hares were drawn from woods
> To share her home caresses,
> And looked up to her human eyes
> With sylvan tendernesses.

Beasts and birds were Florence's dear friends, but dearest of all were her ponies.

While she was at Embley, the vicar, who was very fond of her, used often to take her out riding when he went on his rounds to see his people. Florence enjoyed this very much; she knew them all well, and never forgot the names of the children or their birthdays. Her mother would often give her something nice to carry to the sick ones, and when the flowers came out, Florence used to gather some for her special favourites, out of her own garden.

One day when she and the vicar were cantering across the downs, they saw an old shepherd, who was a great friend of both

of them, attempting to drive his flock without the help of his collie, Cap, who was nowhere to be seen.

'What has become of Cap?' they asked, and the shepherd told them that some cruel boys had broken the dog's leg with a stone, and he was in such pain that his master thought it would be more merciful to put an end to him.

Florence was hot with indignation. 'Perhaps *I* can help him,' she said. 'At any rate, he will like me to sit with him; he must feel so lonely. Where is he?'

'In my hut out there,' answered the shepherd; 'but I'm afraid it's little good you or anyone else can do him.'

But Florence did not hear, for she was galloping as fast as she could to the place where Cap was lying.

'Poor old fellow, poor old Cap,' whispered she, kneeling down and stroking his head, and Cap looked up to thank her.

'Let me examine his leg,' said the vicar, who had entered behind her; 'he does not hold it as if it were broken. No, I am sure it is not,' he added after a close inspection. 'Cheer up, we will soon have him well again.'

Florence's eyes brightened.

'What can I do?' she asked eagerly.

'Oh, make him a compress. That will take down the swelling,' replied the vicar, who was a little of a doctor himself.

'A compress?' repeated Florence, wrinkling her forehead. 'But I never heard of one. I don't know how.'

'Light a fire and boil some water, and then wring out some

cloths in it, and put them on Cap's paw. Here is a boy who will make a fire for you,' he added, beckoning to a lad who was passing outside.

While the fire was kindling, Florence looked about to find the cloths. But the shepherd did not seem to have any, and her own little handkerchief would not do any good. Still, cloths she must have, and those who knew Miss Nightingale in after years would tell you that when she *wanted* things she *got* them.

'Ah, there is Roger's smock,' she exclaimed with delight. 'Oh, *do* tear it up for me; mamma will be sure to give me another for him.' So the vicar tore the strong linen into strips, and Florence wrung them out in the boiling water, as he had told her.

'Now, Cap, be a good dog; you know I only want to help you,' she cried, and Cap seemed as if he *did* know; for though a little tremble ran through his body as the hot cloth touched him, he never tried to bite, nor even groaned with the pain, as many children would have done. By and by the lump was certainly smaller, and the look of pain in Cap's eyes began to disappear.

Suddenly she glanced up at the vicar, who had been all this time watching her.

'I can't leave Cap till he is *quite* better,' she said. 'Can you get that boy to go to Embley and tell them where I am? Then they won't be frightened.' So the boy was sent, and Florence sat on till the setting sun shot long golden darts into the hut.

Then she heard the shepherd fumbling with the latch, as if he could not see to open it; and perhaps he couldn't, for in his hand

he held the rope which was to put an end to all Cap's sorrows. But Cap did not know the meaning of the rope and only saw his old master. He gave a little bark of greeting and struggled on to his three sound legs, wagging his tail in welcome.

Roger could hardly believe his eyes, and Florence laughed with delight.

'Just look how much better he is,' she said. 'The swelling is very nearly gone now. But he wants some more compresses. Come and help me make them.'

'I think we can leave Roger to nurse Cap,' said the vicar, who had just returned from some of the neighbouring cottages. 'Your patient must have some bread and milk to-night, and to-morrow you can come to see how he is.'

'Yes, of course I shall,' answered Florence, and she knelt down to kiss Cap's nose before the vicar put her up on her pony.

Now, though Florence was so fond of flowers and animals and everything out of doors, she was never dull in the house on a wet day. In the first place, nothing was ever allowed to interfere with her lessons, and though the little girls had a good governess, their father chose the books they were to read and the subjects they were to study. Greek, Latin, and mathematics he taught them himself, and besides he took care that they could read and speak French, German, and Italian. They were fond of poetry, and no doubt some of the earliest poems of young Mr. Tennyson were among their favourites, as well as 'Lycidas' and the songs of the cavaliers. Parthy was a better artist and a cleverer

musician than Florence, though *she* could sing and sketch; but both were good needlewomen, and could make samplers as well as do fine work and embroidery. When school-time was over and the rain was still coming down, they would run away to their dolls, who, poor things, were always ill, so that Florence might have the pleasure of curing them. And though before Cap's accident she had never heard of a compress, she could make nice food for them at the nursery fire, and bandage their broken arms and legs while Parthy held the wounded limb steady.

When they grew older, they went abroad now and then with their parents, but Florence liked best being at home with her friends in the village, who were very proud of her wishing to take their pictures with her new photographic camera. If they had only known it, the children in their best clothes standing up very stiff and straight did not look half as pretty as the baskets of kittens with eyes half-innocent, half-wise, or the funny little pups, so round and fat. But the parents thought the portraits of their children the most beautiful things in the world, and had them put into hideous gilt frames and hung on the walls, where Florence could see them on her frequent visits.

Welcome as she was to all, it was the sick people who awaited her coming the most eagerly. She was so quiet in her movements, and knew so exactly what to do without talking or fussing about it, that the invalids grew less restless in her presence, and believed so entirely that she really *could* cure them that they were half cured already! Then before she left she would read them 'a

chapter' or a story to make them laugh, or anything else they wished for; and it was always a pleasure to listen to her, for she never stammered, or yawned, or lost her place, or had any of the tricks that often make reading aloud a penance to the victim.

For the young people both in Derbyshire and Hampshire she formed singing classes, and some of her 'societies' continue to-day. She was full of interest in other people's lives, and not only was *ready* to help them but *enjoyed* doing so, which makes all the difference.

There is much nonsense talked in the world about 'born' actors, and 'born' artists, and 'born' nurses. No doubt some are 'born' with greater gifts in these matters than others, but the most famous artists or actors or nurses will all tell you that the only work which is lasting has been wrought by long hours of patient labour. Miss Nightingale knew this as well as anybody, and as soon as she began to think of doing what no modern lady had ever done before her, and devoting her life to the care of the sick, she set about considering how she could best find the training she needed. She tried, to use her own words, 'to qualify herself for it as a man does for his work,' and to 'submit herself to the rules of business as men do.'

So she spent some months among the London hospitals, where her quick eye and clever fingers, aided by her cottage experience, made her a welcome help to the doctors. From the first she 'began at the beginning,' which is the only way to come to a successful end. A sick person cannot get well where the floor is covered

with dirt, and the dust makes him cough; therefore his nurse must get rid of both dirt and dust before her treatment can have any effect. After London, Miss Nightingale went to Edinburgh and Dublin, and then to France and Italy, where the nursing was done by nuns; and after that she visited Germany, where at the town of Kaiserswerth, on the Rhine, she found what she wanted.

The hospital of Kaiserswerth, where Miss Nightingale had decided to do her training, had been founded about sixteen years earlier by Pastor Fliedner, who was a wise man, content with very small beginnings. At the time of her arrival it was divided into a number of branches, and there was also a school for the children, who were taught entirely by some of the sisters, or deaconesses, as they were called. On entering, everyone had to go through the same work for a certain number of months, whether they meant to be hospital nurses or school teachers. All must learn to sew, cook, scrub, and read out clearly and pleasantly; but as Miss Nightingale had practised most of these things from the time she was a child, she soon was free to go into the hospital and attend to the sick people. The other nurses were German peasant women, but when they found that she could speak their language, and was ready to work as hard as any of them, they made friends at once. In her spare hours Miss Nightingale would put on her black cloak and small bonnet, and go round to the cottages with Mr. Fliedner, as long ago she had done with the vicar of Embley, and we may be sure any sick people whom she visited were always left clean and comfortable when she said good-bye.

But at Kaiserswerth Miss Nightingale had very little chance of learning any surgery, so she felt that she could not do better than pass some time in Paris with the nursing sisterhood of St. Vincent de Paul, which had been established about two hundred years earlier. Here, too, she went with the sisters on their rounds, both in the hospitals and in the homes of the poor, and learnt how best to help the people without turning them into beggars. Every part of the work interested her, but the long months of hard labour and food which was often scanty and always different from what she had hitherto had, began to tell on her. She fell ill, and in her turn had to be looked after by the sisters, and no doubt in many ways she learned more of sick nursing when she was a patient than she did when she was a nurse.

It was quite clear that it would be necessary for her to have a good rest before she grew strong again, and so she went back to Embley, and afterwards to Lea, and tried to forget that there was any such thing as sickness. But it is not easy for people who are known to be able and willing to have peace anywhere, and soon letters came pouring in to Miss Nightingale begging for her help in all sorts of ways. As far as she could she undertook it all, and often performed the most troublesome of all tasks, that of setting right the mistakes of others. In the end her health broke down again, but not till she had finished what she had set herself to do.

It was in March 1854 that war broke out between England, France, and Turkey on the one side, and Russia on the other. The battle-ground was to be the little peninsula of the Crimea,

and soon the Black Sea was crowded with ships carrying eager soldiers, many of them young and quite ignorant of the hardships that lay before them.

At first all seemed going well; the victory of the Alma was won on September 20, 1854, and that of Balaclava on October 25, the anniversary of Agincourt. But while the hearts of all men were still throbbing at the splendid madness of the charge when, owing to a mistaken order, the Light Brigade rode out to take the Russian guns and were mown down by hundreds, the rain began to fall in torrents and a winter of unusual coldness was upon them. Nights as well as days were passed in the trenches that had been dug before the strong fortress of Sebastopol, which the allies were besieging, and the suffering of our English soldiers was far greater than it need have been, owing to the wickedness of many of the contractors who had undertaken to supply the army with boots and stores, and did not hesitate to get these so cheap and bad as to be quite useless, while the rest of the money set aside for the purpose was put into their pockets. The doctors gave themselves no rest, but there were not half enough of them, while of nurses there were none. The men did what they could for one another, but they had their own work to attend to, and besides, try as they would it was impossible for them to fill the place of a trained and skilful woman. So they, as well as their dying comrades lying patiently on the sodden earth, looked longingly at the big white caps of the French sisters, who for their part would gladly have given help and comfort had not the

wounded of their own nation taken all their time. One or two of the English officers had been followed to the Crimea by their wives, and these ladies cooked for and tended the sick men who were placed in rows along the passages of the barracks, but even lint for bandages was lacking to them, and after the Alma they wrote letters to their friends in England entreating that no time might be lost in sending out proper aid.

These letters were backed by a strong appeal from the war correspondent of the *Times*, Dr. W.~H. Russell, and from the day that his plain account of the privations and horrors of the suffering army appeared in the paper, the War Office was besieged by women begging to be sent to the Crimea by the first ship. The minister, Mr. Sidney Herbert, did not refuse their offers; though they were without experience and full of excitement, he saw that most of them were deeply in earnest and under a capable head might be put to a good use. But where was such a head to be found? Then suddenly there darted into his mind the thought of Miss Nightingale, his friend for years past.

It was on October 15 that Mr. Sidney Herbert wrote to Miss Nightingale offering her, in the name of the government, the post of Superintendent of the nurses in the East, with absolute authority over her staff; and, curiously enough, on the very same day *she* had written to *him* proposing to go out at once to the Black Sea. As no time was to be lost, it was clear that most of the thirty-eight nurses she was to take with her must be women of a certain amount of training and experience. Others might follow

when they had learnt a little what nursing really meant, but they were of no use now. So Miss Nightingale went round to some Church of England and Roman Catholic sisterhoods and chose out the strongest and most intelligent of those who were willing to go, the remainder being sent her by friends whose judgment she could trust. Six days after Sidney Herbert had written his letter, the band of nurses started from Charing Cross.

When after a very rough passage they reached the great hospital of Scutari, situated on a hill above the Bosphorus, they heard the news of the fight at Balaclava and learnt that a battle was expected to take place next day at Inkerman. The hospital was an immense building in the form of a square, and was able to hold several thousand men. It had been lent to us by the Turks, but was in a fearfully dirty state and most unfit to receive the wounded men who were continually arriving in ships from the Crimea. Often the vessels were so loaded that the few doctors had not had time to set the broken legs and arms of the men, and many must have died of blood poisoning from the dirt which got into their undressed wounds. Oftener still they had little or no food, and even with help were too weak to walk from the ship to the hospital. And as for rats! why there seemed nearly as many rats as patients.

The first thing to be done was to unpack the stores, to boil water so that the wounds could be washed, to put clean sheets on the beds, and make the men as comfortable as possible. The doctors, overworked and anxious as they were, did not give the

nurses a very warm welcome. As far as their own experience went, women in a hospital were always in the way, and instead of helpers became hinderers. But Miss Nightingale took no heed of ungracious words and cold looks. She did her own business quietly and without fuss, and soon brought order out of confusion, and a feeling of confidence where before there had been despair. If an operation had to be performed – and at that time chloroform was so newly invented that the doctors were almost afraid to give it, Miss Nightingale, 'the Lady-in-Chief,' was present by the side of the wounded man to give him courage to bear the pain and to fill him with hope for the future. And not many days after her arrival, her coming was eagerly watched for by the multitudes of sick and half-starved soldiers who were lying along the walls of the passages because the beds were all full.

It is really hardly possible for us to understand all that the nurses had to do. First the wards must be kept clean, or the invalids would grow worse instead of better. Then proper food must be cooked for them, or they would never grow strong. Those who were most ill needed special care, lest a change for the worse might come unnoticed; and besides all this a laundry was set up, so that a constant supply of fresh linen might be at hand. In a little while, when some of the wounds were healing and the broken heads had ceased to ache, there would come shy petitions from the beds that the nurse would write them a letter home, to say that they had been more fortunate than their comrades and were

still alive, and hoped to be back in England some day.

'Well, tell me what you want to say, and I will say it,' the nurse would answer, but it is not very easy to dictate a letter if you have never tried, so it soon ended with the remark,

'Oh! nurse, *you* write it for me! You will say it much better than I can.'

Would you like to know how the nurses passed their days? Well, first they got up very early, made their beds, put their rooms tidy, and went down to the kitchen, where they had some bread, which was mostly sour, and some tea without milk. Then arrowroot and beef tea had to be made for the men, and when the night nurses took their turn to rest, those who were on duty by day went into the wards and stayed there from half-past nine till two, washing and dressing and feeding the men and talking over their illnesses with the doctors, who by this time were thankful for their aid. At two the men were left to rest or sleep while their tired nurses had their dinner, and little as they might like it, they thought it their duty to swallow a plateful of very bad meat and some porter. At three some of them often took a short walk, but that November the rains were constant and very heavy at Scutari as well as in the Crimea, and as Miss Nightingale would allow no risk of catching cold, on these days the nurses all stayed in the hospital, where there was always something to be done or cooked for the patients, who required in their weak state to be constantly fed. At half-past five the nurses left the wards and went to their tea, but that did not take long, and soon they were back again

making everything comfortable for the night, which began with the entrance of the night nurses at half-past nine.

It was a hard life, and when one remembers how bad their own food was, it is a marvel that any of them were able to bear it for so long. But, as Shakespeare says, 'Nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so,' and it is wonderful how far a brave spirit will carry one. Still, heavy though the nurses' work was, that of Miss Nightingale was far more of a strain. It was she on whom everything depended, who had to think and plan and look forward, and write accounts of it all to Mr. Sidney Herbert in London, and lord Raglan, the Commander-in-Chief, at the Crimea. The orderlies of the regiment gave her willing aid, but they needed to be taught what to do, and no doubt the Lady-in-Chief often found that it is far quicker and easier to do things oneself than to spend time in training another person. Luckily she was prompt to see the different uses to which men and women could be put, so that there were no wasted days or weeks, caused by setting them tasks for which they were unfitted, and in a very short while the hospital, which had been a scene of horror on her arrival from England, was a well-arranged and most comfortable place.

But not only were there soldiers to be cared for, there were also their wives and children, who were almost forgotten and huddled together in a corner of the barracks, with few clothes and hardly any food. Miss Nightingale took them under her charge, and placed them in a clean house close by, giving some of the

women work in her laundry and finding employment for the rest, with the help of the wife of one of the chaplains. The children were taught for several hours in the day, and thus their mothers were left free to earn money to support them, while the widows were given clothes and money, and as soon as possible sent home.

One morning, as the Lady-in-Chief went her rounds, the men noticed that her face was brighter than usual and looked as if something had pleased her very much. So it had, and in the afternoon, when they were all resting comfortably, they knew what it was. One of the chaplains went from ward to ward reading a letter which Queen Victoria had written to Mr. Sidney Herbert, and this was how it ran: —

Windsor Castle, December 6, 1854.

'Would you tell Mrs. Herbert that I begged she would let me see frequently the accounts she received from Miss Nightingale or Mrs. Bracebridge, as I hear no details of the wounded, though I see so many from officers, &c., about the battlefield, and naturally the former must interest me most.

'Let Mrs. Herbert also know that I wish Miss Nightingale and the ladies would tell those poor noble wounded and sick men that no one takes a warmer interest or feels more for their sufferings or admires their courage and heroism more than their queen. Day and night she thinks of her beloved troops. So does the Prince.

'Victoria.'

'God save the Queen,' said the chaplain when he had finished, and from their hearts the men raised a feeble shout, 'God save

the Queen.'

Soon another detachment of nurses arrived from home and undertook the charge of other hospitals along the shores of the Bosphorus. They were led by Miss Stanley, sister of the famous dean of Westminster, and the band consisted partly of ladies who gave their services and partly of nurses who were paid. Some Irish sisters of mercy also accompanied them, and these were allowed to wear their nun's dress, but the others must have looked very funny in the Government uniform – loose gowns of grey tweed, worsted jackets, short woollen cloaks, and scarves of brown holland with 'Scutari Hospital' in red letters across them. They were all made the same size, and 'in consequence,' adds sister Mary Aloysius, who was thankful that *she* did not need to present such an odd figure, 'the tall ladies appeared to be attired in short dresses, and the short ladies in long.'

Clad in these strange clothes they reached their destination and were placed by Miss Nightingale wherever she thought they were most needed. Cholera was now raging and the rain in the Crimea had turned to bitter cold, so that hundreds of men were brought in frost-bitten. Often their garments, generally of thin linen, were frozen so tightly to their bodies that they had first to be softened with oil and then cut off. The stories of their sufferings are too terrible to tell, but scarcely one murmured, and all were grateful for the efforts to ease their pain. If death came, as it often did, Miss Nightingale was there to listen to their last wishes.

All through the spring the cholera raged, and at length some of the nurses, weakened by the strain on mind and body, and the lack of nourishing food, fell victims. One of them was a personal friend of Miss Nightingale's, others were Irish nuns working in Balaclava, and their graves were kept gay with flowers planted by the soldiers. Thus the Lady-in-Chief found them when in May 1855 she set out to inspect the hospitals in the Crimea.

What a rest it must have been to be able to lie on deck and watch the blue waters without feeling that every moment of peace was stolen from some duty. She had several nurses with her; also her friend Mr. Bracebridge, whose wife had taken charge of the stores at Scutari, and a little drummer of twelve, called Thomas, who got amusement out of everything and kept up their spirits when the outlook seemed gloomiest.

The moment she landed Miss Nightingale, accompanied by a train of doctors, went at once to the hospitals, thus missing lord Raglan who came to give her a hearty welcome. Next day, when as in duty bound she returned his visit, she had the pleasure once more of feeling a horse under her, and old memories came back and it seemed as if she was again a child riding with the vicar. As we are told by a Frenchman that she wore a regular riding-dress, she probably borrowed this from one of the four English ladies then in the Crimea, for she is not likely to have had a habit of her own. Her horse was fresh and spirited and nervous, after the manner of horses, and the noise and confusion of the road that led to the camp was too much for his nerves. He plunged and

kicked and reared and bucked, and did all that a horse does when he wants to be unpleasant, but Miss Nightingale did not mind at all – in fact she quite enjoyed it.

All day long the Lady-in-Chief went about, visiting the hospitals and even penetrating into the trenches while sharp firing was going on. The weather was intensely hot – for it is the greatest mistake to look on the Crimea, which is as far south as Venice or Genoa, as being always cold – and one day Miss Nightingale was struck down with sudden fever. She was at once taken to the Sanatorium on a stretcher, which was followed by the faithful Thomas, and great was the dismay and sorrow of the whole camp. Fortunately after a fortnight she began to recover, thanks to the care that was taken of her, but she absolutely refused to go home, as the doctors wished her to do, and, weak though she was, returned to Scutari, where soon afterwards she heard of her friend lord Raglan's death, which was a great shock to her. It was some time before she was strong enough to go back to her work, and she spent many hours wandering about the cypress-planted cemetery at Scutari, where so many English soldiers lay buried, and in planning a memorial to them which was afterwards set up.

In September Sebastopol fell and the war was over, but the sick and wounded were still uncured. It was hard for them to hear of their comrades going home proud and happy in the honours they had won, while *they* were left behind in pain and weariness, but it would have been infinitely harder without the knowledge

that Miss Nightingale would bear them company to the end. After all they stood on English ground before she did, as when she was well enough she sailed a second time for the Crimea to finish the work which her illness had caused her to leave undone.

All through the winter of 1855 she stayed there, driving over the snow-covered mountains in a little carriage made for the purpose, which had been given her as a present. Sick soldiers there were in plenty in the hospitals, and for some time there was an army also, to keep order until the peace was signed. In order to give the soldiers occupation and amusement, she begged her friends at home to send out books and magazines to them, and this the queen and her mother, the duchess of Kent, were the first to do. Nothing was too small for the Lady-in-Chief to think of; she arranged some lectures, got up classes for the children and for anyone who wanted to learn; started a *café*, in hopes to save the men from drinking; and kept a money-order office herself, so that the men could, if they wished, send part of their pay home to their families. And when in July 1856 the British army set sail for England, Miss Nightingale stayed behind to see a white marble cross twenty feet high set up on a peak above Balaclava. It was a memorial from her to the thousands who had died at the mountain's foot, in battle or in the trenches.

Honours and gifts showered on Miss Nightingale on all sides, and everybody was eager to show how highly they valued her self-sacrificing labours. If money had been wanted, it would have poured in from all quarters; but when the queen had made

inquiries on the subject a year before Miss Nightingale's return, Mr. Sidney Herbert replied that what the Lady-in-Chief desired above everything was the foundation of a hospital in which her own special system of nursing could be carried out. The idea was welcomed with enthusiasm, but none of the sums sent were as dear to Miss Nightingale's heart as the day's pay subscribed by the soldiers and sailors. The fund was applied to founding a home and training school for nurses, attached to St. Thomas' hospital, and Miss Nightingale helped to plan the new buildings opposite the Houses of Parliament, to which the patients were afterwards moved.

Miss Nightingale came home with her aunt, Mrs. Smith, calling herself 'Miss Smith' so that she might travel unrecognised, but that disguise could not be kept up when she got back to Lea Hurst. Crowds thronged to see her from the neighbouring towns, and the lodge-keeper had a busy time. However, her father would not allow her to be worried. She needed rest, he said, and she should have it; and if addresses and plate and testimonials should pour in (as they did, in quantities) someone else could write thanks at her dictation. All round Lea Hurst her large Russian dog was an object of reverence, and as for Thomas the drummer-boy – well, if you could not see Miss Nightingale herself, you might spend hours of delight in listening to Thomas, who certainly could tell you far more thrilling tales than his mistress would ever have done.

We should all like to know what became of Thomas.

Miss Nightingale is still living, but the privations and overwork of those terrible months had so broken her down that for the last forty years she has been more or less of an invalid. Still, her interest is as wide as ever in all that could help her fellows, and though she was unable to go among them as of old, she was ready to help and advise, either personally or by letter. If she had given her health and the outdoor pleasures that she loved so much in aid of the sick and suffering, she had won in exchange a position and an influence for good such as no other woman has ever held.

Since this little account was written, the king has conferred on her the highest honour he could bestow on a woman, the Order of Merit, while the lord mayor of London and the corporation have given her the freedom of the City. Thus her life will end in the knowledge that she has gained the only honours worth having, those which have not been sought.

PRISONERS AND CAPTIVES

I am afraid you will think this a sad story, and so it is, but things would have been sadder still but for the man I am going to tell you about. His name was John Howard, and if you were to ask, 'Which John Howard?' the answer would be, 'John Howard the Philanthropist,' which means 'a lover of men.'

It is a great title for anyone to win, and no one ever earned it more truly than this son of the rich upholsterer of Smithfield, born in Clapton, then a country village of the parish of Hackney, in 1727. As you will see by and by, Howard spent the last seventeen years of his life in fighting three giants who were very hard to beat, named Ignorance, Sloth, and Dirt; and it is all the more difficult to overcome them because they are generally to be met with together. Unfortunately, they never can be wholly killed, for when you think they are left dead on the field after a hard struggle, they always come to life again; but they have never been quite so strong since the war waged on them by John Howard, who died fighting against them in a Russian city.

Howard had always been a delicate boy, which made it all the more wonderful that he could bear the fatigue of the long journeys which he undertook to help people who could not help themselves. He was married twice, but neither of his wives lived long, and he had only one little boy to look after. But when the child was four years old, Howard felt that it was dull for him to

be alone with his father, and without any play-fellows, so he sent him to a small school kept by some ladies, where little John, or 'Master Howard,' as it was the fashion to call him, would be well taken care of.

Howard was a quiet man, and very religious, but, what was rare in those times, he did not believe everybody in the wrong who thought differently from himself. He lived quietly among his books on a small estate he owned near Bedford, called Cardington, where he studied astronomy and questions about heat and cold, and when only twenty-nine was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. Medicine always interested him, and he learned enough of it to be very useful to him during his travels; indeed, it was owing to his fame as a doctor that he was summoned to see a young Russian lady dying of fever, which, according to many, infected him, and caused his own death. In his studies and in the care of his tenants many peaceful years passed away. The man who afterwards became known as the champion of 'prisoners and captives, and all who were desolate and oppressed,' did not allow his own tenants to live in unhealthy and uncomfortable cottages crowded together in tiny rooms with water dropping on to their beds from the badly thatched roofs, like many other landlords both in his day and ours. He opened schools for the children, and drew up rules for them. The girls were taught reading and needlework, the boys reading and a little arithmetic. Writing does not seem to have been thought necessary, as none of the girls learned it, and only a few of

the boys – probably the cleverer ones. On Sundays they were all expected to go to church or chapel, whichever their parents preferred.

In spite of the generosity which made John Howard ready to give money or time to any scheme that seemed likely to be of use to the poor, he was not popular with his neighbours, and saw very little of them. They thought him 'odd' because he did not care for races, or cock-fights, or long dinners that lasted far into the night, where the gentlemen often drank so much that they could not get home at all. Year by year Howard was teaching himself to do without things, and by and by he was able to live on green tea and a little bread and vegetables, with fruit now and then as a great treat. No wonder he was considered eccentric by the Bedfordshire country gentlemen!

But, in spite of his quiet ways, Howard had a passion for travelling, and when a youth threw up the position of grocer's apprentice which his father had obtained for him, and started for France and Italy. Immediately after the death of his first wife he determined to go for a change to Lisbon, then lying in ruins after the recent earthquake. Before, however, his ship was out of the English Channel it was attacked and overpowered by a French privateer, and both crew and passengers were left without anything to eat or drink for nearly two days. They were then taken to the prison at Brest, thrown into a dark and horribly dirty dungeon, and apparently forgotten. Besides hunger and thirst, they went through terrible pangs, fearing lest they were to be left

to starve; but at length the heavy bolts of the iron door were shot back, and a leg of mutton was thrust inside. Nobody had a knife, every weapon had been taken from them, and if they had, they were all too hungry to wait to use it. They sprang on the food like wolves and gnawed it like dogs.

For a week they all remained in their dungeon, and then Howard, at any rate, was allowed to leave it, and was sent first to Morlaix and then to Carpaix, where he was kindly treated by the gaoler, in whose house he lived. Howard gave his word that he would not try to escape, and for two months he remained there – a prisoner on parole, as it is called – writing letters to prisoners he had left behind him, who had not been so fortunate as himself. From what he had gone through he could easily guess what they were suffering, and determined that when once he got back to England he would do everything in his power to obtain their freedom.

In two months Howard was informed by his friend the gaoler that the governor had decided that he should be sent to England, in order that he might arrange to be exchanged for a French naval officer, after swearing that in case this could not be managed, he would return as a prisoner to Brest. It was a great trial of any man's good faith, but it was not misplaced, and happily the exchange was easily made. No sooner were his own affairs settled than Howard set about freeing his countrymen, and very shortly some English ships were sent to Brest with a cargo of French prisoners and came back with an equal number of English ones,

all of whom owed their liberty to Howard's exertions.

His captivity in France first gave him an idea of the state of prisons and the sufferings of prisoners, but eighteen years were to pass before the improvement of their condition became the business of his life.

Mr. Howard was appointed high sheriff for the county of Bedford in 1773, and as such had the prisons under his charge. The high sheriffs who had gone before him were of course equally bound to see that everything inside the gaol was clean and well-ordered, but nobody really expected them to trouble their heads about the matter, and certainly they never did. However, Mr. Howard's notion of his duty was very different. He at once visited the county prison in Bedford, and the misery that he found there was repeated almost exactly in nearly every prison in the British Isles. The gaoler in Bedford – and in many other places – had no salary paid him, and therefore screwed all he could out of his prisoners; and no matter if a man were innocent or guilty, if a jury had condemned him or not, he must pay fifteen shillings and fourpence to the gaoler, and two shillings to the warder who brought him his food – when he had any – before he was set free. If, as often happened, the prisoners could not find the money, well, they were locked up till they died, or till the fees were paid.

When Howard informed the magistrates of what he had found, they were as much shocked as if it had not been their business to have known all about it.

'A dreadful state of things, indeed!' they said, 'and they were

greatly obliged to Mr. Howard for having discovered it. Yes, certainly, the criminals and those who had been confined for debt alone ought to be placed in different parts of the prison, and the men and women should be separated, and an infirmary built for the sick. Oh! they were quite willing to do it, but the cost would be very heavy, and the people might decline to pay it, unless the high sheriff could point to any other county which supported its own gaol.'

At the moment, the high sheriff could not, but he had no doubt that such a county would be easily found, so he at once started on a visit to some of the prisons, but, to his surprise, he did not discover *one* in which the gaoler was paid a fixed salary. And the more he saw of the prisons, the more he was grieved at their condition. Almost all had dungeons for criminals built underground, dark, damp, and dirty, and sometimes as much as twenty feet below the surface; and often these dungeons were very small and very crowded. Mats or, in a few of the better-managed prisons, straw was given the prisoners to lie on, but no coverings, and those who were imprisoned for debt were expected to pay for their own food or go without it.

Sick at heart with all that he had seen, Howard went home for a short rest, and then set out again on one of those tours on which he spent the remaining years of his life, never thinking that the work was done when he had reported on the terrible evils of the prison system, but always returning to make sure that his advice had been carried out, which it often was not. Curious to

say, there are few instances of difficulties being put in the way of his inspecting the prisons in any of the countries which he visited, while about six months after his labours began, he was called to the bar of the House of Commons, and publicly thanked for his services in behalf of those who could not help themselves.

Mr. Howard was pleased and touched at the honour done him, and at the proof that but he was much more gratified by two laws that were passed during that session, one for relieving innocent prisoners from paying fees, and the other for insisting on certain rules being carried out which were necessary to keep the prisoners in good health.

> Evil is wrought by want of Thought,
> As well as by want of Heart;

This last Act was greatly needed. The bad air, the dirt, and the closeness of the rooms constantly produced an illness called gaol fever, from which numbers of prisoners died yearly, one catching it from the other. Nominally, a doctor was attached to every prison, but instead of being ready, as doctors generally are, to risk their lives for their patients, these men usually showed great cowardice. In Exeter, the doctor when appointed had it set down in writing that he should not be obliged to attend anyone suffering from gaol fever; in the county gaol for Cornwall, every prisoner but one was ill of this disease when Howard paid his first visit there. And no wonder, for here the prison consisted of only

one room with a small window, and three 'dungeons or cages,' the one for women being only five feet long. The food was let down to them through a hole in the floor of the room above.

In Derby, Howard was thankful to see that things were far more what they ought to be. The rooms were larger and lighter, there was an infirmary for the sick, 'a neat chapel,' and even a bath, 'which the prisoners were required occasionally to use.' Here the debtors, instead of being nearly starved, were given the same allowance of food as the criminals. They were also supplied with plenty of straw, and had fires in the winter. Newcastle was still better managed, and here the doctor gave his services free; but the Durham gaol was in a terrible state, and when Howard went down into the dungeon he found several criminals lying there half-starved and chained to the floor. The reason of these differences probably lies in the fact that before Howard's time nobody had ever taken the trouble to visit the prisons or to see if the rules were carried out. If, as sometimes happened, the doctor and gaoler were kind-hearted men, anxious to do their duty, then the prisoners were tolerably well cared for. If, on the other hand, they were careless or cruel, the captives had to suffer. This Howard saw, and was resolved, as far as possible, to put the prisoners out of the power of the gaolers, who should be made to undergo a severe punishment for any neglect of duty. For in Howard's mind, though it was, of course, needful that men should learn that if they chose to commit crimes they must pay for them, yet he considered that so much useless misery only

made the criminals harder and more brutal, and that the real object of punishment was to help people to correct their faults, and once more to become honest men and women.

Having satisfied himself of the state of the English prisons, and done what he could to improve them, Howard determined to discover how those in foreign countries were managed. Paris was the first place he stopped at, and the famous Bastille the first prison he visited. Here, however, he was absolutely refused admittance, and seems, according to his friend Dr. Aikin, to have narrowly escaped being detained as a prisoner himself. But once outside the walls he remembered having heard that an Act had been passed in 1717, when Louis XV. was seven years old and the duke of Orleans was regent, desiring all gaolers to admit into their prisons any persons who wished to bestow money on the prisoners, only stipulating that whatever was given to those confined in the dungeons should be offered in the presence of the gaoler.

Armed with this knowledge and a quantity of small coins, Howard called on the head of the police, who received him politely and gave him a written pass to the chief prisons in Paris. These he found very bad, with dungeons in some of 'these seats of woe beyond imagination horrid and dreadful,' yet not apparently any worse than many on this side of the Channel.

After Howard's dismal experiences in England, Scotland, Ireland, and France, it must have given him heartfelt pleasure to visit the prisons in Belgium, which, with scarcely an exception,

were 'all fresh and clean, no gaol distemper, no prisoners in irons.' The bread allowance 'far exceeds that of any of *our* gaols. Two pounds of bread a day, soup once, with a pound of meat on Sunday.' This was in Brussels, but when he went on to Ghent, things were better still.

Like most of the large towns of Flanders, Ghent had a stirring history, and its townspeople were rich and prosperous. At the time of Howard's visit, it was part of the dominions of the emperor Joseph II., brother of Marie Antoinette, and by his orders a large prison was in course of building. Though not yet finished, it already contained more than a hundred and fifty men, and Howard felt as if he must be dreaming when he saw that each of these prisoners had a room to himself, a bedstead, a mattress, a pillow, a pair of sheets, with two blankets in winter and one in summer. Everything was very clean, and the food plentiful and wholesome. But, besides all this, Howard noted with a feeling of envy two customs which so far he had tried in vain to introduce into England. One was that the men and the women should be kept apart, and the other, that they should be given useful work to employ their time. In England, a prisoner was sometimes condemned to 'hard labour,' but this was a mere form. There was no system arranged beforehand for the employment of convicts, and indeed, till more light was admitted into the English prisons, it was too dark to work at anything, so they just sat with the other criminals in the dark, stifling dungeons, with nothing to do and nothing to think of!

A more horrible punishment could not have been invented, and if the criminal left the prison at all, he was sure to come out even worse than he went in. And how was anything else possible?

Now in Ghent, and in most of the Flemish prisons, it was all as different as could be. The women sat in work-rooms of their own, when they had finished cleaning and cooking, mending all their own and the men's clothes, which it was part of their duty to wash. This done, wool in what is called its 'raw state' was served out to them – that is, wool as it had been taken off the sheep's fleece – and they had to comb out all the tangles, and spin it into long skeins. Then the skeins were taken to the men, many of whom were weavers by trade, and by them it was woven into cloth which was sold.

Thus, in doing work in which they could occupy themselves and take a pride, the prisoners unconsciously ceased to think all day of the bad lives they had led, and longed to lead again; and when they had served the time of their sentences and were discharged, they had a trade to fall back on, and, what was still more important, the *habit* of working.

Besides this, the method of 'hard labour' carried out in the Ghent prison had another great advantage for the prisoners. Every day each person's work, which would take him a certain number of hours to finish, was dealt out, and when it was done, and done *properly*, the prisoners were allowed, if they chose, to go on working, and the profits of this work were put aside to be given them when they were discharged. And in Ghent the

criminals were not left, as in England, to the mercy of the gaoler, nobody knowing and nobody caring what became of them, for the city magistrates went over the prison once every week, and also arranged what meals the prisoners were to have till the next meeting.

In a gaol in the beautiful old city of Bruges, the contrast between the care taken of the sick criminals and the numberless deaths from gaol fever in his own country filled Howard with the deepest shame. In Bruges, the doctors did not make stipulations that they should not be expected to visit infectious patients, but they wrote out their prescriptions in a book for the magistrates to read. Thus it was possible for the rulers of the city to judge for themselves how ill a man might be, and how he was being treated; and as long as the doctor considered him in need of it, fourteen pence daily – a much larger sum then than now – was allotted to provide soup and other nourishing food for the sick person.

When Howard passed from Belgium to Holland he found the same care, though here the rules respecting the gaolers were stricter, because they were responsible for the orderly state of the prison and the conduct of the prisoners.

The gaolers were forbidden, on pain of a fine, to be seen drinking in public-houses, to quarrel with the prisoners, and to use bad language to them, and, greatest difference of all from the prisons he was accustomed to, no strong drink was allowed to be sold within the walls! Debtors were few, while in England they were more numerous than the criminals; and in Amsterdam not a

single person had been executed for ten years, whereas in Britain sheep-stealing and all sorts of petty offences were punished by hanging.

From Holland Mr. Howard travelled to Germany, where, as a whole, the same sort of rules prevailed; and in Hamburg, the wives of the magistrates went to the prisons every Saturday to give out the women's work. In some places the men were set to mend the roads, clean the bridges, clear away the snow, or do whatever the magistrates desired, and a guard with fixed bayonets always attended them. But they much preferred this labour, hard though it often was, to being shut up indoors, and looked healthy and cheerful.

After three months Mr. Howard returned home and inspected the prison at Dover, to find to his dismay everything exactly as before; and when, after a little rest, he set out on a second English tour, scarcely anywhere did he perceive an improvement. One small prison in the Forest of Dean was inhabited by two sick and half-starved men, who had been kept in one room for more than a year almost without water or fire or any allowance for food. In another, at Penzance, which consisted of two tiny rooms in a stable-yard, was one prisoner only, who would have died of hunger had it not been for a brother, even poorer than himself, who brought him just enough to keep him alive. Again and again Howard paid out of his own pocket the debts of many of those miserable people, which sometimes began by being no more than a shilling, but soon mounted up, with all the fees, to

several pounds.

With only short intervals for rest, Howard went on travelling and inspecting, now in the British Isles and now abroad, and by slow degrees he began to see an improvement in the condition of the prisoners in his own country, whether criminals or debtors in gaols or convicts in the 'hulks,' as the rotten old ships used as prisons were called. He was careful never to leave a single cell unvisited, and spoke his mind freely both to the keepers and to the magistrates. The House of Commons always listened with eagerness to all he had to tell, and passed several Bills which should have changed things much for the better. But the difficulty lay, not in making the law, but in getting it carried out.

It is wonderful how, during all these travels and the hours spent in the horrible atmosphere of the prisons, a delicate man like Howard so seldom was ill. Luckily he knew enough of medicine to teach him to take some simple precautions, and he never entered a hospital or prison before breakfast. Dresden and Venice appear to have been the two cities on the Continent where the prisoners were the worst treated, many of them wearing irons, and few of them having enough food.

It would be impossible to give an account of all Howard's journeys, which included Italy, Russia, Turkey, Germany, France, and Holland, but I have told you enough for you to understand what a task he had undertaken. When he was abroad he was sometimes entreated to attend private patients, so widely had his fame spread; and though he did not pretend to be a doctor,

he never refused to give any help that was possible, and it was through this kindness that he lost his life. Once, during a visit to Constantinople, he received a message from a man high in the Sultan's favour, begging him to come and see his daughter, as she was suffering great pain and none of the doctors could do anything to relieve her. Howard asked the girl some questions, and felt her pulse, and then gave some simple directions for her treatment which soon took away the pain, and in a few days she was nearly well. Her father was so grateful that he offered Howard a large sum of money, just as he would have done to one of his own countrymen, and was struck dumb when Howard declined the gift, and asked instead for a bunch of the beautiful grapes that he had seen hanging in the garden. As soon as the official had made sure that his ears had not deceived him, he ordered a large supply of the finest grapes to be sent to Howard daily as long as he stayed in Constantinople.

So for a whole month we can imagine him enjoying the Pasha's grapes, in addition to the vegetables, bread, and water which formed his usual meals, taken at any hour that happened to be convenient. If he wished to go to visit a prison or hospital or lazaretto, there was no need to put it off because 'it would interfere with his dinner-hour,' for his dinner could be eaten any time. Not that there were any hospitals, properly speaking, in Constantinople; for though there was a place in the Greek quarter to which sick people were sent, hardly a single doctor could be found to attend them, and the only real hospital in the capital was

for the benefit of cats.

Now in most of the great seaport towns along the Mediterranean, lazarettos, or pest-houses, were built, so that passengers on arriving from plague-stricken countries should be placed in confinement for forty days, till there was no fear of their infecting the people. In England, in spite of her large trade with foreign lands, there were no such buildings, and it is only wonderful that the plague was so little heard of. Howard determined to insist on the wisdom and necessity of the foreign plan; but as he always made his reports from experience and not from hearsay, he felt that the time had come when he should first visit the lazarettos, and then go through the forty days' quarantine himself.

This experiment was more dangerous than any he had yet tried, so instead of taking a servant with him, as had generally been his habit, he set out alone in November 1785.

As regards lazarettos, he found, as he had found with regard to prisons and hospitals, that their condition depended in a great degree on the amount of care taken by the ruler of the city. In Italy there were several that were extremely well managed, especially in the dominions of the grand duke of Tuscany; but he had made up his mind that when the moment came for his quarantine it should be undergone in Venice, the most famous lazaretto of them all. He took ship eastwards, and visited the great leper hospital at the Island of Scio, where everything was done to make the poor creatures as comfortable as possible. Each

person had his own room and a garden of his own, where he could grow figs, almonds, and other fruit, besides herbs for cooking.

From Scio Howard sailed to Smyrna, and then changed into another vessel, bound for Venice, which he knew would be put in quarantine the moment it arrived in the city. The winds were contrary and the voyage slow, and off the shores of Greece they were attacked by one of the 'Barbary corsairs' who infested the Mediterranean. The Smyrna crew fought hard, for well they knew the terrors of the fate that awaited them if captured, and when their shot was exhausted they loaded their biggest gun with spikes and nails, and anything else that came handy. Howard himself aimed it, and after it had fired a few rounds, the enemy spread his black sails and retired.

At length, after two months, Venice was reached, and as a passenger on board a ship from an infected port, Howard was condemned to forty days' quarantine in the new lazaretto. His cell was as dirty as any dungeon in any English prison, and had neither chair, table, nor bed. His first care was to clean it, but it was so long since anyone had thought of doing such a thing that it was nearly as long before the dirt could be made to disappear, and meanwhile he was attacked by the same headache which had always marked his visit to such places, and in a short time became so ill that he was removed to the old lazaretto. Here he was rather worse off than before, for the water came so close to the walls that the stone floor was always wet, and in a week's time he was given a third apartment, this time consisting of four rooms, but

all without furniture and as dirty as the first.

Ordinary washing was again useless to remove the thick coating of filth of all kinds, and at length Howard felt himself getting so ill that by the help of the English consul he was allowed to have some brushes and lime, which by mixing with water became whitewash. He then brushed down the walls without hindrance from anyone, though he had made up his mind that if the guard tried to stop him, he would lock him up in one of the rooms. Almost directly he grew better, and was able to enjoy his tea and bread once more.

The rules for purification of the infected ships were most strict, but it depended on the prior, or head of the lazaretto, whether they were carried out or not. All woollen, cotton, and silk materials, which were specially liable to carry infection, were carefully cleansed. The bags in which they were packed were all emptied, and the men belonging to the lazaretto were strictly forbidden to touch them with their hands, and always used canes to turn over the contents of the bags. This was done daily for forty days, when they were free from infection. Other things were kept in salt water for forty-eight hours, and short-haired animals were made to swim ashore.

On November 20, Howard was set free, his health having suffered from the lack of air and exercise, and from anxiety about his son, whom he had left in England. However, he still continued his tour of inspection, and it was not till February 1787 that he reached home. After a short time given to his own

affairs, in making the best arrangements that he could for his son, now completely out of his mind, he was soon busily employed in putting a stop very vigorously to the erection of a statue to his honour. The subscriptions to it had been large, for everybody felt how much the country owed to his unwearied efforts in the cause of his fellow-men, carried out entirely at his own cost. But Howard would not listen to them for one moment.

'The execution of your design would be a cruel punishment to me,' he says in a letter to the subscribers. 'I shall always think the reform now going on in several of the gaols of this kingdom, which I hope will become general, the greatest honour and most ample reward I can possibly receive.'

It was Howard who was right, and his friends who were wrong, for though after his death they would no longer be denied, it is not the picture of the statue in St. Paul's which rises before us at the name of John Howard, but that of the prison cell.

HANNIBAL

If we could go back more than three thousand years, and be present at one of the banquets of Egypt or of the great kingdoms of the East, we should be struck by the wonderful colour which blazed in some of the hangings on the walls, and in the dresses of the guests; and if, coveting the same beautiful colour for our own homes, we asked where it came from, the answer would be that it was the famous Tyrian purple, made at the prosperous town of Tyre, off the coast of Palestine, inhabited by the Phœnician race.

The Phœnicians were celebrated traders and sent their goods all over the world. Ships took them to the mouth of the Nile, to the islands in the Cornish sea, to the flourishing cities of Crete almost as civilised as our own; while caravans of camels bore Phœnician wares across the desert to the Euphrates and the Tigris, most likely even to India itself. Soon the Phœnicians began to plant colonies which, like Tyre their mother, grew rich and beautiful, and far along the north African coast – so runs the old story – the lady Dido founded the city of Carthage, whose marble temples, theatres, and places of assembly were by and by to vie with those of Tyre itself.

But before these were yet completed, a wanderer, tall and strong and sun-burned, towering nearly a head over the small Phœnician people, landed on the coast and was brought before the queen, as Dido was now called.

His name, he said, was Æneas, and he had spent many years in fighting before the walls of Troy for the sake of Helen, whom he thought the loveliest woman in the world, till he had looked on Dido the queen. After the war was ended he had travelled westwards, and truly strange were the scenes on which his eyes had rested since he had crossed the seas.

Dido listened, and as she had talked with many traders from all countries she understood somewhat of his speech, and bade him stay awhile and behold the wonders of the city she was building. So Æneas stayed, and the heart of the queen went out to him; but as the days passed by he tired of rich food and baths made sweet with perfumes, and longed for wild hills and the flocks driven by the shepherds. Then one morning he sailed away, and Dido saw his face no more; and in her grief she ordered a tall pyre to be reared of logs of sandalwood and cedar. When all was prepared she came forth with a golden circlet round her head, and a robe of scarlet falling to her feet, till men marvelled at her fairness, and laid herself down on the top of the pyre.

'I am ready,' she said to the chief of her slaves, who stood by, and a lighted torch was placed against the pile, and the flames rose high.

In this manner Dido perished, but her name was kept green in her city to the end.

But though Dido was dead, her city of Carthage went on growing, and conquering, and planting colonies, in Sicily, Spain, and Sardinia. Not that the Carthaginians themselves, though a

fierce and cruel people, cared about forming an empire, but they loved riches, and to protect their trade from other nations it was needful to have strong fleets and armies. For some time the various Greek states were her most powerful enemies; but in the third century before Christ signs appeared to those with eyes to read them that a war between Carthage and Rome was at hand.

Now it must never be forgotten for a moment that neither then, nor for over two thousand years later, was there any such thing as Italy, as *we* understand it.

The southern part of the peninsula was called 'Greater Greece,' and filled, as we have said, by colonies from different Greek towns. In the northern parts, about the river Po, tribes from Gaul had settled themselves, and in the centre were various cities peopled by strange races, who for long joined themselves into a league to resist the power of Rome. But by the third century b. c. the Roman empire, which was afterwards to swallow up the whole of the civilised world from the straits of Gibraltar to the deserts of Asia, had started on its career; the league had been broken up, the Gauls and Greeks had been driven back, and the whole of Italy south of the river Rubicon paid tribute to the City of the Seven Hills on the Tiber.

Having made herself secure in Italy, Rome next began to watch with anxious eyes the proceedings of Carthage in Spain and in Sicily. The struggle for lordship was bound to come, and to come soon. As to her army, Rome feared nothing, but it was quite clear that to gain the victory over Carthage she must have a

fleet, and few things are more striking in the great war than the determination with which Rome, never a nation of sailors, again and again fitted out vessels, and when they were destroyed or sunk gave orders to build more. And at last she had her reward, and the tall galleys, with high carved prows and five banks of oars, beat the ships which had been hitherto thought invincible.

It was in 263 b. c. that the war at last broke out in Sicily, and after gaining victories both by land and sea, Rome in the eighth year of the contest sent an army to Africa, under the consuls Regulus and Volso, with orders to besiege Carthage. The invading army consisted of forty thousand men, and was joined as soon as it touched the African shore by some tributary towns, and also by twenty thousand slaves – for Carthage was hated by all who came under her rule because of her savage cruelty. At the news of the invasion the people seemed turned into stone. Then envoys were sent to beg for peace, peace at any price, at the cost of any humiliation. But the consuls would listen to nothing, and Carthage would have fallen completely into her enemy's hands had the Romans marched to the gates. But at this moment an order arrived from the Roman senate, bidding Volso with twenty-four thousand men return at once, leaving Regulus with only sixteen thousand. With exceeding folly Regulus left the strongly fortified camp, which in Roman warfare formed one of the chief defences, and arrayed his forces in the open plain. There Carthage, driven to bay, gave him battle with her hastily collected forces. The Carthaginians, commanded by

Xanthippus, a better general than Regulus, won the day, and only two thousand Romans escaped slaughter. The victory gave heart to the men of Carthage, and when news came from Sicily that Rome had been driven back and her fleets destroyed, their joy knew no bounds. In her turn Rome might have lain at the feet of the conqueror, but Carthage had no army strong enough to act in a foreign land, and contented herself with destroying during the war seven hundred five-banked Roman ships, which were every time replaced with amazing swiftness.

The war had raged for sixteen years when Hamilcar Barca, father of the most famous general before Cæsar (except Alexander the Great), was given command over land and sea. He was a young man, not more than thirty, and belonged to one of the oldest families in Carthage. Unlike most of his nation, he valued many things more highly than money, and despised the glitter and show and luxury in which all the Carthaginians delighted. A boy of fourteen when the first Punic war began (for this is its name in history), his strongest passion was hatred of Rome and a burning desire to humble the power which had defied his own beloved city. It did not matter to Hamilcar that his ships were few and his soldiers undisciplined. The great point was that he had absolute power over them, and as to their training he would undertake that himself.

So, full of hope he began his work, and in course of time, after hard labour, his raw troops became a fine army.

Hamilcar's first campaign in Sicily – so often the battleground

of ancient Europe – was crowned with success. The Romans were hemmed in by his skilful strategy, and if he had only been given a proper number of ships it would have been easy for him to have landed in Italy, and perhaps marched to Rome. But now, as ever in the three Punic wars, Carthage, absorbed in counting her money and reckoning her gains and losses, could never understand where her real interest lay. She waited until Rome, by a supreme effort, built another fleet of two hundred vessels, which suddenly appeared on the west coast of Sicily, and gave battle to the Carthaginian ships when, too late, they came to the help of their general. The battle was lost, the fleet destroyed, and Hamilcar with wrath in his soul was obliged to make peace. Sicily, which Carthage had held for four hundred years, was ceded to Rome, and large sums of money paid into her treasury for the expenses of the war.

Bitterly disappointed at the failure forced on him when victory was within his grasp, Hamilcar was shortly after summoned back to Carthage to put down a rebellion which the government by its greed and folly had provoked. The neighbouring tribes and subject cities joined the foreign troops whose pay had been held back, and soon an army of seventy thousand men under a good general was marching upon Carthage. So widespread was the revolt that it took Hamilcar, to whom the people had insisted on giving absolute power, three years to quell the revolt; but at length he triumphed, punishing the leaders, and pardoning those who had only been led.

Peace having been restored, Hamilcar was immediately despatched to look after affairs in Spain, where both Carthage and Rome had many colonies. Strange to say, he took with him his three little boys, Hannibal, Hasdrubal, and Mago, and before they sailed he bade Hannibal, then only nine, come with him into the great temple, and swear to the gods that he would be avenged on Rome.

If you read this story you will see how Hannibal kept his oath.

As this is a history of Hannibal, and not of his father, I have not room to tell you how Hamilcar took measures to carry out the purpose of his life, namely, the destruction of Rome. To this end he fortified the towns that had hitherto only been used as manufactories or store-houses, turned the traders into steady soldiers, sent for heavy armed African troops from Libya, and the celebrated light horse from Numidia, made friends with the Iberian (or Spanish) tribes, and ruled wisely and well from the straits of Gibraltar to the river Ebro. But, busy as he might be, he always had time to remember his three boys, and saw that they were trained in the habits and learning of a soldier. All three were apt pupils, and loved flinging darts and slinging stones, and shooting with the bow, though in these arts they could not rival their masters from the Balearic isles, however much they practised.

When Hannibal was eighteen, Hamilcar was killed in a battle with some of the native tribes who had refused to submit to the sway of Carthage. In spite of the hatred that he cherished for

everything Roman, he had earned the undying respect of the noblest among them. 'No king was equal to Hamilcar Barca,' writes Cato the elder, and the words of Livy the historian about Hannibal might also be applied to his father.

'Never was a genius more fitted to obey or to command. His body could not be exhausted nor his mind subdued by toil, and he ate and drank only what he needed.' He had failed in his aim, but, dying, he left it as a heritage to his son, who, on the point of victory, was to fail also.

Under Hamilcar's son-in-law, Hasdrubal, the work of training the army, encouraging agriculture, and fostering trade was carried on as before. It was not long before Hasdrubal made his young brother-in-law commander of the cavalry, and often sought counsel from him in any perplexity. Hannibal was much beloved, too, by his soldiers of all nations, and to the end they clung to him through good and ill. He gave back their devotion by constant care for their comfort – very rare in those days – seeing that they were fed and warmed before entering on a hard day's fighting, and arranging that they had proper time for rest. To the Iberians he was bound by special ties, for before he quitted Spain for his death-struggle with Rome he married a Spanish princess, little thinking, when he started northwards in May 218 b. c., that he was leaving her and her infant son behind him for ever.

All this time Rome had been growing both in her influence and her dominions, when for a while her very existence was threatened by the sudden invasion of seventy thousand Gauls,

who poured in from the north. They were defeated in a hard-fought battle and beaten back, but the struggle with the barbarians was long and fierce, and Rome remained exhausted. Her attention was occupied with measures needful for her own defence and in raising both men and money, and except for warning the Carthaginians not to cross the Ebro, she left them for a time pretty much to themselves, thinking vainly that, as long as her navy gave her command of the sea, she had no need to trouble herself about affairs in Spain or Africa. Indeed, after the severe strain of the Gallic war, the Roman senate thought that they were in so little danger either from Carthage or from Greece that their troops might take a sorely needed rest, and the army was disbanded.

This was Hannibal's chance, and with the siege and fall of the Spanish town of Saguntum in 218 b. c. began the second Punic war.

For years the young general had been secretly brooding over his plans, and had prepared friends for himself all along the difficult way his army would have to march. Unknown to Rome, he had received promises of help from most of the tribes in what is now the province of Catalonia, from Philip of Macedon, ruler in the kingdom of Alexander the Great, and from some of the Gauls near the Rhone and along the valley of the Po. Many of these proved broken reeds at the time of trial, when their help was most needed, and even turned into enemies, and Hannibal was too wise not to have foreseen that this might happen. Still,

for the moment all seemed going as he wished; war was declared, and Rome made ready her fleet for the attack by sea which she felt was certain to follow.

In our days of telephones and telegrams and wireless telegraphy, it is very nearly *impossible* for us to understand how an army of ninety thousand foot, twelve thousand horse, and thirty-seven elephants could go right through Spain from Carthagena in the south-east to the Pyrenees in the north, and even beyond them, without a whisper of the fact reaching an enemy across the sea. Yet this is what actually occurred. Rome sent a large force under one consul into Sicily, the troops were later to embark for Carthage, another to the Po to hold the Gauls in check, while a third, under Publius Scipio, was shortly to sail for Spain and there give battle to the Carthaginians. That Hannibal was fighting his way desperately through Catalonia at that very moment they had not the remotest idea.

Not only did Hannibal lose many of his men in Catalonia, but he was obliged to leave a large body behind, under Hanno, his general, to prevent the Catalans rising behind him, and cutting off his communications with Spain.

The Pyrenees were crossed near the sea without difficulty, and for a time the march was easy and rapid along the great Roman road as far as Nismes, and then on to the Rhone between Orange and Avignon. By this time the consul, Publius Scipio, who had been prevented for some reason from going earlier to Spain, and was now sailing along the gulf of Genoa on his way

thither, heard at Marseilles that Hannibal was advancing towards the river Rhone. The Roman listened to the news with incredulity and little alarm. How could Hannibal have got over the Pyrenees and he not know it? A second messenger arrived with the same tale as the first, but Scipio still refused to believe there was any danger. Why, the late rains had so swollen the river that it was now in high flood, and how could any army ford a stream so broad and so rapid? And if it *did*, had not the envoy said that some Gallic troops were drawn up on the other side to prevent the enemy landing? So Scipio disembarked his troops in a leisurely manner, and contented himself with sending out a scouting party of horse to see where the Carthaginians might be encamped – if they really were there at all!

Now all the way along his line of march Hannibal had followed his usual policy, and had gained over to his side most of the Gauls who lay in his path, and when they seemed inclined to oppose him, a bribe of money generally made matters smooth. But on reaching the right bank of the river he found the Gallic tribes, of whom Scipio had heard, assembled in large numbers on the left bank, just at the very place where he wished to cross. He knew at once that it was useless to persist in making the passage here, and some other plan must be thought of.

The first thing Hannibal did was to buy at their full value all the boats and canoes used by the natives in carrying their goods down to the mouth of the Rhone, there to be sold to foreign traders. The people, finding that the army of strange nations with

dark skins and curious weapons did not intend to rob them, but to pay honestly for all they took, became ready to help them, and offered themselves as guides if they should be needed. And to prove their good will, they began to help the soldiers to cut down trees from the neighbouring forests, and to scoop them into canoes, one for every soldier.

It was the third night after the Carthaginians had reached the river when Hannibal ordered Hanno, one of his most trusted generals, to take a body of his best troops up the stream, to a place out of sight and sound of the Gallic camp, where one of the friendly guides had told him that a passage might be made. The country at this point was lonely, and the detachment met with no enemies along the road, and no one hindered them in felling trees and making rafts to carry them to the further bank. Early next morning they all got across, and then by Hannibal's express orders rested and slept, for he never allowed his soldiers to fight when exhausted. Before dawn they started on their march down the left bank, sending up, as soon as it was light, a column of smoke to warn Hannibal that everything had gone smoothly, and that he might now begin to cross himself.

His men were all ready, and without hurry or confusion took their places. The heavy-armed cavalry, with their corselets of bronze, and swords and long spears, entered the larger vessels; two men, standing in the stern of every boat, holding the bridles of three or four horses which were swimming after them. It must have required great skill on the part of the oarsmen to allow

sufficient space between the boats, so that the horses should not become entangled with each other, but no accident happened either to the larger vessels or to the canoes which contained the rest of the foot.

Exactly as Hannibal expected, for he always seemed to know by magic the faults that his enemy would commit, at the sight of the Carthaginian army on the river the Gauls poured out of their camp, and crowded to the bank, shouting and screaming with delight and defiance. There they stood, with eyes fixed on the advancing boats, when suddenly Hanno's men came up and attacked them from behind. They turned to grapple with this unexpected enemy, thus giving Hannibal time to land his first division and charge them in the rear. Unable to stand the twofold onslaught, the Gauls wavered, and in a few minutes disappeared in headlong flight.

When the rest of the army was safe on the left bank a camp was pitched, and orders given for the morrow. Hannibal's great anxiety was for the passage of the elephants, still on the other side, for the great creatures on whose help he counted, perhaps more than he should, were terribly afraid of water. But no man ever lived who was cleverer at forming schemes than Hannibal, and at last he hit on one which he thought would do. Five hundred of his light-armed horsemen from the African province of Numidia were despatched down the river to find out how many soldiers Scipio had with him, the number and size of the ships that had arrived, and, if possible, the consul's future

plans. Then the general chose out some men who were specially fitted to manage the elephants, and bade them recross the river immediately, giving them exact directions what they were to do when they were once more on the right bank.

The plan Hannibal had invented for the passage of the elephants was this.

The men whom he had left on the other side of the Rhone were ordered to cut down more trees as fast as possible, and chop them into logs, which were bound firmly together into rafts about fifty feet broad; when finished, these rafts were standing on the bank, lashed to trees and covered with turf, so that they looked just like part of the land. The rafts stretched a long way into the river, and the two furthest from the bank were only tied lightly to the others, in order that their ropes might be cut in a moment. By this means Hannibal felt that it would be possible for the elephants to be led by their keepers as far as the outermost rafts, when the ropes would be severed, and the floating platform rowed towards the further shore. The elephants, seeing the water all round them, would be seized with a panic, and either jump into the river in their fright and swim by the side of the raft, guided by their Indian riders, or else from sheer terror would remain where they stood, trembling with fear. But though the rafts were to be built without delay, the passage was on no account to be attempted till the signal was given from Hannibal's camp.

Meanwhile the Numidians on their way down the left bank of the Rhone had nearly reached the Roman headquarters when

they met the party of cavalry whom Scipio, on his side, had sent out to reconnoitre. The two detachments at once fell upon each other and fought fiercely, and then, as Hannibal had directed, the Numidians retreated, drawing the Romans after them, till they were in sight of the Carthaginian entrenchments. Here the cavalry pulled up, and returned unpursued to Scipio with the news that they had defeated the famous Numidian horsemen in a hot skirmish, and that Hannibal was entrenched higher up the river. Immediately Scipio broke up his camp and began his march northwards, which was just what Hannibal wanted.

But at sunrise that same morning the signal had been given for the passage of the elephants, and the Carthaginians had started on their way to the Alps, the heavy-armed infantry in front, with the cavalry in the rear to protect them. Hannibal himself was determined not to stir till the elephants were safely over, but everything fell out as he expected, and the whole thirty-seven were soon safe beside him on dry land, snorting and puffing with their trunks in the air.

Then he followed his main body, and when Scipio, thirsting to give battle to the enemy he felt sure of conquering, arrived at the spot where three days before the Carthaginian army had been encamped, he found it empty.

Nothing is so necessary to the success of a campaign as having correct maps and information about the country through which your army has to pass. Hannibal, who thought of everything, had thought of this also, and had paid native guides well to lead him to

the nearest passes over the Alps. For four days the Carthaginians marched along the Rhone, till they reached the place where the river Isère flows into it. The Gallic chief of the tribes settled in this part of Gaul, being at war with his brother, was easily gained over by some assistance of Hannibal's in securing his rights, and in return he furnished the Carthaginians with stores from the rich lands he ruled, with new clothes and strong leather sandals, and, more precious than all, with fresh weapons, for their own had grown blunted and battered in many a grim fight since the soldiers left Carthagena.

At the foot of the pass leading over the Mont du Chat, or Cat Mountain, in a lower range of the Alps, the chief bade them farewell, and returned to his own dominions. It was then that Hannibal's real difficulties began. His army consisted of many races, all different from each other, with different customs and modes of warfare, worshippers of different gods. There were Iberians from Spain, Libyans and Numidians from Africa, Gauls from the south of France; but they one and all loved their general, and trusted him completely, and followed blindly where he led. Still, the plunge into those silent heights was a sore trial of their faith, and in spite of themselves they trembled.

As they began their climb they found the pass occupied by numbers of Gallic tribes ready to hurl down rocks on their heads, or attack them at unexpected places. Perceiving this, Hannibal called a halt, while his native scouts stole away to discover the hiding-places of the enemy, and, as far as possible, how they

intended to make their assault.

The guides came back bringing with them the important news that the tribes never remained under arms during the night, but retired till daylight to the nearest villages. Then Hannibal knew what to do. As soon as it was dark he seized upon the vacant posts with his light-armed troops, leaving the rest, and the train of animals, to follow at sunrise.

When they returned and saw what had happened in their absence the Gallic tribes were filled with rage, and lost no time in attacking the baggage-horses, which were toiling painfully over the rough ground. The animals, stung by their wounds, were thrown into confusion, and either rolled down the precipice themselves or pushed others over. To save worse disasters, Hannibal sounded a charge, and drove the Gauls out of the pass, even succeeding in taking a town which was one of their strongholds, and full of stores and horses.

After a day's rest he started again, this time accompanied by some of the enemy, who came with presents of cows and sheep, pretending to wish for peace, and offered themselves as guides over the next pass. But Hannibal feared them 'even when they bore gifts,' and did not put much faith in their promises. He determined to keep a close watch on them, but guides of some sort were necessary, and no others were to be had. However, he made arrangements to guard as far as possible against their treachery, placing his cavalry and baggage train in front, and his heavy troops in the rear to protect them.

The Carthaginian army had just entered a steep and narrow pass when the Gauls, who had kept pace with them all the way, suddenly attacked them with stones and rocks. Unlike their usual custom, they did not cease their onslaughts, even during the dark hours, and did great harm; but at sunrise they had vanished, and without much more trouble the Carthaginians managed to reach the head of the pass, where for two days the men and beasts, quite exhausted, rested amidst the bitter cold of the November snows, so strange to many of the army, who had grown up under burning suns and the sands of the desert.

Cold and tired though they were, hundreds of miles from their homes, one and all answered to Hannibal's words, entreating them to put their trust in him, and they should find ample reward for their sufferings in the rich plains of Italy which could be seen far below them.

'You are now climbing,' he said, 'not only the walls of Italy, but also those of Rome. The worst is past, and the rest of the way lies downhill, and will be smooth and easy to travel. We have but to fight one, or at most two, battles, and Rome will be ours.'

And so perhaps it might have been if Carthage had only supported the greatest of her sons, and sent him help when he needed it so badly.

Hannibal was wrong when he told his soldiers that their difficulties were over, for as all accustomed to mountain-climbing could have informed him, it was much harder to go down the pass than it had been to come up it. A fresh fall of

snow had covered the narrow track, but beneath it all was frozen hard and was very slippery. The snow hid many holes in the ice or dangerous rocks, while landslips had carried away large portions of the path. No wonder that men and beasts unused to such ground staggered and fell and rolled down the sides of the precipice. At length the path, barely passable before, grew narrower still; the army halted, and an active, light-armed soldier offered to go forward, and discover if the track became wider, and whether it was possible for even the men to go on. But the further he went the worse matters seemed. For some distance he managed, by clinging to a few small bushes which had wedged themselves into clefts of the rock, to lower himself down the side of the cliff, which was as steep as the wall of a house. Then he found right in front of him a huge precipice nearly a thousand feet deep, formed by a recent landslip, which entirely blocked what was once a path. As long as this rock remained standing it was plain that no man, still less an army, could get round it.

Climbing painfully back the way he had come, the soldier at once went with his report to Hannibal, who instantly made up his mind what to do. He carried supplies of some sort of explosive with him – what it was we do not know – and with this he blew up the rocks in front till there was a rough pathway through the face of the precipice. Then the soldiers cleared away the stones, and after one day's hard work the oxen, bearing the few stores left, and the half-starved, weary horses, were led carefully along, and down into a lower valley, where patches of grass could be seen,

green amidst the wastes of snow. Here the beasts were turned loose to find their own food, and a camp was pitched to protect them.

Still, though the path had proved wide enough for horses and oxen, it was yet far too narrow for the elephants, and it took the Numidian troops three more days to make it safe for the great creatures which had struck such terror into the hearts of the mountain tribes. But weak as they were, the skin hanging loose over their bones, they made no resistance, and soon the whole army was marching towards the friendly Gauls, in the valley of the Po.

This was how in fifteen days Hannibal made the passage of the Little St. Bernard five months after he had set out from Carthagena. But the journey had been accomplished at a fearful cost, for of the fifty thousand men whom he had led from the city there remained only eight thousand Iberians or Spaniards, twelve thousand Libyans, and six thousand cavalry, though, strange to say, not one elephant had been lost.

It was well indeed for the Carthaginians that Scipio was not awaiting them at the foot of the Alps, but was making his way northwards from Pisa to the strong fortress of Placentia on the Po.

Among the friendly Gallic tribe of the Insubres, to whom Hannibal was united by the bond of hate of Rome, the troops rested and slept, and the horses and elephants grew fat once more. The men had had no time to think of themselves during those

terrible weeks, and their health had suffered from the bitter cold and the wet clothes, which were often frozen on them. To add to this, their food had been as scanty as their labour had been hard, for most of their stores lay buried under the snows of the Alps. But in the rich, well-watered plains of Italy, 'the country and the inhabitants being now less rugged,' as the historian Livy tells us, they soon recovered their strength, and besieged and took by assault the city of Turin, capital of the territory of the Taurini, who were always at war with the Gallic allies of Hannibal.

With two Roman armies so near at hand the Gauls did not dare to join him in any great numbers, though they would gladly have flocked to his standard. Rome itself was filled with consternation at the news that Hannibal, whom they had expected to fight in Spain, was really in Italy, and hastily recalled the troops intended for Carthage, which were still at the Sicilian town of Lilybæum. On receipt of the order, the general Tiberius instantly sailed with part of the men for Rome, and ordered the rest of the legions to proceed to Rimini on the Adriatic, bidding each man swear that he would reach the city by bedtime on a certain day.

If you look at the map and see the distance they had to go, you will be amazed that they kept their oaths, and arrived at Rimini in four weeks, marching daily sixteen miles.

Meanwhile Scipio was encamped in Placentia, and Hannibal, who had no time to lose in besieging such a strong position, was doing his best to tempt his enemy into the plain, where his own cavalry could have room to manœuvre. But instead of

remaining in Placentia, and allowing Hannibal to wear himself out in waiting, the Roman general left the town, crossed the Po, and advanced towards the river Ticino, where he ordered his engineers to build a bridge.

It was quite clear that with the two armies so near each other a battle could not be long delayed, and both commanders took what measures they thought necessary.

The way which Hannibal took to 'encourage' his army, as the Greek historian Polybius calls it, was rather a curious one, and reminds us of the manner in which lessons were taught in some of the old Bible stories.

While crossing the Alps he had captured a number of young Gauls in the very act of hurling rocks on the head of his army. Most commanders, both in that age and for very long after, would have put them to death at once, but Hannibal, unlike the Carthaginians, was never unnecessarily cruel, though he put his prisoners in chains and took care they should not escape. He now ordered these young men to be brought before him and placed in the centre of his troops, which were drawn up all round. On the ground near him lay some suits of armour, once worn by Gallic chiefs, and a pile of swords, while horses were tethered close by. Making a short speech, he then offered the young men a chance of saving their lives with honour, or meeting an honourable death at each other's hands. Would they take it, or would they rather remain prisoners?

A shout of joy answered him.

'Well, then,' said Hannibal, 'you will each of you draw lots which shall fight with the other, and the victor of every pair shall be given armour, a horse, and a sword, and be one of my soldiers.'

Pressing eagerly forward towards the urns which held the lots, the captives stopped to hold up their hands, as was their custom, praying to their gods for victory. After the lots were all drawn, they took their places, and under the eyes of the army the combat began. And when it was finished, and half the fighters lay dead on the field, it was they, and not the victors, who were envied by the soldiers, for having gloriously ended the misery of their lives. For in the old world death was welcomed as a friend, and seldom was a man found who dared to buy his life at the cost of his disgrace.

'The struggle between the captives,' said Hannibal to his army, 'is an emblem of the struggle between Carthage and Rome. The prize of the victors will be the city of Rome, and to those who fall will belong the crown of a painless death while fighting for their country. Let every man come to the battlefield resolved, if he can, to conquer, and if not to die.'

It was in this spirit that Hannibal trained his troops and led them to battle. He never made light of the difficulties that lay before him, or the dogged courage of the Romans, who rose up from every defeat with a fresh determination to be victorious. One advantage they had over Hannibal, and it could hardly be valued too highly. Though the councils of the senate who sent forth the troops might be divided, though the consuls who

commanded them might be jealous of each other, yet the great mass of the army consisted of one nation, who together had fought for years under the eagles of Rome.

Hannibal, on the other hand, had to deal with soldiers of a number of different races, and his latest recruits, the Gauls, though eager and courageous, could not be depended upon in battle. When to this is added the fact that Hannibal was in a country which he did not know, among a people who feared Rome even while they hated her, and would desert him at the first sign of defeat; that he had to provide daily for the wants of both men and animals, and that for sixteen years he remained in Italy with a dwindling army, striking terror into the hearts of the bravest of the Romans, you may have some little idea of the sort of man he was.

Well may an historian say that the second Punic war was the struggle of a great man against a great nation. Take away Hannibal, and the Carthaginian forces were at the mercy of Rome.

We have no space to describe the various battles in the valley of the Po, in which Hannibal was always the victor. At the river Trebia he defeated Scipio in December 218, by aid of the strategy which never failed, till he taught his enemies how to employ it against himself. Hannibal was a man who never left anything to chance, and whether his generals were trusted to draw the enemy from a strong position into the open field, or to decoy it into an ambuscade, everything was foreseen, and as far as possible

provided against. He took care that his troops and his animals should go into action fresh, well-fed, and well-armed, and more than once had the wounds of both horses and men washed with old wine after a battle. That tired soldiers cannot fight was a truth he never forgot or neglected.

During the winter months following the victory of Trebia, Hannibal pitched his camp in the territories of his Gallic allies, and busied himself with making friendly advances to the Italian cities which had been forced to acknowledge the headship of Rome. 'He had not come to fight against them,' he said, 'but against Rome, on their behalf.' So the Italian prisoners were set free without ransom, while the Roman captives were kept in close confinement. He also sent out spies to collect all the information they could as to the country through which he had to travel. He was anxious, for other reasons, to break up his camp as soon as he was able, as he saw signs that the Gauls were weary and rather afraid of having him for a neighbour.

Therefore, in the spring of 217 b. c. he marched southwards, placing the Spaniards and Libyans in front, with the baggage and stores behind them, the Gauls, whom he never quite trusted, in the centre, and the Numidian light horse and cavalry in the rear, under his brother Mago. There were no elephants to be thought of now, for they had all died of cold after the battle of Trebia. North of the Arno was a wide tract of marshland, which had to be crossed before the Apennine mountains could be reached. Never, during all his campaigns, did Hannibal's army have to undergo

such suffering. In many ways it was worse than the passage of the Alps, for once in the midst of the morasses, swollen by the melting snows, it was hardly possible to snatch a moment of sleep. Many of the oxen fell and died, and when this happened the wearied men stretched themselves on their still warm bodies, and closed their eyes for a short space.

At length, after three nights and four days of incessant marching, till the troops were nearly numb with cold, firm ground was reached, and for a while they rested in peace on the hill of Fiesole, above the Arno.

Here Hannibal formed his plans for the next campaign. He found out that Flaminius the consul was a vain, self-confident man, with neither experience nor skill in war. It would be easy, he thought, by laying waste the rich country to the south, to draw the Roman general from his camp at Arretium; and so it proved. Flaminius, greedy of glory he could never gain, refused to listen to the advice of his officers and wait for the arrival of the other consul, and set out in pursuit of Hannibal, who felt that victory was once more in his hands.

The place which Hannibal chose for his battle was close to lake Thrasymene, a reedy basin in the mountains not far from the city of Cortona. At this spot a narrow valley ran down to the lake, with lines of hills on both sides, and a very steep mountain at the opposite end of the lake. At the lake end the hills came so close together that there was only a small track through which a few men could pass at a time.

Making sure that his enemy was following in his footsteps, Hannibal placed his steady heavy armed Spaniards and Libyans on the hill at the end of the valley opposite the lake, in full view of anyone who might approach them. His Balearic slingers and archers, and light-armed troops, were hidden behind the rocks of the hills on the right, and the Gauls and cavalry were posted in gorges on the left, close to the entrance of the defile, but concealed by folds in the ground. Next day Flaminius arrived at the lake, and, as Hannibal intended, perceived the camp on the hill opposite. It was too late to attack that night, but the next morning, in a thick mist, the consul gave orders for the advance through the pass. Grimly smiling at the success of his scheme, Hannibal waited till the Romans were quite close to him, and then gave the signal for the assault from all three sides at once.

Never in the whole of history was a rout more sudden and more complete. Flaminius' army was enclosed in a basin, and in the thick fog could get no idea from which direction the enemy was coming. The soldiers seemed to have sprung right out of the earth, and to be attacking on every quarter. All that the Romans could do was to fight, and fight they did with desperation. But there was no one to lead them, for their generals, like themselves, were bewildered, and Flaminius speedily met with the fate his folly deserved. Fifteen thousand Romans fell that day in the fierce battle, during which even an earthquake passed unheeded. Multitudes were pushed back into the lake and were dragged down to the bottom by the weight of their armour. Some fled

to the hills and surrendered on the promise of their lives being spared, and a few thousands found their way back to Rome.

The victory being won, Hannibal charged the soldiers to seek for the body of Flaminius, so that he might give it honourable burial, by which nations in ancient times set special store. But, search as they might, they could not find it, nor was it ever known what became of him. Very differently did the Roman general Nero behave eleven years later on the banks of the Metaurus, when Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal, seeing that the day was lost, rode straight into the ranks of the enemy. When he fell, Nero, with savagery worthy of his namesake the emperor, cut off the head of the Carthaginian and threw it into Hannibal's camp.

There was silence in Rome when bands of wounded and weary soldiers came flying to the gates, bearing the news of this fresh disaster. Fifteen thousand men slain, fifteen thousand men taken prisoners! Hardly a family in Rome that was not stricken, and who could tell when the banners of the Carthaginians might not be seen on the crests of the hills? But as the troubles of life show the stuff of which men are made, Romans were never so great as when their cause seemed hopeless. The city was at once put in a state of defence, every boy and old man that could bear arms was sent to the walls, the bridges over the Tiber were destroyed, and the senate, putting aside the consuls, elected a dictator, who for six months had absolute power over the whole state.

The man who in this hour of sorest need was chosen to save the city was Quintus Fabius, whose policy of 'waiting' has

become a proverb even to this day. He was already old, and was never a brilliant general, but, like most Romans, possessed great common-sense.

Alone among the senate he saw that there was no hope of conquering Hannibal in a pitched battle. Rome had not then – and, except for Cæsar, never has had – a single general with a genius equal to his; but there was one way, and one only, by which he might be vanquished, and that was to leave him where he was, in the midst of a hostile country, till his troops grew weary of expecting a battle which never was fought, and his Gallic allies became tired of inaction and deserted him.

Such was the plan of warfare which Fabius proposed, but his own countrymen put many obstacles in the way of its success. Many times he was called a coward for declining a battle which would certainly have been a defeat; but he let such idle cries pass him by, and hung on Hannibal's rear, keeping his soldiers, many of whom were raw and untrained, under his own eye. In vain Hannibal drew up his men in order of battle and tried by every kind of insult to induce Fabius to fight. The old general was not to be provoked, and the enemy at length understood this and retired to his camp.

Immediately after the battle of Thrasymene, Hannibal, knowing quite well that he was not strong enough to attack Rome, had taken up his headquarters on the shores of the Adriatic, so as to be at hand if Philip of Macedon made a descent upon Italy, or Carthage sent the reinforcements her general had so frequently

asked for. But it was as useless to trust to the promises of the one as to the patriotism of the other, and having laid waste the country nearly as far south as Tarentum, he suddenly crossed the Apennines to the plain on the western sea, where he hoped to gain over some of the cities to his cause. In this again he was doomed to disappointment, for the rich Campanian towns, notably Capua, richest of all, held aloof till they knew for certain who would be conqueror.

In all Hannibal's campaigns nothing is more surprising than the way he managed to elude his enemies, who were always close to him and always on the look-out for him; yet he went wherever he wished.

Seeing that he could not hope for support in Campania, Hannibal determined to carry off the stores and booty he had collected into a safe place east of the Apennines, in order that his troops might be well-fed during the winter. This Fabius learned through a spy, and, knowing that there was only one pass through the mountains, sent a body of four thousand men to occupy a position in ambush from which they might fall upon the Carthaginians as they entered the gorge, while he himself encamped with a large force on a hill near at hand.

We can imagine the old dictator's satisfaction when he had completed his arrangements for crushing the Carthaginians, and felt that *this* time he would put to silence the grumblings of the people in Rome.

Fabius passed the day in preparing his plan of the attack which

was to take place on the morrow, perhaps now and then allowing his secret thoughts to linger a little on the triumph awaiting him at Rome. But that very night Hannibal ordered one of his generals to fell some trees and split them into faggots, which were to be piled close to where two thousand oxen were tethered outside the camp. The men wondered a little what was going to happen, but did as they were bid, and then, by Hannibal's directions, had supper and lay down to sleep. Very early in the morning they were awakened by Hannibal himself, who bade them follow him out of the camp and tie the faggots on to the horns of the oxen. This was soon done, and then the faggots were kindled by a burning torch, and the oxen were driven up a low ridge which stretched before the pass.

'Help the drivers get them on to the ridge,' he said to his light troops, 'and then pass them, shouting and making all the noise you can.'

The march was conducted silently for some distance, but no sooner did the soldiers break out into shrieks and yells than the oxen grew frightened and wildly rushed hither and thither. The Romans in the defile below heard the shouts and saw the bobbing lights, but could not tell what they meant. Leaving their post, the whole four thousand climbed the ridge, where they found the Carthaginians. But it was still too dark for the Romans to see what these strange lights really were, so they drew up on the ridge to wait till daybreak, by which time Hannibal and most of his army were safe through the pass, when he sent back some of

his Spanish troops to help the force he had left behind him. The troops speedily defeated the entire army of Fabius, who had now come up, and then, joining Hannibal, pushed on to Apulia.

A howl of rage rang through Rome at the news that they had once more been outwitted, and all Fabius' wise generalship was forgotten in this fresh defeat. Yet, had they stopped to think, the fault did not lie with the dictator, whose plans had been well laid, but with the commander of the troops in the pass, who, instead of sending out scouts to find out the cause of the disturbance on the ridge, moved his whole body of men, leaving the defile unguarded. Perhaps Hannibal, in arranging the surprise, had known something of the commander and what to expect of him; or he may merely have counted – as he had often done before – on the effects of curiosity. But time after time he traded on the weakness of man, and always succeeded.

It was in June 216 b. c. that Hannibal gained his last great battle in Italy. He had remained for many months near the river Ofanto, which runs into the Adriatic, but in the beginning of summer he threw himself into the town of Cannæ, used by the Romans as a storehouse for that part of Italy.

A Roman army of ninety thousand men amply supplied was coming swiftly to meet him along the splendid roads, and he had only fifty thousand to cope with them, the greater number being Gauls, and not to be depended on. Of the original troops that he had brought from Spain, many were dead, but he was able to muster ten thousand cavalry, mostly consisting of the Numidian

horse, and in this respect he was superior to the Romans. There was also to be reckoned to his advantage the fact that the two consuls, Varro and Paulus, hated each other bitterly, and that neither of them had any instinct of command, though Paulus was a capable soldier and a brave man.

There was a custom among the Romans, dating back from ancient days, that when the two consuls were serving on the same campaign, each should command on alternate days. It seems strange that such a very practical nation should have made such a foolish law, but so it was; and on this occasion it once more led, as it was bound to do, to an utter defeat. Hannibal played his usual game of sending Numidians across the river to insult and tease his enemy, till at length Varro exclaimed in wrath that the next day the command would be his, and that he would give the Carthaginians battle and teach them something of the majesty of Rome.

In vain the wiser Paulus, who had followed the counsels of Fabius, reasoned and protested. Varro would listen to nothing, and orders were given to the army to be ready on the morrow for the attack.

The day before the battle Hannibal spent 'in putting the bodies of his troops into a fit state to fight,' as the historian tells us – that is, he made them rest and sleep, and prepare plenty of food for their breakfast. Early next morning the Romans began to cross the river, which took several hours, thus leaving their strong camp on the southern bank with only a small force to defend it,

and took up their position in the plains, where Hannibal's cavalry had ample room to manœuvre. And, to make matters worse, the consul formed his men into such close columns that they could not avoid being hampered by each other's movements.

The two armies when facing each other in order of battle must have presented a curious contrast. The Roman legions and their allies, amounting in all to seventy-six thousand men, wore helmets and cuirasses and carried swords and short throwing-spears. In front, the Carthaginian troops looked a mere motley crowd, so various were the dress and weapons of the different nations. It is true that the black-skinned Libyans might at first sight have been taken for deserters from the Roman camp, as they, like their enemies, were clad in the same armour and bore the same arms, the spoils of many a victory; and the young men of the legions trembled with rage as they beheld the glittering line, and thought of what it betokened. But the Gauls were almost naked, and their swords, unlike those of the Romans, could only cut, and were useless for thrusting, while the Spanish troops were clothed in a uniform of short linen tunics striped with purple. In the van, or front of the army, were the small remainder of the contingent from the Balearic Isles, with their slings and bows.

In spite of the faults committed by Varro in placing his troops, Hannibal's lines were once broken by the heavy-armed Roman soldiers, while the cavalry on the wing by the river were fighting in such deadly earnest that they leaped from their horses and closed man to man. But at Cannæ, as at Trebia, the honours

of the day fell to the Numidians and to the Spanish and Gallic horse commanded by Hasdrubal. The Romans had been again routed by an army weaker by thirty thousand men than their own; the consul Paulus, and Servilius and Atilius, consuls of the year before, were all dead: only Varro saved his life by a disgraceful flight.

Still Hannibal did not march to Rome, as the senate expected. Though the battle of Cannæ decided the wavering minds of those who had been waiting to see on which side lay the victory; though the southern half of Italy and many cities of Campania were now anxious to throw in their lot with him; though Philip of Macedon promised once more to send ships and men to his support, and thousands of Gauls swarmed into his camp, the army on which he could actually rely was too small to besiege the city with any chance of success. He did, indeed, send ambassadors to Rome, with powers to treat for the ransoming of some Roman prisoners, but as before in the case of the Gauls, the envoys were not even given a hearing by the senate.

Till he got reinforcements from Carthage, Hannibal felt he must remain where he was; but surely she would delay no longer when she knew that the moment for which Hannibal was waiting had come, and his allies were ready. So he sent his brother Mago to tell the story of his triumphs and his needs to the Carthaginian senate, never doubting that a few weeks would see the tall-prowed ships sailing up the coast of the Tyrrhene sea, where he now had his headquarters. He did not reckon on the

jealousy of his success which filled the breasts of the rulers of his country, a jealousy which even self-interest was unable to overcome. From the first he had borne their burden alone, and owing to the treachery and baseness of his own nation in the end it proved too heavy for his shoulders.

Soon Hannibal began to understand that he would get help from no one, and from Carthage least of all, and the knowledge was very bitter. The Romans had gathered together a fresh army of eighty or ninety thousand men, and had armed a large number of their slaves, offering them freedom. Any check, however slight, to the Carthaginian army was the cause of joy and thankfulness in Rome, for, as Livy says, 'not to be conquered by Hannibal then was more difficult than to vanquish him afterwards.'

In spite of Thrasymene and Cannæ things were now changed, and it was Hannibal who was on the defensive. The Romans had learned their lesson, and the legions always lying at the heels of Hannibal's army were commanded by experienced generals, who adopted the policy of Fabius and were careful never to risk a battle.

Thus three years passed away, and Carthage, absorbed in the difficult task of keeping Spain, from which she drew so much of her wealth, in her hands, sent thither all the troops she could muster to meet the Romans, who were gradually gaining ground in the peninsula.

In Italy the war was shifting to the south, and about 213 b.

c. Hannibal was besieged in the town of Tarentum by a Roman fleet which had blocked the entrance to the gulf on which the city was situated. The alarm in Tarentum was great; escape seemed impossible; but Hannibal ordered boards to be placed in the night across a little spit of land that lay between the gulf and the open sea. When darkness fell, the boards were greased, and ox-hides stretched tightly over them. Then one by one the imprisoned Tarentine fleet was dragged along the boards and launched on the other side, and when all the ships were afloat, they formed in a line and attacked the Roman vessels, which were soon sunk or destroyed.

It was deeds such as these which showed the power Hannibal still possessed, and kept alive the Roman dread of him; yet he himself knew that the triumph of Rome was only a work of time, and that the kingdom of Carthage was slipping from her.

In Sicily, which had once been hers, and even now contained many towns which were her allies, a strong Roman party had arisen. Syracuse in the south was besieged by Appius Claudius by land and by Marcellus by sea, and its defence is one of the most famous in history. The Greek engineer, Archimedes, invented all sorts of strange devices new to the ancient world. He made narrow slits in the walls, and behind them he placed archers who could shoot through with deadly aim, while they themselves were untouched. He taught the smiths in the city how to make grappling irons, which were shot forth from the ramparts and seized the prows of the ships. By pressing a lever the vessels were

slowly raised till they stood nearly upright, when the grapplers were opened, and the ships fell back with a splash that generally upset the crew into the sea, or were filled with water and sunk to the bottom. Of course you must remember that these were not great vessels with four masts like our old East Indiamen, but were long, high boats, worked by banks of oars, the shortest row being, of course, the lowest, nearest the water.

After a while the Romans got so frightened, not knowing what Archimedes might do next, that they thought every end of loose rope that was lying about hid some machine for their destruction. For a long while the engineer kept the enemy at bay, but in the end the power of Rome conquered; the beautiful marble palaces were ruined, and the paintings and statues which had been the glory of Syracuse were carried to Rome.

Just at this time news from Spain became more and more gloomy for the Carthaginians. The young Scipio, who had saved his father's life nine years before at the battle of the Ticinus, was, at the age of twenty-six, made commander-in-chief in the peninsula. Though never a great soldier, Scipio was a good statesman, and had the gift of winning men to his side. Multitudes of natives flocked to his standard, and many important places fell into his hands; and in his hour of victory he was merciful, and caused his captives as little suffering as possible. In the words of the people themselves, 'he had conquered by kindness.'

Seeing that for the time, at any rate, all was lost in Spain, Hasdrubal set out with an army to join his brother Hannibal. In

Auvergne, in the centre of Gaul, where he spent the winter, large numbers of Gallic tribes joined him, and in the spring he crossed the Alps by the same pass as Hannibal. But the difficulties of nine years earlier were now absent, for the mountaineers understood at last that no evil to them was intended, and let the Carthaginian army climb the defile without attempting to hurt them. Traces of Hannibal's roads remained everywhere, and thus the troops, consisting perhaps of sixty thousand men, marched easily along and descended into the plains of the Po. But it was all useless; before Hasdrubal could join Hannibal, who was still in Apulia, the consul Nero, encamped near by at the head of a considerable force, made prisoners some messengers sent by the general to his brother.

Instantly taking steps to have the roads to the north watched by armies, Nero set off at night with a picked detachment to meet the consul Livius on the coast of the Adriatic, south of the river Metaurus. Night and day his men marched, eating as they went food brought them by the peasants. In less than ten days they had gone two hundred miles, and entered the camp of Livius by night, so that the Carthaginian general might know nothing of their arrival. Next morning Nero insisted, against the opinion of the other generals, that battle should be given immediately, as he must return and meet Hannibal at once. In vain they protested that his troops were too tired to fight; he shut his ears, the signal was sounded, and the army drawn up.

The Carthaginians had already taken their places at the time

that the Romans began to form, when Hasdrubal, riding down his lines to make sure that everything was done according to his orders, noticed that among the enemy's array clad in shining armour were a band with rusty shields, and a bevy of horses which looked lean and ill-groomed. Glancing from the horses to their riders, he saw that their skins were brown with the sun of the south and their faces weary. No more was needed to tell him that reinforcements had come, and that it would be madness to risk a fight. He could do nothing during the day, but as soon as the night came he silently broke up his camp and started for the river Metaurus, hoping to put it between him and the Romans; but it was too late.

Had the Carthaginian army only consisted of old and well-seasoned troops all might have gone well with it; but the large body of Gauls were totally untrained, and in their disappointment at not being allowed to give battle, seized on all the drink in the camp, and fell along the roadside quite unable to move. Before Hasdrubal could get his vanguard across the Romans were close upon him, and there was nothing left for him to do but to post his men as strongly as he could.

For hours they fought, and none could tell with whom the victory would lie: then a charge by Nero decided it. When the day was hopelessly lost, Hasdrubal, who had always been in the fiercest of the struggle, cheering and rallying his men, rode straight at the enemy, and died fighting. Thus ended the battle of the Metaurus, the first pitched battle the Romans had ever gained

over the Carthaginian army.

The next night Nero set off again for Apulia, bearing with him the head of Hasdrubal, which, as we have said, he caused to be flung into Hannibal's tent, staining for ever the laurels he had won.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.