VARIOUS

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Содержание

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AN ARMY: ITS ORGANIZATION AND MOVEMENTS

FIFTH PAPER

Before the enlightenment derived from the sad experiences of our present civil contest, upon the incidents of protracted warfare, probably most persons conceived of war as a scene of constant activity—a series of marches, battles, and sieges, with but few intervals of repose. History records only the active portions of war, taking but little account of the long periods consumed in the preliminary processes of organization and discipline, in the occupation of camps and cantonments, in the stationary watches of opposing armies, lying in the front of

each other, both too weak for aggressive movements, but each strong enough to prevent such movements on the part of its opponent. Such matters, if noticed at all, are recorded in a few sentences, making no impression on the reader. Novels of the 'Charles O'Malley' class have also given incorrect ideas. Every page relates some adventure—every scene gleams with sabres and bayonets. Our three years' experience has taught us that the greater portion of an army's existence is spent in inactivity; that campaigning is performed only through one half of the year, and of that time probably not over one third is occupied in progressive movements. In the campaign of 1861, the only marches of the Army of the Potomac were to the battle field of Bull Run and the retreat. In 1862, after a march of fifteen miles to Fairfax Court House and returning, the army was transferred to Fortress Monroe and moved to Yorktown, where some weeks were passed in the trenches; it then proceeded up the Peninsula, and laid a month before Richmond; retreated to Harrison's Landing, and laid another month; returned to Fortress Monroe, and was shipped to the vicinity of Washington, marched for about a month, fought at Antietam, and then laid in camp a month; moved to Warrenton and remained a fortnight; proceeded to Fredericksburg and continued in camp all winter, except making the short movements which led to the battle of December, and the ineffective attempt to turn the rebel left, known as the 'mud march.' In all this long campaign, from March to December, a period of nearly nine months, spent in various operations, more

than five months were passed in stationary camps—most of the time occupied, it is true, in picketing, entrenching, and other duties incident to positive military operations in proximity to an enemy, but very different from the duties connected with marching and fighting. The campaign of 1863 comprised a still smaller period of active movements. Commencing in April with the battle of Chancellorsville, it continued till the march to Mine Run in October—seven months; but considerable more than half the time was spent in camps at Falmouth, Warrenton, and Culpepper. The great campaign now in progress has consumed (at the time this article is written) three months, commencing after a six-months' interval of inaction, and already half the time has been spent in the trenches at Petersburg.

Since so large a portion of the time of an army is passed in camps, that branch of military science which governs the arrangement of forces when stationary, is one of considerable importance. It is in camps that armies are educated, that all the details of organization are systematized, that the *morale* of troops is cultivated, that a round of laborious though monotonous duties is performed. Nothing is so trying to the temper of the individuals composing an army as a long season in a stationary camp; nothing has more effect for good or for evil upon the army in the aggregate, than the mode in which the time, at such a season, is occupied. The commander who does not exercise care to have his camps pitched in the proper localities, to insure the observance of hygienic rules, and to keep

his men employed sufficiently in military exercises, will have discontented, unhealthy, and indolent troops.

The words 'camps' and 'cantonments' are frequently used in the newspapers without any discrimination; but they denote two entirely different methods of sheltering troops. A camp is defined to be the place where troops are established in tents, in huts, or in bivouac; while cantonments are inhabited places which troops occupy for shelter when not put in barracks. Of camps there are several kinds, according to the purposes to be effected by their establishment, such as the nightly camps while upon the march, camps of occupation, camps in line of battle, &c. Cantonments are most frequently used when, during the winter, or other considerable period of inactivity, it is necessary to distribute an army over a large district of country, so as to guard a number of points. We have not had any instance of cantonment, properly speaking, during the present war; but in Europe this method of disposing troops is frequently adopted.

The scenes ensuing upon the arrival of an army corps at its camping ground for a night, after a day's march, are very lively, often amusing, and sometimes present picturesque effects. Where the country traversed by the army is known to the commander, he is able to designate the nightly camps of the different corps with precision; if, on account of ignorance of the country, this cannot be done, places are approximately indicated upon the information given by maps or extracted from the inhabitants, or procured by reconnoitring parties. Usually,

however, the commander possesses considerable topographical information, procured by his officers in the advance with the cavalry and light troops, so that he can fix the nightly camps in such a manner that the various corps shall all be upon the same line, and lie within supporting distances. The vicinity of streams is invariably selected for a camp, if other circumstances permit. When a corps arrives within a mile or two of its destination, the commander sends forward some of his staff officers (accompanied by a cavalry guard, if the country is suspicious), and these officers select the different localities for the camps of the divisions, of the artillery, the cavalry, and the trains, care being taken to give all equal facilities for wood and water, and at the same time to take advantage of the features of the country for military purposes, such as the guarding of roads in all directions, the establishment of the picket line, &c. The leading division arrives perhaps at 5 p.m., and its commander is shown to the locality assigned him. He immediately distributes the ground to the brigades, and the troops, as fast as they arrive, filing into the designated spots, occupy but a few moments in the necessary formalities by which disorder is prevented; then each man quickly spreads his little tent upon the place which in the military order belongs to him, a general din of cheerful voices arises, a unanimous rush is made to the water, cooking fires are kindled in all directions, and in ten minutes a scene of (it may be) utter desolation becomes full of life and activity. For a couple of hours the columns continue to file in, until all the hillsides are

covered with tents. Then, far into the night, is heard the braying of mules, the shouts of drivers, and the rattling of wheels, as the heavy wagon trains toil to the place of rest. All through the evening prevails that peculiar, cheerful din of a camp, as peculiar and characteristic as the roar of a great city; gradually the noises decline, the bugles and drums sound the tattoo, the fires grow dim, and the vast mass of hardy, resolute humanity is asleep—all except the two or three score of sick and dying men, wasted by fever, who have been jolted all day over the rough roads in the ambulances, and now groan and writhe in delirium upon their narrow stretchers in the camp hospitals.

Camps designed to cover and guard a country, are constructed when the army has not sufficient strength to advance, or when the season prevents, or some other cause interferes with the prosecution of hostilities, while at the same time it is necessary to occupy a portion of the hostile territory. We have had numerous examples of this kind of camps—indeed, our armies occupy them generally while lying inactive during the winter. The character of the ground must always determine the shape and features of such a camp, but unless peculiar modifying circumstances dictate otherwise, the general form is that of the arc of a circle. This, with extensions at the sides to cover the flanks, and a rear guard, is the best for protection. The extent of this kind of camp is governed by circumstances, but is much greater, generally, than would be supposed. The camp of an army of 100,000 men, designed to cover any considerable district

of territory, in a country where hills and rivers assist in giving protection, might have a front (including flanking parties of cavalry) of from 30 to 50 miles, and a depth of from 10 to 20; besides a continuous chain of forces in the rear, guarding communications with the base of supplies, from 10 to 50 miles distant.

Camps in line of battle are generally established when opposing armies, lying in proximity, must be on the alert for attacks. They cover but little more ground than is required for the manœuvres of the force, and are so arranged that, in case of probable conflict, the troops can assume immediately the formations of battle. Such camps are arranged in two or three lines, adapted to the natural features of the country for defence. The approach of the enemy having been communicated from the outposts, the tents are rapidly struck, the baggage loaded and sent to the rear, and in an hour the army is free from all encumbrances, and ready to meet the advancing foe. Usually, when armies lie in contact, expecting battle, the troops bivouac—no tents being pitched except at the headquarters of superior commanders, and at other places sufficiently in the rear to be free from immediate danger. The troops may be obliged to remain thus for a day or two, no fires being permitted in the advanced lines, so that their positions may not be indicated.

The season for the suspension of active hostilities having arrived, it is necessary for the commander of an army to select some place in which his forces can remain for the winter—where

they will have sufficient facilities for fuel and water, where their health can be preserved, where they can be protected against surprises or annoyance, where the country can be covered and guarded, and where the supplies can be drawn with security from the base of operations. After a due consideration of all the intelligence that can be obtained upon these points, the commander issues his general directions, the various corps move to their designated positions, and preparations for the habitations of the winter are made. Each corps commander, either personally or by his staff officers, makes a survey of his ground, and assigns the positions of his divisions. If within a few miles of the enemy, he throws detachments of observation toward the front, and then proceeds to establish his picket line, usually some three or five miles in advance of his main line. Precautions for security being thus adopted, more minute inspections of the ground are made, so that unhealthy positions may be avoided. The troops, being placed, immediately proceed to clear the sites of their respective encampments, and wagons are set to work to bring in logs with which huts may be constructed. In about a week thousands of diminutive log houses arise, roofed with the shelter tents of the soldiers, or, when the occupants have sufficient handicraft ability, with rough shingles. Shelters are erected, as far as possible, for the animals, generally being nothing more than frameworks covered with pine brush. If there are lumber mills in the vicinity, they are set to work, and boards sawed for floors to the tents and hospitals. The adjacent forests now begin

to disappear rapidly, leaving nothing but an unsightly array of stumps; for a regiment is entitled to about two hundred cords of wood per month as fuel, and in a well-wooded country, where the men can conveniently cut for themselves, much more is consumed. Every regiment requires, therefore, about eight or ten acres of woodland per month. An army of a hundred regiments will, in the course of a winter, denude several square miles of trees, so that (in the proportion which woodland generally bears to that which is cleared) a space of country equal to a county may be stripped of its timber. The men, having made themselves comfortable, are now called on to form working parties, and put the roads leading to the depots and the various camps in good order, generally corduroying them, so as to be passable during the winter; bridges are made over streams, drainage perfected, &c. In a few weeks, the chief portion of the labor of preparing a winter's camp is completed.

The sanitary regulations for camps are very stringent and comprehensive. The suggestions of experience as to the details by which the diseases incident to camp life can be prevented, are embodied in orders, and it is the duty of the medical officers and of the inspectors to see that they are observed. For instance, it is not permitted to have the floors of the huts lower than the external ground, and the men are required to keep pine boughs between their blankets and the earth. The method in which a camp shall be drained, and the offal disposed of, is prescribed. The cleanliness of the men is enforced. A rigorous system of

reports upon these and many other particulars exists, so that negligences are corrected.

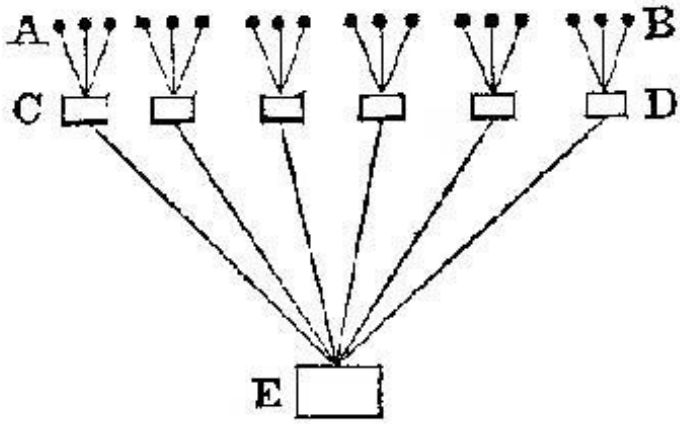
The military occupations which relieve the monotony of camp life are drilling and picketing. It is in the latter that officers and men find change and freedom, though it often involves severe exposure. The ordinary detail for this duty in a corps averages perhaps eight hundred to one thousand men, who are changed usually every three days. If the country be well settled, some opportunities are presented during that interval for intercourse with the 'natives;' but in Virginia, it must be confessed, the attractions of this kind are few. The secession ladies are not over well disposed to any wearers of Yankee uniforms, and though many of them are willing to bestow a few soft words in exchange for tea, coffee, and sugar, they are not liberal of social courtesies. The young man who joins our armies expecting to realize for himself the love adventures he has seen recorded in novels, will find the Southern ladies less given to romance than the damsels of Spain or Mexico. They are inclined, also, to be treacherous, as the fate of several gallant officers, who have gone stealthily beyond the lines to spend an evening with fair rebel sirens, and found themselves delivered to guerillas, has shown. Nevertheless, the experience of others never warns an adventurous youth, and opportunities frequently arise for practical jokes. During the winter of 1862-'3, while the army was encamped on the Rappahannock, an officer was fascinated by the charms of a fair widow who resided just beyond the lines, and frequently

made evening visits to her. His companions, being aware of this, formed a party, on a bitter January night, and proceeding to the widow's house, surrounded it, and sending within some who were strangers to him, they announced themselves as belonging to the rebel army, and captured the enamored lover, blindfolded, led him out, and mounted him. Crestfallen and moody with, thoughts of his disgraceful situation, cursing, perhaps, the wiles of the enchantress, to whom he attributed it, he was made to ride many weary miles, and then, being dismounted, and the bandage removed from his eyes, he found himself at his own camp, where he was greeted with uproarious laughter.

The duties incident to picketing and outpost stations are so important that several works by distinguished authors have been written concerning them, but most of the rules are of too technical a character for recital in these papers. The friends of soldiers will, however, take interest in some general statements. The picket line consists of three portions—first, the stations of the main guard; second, some distance in advance of these, the picket stations; and third, some two hundred yards in advance of these, the stations of the sentinels. If the country is open and hilly, the latter need not be posted closely together, but in a wooded country they must be quite numerous. It is their duty not to allow any person to pass their line; and if a force of the enemy, too strong to be resisted, approaches, they fall back on the pickets. These should be stationed where they can command the main avenues of approach, and offer resistance to the advanced

parties of the enemy. After such resistance becomes useless, the various pickets fall back on the grand guard, which offers a more determined contest. The advance of the enemy should by these means have been delayed for a couple of hours, affording time for the troops to get under arms and take the order of battle.

The following diagram exhibits the general arrangement of picketing:



Let the line A B represent a chain of sentinels on a mile of picket front, C D a line of picket stations, and E the grand guard. The whole force of men may perhaps be three hundred, of whom two thirds will remain at E, posted advantageously upon some eminence protected in part by a stream and commanding

an open country. The remaining one hundred will be distributed among the picket stations and thrown forward as sentinels. The whole arrangement is supervised by an officer of rank—usually a colonel. With a disposition like the above in front of every division in an army, it is obviously impossible for any considerable force of an enemy to approach without detection.

One of the greatest practical difficulties our armies have experienced has been connected with the system of picketing. The South having been greatly impoverished in those portions traversed by the contending armies, and the people entirely destitute of luxuries, there are innumerable applications from residents outside of the pickets for admission within the lines, in order to trade with officers, for the purpose of procuring in return articles from our well-supplied commissariat. Various other necessities of the people appeal for a modified degree of rigor in regard to picket arrangements, so that our armies are never free from the presence of rebel inhabitants, traversing them in all directions. Perfectly familiar with the country, they are able to detect any weakly guarded places, and undoubtedly, in frequent instances, after receiving the kindest treatment, return to their homes conveying such information to guerillas as enables these prowlers to penetrate through by-roads and seize animals and straggling soldiers. As a precaution against such annoyances, a very judicious arrangement was made last winter by the provost marshal general of the Army of the Potomac. He established certain points on the picket line at which traffic might be

conducted, and forbade admission to citizens. Some rigorous system like this is very necessary.

The social life of camps is, however, the topic of chief interest. The question is often asked, Is the life of a soldier demoralizing? The answer must be, 'Yes,' but not for the reasons generally supposed. The opportunities for vice and dissoluteness are really less than at home. The hundred thousand men in an army use less liquor than the same number of men in a city. In fact, liquor is nearly inaccessible to the soldier when on the march. For other kinds of vice the temptations are few. The demoralization arises from the terrible monotony of a prolonged camp, which produces listlessness, indolence, and a devotion to small amusements; deranges and reverses the whole system of active life, as it is seen at home; renders a man uncouth; disqualifies soldiers for anything else than the trade of war. To the officer in his tent and to the soldier in his log hut, while the cold rains are beating without, and the ground is knee deep with mud, there is a constant temptation to find amusement in cards. Gambling thus becomes a pastime too generally adopted. The books sent to the army are not always of the character best adapted to the circumstances. Moral essays and tracts will not be very eagerly sought for by men whose principal object is to kill time. The reading matter needed is the kind afforded by the periodicals of the day, unobjectionable novels, biographies, works of travel, etc.

Camp life has, however, its pleasures, and it must not be supposed that all succumb to its enervating influences, or that

any great number yield themselves entirely to its demoralizing effects. The period of military service among our volunteers is too short to permit its full influence to be experienced, and the connections of our soldiers with their homes too intimate to allow them to subside completely into the routine veterans, whose social, mental, and moral nature is altogether lost and absorbed in the new and artificial military nature imposed on them.

War collects many characters of peculiar idiosyncrasies, and jumbles them strangely together, so that curious associations are produced. In any collection of men upon a staff or in a regiment, gathered from different localities, will be found characters of the most opposite and incongruous elements. There will be the youth who has never before travelled beyond his own village, and is full of small anecdotes of the persons who have figured in his little world; and the silent and reserved man of middle age, who, if he can be induced to talk, can tell of many a wild scene in all quarters of the world in which he has been a participant, since he stealthily left his native home, a boy of sixteen. There are men who have passed through all the hardships of life, who have been soldiers in half a dozen European armies, or miners in California and Australia, or sailors; and men who have always had wealth at their disposal, and spent years in foreign travel, viewing the world only under its sunniest aspects. There are many officers grown gray while filling subordinate capacities at posts on the Western prairies and mountains,

who can relate many interesting anecdotes of their companions —the men now prominent in military affairs; and there are officers of high rank, recently emerged from civil life, who nourish prodigiously in self-glorification upon their brief warlike experience. There are brave men, and men whose courage is suspected; quiet men, and men of opinionated perversity; quick-witted men, and men whose profound stupidity makes them continual butts for all kinds of practical jokes; refined, educated, poetical men, and men of boorish habits. In short, any camp presents such specimens of humanity as would be furnished if all the ingredients of character and experience that compose the world had been collected in a huge pepper box and sprinkled miscellaneously throughout the army.

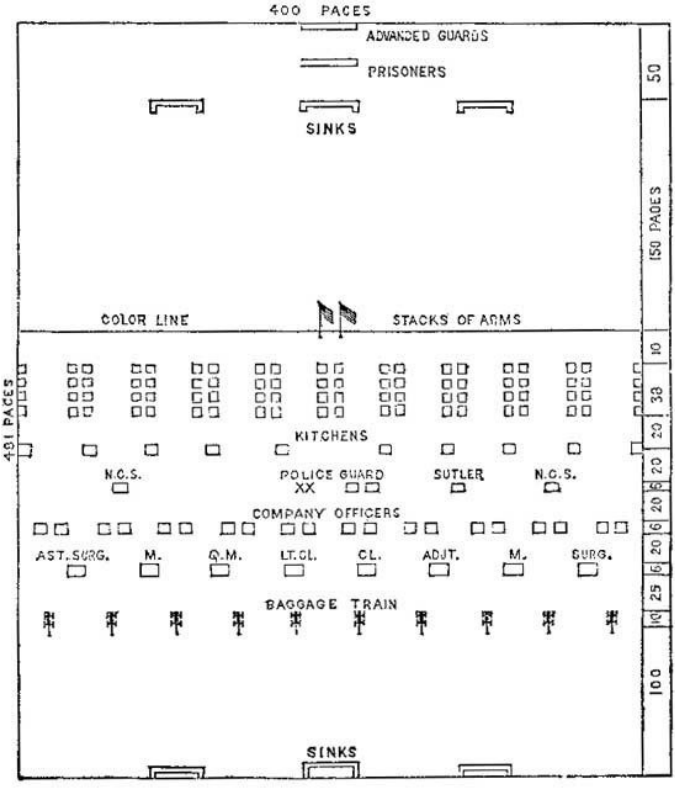
In such associations there are of course many occasions for extracting interesting and comical conversation and incident. Jokes of all kinds are constantly on the wing, and no one can consider himself safe from collision with them. Ridiculous nicknames become attached—no one knows how—to the most dignified characters, and altogether usurp the places of the genuine cognomens. No person possesses the art of concealment to such a degree that all his foibles and weaknesses will escape observation in the companionship of a camp; and when discovered, the treatment of them is merciless just in proportion to the care with which they had been hidden. All pretensions will be penetrated, all disguises unmasked. Every man finds himself placed according to his exact status, no matter how well

contrived his arrangements for passing himself off for more than his par value. Many an officer, whom the newspapers delight to praise, because he is over courteous to correspondents, and takes precautions to have all his achievements published, has a camp reputation far different from that by which he is known to the public.

Opinions of all kinds flourish in the army as vigorously as in the outer world. There are ardent theorists of the progressive order, full of schemes for radical reforms, and old fogies believing in nothing except what they lament to see is fast becoming obsolete. There are students and practical men, authors and mechanics, editors, lawyers, doctors, clergymen, school teachers, actors, artists, singers, and representatives of all kinds of trades and avocations. All are now on the same platform, and, for a time, class distinctions disappear beneath the assimilating conditions of the new profession. Political strifes occur, but are rarely virulent. Generally the association together of men holding different political views, in a common cause, and subject to the same dangers, is tacitly accepted as the occasion for an armistice. But politics of all kinds are represented. There are of course Abolitionists, Republicans, Unionists, and War Democrats; but, strangely enough, there are also Copperheads, Peace Democrats, peace-at-any-price men, and even secession sympathizers. Why extremists of the latter classes should have joined the army voluntarily cannot be surmised; but there they are, and, moreover, they do their duty. There are some traits of

original manhood so strong that even the poison of treasonable politics cannot overcome them.

The daily routine of camp life in a regiment can be told in a few words. The plan of a regimental camp as laid down in the army regulations is generally conformed to, with some variations recommended by the character of the camping ground. The following diagram exhibits the plan:


400 PACES
ADVANCED GUARDS
PRISONERS
SINKS
150 PACES
50
COLOR LINE
STACKS OF ARMS
10
38
20
20
20
20
6
6
25
10
100
401 PACES
KITCHENS
N.C.S.
POLICE GUARD
XX
SUTLER
N.C.S.
COMPANY OFFICERS
AST. SURG.
M.
Q.M.
LT. CL.
CL.
ADJT.
M.
SURG.
BAGGAGE TRAIN
SINKS

REFERENCE

N.C.S. Non-commissioned staff.	LT. CL. Lieutenant-colonel.
AST. SURG. Assistant surgeon.	CL. Colonel.
M. Major.	ADJT. Adjutant.
Q.M. Quartermaster.	SURG. Surgeon.

In our armies the full allowances of camp equipage are not permitted. Field and staff officers have only three wall tents, and company officers only the same shelter tents as the men. The trains very rarely encamp with the regiments. The tents of the men front on streets from fifteen to twenty feet wide, each company having a street of its own, and there is much competition as to the adornment of these. Many regimental camps are decorated with evergreens in an exceedingly tasteful manner—particularly during warm weather—chapels, arches, colonnades, etc., being constructed of rude frameworks, so interwoven with pine boughs that they present a very elegant

appearance.

The daily life of a camp is as follows: At an hour appointed by orders, varying according to the season of the year, the camp is roused by the reveille. The old notion that soldiers should be waked before daybreak in all seasons and all weathers has fortunately been exploded, and the reveille is not generally sounded in winter till six o'clock. In pleasant weather the men are formed upon the color line, where they stack their arms. Breakfast is the next matter in order: after that the mounting of the guard for the day and the detail of detachments for picket and other duties. The prisoners are put to work in cleaning up the camp, and squad drills occupy the morning. About noon the dinner call is sounded; then come more drills and in the latter part of the afternoon the dress parade of the regiment. This closes the military labors of the day. In the evening there are schools for instructions in tactics, and the time is passed in any amusements that may offer themselves. About half past eight the tattoo is beaten, when every one, not absent on duty, must be in camp ready to answer to his name; and shortly after, the beat of taps proclaims that the military day is ended, and lights must be extinguished—a regulation not very strictly enforced. Thus pass the days of camp life.

Very different are those assemblages of huts down among the pine forests of Virginia from the pleasant villages, the thriving towns, and the prosperous cities of the North—very different the life of the soldier from that which he enjoyed before rebellion

sought to sever the country which from his cradle he had been taught to consider 'one and inseparable.'

APHORISMS.—NO. XIV

A Query for the Thoughtful.—May we not justly say that *spirit*, everywhere, in its various degrees, rules over matter, setting its forces at defiance for the time, and yet never interfering with their continued operations?

This seems a great law of the universe. The power of life, wherever guided by *will*, whether in beast or man, or even where we can only venture to speak of instinct, thus asserts its superiority. Within its appointed range, the laws of the material world are evidently subject to its control. Iron may be firmly held together by the attraction of cohesion: but man wills its severance, and it is effected.

Nor does it contravene the general assertion here made, that we act by opposing one natural force to another. The rising of the sledge hammer, to fall with a force more than its own, is just as much against the laws of matter as the breaking of the iron beneath its blows.

All *power*, so far as we can judge, is spiritual—*i.e.*, originates in spirit, and is exerted in obedience to *will*, or to something equivalent.

Nor, again, will it avail an objector to say that *spirit* is also under law as well as matter. The laws of the one sphere, at all events, are not those of the other. They may have their relations, but they are not those of equality. Spirit is sovereign—matter

subject; or, if in any case it should be otherwise, it is from some weak refusal of the spirit to assert its own power.

ÆNONE:

A TALE OF SLAVE LIFE IN ROME

CHAPTER XVI

Gliding softly beneath the shrubbery, and beneath one of the side colonnades, Leta gained the house unperceived, passing Sergius, who loitered where she had been sitting, upon the coping of the fountain basin. His friends had departed, bearing away with them his gold and much else that was of value; and he, with the consciousness of evil besetting him on every side, had morbidly wandered out to try if in the cool air he could compose his thoughts to sobriety. As he sat rocking to and fro, and humming to himself broken snatches of song, Leta stood under one of the arches of the court, glowering at him, and half hoping that he would lose his balance and fall into the water behind. It was not deep enough to drown him, but if it had been, she felt in no mood to rescue him. In a few moments, however, the fresh breeze, partially dissipating the fumes of the wine which he had drunk, somewhat revived him; making him more clearly conscious of his misfortunes, indeed, but engendering in him, for the instant, a new and calmer state of feeling, which was

not sobriety, but which differed from either his former careless recklessness or maddening ferocity. And in this new phase of mind, he sat and revolved and re-revolved, in ever-recurring sequence, the things that had befallen him, and his changed position in the world.

Alone now, for she, Ænone, had left him. Left him for a stripling of a slave—a mere creature from the public market. What was the loss of gold and jewels and quarries to this! And how could he ever hold up his head again, with this heavy shame upon it! For there could be no doubt;—alas! no. Had he not seen her press a kiss upon the slave's forehead? Had she not tenderly raised the menial's head upon her knee with caressing pity? And, throughout all, had she attempted one word of justification? Yes, alone in the world now, with no one to love or care for him! For she must be put away from him forever; she must never call him husband more. That was a certain thing. But yet—and a kindly gleam came into his face for the moment—even though guilty, she might not be thoroughly and utterly corrupt. If he could, at least, believe that she had been sorely tempted—if he could only, for the sake of past memories, learn to pity her, rather than to hate! And this became now the tenor of his thoughts. In his deep reflection of a few hours before, he had tried to believe that she was innocent. Now, circumstances of suspicion had so overwhelmed her, that he could not think her innocent; but he could have wished to believe her less guilty, and thereby have cherished a kindly feeling toward her.

Rising up, and now for the first time seeing Leta, as she still stood under the archway and watched him, he tottered toward her; and, incited by this new impulse of generous feeling, he pleaded to her—humbling his pride, indeed, but in all else, whether in word or action, clothing himself with the graceful dignity of true and earnest manliness.

'Tell me,' he said, 'whether you know aught about her which can calm my soul and give me the right to think better of her. You cannot make me believe that she is innocent—I do not ask it of you. That hope is past forever. But it may be that you can reveal more than you have yet mentioned to me. You have watched her, I know. Perhaps, therefore, you can tell me that she struggled long with herself before she abandoned me. Even that assurance will help me to think more pityingly of her. Remember that there was a time when I loved her; and, for the sake of that time, help me to feel and act generously toward her.'

As Leta gazed upon him, and saw how his late imperiousness had given place to earnest, sorrowful entreaty, she hesitated for the moment how to answer him. There is, perhaps, a latent sympathy in the hardest heart; and despite her resolve to become at once lost and unpitying, some sparks of tender feeling, kindled into life by her parting with Cleotos, yet glimmered in her breast. Cleotos having gone away, she felt strangely lonesome. Little as she had regarded him when present, it now seemed as though, in separating from him, she had lost a portion of her own being. Certainly with him had departed the last link that bound her to

her native land; and though she never expected to return thither, yet it was not pleasant to feel that she had been cut asunder from all possibility of it. Now, for the moment, she was in the mood to look around her for a friend to lean upon; and it might be that she could find that friend in Sergius, if she would consent to let her vengeance sleep, and would forbear to pursue him with further machinations. His love, to be sure, was gone from her, never to be restored; but, after all, might it not be better to retain his friendship than to incur his hate? And if she were now to make full disclosure of the past, and ask his pardon, who could estimate the possible limits of the forgiveness and generosity which, in his newly found happiness, he might extend to her? And then, now that her plans had failed, what need of inflicting further misery upon those who, in their former trust, had lavished kindnesses upon her? And once more her thoughts reverted to Cleotos; and with that feeling of utter loneliness sinking into her heart, and making her crave even to be thought well of by another, she reflected how that friend of her youth would not fail to ask the blessing of the gods upon her, if ever, in his native home, he were to hear that she had acted a generous part, and, by a few simple and easily spoken words, had swept away the web of mischief which her arts had woven.

'What can I say?' she exclaimed, hesitatingly, as she met the pleading look which Sergius fastened upon her.

'Say the best you can; so that, though I can never forgive her, I may not think more harshly of her than I ought. Can I forget

that I loved her for years before I ever met yourself; and that, but for you, I might be loving her still? Can I forget that it was not for my own glory, but for hers, that I tore myself away from her and went to these late wars, hoping to win new honors, only that I might lay them at her feet? Night after night, as I lay in my tent and gazed up at the sky, I thought of her alone, and how that the stars shone with equal light upon us both; and I nerved my soul with new strength, to finish my task with diligence, so that I might the more quickly return to her side. And then, Leta, then it was that I met yourself; and how sadly and basely I yielded to the fascinations you threw about me, you too well know. It was not love I felt for you; think it not. My passion for you was no more like the calm affection with which I had cherished her, than is the flame which devours the village like the moonlight which so softly falls upon and silvers yonder fountain. But, for all that, it has brought destruction upon me. And now—'

'And now, Sergius?'

'Now I am undone by reason of it. From the first moment your ensnaring glance met mine, I was undone, though I then knew it not. Then was my pure love for her obscured. Then, impelled by I know not what infernal spirit, began my downward course of deceit, until at last I almost learned to hate her whom I had so much loved, and met her, at the end, with but a simulated affection; caring but little for her, indeed, but not—the gods be thanked!—so far gone in my selfish cruelty as to be able to wound her heart by open neglect in that hour of her joy.

Whatever I may have done since then, that day, at least, her happiness was undimmed. How gladly would I now give up all the honors I have gained, if I could but restore the peace and quiet of the past! Remembering all this, Leta, and how much of this cruel wrong is due to you, can you not have pity? I know that she would never have been exposed to this temptation but for my own neglect of her, and but for the fact that you had ambitious purposes of your own to work out. Nay, I chide you not. Let all that pass and be forgotten. I will be generous, and never mention it again, if you will only tell me how far your arts, rather than her own will, have led her astray. It cannot harm you now to freely utter everything. The time for me to resent it is past. I have no further power over you, or the will to exercise it if I had.'

A moment before, and she had been on the point of yielding to the unaccustomed pity that she began to feel, and so make full disclosure. But now, as, almost unconsciously to himself, Sergius spoke of her baffled hopes and vaguely hinted at her altered position toward himself—a change of which he believed her to be yet ignorant—her fount of mercy became instantly scaled up, and her nearly melted heart again turned to flint. Yes, she had almost forgotten her new destiny. But now at once appeared before her, with all the vividness of reality, the banquet hall, ringing with the shrill laughter of the heated revellers, as, with the dice box, they decided her future fate. Like a flash the softened smile fled from her face, leaving only cold, vindictive defiance pictured there. And as Sergius, who had been

led on from utterance to utterance by the increasing signs of compassion he read in her, saw the sudden and unaccountable change, he paused, in mingled wonderment and dismay; and, with the conviction that his hopes had failed him, he put off, in turn, his own softened mien, and glaring back defiance upon her, prepared for desperate struggle.

'You speak of my new ownership—of the actor Bassus?' she exclaimed.

'You know it, then?' cried he. 'You have played the spy upon us?'

'Know it?' she repeated. 'When, in your wild revelling, your raised voices told me how heedlessly you were bringing ruin upon yourself with the dice, would I have been anything but a fool not to have remembered that I, too, being your property, might pass away with the rest? Was it not fit, then, that I should have stolen to the screen and listened? You thought to keep it secret, perhaps, until Bassus should send to take me away from here; for you imagined that I might attempt escape. But you do not know me yet. Am I a child, to kick and scream, and waste my strength in unavailing strife against a fate that, in my heart, I feel must sooner or later be submitted to? Not long ago—it matters not how or when—I could have avoided it all, but would not. Now that I have sacrificed that chance, I will go to my doom with a smile upon my lips, whatever heaviness may be in my heart; for, having chosen my path, I will not shrink from following it. Thus much for myself. And as for you, who have tossed me one side

to the first poor brute who has begged for me, and even at this instant have taunted me with the story of baffled hopes, does it seem becoming in you to appeal longer to me, as you have done, for comfort?'

No answer; but in the angry, heated glare with which he faced her, could be seen the new fury which was rising within him—all the more violent, perhaps, from the late calm that had possessed him.

'And yet, for the sake of the past, I might even be willing to comfort you, if it were possible,' she continued, casting about in her mind for new tortures with which to rack him, and now suddenly struck with an inward joy, as her ever-ready invention came to her aid. 'Yes, if I knew aught of good to tell, I would mention it, for the memory of other days. But how can I speak with truth, unless to recapitulate new deceits and wiles which she has practised upon you, and of which, may the gods be my witness! I would have told you before, but dared not? You say that you have never loved me, Sergius Vanno. It is well. But if you had done so, I would have been faithful to you to the end. You say that you loved her, and that, but for your own falsehood, she would not have strayed from you. Poor dupe! to believe that, for all that meek, pale face of hers, she cannot resolve, and act, and mask her purposes as cunningly as any of the rest of her sex! Shall I tell you more? Do you dream that, while you have been revelling, she has been idly whimpering in her chamber? Had you watched outside with me, you might have known better. Look

above your head, Sergius, to where the prison keys are wont to hang, and tell me where they are now!'

More from mechanical instinct than from any actual purpose of mind—for he did not, at the first instant, fully comprehend her meaning—Sergius followed the motion of her hand, and gazed at the wall above his head; then passed his fingers along until he touched the empty nail—then looked back inquiringly at her.

'The keys are gone, are they not?' she said. 'Fool! to lock up one party to a fault, and yet let the other one go free! Do you suppose that during your carousing with your boon companions, she would fail to succor him for whose sake she has already lost so much?'

Still he gazed at Leta with a look of puzzled inquiry, which now began, however, to be disturbed by an expression of painful doubt. Then suddenly, ascertaining that the keys were really gone, her meaning flashed upon him; and dropping his hand with a wrathful exclamation, he turned and strode into the palace. Not, perhaps, with full conviction of the truth of the suggestion so artfully arrayed before him. But he would at least prove its truth or falsity; and, with that suspicion fastened upon his bewildered and unreasoning mind, to doubt was almost to believe, and crossing the ante-chamber to Ænone's room, he burst in upon her.

She had fallen into a troubled sleep—lying dressed upon the outside of her couch, as, in her agony of mind, she had first thrown herself down. The unspent tears still trembled upon her

eyelids. Beside her lay the little folded parchment which Cleotos had given her. She had taken it out to read, hoping, but scarcely believing, that she would now be able to experience the truth of what she had been told about the earnest words there written being divinely adapted to give peace to a troubled heart. But her sorrow was too deep to be healed by phrases whose spirit could, of necessity, be so imperfectly comprehended by her; and the writing had slipped unheeded from her light grasp.

As her husband now entered, she awoke and sat upright, in frightened attitude, not knowing what fate was about to befall her.

'Where is he? What have you done with him?' Sergius cried, seizing her by the arm.

She did not answer, not knowing, of course, wherefore the question was put to her, or what it concerned. Yet, perceiving that she was again suspected of some act of which she was innocent, she would have asked for mercy and pardon, if time had been given her. But even that was denied her. Hardly, indeed, could she draw a breath, when she felt that a new thread was woven in the web of misconception which surrounded her. For, at that moment, her husband's eye fell upon the forgotten parchment; and picking it up, he opened it, gave one hasty look, and then tossed it aside. What need, now, of further proof? Was not that the slave's writing, recognizable at a glance? Words of love, of course! And she had gone to sleep fondly holding them in her hand, as a treasure from which she could not be parted for an instant. Words not freshly written, either, for the parchment was

yellow and discolored. So much the worse, therefore; for did it not prove a course of long-continued deception? Could there be any doubt now? Yes, a long deceit. And this was she for whom, in his simplicity, he had but a moment before been framing excuses, in the effort to convince himself that her fault had been one of impulse, rather than of cool deliberation! This was she in whose behalf he had weakly lowered himself to plead to his own cast-off slave for extenuating evidences! And once more grasping her by the arm, he lifted her from the couch, and, followed by Leta, hurried her across the room into the outer hall, into the court yard, past the fountain, and so onward until they stood before the prison house. There, seeing the inner door open, the outer door swinging loosely inward, with the key yet remaining in its lock, and the captive fled, Sergius deemed her new crime fully proved, and again turned madly upon her.

'Where is he? What have you done with him? Am I to be thus balked of my vengeance? Is it to be endured that, while I entertain my friends, you should steal off so treacherously, and thus complete the dishonor you have brought upon me?'

'I have not—done dishonor—to my lord!' she gasped with difficulty, for she was almost speechless from the rapidity with which he had hurried her along, and his close grasp upon her arm pained her. 'Let me but speak—I will explain—I know not how—'

'No falsehoods—no pleadings to me!' he cried. 'It will avail you nothing now. What more proof do I need? Is not the whole

story written out plainly before my eyes? Have you not stolen away to release him, preferring his safety and favor to my honor or your own? If not, where is he? Escaped me, by the gods! Escaped me, after all! Fool that I have been, to leave that key within your meddling reach!'

Overborne by his violence, not of words merely, but of gesture, Ænone had, little by little, shrunk from before him as he spoke, until she had unconsciously passed through the open doorway, and into the narrow street beyond. Leta and he still remained within the building, standing beside the swinging door. There was even now but a single pace between Ænone and himself, and it was scarcely likely that such a trifling distance could reassure her. It was more probably something in his tone or action which now gave her courage to meet his imputation. Whatever the nature of the inspiration, she now suddenly drew herself up, as though indued with new strength, and answered him with something of the same recklessness of spirit with which once before during that day she had cast aside all fear of misconstruction, and, with the sustaining consciousness of innocence and justice, had defied him.

'Escaped you?' she cried; 'I thank the gods for it! I did not set him free, but I would have done so, had I known how. He was my friend—my brother. Would I have left him, do you think, to suffer torture and death for simple kindnesses to me, when, with one turn of a key, I—could have released him? Would I let the memory of other days so completely pass from my mind as to—'

How, at that instant, happened the door to close? Was it owing to the wind, or to a skilful and concealed touch of Leta's hand, or to some unconscious pressure of Sergius against it? The cause matters little. It was enough that, of a sudden, the loosely hanging door swung round on its creaking hinges into its place, fastening itself securely with a spring bolt as its edge touched the lintel, and leaving Ænone shut out alone in the dark street upon the other side.

Upon the instant, Sergius sprang forward to reopen the door. Convinced of her perfidy, and madly lashing himself into yet further fury with the consciousness of his wrongs, it was as yet not in his mind that even by accident such a forced separation as this should befall her. His hand was upon the bolt—in another second it would have been drawn back—when his further action was arrested by a few lowly uttered words of Leta.

Not spoken to him, for, in his present state of mind, he was more than ever morbidly jealous of any interference or attempted control, and would most surely have disregarded them. But spoken as though to herself, in a kind of whispered soliloquy, softly muttered, but yet with utterance sufficiently distinct to reach his watchful ear.

'Ah, she will not regard that,' were the words, 'for of course she will know where to rejoin him.'

Sergius started as the new idea impressed itself upon him. Could this be true, indeed? Why not? Was it likely that the wife would have released the slave whom she loved, and not have told

him where they could meet again? That, surely, would be too foolish an oversight, for it would be throwing away all the benefits attending the escape. It were hardly possible that any trust could have been reposed in the prospect of future chance interviews, for that would be but a slender hope to lean upon. In that boiling, seething world of Rome, now more than ever disturbed by the inroads of strangers eagerly looking forward to the excitements of the amphitheatre, it would be in vain to make even deliberate and careful search for a lost slave, unless some clew should be left behind. Yes, she must surely have that clew; and doubtless she purposed to use it as soon as daylight came. Let her go now, therefore. It were idle to call her back only for new flight in a few hours hence.

Still with his hand resting upon the bolt as these reflections passed through his mind, Sergius glanced keenly at Leta, as though possessed with some dim suspicion that she had meant her words to be overheard. Then, feeling reassured by her composed attitude, he turned away, muttered something to himself the import of which she could not catch, dropped his hand from the undrawn bolt to his side, stood for a moment in a kind of maze of confusion, and finally left the prison, and staggered through the garden to the house.

CHAPTER XVII

Stunned and confused by her sudden exclusion, and naturally

believing that it was the result of deliberate action upon her husband's part, Ænone now felt all her sudden inspiration of courage deserting her, and sank half fainting against the outside wall. For a moment it seemed to her like a dream. She could realize suspicion, harsh language, and even cruel treatment within a certain limit, for these were all within the scope of her late experience; but it was hard to comprehend this unlooked-for and apparently deliberate excess of degradation. But gradually the mist cleared away from her bewildered mind, and she recognized the reality of what had befallen her. Still, however, her thoughts could not at once grapple with the overwhelming sense of the indignity and suffering cast upon her. She could not doubt that she had been expelled from her lord's house—cast out unprotected and friendless in the midst of night, with undeserved reproaches. But, for all that, a delusive hope clung to her. He could not mean that this should last. It was but an impulse of sudden anger. He would repent of it in a moment, and would call upon her to return to him. He would shed tears of bitter shame, perhaps, and would beg that she would forgive him. And she would be foolish enough to do so, she felt, at the very first pleading word from him; though at the same time feeling that her own self-respect should prompt her to show more lasting resentment. If thus easily forgot the past, what security could she feel that, in some future transport of rage, he might not repeat the act? But for all that, she felt that she would weakly too soon forgive him.

Sliding her trembling hand down the damp wall, she found along its foot a ledge of stone more or less projecting in different sections, in accordance with the architectural requirements of the building. Seating herself upon the widest portion of this ledge, she now waited to hear the key again turned in the lock and the door swung open upon its creaking hinges, and to see loving arms extended with repentant words of self-reproach. Once or twice she fancied that she heard the key softly fitted into its place, but it was only the abrasion of two contiguous branches of a plane tree overhead. Once again she felt certain that she heard the sound of persons approaching through the garden, but it was the voice of men in the street—two slaves coming around the corner and drawing near, speaking some harsh northern dialect which she knew not. As the men approached, she endeavored to shrink out of sight behind a perpendicular projection of the wall, and nearly succeeded. They had passed, indeed, before they noticed her. Then they turned and gazed curiously at her; and one of them made some remark, apparently of a jesting nature, for they both laughed. Then again they turned and moved on out of sight without attempting further molestation.

But the incident alarmed her, and caused her to realize yet more vividly than before the exceeding unprotectedness of her situation. These men had not sought to injure her, but how could she answer for the next who might approach? It was a lonely, dark street, narrow, and comparatively seldom used, and but little built upon, being mainly flanked by garden walls. Upon the side

where she sat there were no buildings at all, excepting low prison houses for slaves, similar to that belonging to the Vanno palace —for the street ran along an inner slope of the Cœlian Mount and parallel to the Triumphal Way, and thus naturally served as a rear boundary to the gardens of the palaces and villas which fronted upon the latter avenue. This very loneliness, therefore, added to her insecurity; for though it was possible that no one else might pass by for hours, there was the equal chance that if any one came with evil intent, she might be murdered before help could be summoned. And at a time when the broadest streets were never entirely safe even for armed men, a weak woman, with tempting jewelry upon her person, might well shudder at being left alone in a narrow alley.

Slowly and painfully—for the night was cool, and she had now been sitting long in one position—Ænone raised herself and stood up, looking hither and thither for some place of refuge. She had now waited more than an hour, and if her husband had been inclined to recall her from her exclusion, his repentance would scarcely have tarried so long. His anger was generally fierce, but of short duration; could it be that in this case his sense of injury was so great as to make him more unreasoning than usual? Her heart sank yet lower with a new weight of despair; but again hope whispered alleviation. He had been drinking deeply—she said to herself—and had not clearly comprehended what he had done. And afterward he had probably forgotten all about it, and had fallen off into sleep. Upon the morrow he would be himself

again. Perhaps he would not then remember the outrage he had committed against her. Certainly his anger would not still burn when corrected by returning reason. She must therefore endeavor to gain access again to the palace, and there avoid his presence, until the morrow brought to him fresher reflection and a better inclination to listen to explanation.

And accordingly she commenced her departure from her hiding place, and slowly crept along the blank flanking wall of the little street, hoping soon to gain the palace front. At first it seemed a very easy thing to do so. Though she had never before been in that portion of the city, she knew enough of its geography to feel certain that if she followed the street in either direction, she could not fail to come to some intersecting alley, through which she could reach the Triumphal Way. Once there, the route was familiar to her, and she could arrive at her home in a few minutes. But as she advanced, she found that what had appeared to be an easy stroll, seemed converted into a toilsome and perplexing journey. Confused and terrified, the coolness necessary to pursue in safety even so short a route began to fail her. At times she imagined that she heard strangers approaching, and then it became needful to conceal herself again, as well as she could, behind projections or in recesses of the wall. Then, when once more venturing out, the shadows of the wall itself or of neighboring buildings would terrify her into seeking other concealments. And once, after having resumed her course, she discovered that she had mistaken the direction, and was retracing

her steps.

At last, after a journey of nearly an hour, during which she had only advanced as far as a resolute person might have gone in a few minutes, she reached an intersecting street leading to the Triumphal Way. It was a wider passage than that which she was leaving, and this fact added to her dismay. For though she had at first feared the narrower street for its loneliness, yet now that she had so far glided through it in safety, she had begun to feel somewhat reassured, and in turn dreaded the more open channels, since they would naturally be more frequented. It was, therefore, with new trepidation that, upon turning the corner, she saw, in the broader street before her, signs of movement and life. The street happened to be a favorite thoroughfare from the Triumphal Way, across the Cœlian Mount, and, in consequence, was never, perhaps, entirely deserted. Now that the whole city was throbbing with anticipations of the morrow's festivities, there were more persons wakeful and wandering about with feverish expectation than usual. Moreover, it was a street which abounded with drinking shops, and these were now all open, in spite of the lateness of the hour, and appeared to be thronged with customers. One of these shops stood upon the corner where Ænone had halted. A faint light burned over the doorway to mark the locality; and through the open passage she could see a crowd of ill-conditioned, rough-looking men, appearing, in the dim light, more rough and uncouth than they really were. Here were mingled together artisans of the lower orders, slaves and

professional gladiators, all drinking and singing together in close fraternity. For a moment Ænone paused and hesitated, not daring to pass on. If she could reach the farther side without attracting observation, it would be but one step gained, for there were many other drinking shops glimmering in the distance along the whole street, and each one had its special crowd of noisy customers. To escape one peril seemed only to run into another. Then, as she deliberated and alternately put her foot forward and withdrew it again in a fruitless attempt to muster courage to run the gauntlet, two men emerged from the wine shop, and staggered toward her —a slave and a gladiator, linked arm in arm, and singing a wild song in discordant keys. Both appeared to be under the influence of wine, though in different degrees; for while the former had set no bounds to his license, the latter had somewhat restrained his propensities, in view of the demands upon his strength which the morrow's work would surely make. Seeing these men reel toward her, Ænone turned and fled, without knowing, or, for the moment, caring, in which direction she went. The men had not at first seen her, but, as they now caught sight of her flying figure, they set up a drunken whoop, and attempted to follow. All in vain; for ere they had advanced many paces, their weakened limbs betrayed them, and they sank powerless upon the ground, and, forgetting the pursuit, rolled over lovingly in each other's arms. Meanwhile, Ænone, not daring to look back, and not knowing that the chase had ended, still fled in wild terror, until at last her breath failed her, and she tottered helpless into the shade

of the nearest wall.

She was now lost indeed. How long she had been running, or in which direction, how many divergences she had taken, or how many narrow alleys threaded, she knew not. She simply realized that she was in a portion of the city where she had never been before, and from which extrication seemed impossible, so dark and narrow and winding seemed the passages in every direction. Far narrower and darker, indeed, than the lane behind the palace, and without its protecting solitude. In place of high garden walls, the whole route seemed lined with miserable tenements, the refuge of the lowest of the Roman population. There, crowded together in close communication, were the rabble of poorer slaves and beggars, all equally marked with rags and filth.

In all this there was one comfort. However thronged the tenements along the side might be, the street itself seemed deserted, nor could Ænone any longer hear the sound of pursuit. That, at least, she had escaped, and now again she took partial courage as she reflected that with moderate caution she might yet be able to extricate herself. There must be some outlet to that neighborhood of squalid misery; and take whichever way she might, she could scarcely fail, at the end, to emerge into some more reputable region.

Again the sound of two persons approaching restrained her, and caused her to shrink into a corner until they might pass. Unlike the others, these men had not been drinking, but advanced gravely and steadily, with a slow, deliberate pace, indicative of

weighty reflection. These, also, were slaves; and before they emerged into sight from the surrounding darkness, Ænone could distinctly mark the low, plotting whisper with which they spoke, occasionally rising, from excess of emotion, into a louder key. As they came opposite to her, they paused—not seeing her, but simply seeming to be arrested by the vehemence of their debate; and again their words sank nearly into a whisper.

'Tell me why I should not do so?' hissed the nearest, a man of gigantic proportions and development of strength. 'Why should I not leap out of the arena where these men place me to play a fool's part; and scrambling over the ranges of seats, plunge this dagger into his heart? Ye gods! were I once to begin to clamber up, no force could stop me from reaching him, were he at the very topmost range! And I will—why not?'

'You would gain but an instant's revenge,' said the other, striving to soothe him, 'and you would lose—'

'What? My life, would you say?' retorted the first. 'I know it. I know well, that before I could strike him thrice, I would myself be beaten down, a corpse. But one blow from me would be sufficient for him. Ay, though I used not my knife at all, but only my hardened fist. Would it not be a fine revenge, say you, thus to kill him? It was on account of my strength of arm that he laid toils for my capture, and for that alone he most valued me. Why not, then, prove its quality upon himself? With a single blow I could crush in his proud head like an egg shell. Then let them kill me—I care not.'

'And yet the life once lost by you cannot be gained again,' responded the other.

'O feeble-minded!' said the first, with disdain. 'Have I ever so dearly cared for life that I should thus guard it at the expense of honor? While I was a free man, in my native Rhodes, with my wife and children around me, did I not then risk my life among the very first? And am I likely to value it the more now that I am a slave, with wife torn from me and sent I know not where, with children slain one by one, as the only means of capturing me, with the accursed livery of the arena placed upon me that I may administer to their gaping appetite for blood? Can all this make me love my life more than I have ever loved it before?'

'But wait—only wait. There will come a time—'

'Ay, ay; there will come a time is what all say, and will continue to say, and yet the time comes not. There is never any time like the present. All around me are thousands of men, once free and now chained into slavery—and chained, perhaps, more through their own indolence than by the power of their masters; and yet they lie supine, and call upon each other to wait! And to-morrow there will be a thousand such in the arena, and instead of rising up together in their strength, they will fight only with each other. What might not that thousand accomplish, were they to act together in brave and earnest revolt? What chance would a few hundred pampered pretorians have of staying the flood? There, seated in fancied security upon their benches, will be the emperor, the court, the nobles, and the most wealthy of the

empire. In one hour of action, we could sweep these away like chaff, together with all else that is held most worthy of place and power in the whole empire! And yet these thousand slaves will not rise up together with me, and it will not be done!'

The head of the Hercules dropped upon his chest with a gesture of despair.

'You say truly,' responded the other. 'It will not be done, for they will not act with you. And what can you do alone?'

'Nothing—nothing; I see it all. I am powerless,' murmured the first. 'Well, I will be patient, and dissimulate. I will do as you request, Gorgo. I will restrain myself. As for this man—this imperator—why should I there wreak my vengeance upon him? It would only be giving to the rest of the people an unlooked-for sight—a newer pleasure, that is all. I will therefore act the part of a good and faithful slave—will kiss the rod held over me—and will duly serve my master by slaying my adversary, whoever he may be, and thus winning that store of gold pieces which have been laid out as the stake of my life. And then—then I will go home to my kennel and my bones. But this I swear, by the immortal gods! that I will follow this man from house to forum, wherever he may go, until I find a proper chance to strike him down in secret like a dog. You were right. I must not lose my life to kill him, when I can so easily slay him and yet live to slay other men as bad as he. My life is for other things. And when the time comes that I can raise the standard of insurrection, will you then—'

'Then I will be with you heart and soul forever, until our freedom is built up on the ruins of this accursed Rome!' cried the other, striking his hand responsively into the outstretched palm before him. And the two men again took up their walk, and passed on until they were swallowed up in the darkness and their voices, growing more and more indistinct, were finally hushed.

THE VISION

INSCRIBED TO TEACHERS TO CONTRABANDS IN THE SOUTH

Lo! a picture came before me
Of a million broken chains,
Lying cankered with old blood-drops
Which had oozed from tortured veins,
Reddening the fleecy cotton
Snowed upon the Southern plains.

And the picture's tints grew deeper,
Redder, blacker, as I gazed,
And my weak knees smote together,
And my eyes grew dim and glazed,
At the vision's spectred horrors
From the graves of vengeance raised.

For, where liveoaks and magnolias
Gloom the earth with densest shades,
Where the snake and alligator
Lurk in endless everglades,
Where the cloud-lace-fretted sunset

Lingering, longest night evades,

Where the eagle builds his eyrie
Nearest to the fervid skies,
Where the buzzard swoops to fatten
On the prey that lingering dies,
Where the bloodhound's hellish baying
Stills the hunted bondman's cries,

There uprose, all ghostly shadowed,
Hosts of wasted, haggard forms;
And their wild eyes glared and glittered
Like heaven's fire in dark-browed storms,
And with outstretched arms toward me
They came rushing in thick swarms.

And I saw upon their foreheads
Letters where the irons burned,
And their backs left gashed and harrowed
Where the lash for life-blood yearned,
And their lank limbs, fester-eaten,
Showed where gnawing shackles turned.

There were gaunt and frenzied mothers
With wan children in their arms,
There were youths, and there were maidens,
Curses, tears, and wild alarms,
There were auction blocks and hammers
Where were bartered beauty's charms.

Ah! my heart grew chill within me,
And my 'frighted blood congealed,
As my soul's eye raised the shadows
Which like curtains half concealed
Deeper horrors, depths of anguish
Left till God's day unrevealed!

And my soul went up in sighing
To God's ear: 'And *Thou* dost know,
High and Holy! men are devils,
Earth, like hell, is drowned in woe?'
Came an answer: 'Hark! my war-blast
Dealing sin a staggering blow!'

'Father! though the chains be broken,'
Cried my soul, 'the wounds remain,
Deeper than the irons wore them,
'Neath the brow within the brain,
'Neath the body in the spirit!
Peals Thy war-blast not in vain?

'How shall knowledge, how shall virtue
Dwell with ignorance and sin?
Where is found that earthly saintship
Can consort with devils' din?
Who the saintly self-denying
Through bell's door would look within

'E'en to save the devil's victims,
Snatch them from the cooling flames,
Kiss with love their long-charred spirits,
Breathe new souls into their names,
Wing them to the climes supernal,
And to angels' loud acclaims?'

Then came answer: 'Lo! I call them,
Ministers of love, I call!'
Then I waited in the silence,
With God waited over all,
Till I knew how He forgetteth
No one worthy, great or small.

For I saw from where the ocean
Drifts its rhythms to the beach,
From where mountain snows eternal
Far toward heaven as stainless reach,
From where gold and russet harvests
Of God's 'whelming bounty teach,

From where all are always freemen,
From where colleges and schools
Free the mind from Old-World trammels,
Unfit men for tyrants' tools,
From where firesides and altars
Govern hearts with golden rules,

Came, as flowers come in spring-time

Dropt from Winter's icy hand,
Came to cheer, to teach, to brighten—
God's commissioned, shining band;
Came with hands and hearts o'erflowing
To renew the Southern land!

And I watched how spirit-anguish
Songs and smiles soon soothed, allayed,
And how soul-wounds touched by kindness,
As by Christ, could heal and fade,
And how darkness fled affrighted
Where these angels wept and prayed.

And my soul went up in praising
To God's ear: 'Yea, Thou dost know,
High and Holy! men are devils,
Earth, like hell, is drowned in woe;
But Thy war-blast, in Thy mercy,
Hath dealt sin a staggering blow!'

THE UNDIVINE COMEDY —A POLISH DRAMA

Dedicated to Mary

PART IV

'Bottomless perdition.'—Milton.

Fog and cloud! Nothing can be seen from the bastions of the castle of the Holy Trinity, to the right or to the left, in front or in the rear, but dense, motionless, snowy mist; a spectral image of that deluge-wrath which, as it rose to sweep o'er earth, once broke against these stern, steep cliffs and beetling peaks of rock: no trace is to be seen of the buried valley, for the ghostly waves of the cold, white sea of foam shroud it closely in their stifling veils; the glowing face of the crimson sun shines not as yet upon earth's winding sheet of silent, clinging, pallid vapor.

The tower of the castle stands upon a bold and naked granite peak. Built of the strong rock from which it soars by the giant labor of the now dying Past, it seems during the lapse of centuries to have grown up from its stony heart, as the human breast grows from the broad back of the Centaur. A single banner streams above its lofty turret, the only banner of the Cross now raised on earth; the symbol of God's mystic love alone floats high enough to pierce into the unclouded blue of the stormy sky!

The white and sleeping mist gradually awakens; the sighing and howling of the bleak winds are heard above; the vapor palpitates in the first rays of the coming sun, and a drifting ice-floe of curdling clouds drives wildly o'er this quickening sea of

fog and foam.

Other voices, human voices, mingle with the wails and sobs of the passing storm: borne upward on the ghastly waves of the spectral cloud sea, they break against the walls of the granite castle.

The pallid shroud of mist is suddenly riven, and through the walls of the chasm torn through the heart of the white foam, glimpses are seen of the abyss below.

How dark it looks in the depths! A sea of heads in wild commotion surges there; the valley swarms with human life as ocean's slimy sands with creeping things that writhe and sting.

The sun! the sun! He mounts above the rocky peaks; the pallid vapors rise in blood and melt in gold, and as they roll and lift into the sky, more and more distinctly grow upon the view the threatening swarms of men still gathering below.

The quivering mist rolls into crimson clouds and scales the craggy cliffs; it dies softly away into the blue depths of the infinite sky. The valley glitters like a sea of light, throws back the dewy sunshine in a dazzling glare, for every hand is armed with sharp and sparkling blades and points of steel—and millions are seen pouring into its depths, numberless as they will pour into the vale of the Last Judgment.

A cathedral church in the castle of the Holy Trinity.

Lords, senators, dignitaries are seen seated on either side, each under the banner of a king or knight. Bands of nobles stand behind the banners. The Archbishop is in front

of the high altar, a choir of stoled Priests kneel behind and around it. The Man appears, pauses a few moments on the threshold of the church, then advances slowly up the aisle to the Archbishop, holding a banner in his hand.

Chorus of Priests. O God of our fathers! we, Thy last priests, pray in the last church of Thy Son now standing upon earth for the faith of our ancestors! Deliver us from our enemies, O Lord our God!

First Count. See with what pride Count Henry regards us.

Second Count. As if the whole universe were at his feet.

Third Count. And yet he has done nothing but cut his way through the camp of the peasants at night!

First Count. He left one hundred, nay, it is reported, two hundred of their men dead upon the place of combat.

Second Count. Let us object to his appointment as general-in-chief.

The Man (*kneeling at the feet of the Archbishop*). I lay my trophy at thy feet!

Archbishop (*giving him a sword*). Gird this sword upon thee; it was once consecrated to Saint Florian!

Many Voices. Long live Count Henry! Vivat! vivat!

Archbishop. And thus sealing thee with the sign of the cross, I commit to thy hands the sole command of this, our last fortress and refuge upon earth.

It is the universal wish that thou shouldst assume the rank of general-in-chief.

Many Voices. Long live our general! Vivat! vivat!

A Voice. I will not give my consent to the appointment!

Many Voices. Away with the objector! Long live Count Henry!

The Man. If any one present have just cause to reproach me, let him proclaim it openly, and not hide himself in the crowd!

He pauses; no one responds.

I accept this sword from thy hands, most reverend father; and may God send me an early and sudden death if I fail to deliver thee!

Chorus of Priests. Gift him with power, O God; and let Thy Holy Spirit descend upon him! Deliver us from our enemies, O Lord!

The Man. Let us all, princes, knights, and nobles, take a solemn oath to defend the glory and fame of our fathers!

Let us swear that though hunger and thirst may lead us to death, they shall not force us to dishonor!

Let us vow that no suffering shall induct us to capitulate, to yield one of our just rights, or to sacrifice any of the duties due to our Creator! Swear!

Many Voices. We swear.

The Archbishop elevates the Cross, they kneel and pledge their faith.

Chorus of Priests. The perjured Thou wilt punish in Thy wrath, O God!

The faint-hearted Thou wilt punish in Thy wrath, O God!
The traitor Thou wilt punish in Thy wrath O God!

The Man (*drawing his sword*). Keep the oath, and I promise glory—for victory, pray to God!

He leaves the church, surrounded and followed by bands of knights, nobles, etc.

A courtyard in the castle of the Holy Trinity. The Man, counts, barons, princes, noblemen.

A Count (*leading the Man aside*). What—is all irretrievably lost?

The Man. Not all, unless your courage fail before the time.

The Count. Before what time?

The Man. Before death!

A Baron (*leading him off on the other side*). It is reported that you have seen and spoken with our dreadful foe, Count Henry. If we should fall into his hands, will he have the least compassion upon us?

The Man. To tell you the truth, such compassion as our fathers never dreamed could be shown to them: '*the gallows*!'

The Baron. We must guard against that to the utmost of our power!

The Man. What says your excellency?

Prince. I must speak a few words alone with you, (*He draws Count Henry aside*.) It is all very well to encourage our people, but you must surely be aware that we can hold out no longer.

The Man. What else is left us, prince?

Prince. As you have been appointed chief, it is for you to propose the terms of *capitulation*.

The Man. Not so loud....

Prince. Why not?

The Man. Because your excellency would thus forfeit your own life! (*He turns to the men thronging around him.*) He who speaks of surrender will be punished with death!

Baron, Count, and Prince (*together*.) He who speaks of surrender will be punished with death!

All. With death! With death! Vivat! vivat!

Exeunt.

The gallery of the tower. The Man. Jacob.

The Man. Where is my son, Jacob?

Jacob. He is in the north tower, seated on the threshold of the old vault and dungeon, singing strange songs of prophecy.

The Man. Man the Leonoren bastion as strongly as possible, stir not from the spot, and make constant use of the best glass to observe what movements are going on among the forces of the besiegers.

Jacob. So help me God the Lord!

It were well to give a glass of brandy to our troops to keep up their sinking courage.

The Man. If necessary, open the cellars of our counts and princes.

Exit Jacob.

The Man (*mounting some feet higher, and standing wider the banner upon a small terrace*). With the whole power of my eyes I trace your plans; with the concentrated hatred of my soul I surround you, my enemies! No longer with a single voice, or with a vain enthusiasm, am I to meet you; but with the sharp swords and strength of men governed by my will I seek our last encounter!

It is a noble thing to be the leader in this contest; to look even from the bed of death, if so it must be, upon the strange power added to my own single arm through the many wills subjected to my rule; and glorious to gaze thus down upon you, my enemies, lying far below in the abyss and crying up to me from the depths, as the damned cry up to heaven!

Yet a few hours more of time, and then I, with thousands of the miserable wretches who have forgotten and renounced their God, will be no more forever—but come what will, one day of life at least is left me—I will enjoy it to the utmost—I will rule —combat—live! Is this my last song?

The sun sets behind the cliffs; sinks in a long, dark shroud of vapor—on every side his rays pour blood into the valley. Foreshadow of my bloody death, I greet thee with a more sincere and faithful heart than I was wont to salute the allurements of pleasure, deception, enchantment, love, in the past days of my youth!

Not through low intrigue, through cunning skill, through

laborious effort, have I attained the fulfilment of my wishes; but suddenly and unlocked for, as I have ever dreamed I would!

Ruler over those who were but yesterday my equals, I have reached the aim of my ambition: I stand on the very threshold of the eternal sleep!

A hall in the castle lighted with torches; George reclining upon a bed; the Man enters, and places his weapons upon a table.

The Man. Let a hundred men keep guard upon the bulwarks, the remainder may repose after our long and exhausting combat!

Voice (*without*). So help me God the Lord!

The Man. You must have been frightened, George, with the noise of our attack, the firing of musketry, the cries of the soldiers!

But keep up your courage, my child; we shall not be taken to-day, nor to-morrow.

George. I have indeed heard it all distinctly, but it is not that which strikes terror to my heart; the thunder of the cannon flies on and is here no longer—it is something else that haunts me, that appals me, father!

The Man. You fear for me, George?

George. No. I know your hour has not yet struck.

The Man. A heavy weight has fallen from my heart to-day, for in the plain below, scattered like autumn leaves, lie the corpses of our foes, foiled in their fierce attack.

Come, George, we are alone, come! tell me all thy thronging

thoughts; I will listen to thee once more as of old in our own home!

George (*hurriedly*). Follow me, then—follow me, father! A dreadful trial—sentence—is reëchoed here every night. Oh come with me!

He goes to a door in the wall hidden by a heavy fall of tapestry, and opens it.

The Man. George! where art thou going? Who has made known to thee this secret passage into endless vaults covered with eternal darkness? to this black charnel house, where moulder the bones of earlier and countless victims?

George. Where thine eye, accustomed to the sunshine, has no power to pierce, my spirit presses forward.

Gloom roll on to gloom—and darkness gather unto darkness!

He enters the door, followed by his father, and rapidly descends into the vault.

A long, vaulted, subterranean dungeon. Grates, bars, chains, and broken instruments of torture. The Man, with a torch in his hand, stands at the base of a great block of granite, on the top of which stands George.

The Man. Come down to me, George, I implore!

George. Hearest thou not these voices? Seest thou not these forms?

The Man. All is still as the grave—and almost as dark. The light of the torch is instantly swallowed up by the damp chill gloom around us!

George. Listen! Ever nearer! ever clearer! One after another they are slowly filing on from the depths of the narrow vaults—they are solemnly seating themselves below, far in the background; behind thee, father!

The Man. Thy madness is my damnation! Thy mind is wandering, my poor child; thou art destroying the strength which I now so sorely need!

George. I see their pale and stately forms as they collect for fearful judgment! I see the prisoner approach the dreadful bar, his tall form seems.... I cannot discern his features—they float and flow like morning mist! Hark!

Chorus of Voices. We, once chained, beaten, tormented, choked with dust and broken with stones, through the Power now given to our hands, proceed in our turn to sentence!

We too will judge and torture; try and condemn; Satan himself will delight to assume the execution of our sentence.

The Man. George, what dost thou see?

George. The prisoner! the prisoner, father! He wring his hands —O father! father!

A Voice. With thee dies out the accursed race; all its power, all its passions, all its pride, have joined in thee to perish!

Chorus of Voices. *Because thou hast loved nothing—revered nothing save thyself and thine own thoughts—thou art condemned —art damned to all eternity!*

The Man. I see nothing, but I hear from every side—above —below—sighs and wails—judgment, threatening, and eternal

doom!

George. The prisoner! he raises his haughty head as thou dost, father, when thou art angered! He answers with proud words, as thou dost, when thou scornest—father!

Chorus of Voices. In vain! thou plead'st in vain! there is no redemption for him more, in earth or heaven!

A Voice. Yet another day of passing earthly glory, of all share in which thine ancestors have robbed me and my brethren—and then thou fallest forever—thou, with thy brethren!

Your burials will be, as once were ours, without the toll of holy knells, without tears, sobs, or wailing mourners, without friends, without relations, and you will die transfixed upon the same rock of universal human pain!

The Man. I know you, wretched ghosts! wandering stars amid the angelic hosts!

He goes forward into the darkness.

George. Father! go not into that fearful gloom! Father! in the name of Jesus Christ—I implore—I conjure thee—father!

The Man (*turning toward his son*). Whom do you see below? Speak, and tell me truly, George!

George. The prisoner—he is thyself, my father!

He is white as snow—gagged—chained—they drag him on—they torture thee, my father!

I hear thy gasping breath—thy groans—thy sobs! (*He falls upon his knees.*) Forgive me, father! My mother shines through the dark—and commands me to....

He falls back in a fainting fit.

The Man (*catching the falling boy in his arms*). This alone was wanting! Ha! my own, my only child has led me to the brink of hell!

Mary—inexorable spirit! God!!

And thou, second Mary, to whom I have so often prayed!

Here then is the beginning of eternal darkness, eternal torture!

…

Back! back into life! one day of glory is at least still left me! First must I combat with my fellow men—and then for my eternal struggle!

Chorus of Spirits (*dying away in the distance*). *Because thou hast loved nothing, revered nothing, save thyself and thine own thoughts—thou art, damned to all eternity!*

A large hall in the castle of the Holy Trinity; arms and armor hang upon the walls, with various Gothic ornaments. The Man; women, children, some old men, and nobles are kneeling at his feet. The Godfather stands in the centre of the hall, and crowds of men are in the background.

The Man. No, no. By my son—by the memory of my wife—never! never!

Voices of Women. Have mercy upon us! Hunger gnaws our bowels; our children die of famine; fear is upon us day and night; have pity upon us!

Voices of Men. It still is time! Listen to the herald—dismiss

not the envoy!

Godfather. I regard not your reproaches, Count Henry, for my whole life has been that of a good citizen.

If I have assumed the office of ambassador, which I am at this moment fulfilling, it is because I understand the age in which we live, and estimate our times aright.

Pancratius is, if I may so express myself, the representative of the people....

The Man. Out of my sight, old man!—(*Aside to Jacob.*) Bring a detachment of soldiers hither!

Exit Jacob.

The women rise from their knees weeping and sobbing, and the men draw back a few paces.

A Baron.—We are all lost, and through you alone, Count Henry!

Second Baron. We renounce all further obedience.

A Prince. Let us arrange for ourselves the terms of the surrender of this castle with the worthy envoy!

Godfather. The great man who sent me here secures life to you all, if you will enter into a league with him and acknowledge the justice of the struggle of the century.

Many Voices. We acknowledge it.

The Man. You have sworn to me, and I have sworn to you, to die upon these walls; I intend to keep my oath, and you shall be true to yours. You are all to die with me!

Ha! can you indeed still wish to live?

Ha! ask the spirits of your fathers why, when living, they were guilty of such continuous oppression, and why they ruled with so much cruelty!—(*To a Count.*) Why have you, count, oppressed your serfs?—(*To another.*) Why have you passed your youth in cards and dice, and your life in the land of the stranger?—(*To another.*) Why have you crept before the great, and scorned the lowly?-(*To one of the women.*) Why did you not bring up your sons to defend you? As knights and soldiers, they might then have served you now; but you have preferred dealings with Jews and lawyers: call upon them, then, for life and safety.—(*He rises and extends his arms toward them.*) Why hasten ye thus to shame? why wrap your last hours in shrouds of infamy?

On with me, ye knights and nobles! On, where bayonets glitter, swift balls whistle!

Oh seek not the accursed gallows prepared for you by the New Men; believe me, the masked and silent hangman stands waiting to throw the rope of shame around your high-born throats!

A Voice. He speaks the truth—to our bayonets!

Another Voice. We die of hunger; there is no more food!

Voices of Women. Our children! Your children! Mercy!

Godfather. I promise you safety—safety of life and limb....

The Man (*approaching the Godfather, and seizing him y the shoulder*). Sacred person of the herald, go! Go, and hide thy gray hairs in the tents of Jews and low mechanics, that I may not dye them in thine own base blood!

Jacob enters with a division of armed men.

Take aim at this brow, furrowed with the folds of idle learning! Aim at this liberty cap, which trembles on the brainless head before every breath from the lips of a man!

The Godfather escapes.

All *cry, with one breath*: Bind Count Henry! Deliver him up to Pancratius!

The Man. Wait but a single moment, lords! (*He goes from one soldier to another.*) Do you remember when we climbed a mountain's rocky slope, a savage wild beast closely tracked our steps, and when you, frightened, fell into a yawning chasm, I rescued you, and saved your life? You were most grateful then. Have you forgotten it?—Jerome, we once were cast away upon the Danube's craggy shore; we braved the waves, and saved our lives; we were bold swimmers, and we helped each other well! —Christophe, Hieronymus, you sailed with me upon the wild Black Sea; we were young sailors then!—(*To others.*) When the fire destroyed your homes, who built your cottages anew?—(*To others.*) You fled to me from cruel lords, and I redressed your wrongs.—(*Addressing himself to the men generally.*) Reflect, and choose!… Speak! will you arm with me to battle for our rights, or will you leave me here to die alone—with haughty smiles upon my stiffening lips, because, among so many men, I found no single *man*?

The Men. Long live Count Henry! we desert him not—vivat!

The Man. Let the remaining meat and brandy be shared among them; then upon the walls!

Soldiers. Meat and brandy, and then upon the walls!

The Man. Go with them, Jacob, and in an hour be ready to renew the fight!

Jacob. So help me God the Lord.

Women. We curse thee, Count Henry, in the name of our innocent children!

Other Voices. We, for our fathers!

Other Voices. We, for our wives!

The Man. And I breathe curses on all craven souls!

> The wall of the fortress of the Holy Trinity. Troops are lying scattered about. Broken rocks and stones strew the ground, mingled with pikes and guns; soldiers are running to and fro; the Man leans against a bulwark, and Jacob stands beside him.

The Man (*putting his sword into its sheath*). There can be no greater pleasure than to play at danger when we always win; and when the time comes to lose, one cast of the die, and all is over!

Jacob. Our last broadside has driven them back for the moment, but I see them below there, gathering to renew the storm; however, all is vain, for since the world a world was, no one has ever escaped his destiny!

The Man. Are there any cartridges left?

Jacob. Neither balls nor grapeshot: everything has its end!

The Man. Bring then my son to me; I would embrace him once more!

Exit Jacob.

The smoke from the powder has dimmed my eyes; it seems to me as if the valley were swelling up to my feet, and again sinking back to its place; the socks crack, and cross each other at a thousand angles, and my thoughts wander, flicker, quiver in the most fantastic forms. (*Seats himself upon a wall.*) It is not worth the trouble to be a man—nor even an angel; the highest archangel must feel, after some centuries of existence, as we do after a few years of our fleeting life, utter weariness in his soul, and long, as we do, for mightier powers! Either one must be God —or nothing....

Enter Jacob with George.

Take some of the men with you, go through the castle, and drive all before you upon the walls!

Jacob. Counts, princes, bankers?

Exit Jacob.

The Man. Come to me, my dearest son! place thy thin hands in mine, while I press my lips upon thy pure forehead; thy mother's brow was once as white and smooth!

George. Before thy men took up their arms to-day, I heard mamma's voice; her words came floating to me as soft and sweet as perfumed air; she said to me: '*George, thou wilt come to me this very evening, and sit down beside me*.'

The Man. Did she name me to thee?

George. She said: '*This very evening I expect my son*.'

The Man (*aside*). Is my strength to fail me, when I have almost reached the end of the weary way? No, God will not permit it! For one moment's fiery madness, I will be thy prisoner to all eternity!—(*Aloud*). Oh, my son! forgive—forgive the fatal gift of life! We part; and knowest thou for how long a time?

George. Take me with thee, father, and leave me not! I love thee; oh, leave me not, my father—and I will draw thee on with me!

The Man. Our paths are widely sundered. Amid the choirs of happy angels thou wilt forget thy father—thou wilt bring me down no drop of cooling dew. O George! George! my son! my son!

George. What dreadful cries! I tremble, father. Louder and louder, nearer and nearer comes the thunder of the cannon; the last hour—the prophesied—draws near!

The Man. Jacob! quick—quick—here!

A band of counts and princes cross the courtyard. Jacob follows with the soldiers.

A Voice. You give us broken arms, and force us to the combat!

Another Voice. Henry, have mercy on thyself!

Third Voice. Weak, wearied, famished, drive us not upon the walls!

Fourth Voice. Where do they drive us? where?

The Man. To death!—(*To George, folding him in his arms.*) With this embrace I would fain bind thee to my heart forever, George! Alas! I know our paths are widely sundered: it may not

be, my son! my son!

Struck by a ball, George sinks dying in his arms.

Voice (*from above*). To me! to me! pure spirit! Up to me, my son!

The Man. Ha! to my aid, soldiers! (*He draws his sword, and holds it before the lips of the wounded boy.*) The blade is crystal clear; no moisture dims the cold and glittering steel! Breath and life already gone! O George, my son!

Ha! they are upon me! On I on! They are at last but a sword's length from me! Back! Back! into the abyss, ye sons of freedom. Back!

Rushing on of man, confusion, struggle.

Another part of the wall of the castle. Men in the distance in line of battle. Jacob is seen stretched out upon the wall: the Man, sprinkled with blood, hastily approaches him.

The Man. Faithful old man, what has happened to you?

Jacob. May the devil reward you in hell for your obstinacy, and my dying agonies!

So help me God the Lord!

Dies.

The Man (*throwing away his sword*). I will need thee no longer, sword of my fathers! My son is in heaven—the very last of my retainers lies dead at my feet—the craven nobles have deserted their cause; already they kneel before the victor, and

sue and howl for mercy! (*Looking in every direction around him.*) There still is time; as yet the enemy are not upon me! I will steal a moment's rest before....

Ha! the New Men scale the northern tower; they shout 'Count Henry'—they seek him in every direction!

Here I am! here I am! here I am! But you are not to pronounce sentence upon me; the dead have already given in their verdict. I go to meet the judgment and justice of my God! (*He clambers up a steep cliff jutting out over the abyss.*) I see thee, my eternity, as thou rapidly floatest on to meet me, black with the shadows of eternal night! shoreless, limitless, infinite! And in the midst of thy rayless gloom, like a burning sun, eternally shining, but illumining nothing, I see my God! (*He takes some steps forward, and stands on the brink of the precipice.*) Ha! they run, the New Men—they see me now! Jesus! Mary! O Poetry! be cursed by me, as I shall be to all eternity! Up, ye strong arms! cut through these waves of air!

He springs into the abyss.

The courtyard of the castle. Pancratius, Leonard; Bianchetti stands at the head of a regiment of soldiers. The remaining princes and counts, accompanied by their wives and children, file in before Pancratius.

Pancratius. Your name?

A Count. Christopher von Volsagen.

Pancratius. You have pronounced it for the last time! And yours?

A Prince. Wladislaus, Lord of Schwarzwald.

Pancratius. It shall be heard on earth no more! And yours?

A Baron. Alexander von Godalberg.

Pancratius. It is already erased from the list of the living. Go!

Bianchetti (*to Leonard*). They have repulsed us for two long months; their arms are wretched, and their accoutrements utterly worthless.

Leonard. Are there many of them left?

Pancratius. They are all given over to you for execution, that their blood may flow as an example to the world. But if there is one among them who can tell me where Count Henry hides, he shall have his life for his information!

Many Voices. He vanished from our sight at last.

The Godfather. Great Pancratius, I appear as mediator between you and your prisoners; spare these citizens of noble birth, because they have given up to you the keys and strongholds of the castle of the Holy Trinity!

Pancratius. I have conquered by my own strength, and need no mediator. You will yourself take charge of their immediate execution!

The Godfather. My whole life has been that of a good citizen. I have frequently given proof of true patriotism. When I joined your cause, Pancratius, it was not with the intention of leading my own noble brethren to—....

Pancratius (*interrupting him*). Seize the old pedant! away with him! let him join his *noble* brethren!

The soldiers surround the Godfather and the prisoners.

Where is Count Henry? Has no one seen him, dead or living? A purse of gold for Henry, if only for his corpse!

A division of soldiers descend the wall from above.

The Leader of the Division. Citizen general! by the command of General Bianchetti, I stationed myself with my detachment, on the west side of the bulwark; upon our entrance into the fort on the third bastion to the left, I observed a man standing, unarmed, but bleeding and wounded, by a dead body. I cried immediately to my men: 'Hasten your steps, we must reach him!' but before we could approach him, he ascended a steep cliff overhanging the valley, stood for a moment on a sharp and jutting point of rock, and fixed his haggard eyes upon the depths below. I saw him, then, extend his arms like a swimmer about to make a sudden plunge; he threw himself forward with all his force; I saw him a moment in the air, and we all heard the noise made by the fall of the body as it pitched and fell from rock to rock into the abyss below.

This is the sword which we found but a few steps from the spot on which we first observed him.

He hands a sword to Pancratius.

Pancratius (*examining the sword*). Drops of blood stain the handle, but here are the arms of his house! It is the sword of Count Henry!

He alone among you all has kept his plighted faith; to him be

endless glory—to you, traitors, the guillotine!

General Bianchetti, you will see that the fortress of the Holy Trinity is razed to the ground, and will also superintend the execution of the prisoners!

Leonard!

He withdraws with Leonard.

A bastion on the north tower. Pancratius, Leonard.

Leonard. You require repose after so many sleepless nights; you look wearied and exhausted with ceaseless labor.

Pancratius. The hour of rest has not yet struck for me, and the last sigh of the last of my enemies marks the completion of but half my task. Look upon these heavy mists, these swamps, these desert plains; they stand between me and the realization of my plans. Every waste on earth must be peopled, rocks removed, lakes and rivers everywhere connected; a portion of the soil must be awarded to every human being; the teeming hosts of the living must far outnumber the multitudes who have perished; life and universal prosperity must fill the place of death and ruin, before our work of general destruction can be at all atoned for. If we are not to inaugurate an era of social and widespread happiness, our work of havoc and devastation will have been worse than vain!

Leonard. The God of Freedom will give us power for gigantic tasks.

Pancratius. What! *You* speak of *God!* Do you not see that it is crimson and slippery here—that we are standing deep in human gore?

Whose blood is this beneath our feet?

There is nothing behind us save the court of the castle; no one is near us. I know that we are quite alone, and yet, Leonard, I feel there is another here!

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.