HISTORY OF THE PERSECUTIONS AND BATTLES OF THE WALDENSES.

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NEW YORK:
JOHN S. TATLOE,
NASSAU STREET,
MONTREAL: – R. W. LAY.

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CHAPTER I.

THE WALDENSES.

Perhaps there are no people so limited in number so widely known, and for whom so much sympathy has been expended, as the Waldenses. Surrounded by a corrupt church; oppressed by the strong arm of civil power; tortured, hunted, massacred, and driven forth from their homes, they still have clung to their religion, and remained true to their principles. Now suffering, without a murmur, death and imprisonment; and now rising in sudden wrath, and falling with resistless force upon their foes; braving alike the Alpine storm and serried armies, they fix themselves in our affections, and enlist all our sympathies. So weak, and so resolute; so peeled and scattered, and yet unconquered; they exhibit all that is noble, and great, and heroic in man. Their very home, amid the Alpine hills – their quiet valleys, nestling in the lap of rugged mountains, add to the interest that surrounds them. Who has not thought of the "Vales of the Vaudois" with the deepest emotion, and lingered in imagination around their homes by the Alpine stream?

Though Piedmont itself is an extensive province, extending across the Alps to Geneva on the north, and resting on the Apennines around Genoa and the Po on the south, the Waldenses occupy a tract of country only about twelve miles square, and situated amid the Alps, on the confines of Italy and France. Through this small, but wild region, are scattered several valleys, which look, amid the savage peaks and heaven-piercing cliffs, like Innocence sleeping in the lap of Wrath. In midsummer, they are delightful; being covered with carpets of green, which contrast beautifully with the snowy summits and everlasting glaciers that surround them. Here flocks of goats and herds of cows may be seen sprinkling the sweet pasturages; and the tinkling of bells, the song of the mountaineer, and the bleating of the flocks, combine to render them enchanted ground. But in winter, the Alpine storm here lets forth all its fury, roaring through the gorges, and sifting the snow in blinding showers over all things. And long after spring has decked the plains of Piedmont in verdure, snow covers the valleys of the Waldenses.

A bird's-eye view of the whole plain of Piedmont, with the Alps in the distance, is extremely fine. Near by is seen the Po, winding through the plain until it is joined by the Stura and Doria. In the centre stands Turin, the capital of Piedmont. To the right, and close under the Alps, lies Rivoli; while to the left, and almost directly back of Turin, is Pignerol, a Waldensian town, from which proceeds the pass of Susa into the very heart of the Waldensian country.

Turin is about three miles in circumference, and surrounded with pleasant promenades and carriage-roads. It has thirteen squares and eighty-four streets, the latter crossing each other at right angles, like those of Philadelphia. It has a population of a hundred and ten thousand inhabitants. It abounds in nobles, many of whom are poor in the extreme, and receive their company in their opera-boxes, to save the expense of wax candles at home. The environs of the city are beautiful, decked with picturesque villas and churches.

Leaving the Piedmontese capital, let us go westward into those fastnesses of the Waldenses, where still remain the people who have withstood all the corruptions of the Italian church, survived the changes that have rocked Europe and overthrown old dynasties, and emerged pure as gold from the fires of persecution. They are a standing miracle amid the nations of the earth. That a small and rude community, a band of mere peasants should dare resist the power of the Church, condemn her departure

from the truth, and finally separate from her, and brave the fury of Catholic Europe, is certainly one of the strangest events in human history. The strong empire of the Caesars was dismembered, and northern barbarians occupied the ancient Roman capital. Italy was overrun and subdued, her republics wiped from existence, and she, throughout her entire extent, made to shake under the victorious tread of armies – yet there, in their mountain home, the pious Waldenses have lived, the same in manners and religion.

From the wild waking up of Europe in behalf of the Crusades, when the West precipitated itself in boundless enthusiasm on the East to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of infidels, to the terrible overthrow of the French Revolution and triumphal march of Napoleon – through all the changes that intervened, they have remained the same apostolic church – a pure flame amid Surrounding and limitless darkness – a true and faithful Christian church amid an apostate world. Clustering around their ancient religion, sometimes with the lofty resignation of martyrs, and sometimes with the sternness and heroism of veteran warriors, they have both suffered and struggled, fallen and conquered, with unequalled firmness. Now serene and quiet, their prayers and songs have filled the Alpine valleys with joy, and now their shrieks and death-cries loaded the shuddering air with sorrow. To-day, gazing on their smouldering homes and wasted vineyards, and to-morrow standing on an Alpine summit, and like the captives of Zion as they ascended the last hill-top that overlooked Jerusalem, sighing forth their sad farewell to their mountain home – now fugitives and exile, fleeing to stranger provinces, and now breaking with their strong war-cry through their ancient defiles, they move before us in light and shade, alternately filling us with joy and sadness, and bringing successive smiles and tears. A God-protected band, the heart of every true man loves them, and the prayer of every Christian rises to heaven in their behalf. They have indeed been witnesses for the truth.

Of the origin of the Waldenses little is known, except what doubtful tradition has left us. They claim to have been founded by the Apostles, and to have remained the same Church from the first spread of Christianity. But nothing certain, however, can be ascertained of them prior to the ninth century. As the Christian Church gradually receded from the truth, and began to adopt the errors which now characterize Romanism, the Waldenses, by their firm resistance to the tide of corruption, and their independent attitude, excited the hostility of both the civil and ecclesiastical power, and those persecutions commenced which have covered their name with glory, and the Roman hierarchy with everlasting infamy. During the nine hundred years in which they have withstood all attempts to overthrow their religion, their history has been marked by wonderful events.

We shall describe the successive persecutions that deluged their valleys with blood, their manly resistance, their desolate flight and exile, their triumphant return through hosts of enemies, their pastoral life, and their battle-fields.

The first persecutions against them were carried on by the Inquisition, which tortured and slew by detail. This being found insufficient, the soldiery were called in, and the sword of war hewed down men, women, and children indiscriminately. This also failing to exterminate the heretics, a general expatriation was resorted to. This succeeded only for a while, and the Waldenses still rear their altars in their ancient mountain valleys. We wish to trace them through their changing career and show how religion,

“Diffused, and fostered thus, the glorious ray,
Warmed where it went and ripened into day.
‘Twas theirs to plant, in tears, the precious shoot;
‘Tis ours to reap the promised fruit.
By them the bulwark of our faith was built –
Our church cemented by the blood they spilt.
In Heaven’s high cause they gave all men could give
And died its martyrs that the truth might live.”

CHAPTER II.

PERSECUTIONS OF THE WALDENSES

VALLEY AND CHURCH OF BOBI.

The church and valley of Bobi have borne a distinguished part in the history of the Waldenses. This valley is so shut in by the hills, that its existence cannot be detected by the traveler till it bursts at once in all its richness and beauty upon him. The river Pelice and its tributaries wind through it, lacing its meadows with silver veins while all around stretches a border of green forest, which constitutes the wealth of the inhabitants. Dark chestnuts contrast beautifully with the pale willows that run in strips across the meadows – huge rocks rise along the outskirts, covered with moss, on the top of which the peasant spreads his threshing floor. Higher up, crag beetles, over crag – thunder-riven – here leaning threateningly over their bases, and there towering heaven-ward like the embattled walls and turrets of some feudal castle. In the upper end of the valley rises one immense rock, a mountain in itself. In some ancient convulsion it split at the summit, leaving a crack through which the blue sky beyond is seen. By crawling on his hand and knees, the adventurous traveler can approach the edge of this enormous crevice, when lo! all the valley below bursts on his view. There it sleeps in the summer sunlight, with the bright streamlets sparkling and flashing amid the masses of green – men and cattle are seen moving across it – the peasant is laboring in the field – the cart trundling along the highway – and yet not a sound reaches the spectator, lying in the shadow of the huge cliff. Far, far below, like pigmies, the inhabitants are toiling in the sun; but they seem as objects that move through a dream, so noiseless and still are they. Up that serene height the murmurs of the valley never come, and the thunder-crash and scream of the Alpine eagle around its summit are the only sounds that disturb its repose. This old rock was once made the chief stronghold of the Vaudois, when they fought their way back to their valleys. The view from the top is wonderfully beautiful. From the margin of the valley to the Po, the whole expanse is distinctly seen. Snow-capt mountains piercing the heavens with their shining helmets – peaks on peaks rolling in an endless sea of heights along the horizon, combine to render it a scene of indescribable interest. But the rock itself is a striking object when viewed from the valley; especially at evening, when the gun is going to its lordly repose amidst the hills, does its colossal form stand out in bold relief against the cloudless heavens. Its ragged outline is subdued and softened – its black surface covered with rose tints – and it looks like a glorious pyramid of light and beauty there over the plain slumbering in deep shadow beneath. Gradually, the gorgeous hues disappear; the stars displace the sun; and the moon, rising in the east, makes that stern rock darker than at mid-day.

The picturesque little church of Bobi has borne its part in the struggle of the Waldenses. With the rocks around it, and the mountains above, it has rung to the prayer of the persecuted Christian, the war-cry of his murderers, and the clash of arms. Solemn vows have been repeated there, and on its very threshold men and women been butchered with worse than savage barbarity.

The whole history of the Waldenses has been marked by persecutions carried on in a spirit of ferocity and cruelty, and accompanied by outrages so fiendish, as almost to transcend human belief.

About the year 1200, the persecutions commenced, and with greater or less intervals, and more or less cruelty, have continued till this time. The Inquisition first slew its victims silently; but in 1488 open force was used, and the soldiery sent against the peasants. From that time on, the sword has been the

instrument of the persecutor. Whole valleys have been depopulated, and the inhabitants driven into caverns, and there suffocated with smoke. Hundreds of children have been found dead together, some mangled in the most inhuman manner. The young women were ravished in presence of their fathers and brothers, and then brutally murdered. Men were hurled from the cliffs, and tortures and violence unparalleled endured, till these Protestant valleys were soaked in blood, and the hill-sides covered with the bones of thousands of the inhabitants. Decency forbids us to name the enormities practised on this unoffending people, because they chose to worship God according to their own consciences.

But, in the persecution of 1655, set on foot by the Duke of Savoy, Bobi bore a more important part than in those which preceded. The mere recital of the sanguinary scenes which were enacted would freeze the blood. Horrors unheard of, except in the history of the Romish Church, were perpetrated in presence of the civilized world, until Cromwell, then wielding the power of England, uttered his stern remonstrances, declaring he would put a stop to them, if he had to sail his ships over the Alps to accomplish the object. It began by the invasion of the Waldensian territory with a large French army.

Against this powerful array, it seemed impossible that the Christians could contend. Nevertheless, they bravely rallied, and, kneeling in solemn prayer to God, fell on the enemy with such enthusiasm and terror, that, though outnumbered a hundred to one, they broke their ranks in pieces, and sent them shattered and discomfited back. The Marquis of Piannesse, seeing that they were not to be overcome by arms, resorted to duplicity, and calling to him deputies from the different valleys, promised them peace and security. The only favor he asked in return was the permission to quarter one regiment of foot, and two troops of horse, among them for two or three days, as an evidence of their fidelity. To this the unsuspecting peasants joyfully acceded, and the army marched in. But no sooner was it in possession of the strongholds than it began the work of massacre. The poor people, taken by surprise, fled to the mountains – those who could – and the rest were slain. Around the Church of Bobi, the dead lay in heaps. The shouts of infuriated men, and the shrieks of women and children, made this sweet valley ring with terrific echoes. The ordinary means of torture were not sufficient, and new modes of cruelty were invented. Infants were pulled from the breasts of their mothers, and their brains dashed out against the rocks. Mothers and daughters were ravished in each other’s presence, and then filled with pebbles. In their mouths and ears powder was crammed, and set fire to, and thus the helpless sufferers were blown up. Sick people were tied with their heads and feet together, and thrown down the precipices. Many of both sexes and all ages were impaled alive, and thus, naked and writhing in agony, were planted along the highways.

Afterwards, however, these persecuted Christians rallied, and, falling on their persecutors, routed them with terrible slaughter. In 1686, another persecution commenced; but its history is like that of all the others – it is a record of duplicity, treachery, cruelty, and barbarity too horrible to give. The people of Bobi suffered in both these persecutions severely; but they had brave hearts, and fought around their ancient altars with a heroism deserving of a better fate. Out of fourteen thousand who were imprisoned during the former persecution, eleven thousand perished. Still a remnant remained, and, true to their ancient faith, these smitten children of God bore all with the firmness of martyrs.

At length, they were driven from their homes and scattered over Protestant Europe. But they still turned their eyes wistfully towards their mountain homes. They were exiles in a strange land, and, like the captive children of Israel, they wept when they remembered their quiet churches amid the Alps. The very fact that their altars had been baptized in blood rendered them doubly dear. Their hearts were in their desolate homes, and still clung to the ashes of their fathers and children, and wives, and brothers who had fallen nobly for their holy religion.

At length, the exiles started to return, and, with the intrepid Arnaud, a priest, at their head, fought their way back, inch by inch, to their native valleys, and there, despite their persecutors, gathered once more into their neglected churches, and reared anew their broken down altars. With the sword of war and with prayer together, they entered and maintained their long-deserted homes.

On the sixteenth day of their march, they reached Bobi, and encamped around their little church. The building was in ruins; but the minister, M. Montoux, the colleague of Arnaud, placed a door from one rock to another, and preached to that toil-worn band, fresh from the field of slaughter, and still stained with the blood of their foes, from these words: “The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” The

hearts of the exiles were sad as they looked on their desolate valley; but the words of the preacher comforted them. After sermon, their cause was committed in solemn prayer to God, and then they adopted certain regulations, by which they were to be governed, and took an oath of fidelity to each other. This was the oath taken at Bobi: –

“God, by his divine grace, having happily led us back into the heritage of our forefathers, there to re-establish the pure service of our holy religion, by the completion of that enterprise which the Lord of Hosts has hitherto conducted in our favor: We, the pastors, captains, and other officers, swear, in the presence of Almighty God, and at the peril of our souls, to observe union and order among us; never willing to disunite or separate, so long as God shall grant us life – not although we should be so miserable as to be reduced to three or four – never to temporize or treat with our enemies of France, nor those of Piedmont, without the participation of our whole council of war, and to put together the booty which we have now or may have, to be applied to the wants of our people, on cases of emergency. And we, soldiers, swear this day, before God, to obey all the orders of our officers, and vow, fidelity to them with all our hearts, even to the last drop of our blood; also, to give up to their care the prisoners and booty, to be disposed of as they shall judge fit. And, in order to more perfect regulation, it is forbidden, under heavy penalties, to any officer or soldier to search an enemy, dead, wounded, or a prisoner, during or after battle, but for which office proper persons shall be appointed. The officers are enjoined to take care that the soldiers keep their arms and ammunition in order, and, above all, to chastise severely all who shall profanely swear or blaspheme. And, to render union, which is the soul of our affairs, inviolable among us, we, the officers, swear fidelity to our soldiers, and we soldiers, to our officers; solemnly engaging, moreover, to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to rescue, as far as in us lies, our brethren from the thraldom of the cruel Babylon, and with them to re-establish and maintain his kingdom unto death; and by this oath we will abide all our lives.”

On Sunday, one September morning, did the brave Waldenses repeat this solemn oath with arms in their hands. The hills of Bobi looked down upon them – God heard the oath, and gave them deliverance, and once more they assembled in this secluded church, and worshipped God in sincerity and purity of heart.

CHAPTER III.

PERSECUTIONS OF THE WALDENSES

BATTLE OF SALABERTEANN.

During the return of the exiles to their native land, mentioned in the preceding chapter, occurred the battle of Salabertrann. Like the children of Israel in their march to Canaan, the Waldenses were compelled to fight their way back to their ancient altars and possessions. Their journey occupied thirty-one days, and was marked by trials, sufferings, heroisms, almost miraculous escapes, such as are seldom found in the history of any people.

Having been compelled to leave Germany, the exiles, after awhile, found themselves scattered amid the cantons of Switzerland, close on the confines of their native land. They had made two attempts to return, but failed in both. Still, however, they boldly resolved on a third. The hostility existing between England and France, and the known sentiments of the Prince of Orange, just ascended the English throne, together with the reports of spies, that the French king had withdrawn his troops from the farther side of the mountains, encouraged them to make one more effort to regain their land. As we have already stated M. Arnaud, a clergyman, headed the expedition. Having assembled in the forest of Nyon, they waited for the arrival of their brethren from the Grisons and Wirtemberg. These latter, to the number of a hundred and twenty-two, had agreed to join them; but, soon after setting out, they were all taken prisoners, and marched over the Alps to Turin, and thrown into prison. Finding, at length, it was growing dangerous to wait longer, Arnaud, at the head of his gallant band, resolved to proceed without delay. It had been whispered about that the exiles were plotting some new expedition, which caused many strangers to seek the forest of Nyon, bordering on Lake Geneva. Of the unexpected supply of boats furnished by them, Arnaud immediately took advantage, and, pressing them into temporary service, commenced the passage of the lake. When all was ready, Arnaud, who had assumed the name of M. de la Tour, stepped into the midst of his followers, and uncovering his head, knelt on the ground, and offered up a fervent prayer that God would smile on their endeavors. Having thus committed their cause to Heaven, the Waldenses shoved their boats from shore. It was a warm August night, and a little before midnight, that frail fleet might have been seen gliding over the blue waters of Lake Geneva. No sooner did they step on shore than they formed in order of battle. In one column, composed of nineteen companies in all, they started on their perilous march. Of their difficulties by the way, danger from treachery, deceit, and open hostility, we can mention but a moiety. In a solid phalanx, with their scouts thrown out on every side, and their arms in their hands, and shut out from all reinforcements, they boldly entered the heart of a hostile country, determined to cut their way through it, and, driving out the occupants of their homes, take and maintain possession of them. Every village rung its alarm-bells at their approach, and armed bands of peasants prepared to dispute their passage; but the firm order and presence of the Waldenses awed them into respect, and forced them to supply provisions and guides. Now and then a skirmish took place, and a few were killed; but the bold Waldenses kept on their way for a long time without any serious obstacles, except what the Alps presented. Through gloomy gorges, where twenty brave men could have withstood a hundred, and over snow-covered heights, they passed on until they at length reached the base of the “Haute Luce.”

This mountain was covered with snow, and enveloped in fog; yet up its steep sides pressed the wanderers. The guides endeavored to lead them astray into the ravines that intersect it, where they might wander around until the Savoyards could arrive, and cut their throats. But Arnaud, detecting the foul play, threatened to hang them if they did not conduct his band safely, and thus frightened them out of their treachery. Up steps cut in the rocks, they mounted in single file, and at length, reached the summit. Thence, sliding down, one after another, on their backs, guided only by the white snow, they reached, late at night, a few shepherds' huts, at the base, which they unroofed to provide themselves with fuel. A cold and drenching rain, which lasted till morning, chilled their frames, and they arose benumbed, yet still resolute, to commence the fourth day's march. In soft snow, a foot deep, and pelted by an Alpine storm, they began the ascent of the Col de Bonne Homme. Along this pass of 7500 feet high, forts had been erected by the enemy, and the Waldenses expected every moment a sanguinary conflict; but their prayers had been heard, and silence and solitude reigned over the entrenchments. Now hanging above an Alpine cliff, at midnight – now kindling their camp fires in some quiet meadow – now swallowed up in a fearful gorge, and now threading a quiet valley, they slowly but steadily approached their former home. At length, they reached the foot of Mount Cenis, where, it was reported, troops were waiting to receive them. Nothing daunted, and, trusting in that God whose protection they had invoked, they began the ascent. No language can describe the horrors of this passage. The exiles lost their way, and stumbled about in frightful gorges. Several men were lost and taken prisoners, and gloom began to gather over the path of the exiles. At the foot of the Touliers, they sounded their trumpets a long time to recall the fugtives who had lost their way, and then marched on. Upon the summit they saw, through the thick fog that crowned the height, a band of two hundred armed men, advancing with beating drums to the charge. The latter, however, gave way, and the exiles kept on until they came within three miles of the village of Salbertrann. This was the eighth day of their march, and, weary and hungry, they inquired of a peasant if they could obtain provisions at the village. "Go on," he replied, "and they will give you all that you desire, and are now preparing a warm supper for you." The Waldenses understood the hint, but kept on until within a mile and a half of a bridge that crossed the Doria, when they descried in the depth of the valley nearly forty camp fires burning. The Christians were in need of rest and food but, before they could obtain either, a fierce and unequal battle must be fought. They kept on, however, until the vanguard fell into an ambuscade, and a sharp firing of musketry awoke the echoes of the Alps. The intrepid Arnaud saw that a crisis had indeed come. Before him was a well-appointed French army, two thousand five hundred strong, and commanding a narrow bridge. Halting his tired column, he ordered them all to kneel, and there, in the still evening, he offered up prayer to the God of battles that he would save them from the destruction that seemed inevitable. Scarcely had the solemn prayer died away upon the evening air, before the rattling of arms was heard, and in one dense column, the exiles pressed straight for the bridge.

As they approached, the sentinels on the farther side cried out, "Qui vive!" to which the Waldenses replied, "Friends, if they are suffered to pass on!" Instantly the shout, "Kill them! kill them!" rang through the darkness, and then the order, "fire!" was heard along the ranks. In a moment, more than two thousand muskets opened on the bridge, and it rained a leaden storm its whole length and breadth. They expected, and rightly, that, under such a well-directed fire, the little band of exiles would be annihilated; and so they would have been but for the prudence and

foresight of their pastor and leader, Arnaud. Expecting such a reception, he had given orders that his followers, the moment they heard the word "fire" from the enemy, should fall on their faces. They obeyed him, and that fiery sleet went drifting wildly over their heads. For a quarter of an hour did these heavy volleys continue, enveloping that bridge in flame; yet, during the whole time, but one

Waldensian was wounded. At length, however, a firing was heard in the rear: the troops that had let them pass on the mountain in the morning, had followed after, on purpose to prevent their escape from the snare that had been set for them. Crushed between two powerful bodies of soldiers, with two thousand muskets blazing in their faces, and a narrow bridge before them, the case of the Wanderers seemed hopeless. Seeing that the final hour had come, Arnaud ordered hit followers to rise and storm the bridge. Then occurred one of those fearful exhibitions sometimes witnessed on a battle field. With one wild and thrilling shout, that little band precipitated itself forward. Through the devouring fire, over the rattling, groaning bridge, up to the intrenchments, and up to the points of the bayonets, they went in one resistless wave. Their deafening shouts drowned the roar in musketry and, borne up by that lofty enthusiasm which has made the hero in every age, they forget the danger before them. On the solid ranks they fell with such terror and suddenness, that they had not time even to flee. The enraged Waldenses seized them by the hair, and trampled them under foot; and with their heavy sabres cleaved them to the earth. The terrified French undertook to defend themselves with their muskets, and, as they interposed them between their bodies and the foe, the Waldensian sabres struck fire on the barrels till the sparks flew in every direction. The Marquis of Larry strove for a while to bear up against this overpowering onset; but, finding all was lost, he cried out, “Is it possible I have lost the battle and my honor?” and then exclaiming “Sauve qui peut!” turned and fled. That army of two thousand five hundred men then became a herd of fugitives in the darkness, mowed down at every step by the sword of the Waldensian. The slaughter was terrible, and the victory complete: all the baggage and stores were taken; and at length when the bright moon rose over the Alps, flooding the strange scene with light, Arnaud called his little band from the pursuit. Having supplied themselves with all the powder they wished, they gathered the rest together, and set fire to it. A sudden blaze revealed every peak and crag, and the entire field of death, with the brightness of noonday – followed by an explosion like the bursting of a hundred cannon, and which was heard nearly thirty miles in the mountains. A deep silence succeeded this strange uproar, and then Arnaud ordered all the trumpets to sound, then every man threw his hat into the air, and shouted, “Thanks to the Eternal of Armies, who hath given us the victory over our enemies!” That glorious shout was taken up and prolonged till the fleeing foe man heard it in the far mountain gorges.

The entire loss of the Waldenses in this bloody engagement did not reach thirty men, while the ground was cumbered with the dead bodies of the French. The latter had refused to destroy the bridge, and thus effectually arrest the progress of the exiles, because they wished to destroy them. But God had given them the victory, and their shout recalled to mind the ancient shout of Judah in battle.

That night, the tired Waldenses slept upon their arms on the bloody field they had won; and when the morning sun arose, there lay the wrecks of the fight on every side. In the midst of the trampled plain, they lifted their morning prayer and voice of renewed thanksgiving to Him who carried them in the hollow of his hand; and again took up the line of march

CHAPTER IV.

PERSECUTIONS OF THE WALDENSES

VALLEY OE PRAJELAS, OPPOSITE COL DU PIS. – MORNING AFTER THE BATTLE.

The glorious battle just mentioned, occurred on Saturday night, and the next (Sunday) morning, the weary but victorious exiles found themselves on the top of the mountain of SEI. For three days previous to the battle, they had been constantly on the march, drinking only water, and eating scarcely any thing, and hence, at the close of the engagement, felt the need of repose and food. But the routed enemy might rally, and reinforcements arrive to their aid, and the conquest, which had been so hardly won, wrested from their grasp; and so, guided by the glorious moon, they slowly began the ascent of the mountain. All night long they toiled up the steep acclivity, though numbers, overcome by fatigue, kept staggering from the line of march, and falling beside the rocks. Several were thus lost; and but for the rearguard, which kept rousing the sleepers, as the moonbeams revealed their dark forms on the mountain-side, many more would have perished. At length, the morning began to break in the east; at first a cold gray light, and then a rosy red, bathing the lofty Alpine peaks in the same ruddy hue. Oh! a sunrise in the Alps is glorious beyond description. How often I have stood mute and awe-struck to see the King of day slowly roll his blazing car over those giant forms of nature, and look with his regal eye on the deep valleys sleeping sweetly below! White snow-peaks and glaciers above, dark fir-trees midway, and the green vales beneath, with here and there an awful gorge that defies the daylight to reach its abysses, combine to form a scene that baffles description. All this burst on the wanderers, as they stood and leaned on their trusty muskets, and gazed below them. Yet the beauty and splendor unrolled before them were forgotten in the emotions of love and joy that found utterance in mingled tears and smiles and loud thanksgivings; for, as the mist rolled slowly upward, and the sunbeams flooded the earth, they saw the mountains that locked in their native homes. The hills of their boyhood – the hills their fathers had trod – the peaks that had ever risen before them in their dreams and their prayers, and towards which their eyes had been constantly strained through their long perilous march – the hills that surrounded their sanctuaries and their altars, at length stood clear and bold against the distant horizon. Arnaud stood a moment, and gazed with swelling heart on the scene; and then called all his followers about him, and pointing to their native fastnesses, bade them bless God for having brought them, as by a miracle, through so many perils and now permitted them to behold again the hills of their fatherland. He then knelt in their midst, and with uncovered head offered up a solemn thanksgiving to God. What a scene they presented on that mountain top in the early sunrise! Those men, who the night before had stormed so wildly through the battle, were now bent in humble prayer to the God who had led them safely on.

But though they had arrived at the borders of their own land, their perils were not over. Delays were dangerous; and before the sun had mounted far up the heavens, their long column might be seen winding down the breast of the mountain, directing its serpentine course towards the valley of Prajelas. Keeping on their march, they might be seen in the afternoon commencing the ascent of the Col du Pis. Suddenly, a company of dragoons came galloping along the road to intercept their march; but the firm presence of the Waldenses so awed them, that they retired without striking a blow. The next day –

Monday – they came upon a body of troops, drawn up in battle array, at the foot of the Col du Pis, ready to receive them. Arnaud immediately halted his feeble troops, and, gathering them around him, solemnly committed them and their cause to the God who had thus far befriended them. He then formed his band into three columns, and firmly began the ascent of the next mountain. The enemy, seeing the determination of the Waldenses, gave way, and the latter marched triumphantly forward.

For several days after, they met with more or less obstacles, but at length reached the valley of Paoli, where still stood one of their old churches. There the first public worship was performed in their march. A chapel which the Catholics had added to the church, was first set on fire, and all their religious emblems removed; and then Arnaud mounted a bench placed in the doorways and gave forth the seventy-fourth Psalm to be sung. Together those stern warriors chanted that touching complaint of David, commencing, “God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed,” &c. When they came to the passage, “let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name. Arise, God, plead thine own cause,” many an eye was filled with tears, and voices that had shouted steady and strong in the tumult of the fight, trembled with emotion. The glorious anthem rang through the Alpine valley as the hymns of the Waldenses rang of old, recalling their ancient worship, before the sword of the oppressor had driven them forth to eat the bitter bread of captivity.

After a short pause they again struck up, and sung the hundred and twenty-ninth Psalm: “Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say: many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me. The ploughers ploughed upon my back: they made long their furrows. The Lord is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked. Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion,” &c. After they had finished singing the Psalm, Arnaud preached in exposition of it. He showed how they had been afflicted, and sorely, like Zion of old – how the ploughers had ploughed upon their backs and trodden them down. He spoke of their long exile in other lands – their toils and hardships, until they were ready to weep anew over their misfortunes. But when he came to show how the Lord had “cut asunder the cords of the wicked,” and “turned back” those that “hated Zion,” every eye beamed with joy and triumph, and there hovered on every lip the shout that went up so loud from the bloody field of Salbertrann: “Thanks to the Eternal of Armies, who hath given us the victory.”

We cannot follow the Waldenses through all their difficulties, until they finally, as mentioned in a previous sketch, took possession of the vale of Bobi. They met with losses and some disasters, but never with a defeat; their enemies were turned back in every encounter.

Only one charge has been laid to the door of the Waldenses in this long and perilous march – that of cruelty to their captives. During the latter part of their expedition, they invariably put them to death. Whether they surrendered or were taken by force, it mattered not, they were slain without mercy. But it must be remembered this was not an act of vengeance, nor did it spring from that thirst of blood which has made so many tigers of the human species, but was an act of self-defence – of pure necessity. Few in number themselves, they could not be encumbered with prisoners, for the latter would soon out-number their captors. They could not turn them loose, for they would not only immediately arm again to oppose their progress, but convey to others that information on the concealment of which the salvation of the Waldenses depended. To set them free, was to secure their own destruction: and they could not confine them, for they had not a hut, much less a fortified place, they could call their own. It was a hard necessity, but one their enemies laid upon them. They could not have done otherwise, and

the poor victims were slain while crying for mercy. Shut out from all reinforcements, with no post to fall back upon, and no line of communication kept open between them and succor, they were forced to cut their way through to their possessions and homes with the sword, and right nobly did they do it. Their pastor, Arnaud, was afflicted with no childish squeamishness about shedding blood. He would pray with his face to the ground for the help of heaven, and then rise and rush to battle. He would send up his loud thanksgiving for deliverance, and then coolly slay his prisoners; and God heard him and sanctioned his course, and made him the founder again of his church in the Alps. He was a noble and great man. Far-reaching in his plans – clear in thought – correct in judgment – prompt and fearless in action – humble and devout in his religion, he excites our wonder and admiration, at the same time that he wins our love and sympathy. A man of peace, ignorant of arms, he yet withstood the King of France, then the terror of Europe, and put to flight his veteran troops. The hand of an overruling Providence is seen in all that transpired under his guidance. The Israelites never fought a battle in which the interposition of Heaven was more clearly seen than in that of Salbertrann. That eight hundred peasants should attack, in an entrenched position, and put to flight nearly three thousand regular troops, and in the open valley slay six hundred men, with a loss of only fifteen to themselves, is little less than miraculous. Equally so is the routing of twenty-two thousand French and Piedmontese by three hundred and sixty-seven Waldenses, just emerged, pale and thin, from six months' imprisonment. It is also a remarkable fact that the Lord preserved the grain upon the earth till mid-winter, so that the Waldenses could gather it for their preservation after they had got possession of their country. In those high latitudes and elevated regions, to see men harvesting grain in the dead of winter, instead of the height of summer, one is ready to believe it a miracle, as much so as the showers of manna that fell around the camp of Israel. We have omitted many things in our hurried sketches, lest we should seem too tedious. One more sketch will finish the series.

CHAPTER V.

PERSECUTIONS OF THE WALDENSES

SIEGE AND HEROIC DEFENCE OF BALSILLE.

We spoke in the last chapter of the safe return of the Waldenses to their native valleys. But though they had overcome all opposition, and again reared their altars in their ancient places, their troubles and dangers were not yet over. Their powerful enemies resolved to make one last great effort for their overthrow. For this purpose, the French king formed an alliance with the Duke of Savoy, and their combined troops, to the number of twenty-two thousand men, marched into the Waldensian country. Against this overwhelming force the pastor and leader, Arnaud, could muster but three hundred and sixty-seven men. Trusting, however, in that God who had thus far protected and saved him, he boldly resolved, with his mere handful of peasants, to withstand this army of veteran troops. It was useless to attempt an open warfare in the valleys, and to he withdrew his band to the impregnable rock of Balsille, and began to cast up intrenchments. This rock rises in the form of a cone, from the valley of Macel, or rather at the angle where two valleys unite. It consists of several precipices, rising one above another, whose edges are fringed with scattered pine-trees, that give a still greater wildness to the savage scene. The approach to it is through a fearful gorge, where a few brave men could keep at bay ten times their number. Into this fortress of nature the weary exiles cast themselves, with the stern resolve to conquer or leave their bones to be picked by the mountain vultures. Their case seemed a hopeless one, and their long journey and battles and hardships were apparently about to end in utter extermination. So confident were the enemy of victory, that they brought along executioners and halters, with which to hang up the captives.

What a sublime spectacle did that rock then present in the dead of winter! All over its massive form hung the snow-drifts, here and there relieved by the dark edge of a precipice, or the dwarf pine-trees that rocked and roared in the Alpine blast; while in caves they had excavated in the heart of the mountain – living on roots and herbs which they dug from under the snow – lay three hundred and sixty-seven brave Christians, ready to die for their altars and their homes. Like mere insects they hung along that precipitous height, while the thousands of their enemies were crowded in a dark mass below. Shut out from the world around them, exposed to all the severity of an Alpine winter, and all the horrors of famine, they dragged out the weary months, sustained by that lofty faith and heroism which have made the martyr and patriot of every age. But they were not idle; every precaution was taken and every defence made in their power. They dug

themselves eighty holes in the earth for houses, each surrounded with a gutter, to carry off the water, and then commenced their fortifications. On the Sabbath, they assembled on a small flat, near what was called the castle (the spot where they made their first stand), and had divine worship – Arnaud preaching them two sermons. Every week-day, also, he assembled them morning and evening for prayers. In the morning, at early daylight, these bold men would gather together, and, kneeling on the cold earth, with their heads bowed between their knees, listen reverently to the prayers of their pastor, and then seize the spade and axe and labor till night on the intrenchments. They made a succession of breastworks, seventeen in number, each higher up the rock than the other, so that when driven from one

they could retire to another, until they reached the sharp summit, where they had resolved one and all to die.

The French and soldiers of the Duke, when they saw how strongly the Waldenses were intrenched, hesitated to attack them, and finally contented themselves with hemming them in, hoping that the severe winter and famine would force them to surrender. But they bore their privations and sufferings without a murmur, and still clung to their dens amid the snow-drifts and cliffs of their mountain rock, with their first purpose to conquer or die.

At length, spring opened, and the enemy, seeing no prospect of discouraging or starving out the exiles, resolved to storm their intrenchments. So, on the Sabbath morning of the last of April, 1690, they put their troops in motion, and began to enter the defiles that led to the first barricade. There was but one way of access to the castle, as it was called, and that was by a torrent which had cut a natural passage through the rocks. This Arnaud's practised eye soon discovered, and he paid particular attention to it. He planted there strong palisades, working upon them with his own hands, and raised parapets of wall. He also laid down trees, with the bushy tops towards the enemy. On these he rolled a layer of rocks to keep them down, and on the rocks another layer of trees, and so on, until an almost insurmountable breastwork was reared. As the enemy approached, the Waldenses opened their fire with terrible effect which caused them to retire. At length it was resolved to pick out five hundred men, and with them carry the first barricade by assault.

In close and firm order this noble body of men, sustained by a still larger body of peasants, moved forward, under cover of a terrible snow-storm, which filled the air like a driving mist, until within close musket-shot, when they halted and delivered their fire, then with a loud shout sprang forward with the bayonet. They imagined they could pull away the trees by the topp, and thus open a passage, but the rocks held them fast. Thus brought breast to breast with the Waldenses, the fire of the latter could be delivered with horrible effect, as indeed it was. The muzzles of their guns almost touched the bosoms of their foes, and when the word "Fire!" rang along the breastwork, a volley opened that laid the front rank dead at its base. The second rank, however, stepped bravely in the blood of their comrades, and with loud huzzas pressed onward; but that same tempest of fire smote them down. The Waldenses were divided in two portions, one of which, in the rear, loaded the muskets, while those in front discharged them. This made the firing more constant and terrible – it was a continual blaze there in the snow-storm, and the air was filled with bullets, which rained in an incessant shower on the devoted heads of the assailants. The latter, however, bore bravely up till more than two-thirds of their entire number lay stretched on the rocks and amid the snow, and were still striving desperately to stem the fiery torrent, when the Waldenses sallied forth and fell on them with such fury, that all order was lost, and the fight became a slaughter. But a small band, without hats or arms, of all that brave detachment, were left to bear to the army the news of their sad overthrow, while not a single Waldensian was killed or wounded.

Darkness and the storm finally shut in the scene, and all was still save the groans of the wounded. The next morning Arnaud assembled his little band for prayers, and tears of joy accompanied their morning thanksgiving. After prayers, they cut off the heads of the dead, and stuck them on poles, which they planted on the palisades, to show the enemy that they had cut themselves loose from mercy, and neither asked nor expected pardon

The French, overwhelmed by this great disaster, broke up their encampment the next day, and retired over the borders of France. On that very day Arnaud preached a sermon, which was delivered and received with flowing tears.

But the enemy had not abandoned their designs, and on the 10th of May again marched back and invested the rock of Balsille. In long and glistening array the steady columns wound through the deep defiles, while the roll of a hundred drums and the prolonged blasts of the trumpet, made the rocks above the Waldenses ring with echoes. Having learned wisdom from their previous failure, the enemy advanced with more caution, and investing the place on every side, began to erect redoubts and mount their cannon. The batteries soon opened, and it rained an iron storm on the works of the Waldenses. Not satisfied with this, they made gradual approaches, by sending forward soldiers protected by fascines and sacks of wool, who erected parapets in closer proximity to the Waldenses. The latter, having no artillery, could not prevent these approaches, nor beat down the parapets when raised, and hence were compelled to witness the circle of fire growing narrower around them every day. They made sally after sally, but were compelled to retire before the superior force of their enemy. In a short time they found themselves entirely surrounded. The French commander having planted his cannon so as to completely uncover the Waldenses, hailed them through a trumpet and sent a flag of truce, offering them, in the name of the King of France, free permission to leave the country, if they would retire without further resistance. To this summons the Waldenses returned the following heroic reply: –

“Messieurs, the answer we have to make is, that not being subjects of the French King, and that monarch not being master of this country, we cannot treat with any of your gentlemen; and being in the heritages which our fathers have left us from time out of mind, we hope, by the help of Him who is the God of hosts, to live in them and die in them, one and all, even though there should be but ten of us left. If your cannon fire, our rocks will not be frightened at it, and we will hear them roar.”

Bravely said, bold exiles! the God of hosts will help, and send deliverance.

The cannon then opened with a terrific uproar, together with the small arms, till that old rock trembled under the incessant explosions. Still, the Waldenses did not shrink from their high purpose, and replied with their feeble volleys. Before noon, the French had fired a hundred and fourteen rounds of artillery, and a hundred thousand musket-shots. The feeble intrenchments of the Waldenses melted away like frost-work before this tremendous fire. Huge gaps were opened in the walls, and the next day was fixed upon by the enemy for a grand assault, at three different points. Arnaud saw at a glance that his feeble band could not, in their uncovered state, sustain a general assault, and so ordered them to retire by night to an intrenchment farther up the rock. This, however, was found to be impossible for the French had completely hemmed them in. There was but one way of escape, and that was down the mountain over a frightful precipice, and within sure striking distance of the enemy’s guards. It was impossible to carry out their first resolution and make their last desperate stand on the top of the rock, for the enemy had got possession of it above their heads.

Thus encompassed and uncovered, they could only turn to the God who had thus far defended them; and again He appeared for their deliverance by sending at night a dense fog which completely concealed the movements of the besieged. Under cover of it they filed out of their intrenchments, and began to slide down the precipices. If, for a moment, the fog lifted before the night wind, they would fall flat on their faces till it again settled on the breast of the mountain. With their shoes off to deaden the sound, and at the same time make secure their footing, they made their perilous way, now letting themselves down a ledge, and now crawling through a ravine, and at times so near to the sentinels that the slightest motion of the latter could be distinctly heard. At length one of the Waldenses let a kettle drop from his hand, and roll down the precipice. As it went jingling and rattling by a sentinel, he exclaimed, “Who goes there?” but the kettle making no reply, and soon ceasing its noise altogether, he turned again to his drowsy watch. The fugitives in the mean time had descended into the ravine at the

bottom, and by steps cut in the snow ascended the opposite precipice; and when the fog lifted before the morning sun and rolled away over the Alpine heights, the French commander saw with indignation and astonishment the little band he had made such immense sacrifices to capture winding rapidly around the crest of the opposite mountain. He immediately ordered out a detachment in pursuit, but the prey had escaped.

Various skirmishes after this occurred between the Waldenses and detachments of the French; but at length the Duke of Savoy quarreling with the King of France, the former sought the aid of his subjects whom he had persecuted and driven from their homes. The Waldenses received his proposals of an alliance with joy, and fought as bravely under their unjust prince as they had done for themselves. As a reward for their services, their country was restored to them. Still, as Protestants, they were subjected to various restrictions, and burdened down with heavy taxes.

When Bonaparte undertook the conquest of Piedmont, they rallied bravely around their prince, and were the last to yield. Notwithstanding their stubborn resistance, Bonaparte, after his conquest, removed all the odious restrictions under which they had suffered, abolished the tax for the support of the Catholic priesthood, and let them appropriate their funds for the support of their own pastors, and gave them every right guaranteed to a Catholic subject. After his downfall, they sunk under their old oppression, in which they languish at they present day.

Thus have we gone over a few of the most striking incidents in the Waldensian history. Every candid reader must acknowledge that it is marked by extra-ordinary events, such as have attended no people since the Israelites performed their miraculous journey to the land of Canaan.

THE MUSIC OF ITALY.

Italy has long enjoyed, par excellence, the title of “the land of song;” and it richly merits it. It stands alone in this respect among the nations of the earth, civilized and uncivilized, and we venture to say no one thinks of it as the home of the arts, without thinking of it at the same time as the home of song. From our childhood its blue heavens and its gay-hearted music have been blended together in our fancy. That beautiful peninsula has seemed a sort of embodied opera in the bosom of the Mediterranean. Men have attempted to account for both its taste and talent for music on philosophical principles. One tells us that the fine arts are a bright sisterhood, growing up together. But the fine arts flourished in Greece without making it, even in a limited sense, a “land of song.” Another points us to its warm and beautiful climate, softening and refining the character, so that it naturally loves and appreciates the “concord of sweet sounds.” But we have as mild a climate, and as voluptuous an atmosphere on our side of the water, yet they produce no such effect. Beings as dark-eyed and passionate as the Italian maid, dwell in our Mexican States, but the power, if not the spirit, of song is absent. We think it is owing in part to the language itself; flowing with vowels, and its very movement suggestive of melody, nay, melody itself. A stronger and more matter-of-fact reason is found in habit. One nation becomes commercial, another military, and a third scientific and philosophical. Accidental circumstances, or the influence of a single man may have set the current of national feeling and taste in a particular direction, so strong as to wear a deep channel, in which they must for ever flow, unless some violent upheaving change the bed of the stream. This national habit changes the very

conformation of the body from childhood. The organs of music are moulded into shape at the outset. This is the reason that a “musical talent,” as it is called, is usually found running through an entire family. The first efforts of the child are to utter melody, and he will succeed, of course, just as he would if attempting to learn a foreign language.

Nowhere is music so spontaneous and voluntary as in Italy, and nowhere is it studied with such untiring and protracted effort. We might except the Germans here, who, perhaps, are as great composers as the Italians. But there is no song in the stern old saxon heart. The sudden and exciting transitions of music are not found in their character. The free and fountain-like gushings forth of feeling in an Italian render him peculiarly fitted to enjoy and utter music, though we think this very trait in his character was formed in the first place by music. They have re-acted on each other, making both the Italian and his music what they are.

It is a singular fact that the best singers of Italy come from the northern provinces. The people of the south are more fiery and passionate, yet less distinguished for music, than those of the north. Nothing strikes the traveler in Italy with more force, or lives in his memory longer, than the gay street-singing of the lower classes, yet one hears little of this in Home or Naples. There is a sombre aspect on old Rome, taken from its silent, haughty ruins, giving apparently a coloring to the feelings of the people. The gay, light-hearted Neapolitan seems too gay for music – like the French, his spirits burst out in action. The Piedmontese are for ever singing, while Genoa is the only Italian city over which our memory lingers ever fresh and ever delighted. There is not a moonlight night in which its old palaces do not ring with the song of the strolling sailor-boy or idle lounger. The rattling of wheels seldom disturbs the quietness of the streets, while the lofty-walls of the palaces confine and prolong the sound like the roof of a cavern. The narrow winding passages now shut in the song till only a faint and distant echo is caught, and now let it forth in a full volume of sound, ever changing like the hues of feeling. Hours and hours have we lain awake, listening to these thoughtless serenaders, who seemed singing solely because the night was beautiful. You will often hear voices of such singular power and melody ringing through the clear atmosphere that you imagine some professional musicians are out on a serenade to a “fayre ladye.” But when the group emerges into the moonlight, you see only three or four coarse-clad creatures, evidently from the very lowest class, sauntering along, arm in arm, singing solely because they prefer it to talking. And, what is still more singular, you never see three persons, not even boys, thus singing together, without carrying along three parts. The common and favorite mode is for two to take two different parts, while the third, at the close of every strain, throws in a deep bass chorus. You will often hear snatches from the most beautiful operas chanted along the streets by those from whom you would expect nothing but obscene songs. This spontaneous street-singing charms us more than the stirring music of a full orchestra. It is the poetry of the land – one of its characteristic features – living in the memory years after every thing else has faded. We like, also, those much-abused hand organs, of every description, greeting you at every turn. They are out of place in our thronged and noisy streets, but in Italy you could not do without them. They are the operas of the lazzaroni and children, and help to fill up the picture. Passing once through a principal business street of Genoa, we heard at a distance a fine, yet clear and powerful voice, that at once attracted our attention. On approaching, we found it proceeded from a little blind boy not over eight years of age. He sat on the stone pavement, with his back against an old palace, pouring forth song after song with astonishing strength and melody. As we threw him his penny, we could not help fancying how he would look sitting in Broadway, with his back to the Astor House, and attempting to throw his clear, sweet voice over the rattling of omnibuses and carriages that kept even the earth in a constant tremor.

I will say nothing of the Italian opera, with its well-trained and powerful orchestra, and wonderful cantatrice, for it is impossible to describe its effect on the people. But no one has heard a Grisi, or Albertazzi, or Clara Novello, with their clear and thrilling voices riding high and serene over an orchestra in full blast, pouring strain after strain of maddening melody on the excited throng, till it trembled like a smitten nerve, without feeling that music had a power unknown to them before.

But to know the full effect of song and scenery together, one must hear the chanting of the Miserere in the Sistine Chapel of St. Peter's. That the pope should select the best singers of the world for this service is not strange, but that he should with these be able to produce the effect he does, is singular. The night on which our Saviour is supposed to have died is selected for this service. The Sistine Chapel is divided into two parts by a high railing, one-half being given to the spectators, and the other half reserved for the pope, his cardinals, and the choir. The whole is dimly lighted, to correspond with the gloom of the scene shadowed forth. This dim twilight, falling over the motionless forms of priest, and monk, and cardinal, and the lofty frescoed arches, together with the awful silence that seemed hanging like a pall over all the scene, heightened inconceivably the effect to us.

The ceremonies commenced with the chanting of the Lamentations. Thirteen candles, in the form of an erect triangle, were lighted up in the beginning, representing the different moral lights of the ancient church of Israel. One after another was extinguished as the chant proceeded, until the last and brightest one at the top, representing Christ, was put out. As they one by one slowly disappeared in the deepening gloom, a blacker night seemed gathering over the hopes and fate of man, and the lamentation grew wilder and deeper. But as the Prophet of prophets, the Light, the Hope of the world, disappeared, the lament suddenly ceased. Not a sound was heard amid the deepening gloom. The catastrophe was too awful, and the shock too great to admit of speech. He who had been pouring his sorrowful notes over the departure of the good and great, seemed struck suddenly dumb at this greatest woe. Stunned and stupefied, he could not contemplate the mighty disaster. I never felt a heavier pressure on my heart than at this moment. The chapel was packed in every inch of it, even out of the door far back into the ample hall, and yet not a sound was heard. I could hear the breathing of the mighty multitude, and amid it the frequent half-drawn sigh. Like the chanter, each man seemed to say, "Christ is gone, we are orphans – all orphans!"

The silence at length became too painful. I thought I should shriek out in agony, when suddenly a low wail, so desolate and yet so sweet, so despairing and yet so tender, like the last strain of a broken heart, stole slowly out from the distant darkness and swelled over the throng, that the tears rushed unbidden to my eyes, and I could have wept like a child in sympathy. It then died away, as if the grief were too great for the strain. Fainter and fainter, like the dying tone of a lute, it sunk away, as if the last sigh of sorrow was ended – when suddenly their burst through the arches a cry so piercing and shrill that it seemed not the voice of song, but the language of a wounded and dying heart in its last agonizing throb. The multitude swayed to it like the forest to the blast. Again it ceased, and the broken sobs of exhausted grief alone were heard. In a moment the whole choir joined their lament, and seemed to weep with the weeper. After a few notes they paused again, and that sweet, melancholy voice mourned on alone. Its note is still in my ear. I wanted to see the singer. It seemed as if such sounds could come from nothing but a broken heart. Oh! how unlike the joyful, the triumphant anthem that swept through the same chapel on the morning that symbolized the resurrection.

There is a story told of this Miserere, for the truth of which we can only refer to rumor. It is said that the Emperor of Austria sent to the pope for a copy of the music, so that he could have it performed in his own cathedral. It was sent, as requested, but the effect of the performance was so indifferent that the

emperor suspected a spurious copy had been imposed on him, and he wrote to His Holiness, intimating as much, and hinting also that he would find it for his interest to send him a true copy. The pope wrote back that the music he had sent him was a genuine copy of the original, but that the little effect produced by it, was owing to the want of the scenery, circumstances, &c, under which it was performed in St. Peter's. It may be so. The singer, too, is doubtless more than half. The power of a single voice is often wonderful. We remember an instance of this on Easter Sunday, as the procession was moving up and down the ample nave of St. Peter's, carrying the pope on their shoulders as they moved. In the procession was a fat stout monk, from the north of Italy, who sung the bass to the chant with which the choir heralded the approach of His Holiness. A band of performers, stationed in a balcony at the farther end of the church, was in full blast at the time, yet over it, and over the choir, and up through the heaven-seeking dome, that single voice swelled clear and distinct, as if singing alone. It filled that immense building, through which were scattered nearly thirty thousand people, as easily as a common voice would fill an ordinary room.

Improvising is not what it formerly was in Italy, or else Madame de Stael has most grievously drawn on her imagination in her delineation of Corinna. I heard an improvisatrice sing in Rome to a small audience in the theatre Argentina. An urn had been left at the door in which any one who wished dropped a slip of paper, with the subject he wished improvised written upon it. I sat all on the qui vive, waiting her appearance, expecting to see enter a tail, queenly beauty, with the speaking lip and flashing eye, uttering poetry even in their repose. I expected more, from the fact that these inspired birds are getting rare even in Italy, and this was the second opportunity there had been to hear one in Rome during the winter. At length she appeared; a large, gross-looking woman, somewhere between thirty-five and fifty, and as plain as prose. She ascended the platform, somewhat embarrassed, and sat down. The urn was handed her, from which she drew by chance, seven or eight papers, and read the subjects written upon them. They were a motley mass enough to turn into poetry in the full tide of song. However, she started off boldly, and threw off verse after verse with astonishing rapidity. After she had finished one topic, she would sit down and wipe the perspiration from her forehead, while a man, looking more like Bacchus than Ganymede, would hand her a cup of nectar, in the shape of coffee, which she coolly sipped in presence of the audience. Having taken breath, she would read the next topic and start off again. Between each effort came the coffee. Some of the subjects staggered her prodigiously. The "spavined dactyls" would not budge an inch, and she would stop – smite her forehead – go back – take a new start, and try to spur over the chasm with a boldness which half redeemed her failures. Sometimes it required three or four distinct efforts before she could clear it. I will do her the justice to say, however, that her powers of versification were in some instances almost miraculous. She would glide on without a pause, minding the difficulties of rhyme and rythm no more than Apollo himself. Columbus was one of the topics given her, and she burst forth (I give the sentiment only), "Who is he that with pallid countenance and neglected beard enters, sad and thoughtful, through the city gates? The crowd gaze on him, as, travel-worn and weary, he passes along, and ask, 'Who is he?' 'Christopher Columbus' is the answer. They turn away, for it is a name unknown to fame." Then with a sudden fling she changed the measure; and, standing on the bow of his boat, flag in hand, the bold adventurer strikes the beach of a New World. The change from the slow, mournful strain she first pursued, to the triumphant, bounding measure on which the boat of the bold Italian met the shore, was like an electric shock, and the house rung with "Brava! Brava!" But, alas! there was no Corinna there.

Italy is the land of song, and it flows from the people like the wine from their vineyards; but there is one constant draw-back to one's feelings – it is made an article of merchandise. The thought that half

the time money is the inspiration, kills the sentiment, and we turn away but half gratified. On this account, I love the less musical, but more spontaneous songs of the peasantry amid their vineyards.

A MAN BUILT IN A WALL.

Florence, May, 1843.

The day I entered this city was one of the festive days of the church. Leaving Arezzo the previous afternoon later than we ought, we were compelled to stop for the night at a country inn entirely removed from any settlement, and with no house in sight of it. It was growing dusk as we drove up, and the lonely inn, though not particularly inviting, seemed preferable to the uninhabited road that stretched away on the farther side. Every thing was in primitive style; the stables were on the first floor, at the foot of the stairs leading to the second story, and the horses slept below while we slept above. As we went down we saw them standing by the manger, just where the bar-room should have been, quietly put away for the night.

Having obtained some honey, my invariable resort in wretched inns in Italy, I made my simple meal and strolled out into the moonlight to breathe the fresh air. On the hills, in the distance, a bonfire suddenly blazed up, before which dusky figures were rapidly passing and repassing. On inquiry, I found that it was kindled in honor of the approaching festivity, and that music and dancing would be in the peasant's cottage that night. I do not know why it is, but a mirthful scene in a strange country among the peasantry brings back the memory of home sooner than any thing else. There is a freshness, a sincerity about it that reminds one of his childhood years and makes the heart sad. It was so with me that night. Every thing was quiet as the moonlight on the hills, and the stillness of nature seemed filled with sad memories. I retired to my bed, but not to sleep; the busy brain and busier heart drove slumber away. At length there grew a sense of pleasure in my bosom, and I rose and opened the window and leaned out into the cool air for relief. All was quiet, within and without. The stars were burning on in the deep heavens, and the moon was hanging her crescent far away over the hills. The distant bonfire burned low and feebly, for the revelers had left it. The heavy breathing of my companion, in the next room, spoke of oblivion and rest, while my own loud pulses told how little sleep would be mine that night. Memories came thronging back like forgotten music, and the sternness of the man and the indifference of the traveler melted away before the feelings of the child, the son, and the early dreamer. As I stood, looking off on the sparkling light and deep shadows of the uneven surface before me, suddenly from out a grotto of trees, whose tops alone the moonbeams could find, came the clear voice of a nightingale. It was like the voice of a spirit to me – so strange and mysterious. Unconscious of any listener, it looked out from its thick curtain of leaves and sang on to the moon. Its wild warble was like the murmur in one's dreams, and the music seemed half repressed in its trembling throat. I listened as it rose and died away and rose again, till I felt that the sweet bird was singing in its happy dreams. How long I listened I know not, and what the strange fancies that spellbound me were I cannot tell.

* * * * * * The morning came, and we started for Florence. While the driver was harnessing his team, I set off on foot and walked on for miles, while the quietness around was disturbed only by the mournful cry of the cuckoo. We at length entered upon the Val d'Arno, and wound along its beautiful banks. In the distance on the right, was the Vallambrosa, immortalized by Milton, and the convent in which he dwelt. The scenery changed with every turn of the river, yet it was ever from beautiful to beautifu .

At length we entered the little town of San Giovanni (St. John), and, after strolling over the Cathedral, sent for the woman who keeps the key of the door that shuts over the withered form of a man cased in the church wall of San Lorenzo.

As the door swung open I recoiled a step in horror, for there stood, upright, a human skeleton, perfect in all its parts, staring upon me with its dead eye-sockets. No coffin inclosed it, no mason-work surrounded it, but among the naked jagged stones it stood erect and motionless.

This church had been built centuries ago, and had remained untouched till within a few years, when in making some repairs the workmen had occasion to pierce the wall, and struck upon this skeleton. They uncovered it, and the priests have let it stand unmolested. A narrow door has been made to swing over it, to protect it from injury and shield it from the eyes of those who worship in the church. The frame indicates a powerful man, and though it is but a skeleton, the whole attitude and aspect give one the impression of a death of agony. The arms are folded across the breast in forced resignation, the head is slightly bowed, and the shoulders elevated, as if in the effort to breathe, while the very face – bereft of muscle as it is – seemed full of suffering. An English physician was with me, and, inured to skeletons as he was, his countenance changed as he gazed on it. His eyes seemed riveted to it, and he made no reply to the repeated questions I put him, but kept gazing, as if in a trance. It was not till after we left that he would speak of it, and then his voice was low and solemn, as if he himself had seen the living burial. Said he, “That man died by suffocation, and he was built up alive in that wall. In the first place it is evident it was a case of murder, for there are no grave-clothes, no coffin, and no mason-work around the body. The poor civility of a savage was not shown here, in knocking off the points of the stones, to give even the appearance of regularity to the inclosure. He was packed into the rough wall, and built over, beginning at the feet. It is extremely difficult to tell any thing of the manner of death, whether painful or pleasant, by any skeleton, for the face always has the appearance of suffering; but there are certain indications about this which show that the death was a painful one, and caused, doubtless, by suffocation. In the first place, the arms are not crossed gently and quietly in the decent composure of death, but far over, as with a painful effort or by force. In the second place, the shoulders are elevated, as if the last, strong effort of the man was for breath. In the third place, the bones of the toes are curled over the edge of the stone on which he stands, as if contracted in agony when life parted. And,” continued the doctor, with true professional detail, “he died hard, for he was a powerful man. He was full six feet high, with broad chest and shoulders, and strongly limbed.” I knew all this before, for I felt it. There was no mistaking the manner of that man’s death. I could tell every step of the process. Doubtless there was originally some hanging or church furniture in this part of the church, to conceal the displacement of the wall. In a dark night the unfortunate man was entrapped, bound, and brought into this temple, where he first could be tortured to death, and then the crime concealed. Men of rank were engaged in it, for none other could have got the control of a church, and none but a distinguished victim could have caused such great precaution in the murderers. By the dim light of lamps, whose rays scarcely reached the lofty ceiling, the stones were removed before the eyes of the doomed man, and measurement after measurement taken, to see if the aperture were sufficiently large. A bound and helpless victim, he lay on the cold pavement, with the high altar and cross before him, but no priest to shrive him. Stifling in pride the emotions that checked his very sighs, he strung every nerve for the slow death he must meet. At length the opening was declared large enough, and he was lifted into it. The workman began at his feet, and with his mortar and trowel built up with the same carelessness he would exhibit in filling any broken wall. The successful enemy stood leaning on his sword – a smile of scorn and revenge on his features – and watched the face of the man he hated, but no longer feared. Ah, it was a wild effort that undertook to return glance for glance and scorn for scorn,

when one was the conquered and helpless victim and the other the proud and victorious foe! It was slow work fitting the pieces nicely, so as to close up the aperture with precision. The tinkling of the trowel on the edges of the stones, as it broke off here and there a particle to make them match, was like the blow of a hammer on the excited nerves of the half-buried wretch. At length the solid wall rose over his chest, repressing its effort to lift with the breath, when a stifled groan for the first time escaped the sufferer's lips, and a shudder ran through his frame that threatened to shake the solid mass which inclosed it to pieces. Yet up went the mason-work till it reached the mouth, and the rough fragment was jammed into the teeth and fastened there with mortar – and still rose, till nothing but the pale, white forehead was visible in the opening. With care and precision the last stone was fitted in the narrow space – the trowel passed smoothly over it – a stifled groan, as if from the centre of a rock, broke the stillness – one strong shiver and all was over. The agony had passed – revenge was satisfied, and a secret locked up for the great revelation day. Years rolled by; one after another of the murderers dropped into his grave, and the memory of the missing man passed from the earth. Years will still roll by, till this strong frame shall step out from its narrow inclosure upon the marble pavement, a living man.

Absorbed in the reflections such a sight naturally awakens, I rode on, for a long time unconscious of the scenery around me, and of the murmur of the Arno on its way through the valley. But other objects at length crowded off the shadow on the spirit; the day wore away, and at last, after ascending a long and weary mountain, Florence, with its glorious dome, and the whole vale of the Arno, rich as a garden, lay below us. Past smiling peasants, and vine-covered walls, we trotted down into the valley and entered the city.

THE NEW YEAR'S THRESHOLD.

The threshold of a New Year is a pausing spot in man's existence, where he can scan the past and ponder the future. Up to this threshold the old year comes, and gazing for a moment on the future, which it cannot enter, it turns away to lie down with the years that nave already marched round the earth. As we look on its retiring form, we see its giant shadow flung over the past, as it slowly sinks into its grave to wait its resurrection with "the years beyond the flood." While we look and muse, the New Year approaches fresh from the hand of Time, with its brow unscarred and unwrinkled by the months that must leave their furrows there; and with an eye bright with the light of hope and promise, extends its welcome hand to the weary generations that come to meet it.

Say what men will of life, the voice of the New Year is cheerful and congratulatory. The Old Year is sad with memories – the New cheerful with hope, and with the same spirit and the same cheerfulness do we extend the hand to our friends, and echo its voice of congratulation – reiterate its words of promise. There is "a time to weep and a time to laugh," and if one spot in our existence is more proper than any other for the former, it is when we bury the Old Year. The monuments that line its pathway stand over lost friends, disappointed hopes and broken promises. There is also the good that could have been done and was not – the error committed that can never be recalled – the pleasure we received gone with the objects that created it, – and the hours that we squandered, lost beyond the power of redemption, and why should we not be sad? But as we turn to the New Year, we may smile at its words of

encouragement. Its lap is full of blessings, and life again offers us the power of accomplishing good. With our animosities buried, our errors regretted and repented of, we may start with fresh resolutions and fresh encouragements. We can, if we will, help the weary, feed the hungry, cheer the lonely-hearted, brighten the hut of poverty, and turn the erring and the wicked to paths of truth and happiness. The warm grasp of those we love tells of the pleasures of friendship that are in store, while the glad countenances about us are but indices of the blessings with which the year promises to strew our way. These gifts are to be taken to our bosoms with hope, in order to strengthen us for the struggles we are to enter upon. Cheerful hope is as powerful an ally as stern resolve in accomplishing good both to ourselves and others, therefore let the heart brighten up with the encouraging words the New Year whispers in our ears. Besides, the plans of Deity are to move on towards their consummation, and we are reserved to aid their progress and receive in our own hearts the reward of doing good. The weary earth staggers blindly on in its path, yet each year breaks one of the links of its fetters, lightens up one new star in its heaven, and sends it one step farther on towards the paradise it lost. All hail, then, the New Year, with its untried scenes and new experiences!

Still it is with thoughtful feelings we should cast our eye before us. The great things of this life do not happen in cycles but in single years. In a single year the flood swept world, and a new year rose on a buried race and a new earth. In a single year the Son of God was born on the plains of Asia. Within each year transpire all the events that go to make up the history of man. In some single year have occurred all the famines and pestilences and earthquakes that have swept men into eternity. In a single year did Christ die to redeem a world. In a single year has each man entered upon his changeless state. If, then, in some one year all the great events of life have transpired, and all that makes it solemn to us will transpire, how appropriate to make the threshold of the New Year a breathing spot – a thinking place in our feverish and hurried existence. As we pass through time, it is to us as if a bell was suspended in the dome of the vast sky. Through the revolving year it hangs motionless and silent, but as the year departs it swings, sending its deep and solemn peal round the wide earth echoing “A year has fled!”

– – “As if an angel spoke,
I hear the solemn sound.”

It is a signal demanding despatch; causing man’s hopes and fears to start up from their repose, and amid the brightness and blessings of an opening year, bidding him be thoughtful in his rejoicings. The New Year also bids man remember that nothing is permanent here – that “there is nothing constant but change.” The year is made up of revolving seasons – the weeks of successive days and nights, and alternate sunshine and storm. Every thing, like Ixion’s wheel, keeps turning, turning, – or, like the shadows of night, changing, changing. The moon keeps rolling, the earth revolving, and the sun itself with all its family of worlds, is passing onward through the heavens with each revolving year, to – God alone knows where. The stars, those bright records of the sky, that seem to retain the same place from age to age, are also in motion, and each year approach nearer the fulfilment of their destiny. The whole universe, like a single orb, is probably in motion, and like a single engine striking continually for the fulfilment of the plans of its Creator. From this law of change man is not exempt. His body is not the same for two successive hours; his whole life is a history of changes, the last of which removes him beyond observation. The greatest events of life are not tumultuous and alarming to the outward senses. The uproar of battle – the sound of falling armies – the terror of the advancing earthquake, and all the din and jar of outward life, are not, after all, the solemnities of life. The changes that ought to arrest thought and awaken emotion are unobtrusive and noiseless as a passing breath. The old year dies

without a struggle, and the new year is born in silence. “We see not the threshold over which we step, or the responsibilities on which we are to enter. The change that passes over us with the new life that is begun, as well as the change that has passed over all the plans of Deity from their progress, are not seen and cannot be felt, unless the soul will stop to think of itself, and of the life that is fluctuating around it.

The New Year also should remind us that the number of years is limited, and their solemn revolution is soon to cease. Soon the archangel who stands and gazes on the dial’s face, which yonder stands before the Sun of Righteousness, and

“Computes
Times, seasons, years, destinies,
And slowly numbers o’er the mighty cycles
Of Eternity –

shall see the last ray that falls on “the gnomon of Time,” and seizing his trumpet and sending its rapid blast over the earth, shall swear that “ Time shall be no longer.”

The threshold of the New Year is a thoughtful place, full of hope and promise, but full of reflection too. It bids man “throw empires away and be blameless,” but none squander his hours.

I asked an aged man, with hoary hair, as he stood trembling between two years, what was time? – “Time (he replied) is the warp of life; oh tell the young and gay to weave it well.”

The New Year speaks also of a resurrection. When changes shall cease, and Time, which is the last thing that dies, shall cease to be, the true life of man begins. As from the grave of the Old, the New Year arises, so from the grave of Time itself shall the spirit of man ascend to a life that is permanent as the throne it surrounds. Amid the changes and losses and disappointments and discouragements that envelope and confuse us here, this thought comes like the Saviour’s voice over the turbulent waters of Galilee, saying, “Peace, be still” – “there is a birth which never dies, a promise which never disappoints, and a life which never ends.”

JOHN HOWARD.

In looking across the plain of human life, we behold at rare intervals forms rising so far above the common surface, that they seem to stand on an entirely different basis from the mass below, and to feel none of the mutations that agitate it. A great military leader, who lived apparently above the power of fate, and whose life was a succession of almost miraculous achievements – a genius whose creations and thoughts betokened an origin different from ordinary mortals – a prophet whose strains sounded more of heaven than of earth – a philanthropist whose freedom from earthly passions and desires, and whose life of self-sacrifice showed that he dwelt in a different region, and breathed a different atmosphere from those around him, – rise in groups, or at long distances apart, so far above their fellows, that it is hard to measure them by the same standard. They are the earthly gods whom men worship. They are the great leaders around whom the world groups itself, led by taste or education to one or the other. But there are more heroes and geniuses than prophets and philanthropists. The physical and mental man rises to perfection oftener than the moral. Great and transcendent virtue is of

rarer exhibition than great talents. The stimulus of ambition and the excitements of outward life, lay a stronger grasp on men than the still small voice of conscience, or the commands of God. Hence the almost solitary eminence, which Howard occupies.

It is a curious road through prisons to greatness, and lazar-houses to immortality – a road never before traveled by a mere mortal, and which furnished no stimulants except such as an angel might feel. The muffled tread of legions at his heels, and the blasts of trumpets did not urge him on. The shout of gazing nations and the triumphs of power did not await him. He saw no expectant crowds in advance eager to welcome him with honors – no wreaths, no wealth, no ease. Nothing, nothing hurried him through the damp dungeon, and pestiferous air of the lazaretto, but the warm impulses of a noble heart, and the approving smile of Heaven. Not up above the heads of men, but deep down amid their graves and rejected spots he moved. He might have labored for man's welfare – relieved the sick, helped the poor, delivered the oppressed, – nay, devoted his whole life to doing good, and still lived amid his friends, surrounded with all the comforts of life. But he chose not only to renounce these, but to brave the loathsome vapors of the dungeon, and the air of the pest-house, – to move amid the arrows of death, and tread for ever on the crumbling edge of his own grave.

It is a little singular, that both the birth-place and birth-year of Luther and Howard should be a matter of conjecture. Leaving a reputation wide as the world, and which will descend to remotest time, they still do not allow us to fix with certainty on any spots as their natal places, in order to make them "Meccas of the mind," or any years to remember as great anniversaries. It is well, perhaps, it is so, for they belong to no year and no place; but to the world and the race.

Howard's father was a merchant of London, and having amassed a fortune, retired from business and took up his residence in the country. Here the young Howard passed his early boyhood. There was nothing in his education or behaviour to distinguish him from ordinary boys. Having acquired an education not superior, perhaps, to that obtained in our ordinary academies, he was bound apprentice to a firm in London preparatory to a mercantile life, to which he was destined by his father.

But after a few years the father died, and the son found himself in possession of about thirty-five thousand dollars in money, and a large landed estate. He immediately retired from business; and being feeble in health, resolved on a continental tour. Nothing is known of this part of his career, and after a year or two he returned still an invalid, and took up his residence in the country. Simple and abstemious in his habits, he passed his days among his books, or in strolls about the country.

At this time, in addition to his consumptive tendency, he was seized with a nervous fever, which completely broke down the little remaining constitution he possessed. Not thinking his landlady treated him kindly and justly, he changed his residence, and went to live with a widow of fifty-two. Nursed kindly and tenderly by her, through his long and tedious illness, he at length rallied, and, as a token of his gratitude, offered her his hand and fortune. He would not listen to her objections; and the young heir of twenty-six became the husband of the poor widow of fifty-two.

She lived, however, not quite three years, and the young widower, left alone in the world, determined to travel again, and embarked for Lisbon, which had just been buried by an earthquake. The vessel, however, in which he sailed, was captured by the French, and he, with the rest of the crew and passengers, was carried into Brest, and thrown into a miserable dungeon, and left almost to starve amid its filth and darkness. Here commenced his first experience of a prison life, and it was one well calculated to make an impression upon him.

I do not design to write his biography. He returned to England, settled down at Cardington, and having married a young and lovely wife, divided his time between the cultivation of his grounds, his books, and his numerous tenants. He built new cottages, established schools, and scattered happiness and blessings on every side. The strong and active benevolence of the man here began to develop itself, and that tender conscience and high sense of duty which afterwards bore him above every obstacle, and carried him triumphantly through his work of mercy to the captive.

In his elegant home, made still more beautiful by the presence of an amiable wife whom he loved with all the strength of his pure nature, with ample means to gratify all his wants, his life promised to be one of quiet happiness. He had erected his Penates, and thinking only of doing good in the narrow sphere of his own county, seemed destined to an unobtrusive useful life, and a peaceful death among those he loved. But the death of his second wife crushed at one blow the beautiful fabric his imagination had reared around his home. Stricken to the earth by the overwhelming calamity, and broken in health, he sought amid change of scenery to relieve the pressure that was on both body and soul, and once more turned his face towards Italy. Returning to England still an invalid, he revisited his desolate home.

But his great sorrow resulted in incalculable good to the world. It deepened his religious convictions – cut him loose from those attractions which had bound him to a single spot, and consecrated him to the great work he afterwards accomplished. He commenced visiting the prisons of his neighborhood, and when afterwards appointed sheriff, he extended his investigations till he had visited nearly every prison of England. The haggard faces of captives immured in loathsome dungeons, the cruelty, injustice, and degradation, which every where met his eye, aroused all the sympathy of his noble nature. His reports, printed at his own expense, awakened universal interest, and his self-denying labors, unbounded admiration. He was now fairly launched on his great mission, and here-after national limits were not to bind his large benevolence. The “prisons of Europe” he placed before him, and into their revolting and dangerous depths he resolved to plunge, and bring to light the horrors and sufferings they concealed. From the contemplation of such a work, the strongest mind might well turn with a shudder. While England was ringing with the fame of the greatest man it has ever produced, and Europe was shaking to the tread of armies, this solitary man, laying aside the comforts of his home, forsaking all the paths of ambition, renouncing the comforts of wealth, goes meekly and alone into the silent prison-world. Unasked, unwelcomed, unrewarded, he moves into that dark abyss of crime, and pestilence and death, from which few expect he will ever return – impelled onward by the boundless benevolence of his own nature, and those exalted views of religious duty which have made the martyr in every age.

One of the striking characteristics of Howard, was his untiring and unconquerable energy. Though of feeble health, and compelled to adopt the most abstemious habits, nothing seemed able to damp his ardor, or check his Herculean labors. This energy appears the more remarkable, because there was nothing outward to sustain it. A man with the fate of an army or a state in his hands, may well put forth almost miraculous efforts. So long as glory is to be gained, disgrace shunned, or enemies and rivals beaten, there is something to stimulate a man’s energy, and force it into action under the most disheartening circumstances. But Howard, who had no enemies to overcome, no rivals to outstrip, sought no glory, and was placed under no obligation by others, who could stop when he chose and receive no blame, kept on where the most desperate would have hesitated. His energy was as tireless as though the fate of a nation had been intrusted to his hands. One would judge from his actions, that he thought dilatoriness or exhaustion under troubles involved ruin to an empire, or treachery to his monarch.

Thus on his first foreign prison tour, in Paris he overcame obstacles that no other man had been able to surmount, and entered prisons where .none but the jailer and the captive had ever before been seen. He raked up old laws with which to force prison doors, and knocked so loudly and earnestly for admission, that the authorities could not refuse him. He visited the most abhorred and dismal prisons of Paris – breathed an atmosphere whose taint was death, and looked on scenes of suffering, loathsomeness and crime, that philanthropy had ever before avoided. Having been admitted into all except the Bastile, he made a desperate effort to enter it. But the deep dungeons of that gloomy prisonhouse were like that "bourne from whence no traveler returns." He, on whom the ponderous doors once closed, was never allowed to pass through them again to reveal what lay beyond, and Howard was not to penetrate its secrets, and unfold the dark and monstrous deeds that must await the revelations of the last Judgment. Appeals, expostulations, and management, were alike unavailing, and disappointed, yet eager, he would go and wander round the walls, and look with cautious eyes on that which made the heart of every beholder shudder. As one in imagination sees that attenuated form and pale face lingering round the Bastile, ever and anon stopping and casting a wistful look on its gloomy exterior – returning again and again to contemplate the same hideous structure, as if spellbound by its presence, he cannot but feel that he has a father, a brother, a son, or some dear friend immured within.

His heart is deep down in those dungeons, beating over a loved object on whom the light of day never shines, and over whose worn and haggard features no ray of happiness ever passes. But when we are told that the only spell which keeps him there is love and pity for the helpless stranger; that his heart is beating for captives and criminals, he changes before us from a true and faithful friend, into something almost superhuman.

At length his desire became so strong, that one day he approached the outer gate and rang the bell violently. On the door being opened, he stepped past the sentry without saying a word, and "walking coolly through a file of guards who were on duty," advanced as far as the drawbridge of the inner court. While standing here, and "contemplating the dismal structure," an officer in great agitation came up to him, and the rash philanthropist was compelled to hasten back. The guard was so astonished at the strange proceeding, that no attempt was made to arrest him.

His researches in Flanders, Holland, and Germany, revealed a much more humane system than prevailed in England and France. In almost all cases he found the prisoners employed. Returning to England, lie spent seven months amid its prisons, and then started for a new continental tour in order to get more materials for his contemplated work on prisons. Through a part of France to Switzerland, thence to Germany, he at length returned to England, having devoted, since he first set out, more than three years to his mission of love, and having traveled over 13,000 miles. With the few facilities that then existed, at what labor and cost must all this have been achieved! What scenes he had looked upon – what objects he had met and conversed with – what loathsome diseases he had braved, and what perils he had run! A path 13,000 miles in length, ever leading through prisons and dungeons no man before ever trod.

With the immense mass of material he had collected, lie now completed his great work and published it. It created an immense sensation throughout the world. It contained the elements of all the prison reforms that have marked the progress of civilization since that time, and established him the great reformer of his age.

THE END.