A Dark Night's Work.

By Paul Ingelow.

(CONTINUED.)

"Where to?"

"Somewhere among the mining towns, surely, you have crooks, friends who know of lonely caves, isolated huts, this or that out-of-the-way spot where he will be safe?"

"I reckon we can find such a place."

"I trust you to do it. You are to take charge of him, but watch him closely."

"Never fear!"

"If he escapes, you lose the reward I have promised you. I leave him in your keeping. Then I shall propose marriage to the girl."

"Will she consent?"

"Dare she refuse?"

"Why?"

"I tell you, the menace I hold against Vance terrorizes her completely. I may have to promise Vance his liberty—I may have to ask you to cause him to disappear mysteriously."

The villain paused and glanced significantly at the two men. Both, murderous wretches that they were, sordid, conscienceless, the yellow glow of gold obliterated the lurid stain of blood for them, were the recompense only large and specdy.

"Once I wed Gladys Vernon," continued Durand, "I am sure of a fortune. Then, a new scene of life, a foreign or a distant land, and let her friends and my foes discover what they will come."

"Where?" queried one of the men, and all three of the conspirators arose to their feet.

Durand did not reply, but led the way from the room.

The interested and excited watcher at the window drew into the shadow of some shrubbery.

The trio came out into the garden, Durand in the lead; they traversed its length, and disappeared in a stable.

Le Britta got around to the building, and watched, keenly.

In a few minutes a horse, attached to a covered wagon, was driven out.

This vehicle was formed of boards that inclosed all the back of the driver's seat completely, and was only accessible by two doors which opened at the rear.

These were now open, but Le Britta, peering past the corner of the stable, could see that they were provided with a heavy iron staple, padlock and chain, for locking them securely.

Further than that, he could make out the outlines of some human being lying on the bottom of the wagon.

One of the men approached the wagon and seized the doors, to close and lock them.

Just at that moment, however, Durand spoke:—

"Here, Tom, Bill! I've got a bottle in the stable. Perhaps you'd like a sup before you start."

The hint at the wagon doors almost done, his task at once, and he and his companion disappeared with Durand from the stable.

"They have a man in that wagon—Vance!" ejaculated Le Britta, excitedly. "What should he do? Scarcely give battle to three armed foes, and he was hardly fit for a run of miles after a fast, spirited steed.

He glanced at the stable. At its rear end, he could see the three conspirators by the light of a lantern drinking from a bottle.

They were not looking toward the wagon, and his opportunity seemed now or never.

Springing forward the venturesome Le Britta decided on a daring exploit to ascertain the identity of the prisoner in the vehicle and rescue him if possible.

CHAPTER XL.—ESCAPE.

Le Britta reached the wagon in a single bound.

Whatever was to be done must be executed quickly; he realized that fully.

Peering into the close wagon-box he could make out plainly a human form lying prostrate upon a heap of old grain bags.

He ventured the utterance of a name—a surmise as to the identity of the occupant of that dark wagon-box.

"Vance—Sydney Vance?" he gasped softly, but with startling distinctness.

There was a rustle, a muffled ejaculation.

"Who is it?"

"A friend. You are Sydney Vance?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. Listen! we have not a moment to spare. I am Gladys Vernon's friend. I came to rescue you."

"But those men?"

"Are momentarily out of sight. I will drag you out."

Le Britta seized the man's feet. He calculated on dragging him to the ground, and then, tied as he was, bodily carry him to some near retreat.

"No, no!" dissented the captive, pantingly. "I am bound."

"I know that."

"Hand and foot.

"Still?"

"You are tugging in vain. You cannot drag me out!"

It did indeed seem as if the task was impossible—as if some obstacle offered a sturdy resistance to all Le Britta's efforts.

"What is the matter?" queried the photographer, with an apprehensive glance toward the stable.

"I am also secured to a ring in the side of the wagon."

Le Britta uttered a concerned cry, but he was not yet daunted.

He clambered through the back of the vehicle, and groped in his pockets for a knife to sever the ropes securing the captive.

"Too late!" gasped the latter suddenly. "Oh what now?"

"Those men!"

Le Britta uttered a dismayed ejaculation.

At just that moment Durand and his two accomplices came out from the stable.

There was no time to spring to the ground and run for cover. He doubted even if his retreat was a safe one, as he shrunk back in the darkest corner of the wagon-box.

"You understand, Tom," spoke Durand, "Perfectly," replied the man addressed, wiping his lips.

His companion advanced to the rear of the vehicle and closed the doors with a crash, enveloping the startled Le Britta in complete darkness.

"No danger of his getting away now!" laughed the man.

"Scarcely," spoke Durand. "You have your instructions. Don't lose sight of the prisoner, and obey orders."

The two men jumped into the seat, separated from them by only the thin board partition, and Le Britta tried to realize the strange situation into which this rashness had precipitated him.

His position was one of undoubted peril. He was weak, unarmed, practically at the mercy of two desperate foes, and in such a prison-place from which escape would be difficult.

The vehicle started up. Le Britta sank to the bottom of the wagon. He groped about until he established the position in which his companion in captivity lay. Then placing his lips close to his ears, he began a hurried, undertone conversation.

"Who are you?" queried the prisoner, in a wondering tone.

Le Britta explained sufficient to force the conviction that he was a friend.

He had found his pocket knife now, and he set straightway about relieving Vance of his bonds.

A few deft strokes severed the ropes securing hands and feet. He untied the strong cords running to an iron ring sunk in the side of the wagon.

"You are free," whispered the photographer. "Now for liberty!"

"But how?"

"Wait!"

The jolting of the wagon and the grinding of the wheels marred Le Britta's movements about the interior of the vehicle. He felt at the sides of the partition, behind the driver's seat, at the bottom, top and at the locked doors at the rear.

"We are tightly shut in," he announced, coming back to Vance.

"Then let us wait until they reach their destination." "And then."

"They will unlock the doors. We will spring out suddenly upon them, overcome them."

"You forget—they are armed."

"But we shall take them at a disadvantage," persisted Vance.

"And they may also halt amid friends as desperate and murderous as themselves."

"I never thought of that."

"No," spoke Le Britta, thoughtfully, "our only hope of escaping their clutches safely, is to find some way of leaving the vehicle unperceived by them before they reach their destination."

"But, how?"

That was, indeed, a serious question, and Le Britta reflected deeply.

Their combined efforts, vigorously persisted in, might eventually enable them to burst open the rear doors, but the noise would disturb and warn their jailers, would lead to an investigation, and certainly end in recapture.

"Let us make a united rush for the doors," murmured Vance.

"They are strongly locked."

"But we may burst them open at a single contact."

"And warn those men, even if we succeed."

"Then it is fight or flight," returned Vance grimly. "Come. Ready."

"Stop!"

The desperate venture about to culminate, the voice of Le Britta sounded a peremptory halt.

"What is it?" queried his companion, impatiently.

"I have discovered something."

"What?"

"A new possible means of escape. Give me time. Yes. I am positive."

Le Britta was feeling along the roof of the wagon-box.

His hand reached up; he had discovered a slight break in the sealed top.

One board, about a foot wide, had given slightly under his touch, and as he pressed it, he found that it was loose from the rear end clear to the center of the wagon.

It swayed upward about six inches, then some new resistance prevented further progress.

"I see what the matter is," he murmured.

"What?" queried the eager Vance.

"The top has a covering of waterproof cloth. Wait. I can slit it."

By extending his knife past the loose board, the photographer was enabled to cut the outside covering.

Pushing now on the board, it gave nearly a foot, and through the opening the stars were plainly visible.

The center nail, however, held it firmly so that it would spring back into place, once the pressure of his hand was removed.

"If I hold it, can you creep through?" he queried of his companion.

"Yes, readily; but you?"

"I will try to follow."

"Good. I am ready."

Le Britta gave some quick whispered directions to his companion.

He then pushed the board up as far as he could and Vance, grasping the boards at the side, began to scramble through the aperture.

It was a tight squeeze and fraught with considerable peril.

Too much pressure on the board might pull the center nail loose, and although the hood over the driver's seat concealed them from the two men, once the board broke loose, the shock and crash would alarm them.

The board shot back with the force of a lever on Le Britta's fingers, as he saw Vance reach the top, scramble over it, and drop to the road from the rear of the vehicle.

He was elated at the success of his experiment. He theorized that Vance would follow after the wagon until he had effected his own escape, when he would rejoin him.

Resting a moment or two, Le Britta started to escape as his companion had done.

A sight of dismay escaped his lips, as he lifted himself to the aperture.

For just then he made a distressing discovery.

It was easy to get out with some one to hold the board up for the escaping person, but unaided, Le Britta vainly strove to force head and shoulders through the opening.

The board, taut as a steel trap, would not give sufficiently.

With a concerned face, the photographer dropped back to the bottom of the wagon-box.

He was fairly in a trap of his own making—he had sacrificed his own safety for that of Vance, and his escape now depended solely on outside assistance.

CHAPTER XLI.—IN PERIL.

The wagon had commenced to go slower, and the anxious Le Britta could estimate that they had proceeded at least five miles, and were probably nearing their destination.

He saw at a glance his mistake in directing Vance to make haste in leaving the wagon-top once free of the aperture, for had he remained only a moment to hold up the loose plank while Le Britta crawled through, both would now be speeding away to liberty.

Where was Vance? Surely, he would not leave his rescuer in perilous cowardly-like, abandon him to his fate!

No; a slight jangle at the rear doors told that some one was fumbling with the lock. Then the doors creaked and strained, but they remained intact, and Le Britta knew that his friend must be following the wagon under the cover of the darkness and gloom of the night.

No further evidence of the proximity of his late companion in captivity was forthcoming for nearly half an hour.

Then, in a manner most original and startling, Sydney Vance announced his fealty to his rescuer and his desperate resolve to reach and aid him, even at the cost of discovery, and an unequal conflict with the two knaves on the wagon-seat, who, all unconscious of what had so far occurred, smoked placidly and indulged in occasional conversation.

Of a sudden, something landed against the two locked doors of the vehicle with a force that split one of the panels clear in twain.

Pieces of rock and splintered wood were showered about the astonished Le Britta as that crash resounded, and the horse started up affrighted.

Instantly, too, Le Britta saw out into the road through the broken door, and discerned also that the rent thus made in the thin wood could be enlarged to an aperture of escape very speedily, were time only afforded.

"Whoa!"

The imperious command rang out, the lines were jerked, the horse shrank to its haunches, and there was a hurried commotion on the front seat.

"What was that?"

"A crash!"

"It struck the wagon?"

"Jump down and see."

Abandoning the seat, both men sprang to the roadway, and ran around to the rear of the vehicle.

"Tom, look here."

"Mercy! what does this mean?"

Ralph Durand's fellow-plotters viewed the rent in the wagon-door agape.

"He's tried to break out!" cried one.

"No, don't you see? The damage has been done from the outside."

"But how?"

"A rock. See! the jagged ends of this board?"

"Maybe he's escaped?"

"What! tied hand and foot?"

"But"—

"I'll look and see."

One of the men drew forth a match and ignited it.

Extending it through the rent, he peered into the darksome void beyond.

"Great goodne s! it's"—

The sentence was not concluded, for as, wonder-eyed, incredulous, the startled eyes of the plotter took in the outlines of the form in the wagon, that form sprang forward.

Puff! a quick breath blew out the match.

Recoiling, the man seemed too overcome to speak.

"Tom!" he gasped.

"Well?"

"He ain't there!"

"What!"

"No—he's gone."

"Gone? why—I heard him moving about."

"Yes, but it ain't our man!"

"Nonsense!"

"It's another, and he ain't bound."

"Ridiculous!"

"Look and see!"

The other flared a second match. A sudden cry announced his surprise, but he was quicker to act than the other.

"Treachery! trickery!" he cried.

"If ain't our man?"

"No."

"It's another"—

"Back!" yelled the man. "He may be armed."

He, himself, drew a revolver. Excited, dubious, he extended it toward the wagon.

At that moment, from some bushes lining the road, though unperceived by the two startled men, a human hand was raised.

A rock struck the hand of the man clutching the weapon.

It fell from his nerveless grasp, but as it did so, one chamber exploded with a startling report.

The horse, affrighted, sprang forward. The sudden jerk sent the anxious Le Britta flat on his back again, struggle to his feet, he realized that he was the victim of a runaway.

CHAPTER XLII.—A STRANGE COMPLICATION.

"Whoa! whoa!" yelled the two men, in unison, but their cries and their springs after the flying horse and vehicle were fruitless to stay a terrified runaway.

It seemed to Le Britta that the wagon was going at the rate of a fast express train. He was knocked from side to side of the vehicle, which slipped, jolted and jarred as if threatening every moment to come to a halt, a wreck.

He made one frantic effort to reach the hole in the door made by the rock, enlarge it, spring through it.

With the wagon dashing along at breakneck pace, however, he could enforce no systematic plan of operations, and he saw at a glance out upon the starlit road, that a fall there would be perilous in the extreme.

Even in the uncertain light of the night he could make out the winding road. A curve had shut out friend and foes alike. No houses or lights were visible, and the road seemed to be inclining steeply.

With added momentum, steed and vehicle now dashed forward. A thundering noise caused Le Britta to look out.

The wild runaway had reached a planked bridge. Half way across it there came a shock that jarred every nerve of Le Britta's system.

There was a crash, a stumble, a loud neigh of terror, and then the horse dashed away again, fleet as the wind, but no longer encumbered with the wagon.

That, with its human captive, had, it seemed, struck a pier in the railing of the bridge. It crashed, it toppled. There was a rending sound, and over and over it went, crashing the bridge guard from place and carrying it with it in a mad dive for the surface of the turbulent stream fully twenty feet below.

Splash!

A confused sense of peril flashed upon Le Britta's senses.

Then as he lay a huddled heap in one corner of the box, two discoveries thrilled his soul vaguely—the current of the river was carrying the dismantled vehicle down stream, and the box was filling with water!

It seemed to eddy wildly and totter, and gain additional velocity each moment. It careened, upset, a choking flood of waters rose breast high, and then a second crash half-stunned the imperiled captive.

That crash announced liberty, however, if nothing else, for striking some rock in mid stream, the battered wagon-box split clear in twain.

Exhausted, weak and half-blinded, Le Britta managed to swim to shore. There upon the shingly beach he lay, one hour or ten, he knew not which, for insensibility instantly supervened.

The first gray tints of dawn were streaking the eastern horizon as he again staggered to his feet.

His senses swam still, and his brain seemed benumbed. Without coherency or motive, he wandered from the spot.

Broad daylight found him nearing a collection of huts, marking some poor industrial center. Into one that was deserted he staggered.

It seemed complete luxury to rest again. It seemed as if the tired senses demanded mertia, forgetfulness.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HEALTH'S PARADISE.

Regained After Twenty Years' Torture From That Dread Disease, Catarrh—Hon. Geo. Taylor, of Scranton, Pa., Tells the World What Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder Has Done For Him.

I was a martyr to catarrh for twenty years—tried every known remedy, but got little or no relief. Was troubled with constant dropping in the throat, terrible pains in my head and my breath was very offensive. I was induced to give Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder a trial, and the result was magical. The first application cleared my head instantly. I persisted in its use, and to-day I am a cured man, and it affords me pleasure to lend my testimony.

About the Same.

Milord was ill.

Meeting Pessimus I asked: "How is Milord to-day?"

"He is no better."

"Ah, indeed; I am sorry to hear it."

And passing on I met Optimus, and asked of him "How is Milord to-day?"

"He is no worse."

"Ah, indeed; I am sorry to hear it."

And that is how I learned that Milord was just about the same.—Town Topics.

BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

For 25 Years, Says Mrs. J. D. Stoddard, of Ashbury Park, N.J., and Two Bottles of Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart Restored the Lost Treasure.

For twenty-five years I have been a great sufferer from heart disease, palpitation, dizziness and severe headaches. I saw Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart advertised, and determined to try it. Two bottles have done wonders for me. The dizziness and palpitation are gone, the headaches have disappeared. I never cease telling my friends the wonderful benefit this great cure has been to me, and I cheerfully recommend it any and everywhere.

Old Folks Obstinacy.

Clarence—Wonder what's worrying Algy, ye know?

Reggy—W'y, his fawther-in-law and his mother-in-law are both living with him, ye know.

Clarence—How's thawt, ye know?

Reggy—W'y, Algy has no house of his own, and they won't leave theirs, ye know.—Puck.

Piles Cured in 3 to 6 Nights.

Dr. Agnew's Ointment will cure all cases of itching piles in from three to six nights. One application brings comfort. For blind and bleeding piles it is peerless. Also cures Tetter, Salt Rheum, Eczema, Barber's Itch and all eruptions of the skin. 35 cents.

It Had Been Washed.

Husband (to wife)—I cannot conceive what is the matter with my watch; I think it must want cleaning.

Spoiled child (breaking in)—Oh, father, I don't think it needs cleaning. Baby and I had it washing in the basin for ever so long this morning.—Tid-Bits.

The Snub Direct.

"Mary, has any one called while I was out?"

"Yes, ma'am Mr. Biggs was here."

"Mr. Biggs? I do not recall the name."

"No, ma'am, he called to see me, ma'am."—Paris Gaulois.

THE FLAGS HOISTED.

DR. TALMAGE PREACHES A VIVID AND APPROPRIATE SERMON.

He Says He Hates War—But He Admires the Right Kind of Martial Spirit—Words of Glowing and Picturesque Exhortation.

Washington, March 14.—At this time, when our national capital has for ten days been ablaze with our national flag, the imagery of this sermon of Dr. Talmage seems very vivid and appropriate. The text is Psalms xx, 5, "In the name of God we will set up our banners."

I hate war. In my boyhood we may have read the biography of Alexander or of some Revolutionary hero until our young heart beat high and we wished we had been born over 100 years ago, just for the glory of striking down a Hessian. For rusty swords hung up on the rafters and bullets cut out of log houses in which they were lodged during the great strife we had unbounded admiration, or on some public day, clothed in our grandfather's soldierly accoutrements, we felt as brave as Garibaldi or Miltiades. We are wiser now, for we make a vast distinction between the poetry and the prose of war. The roll of drums and the call of bugles and fife, champing of steeds foaming and pawing for the battle, 100,000 muskets glittering among the dancing plumes, "God Save the King" waving up from clarinets and trumpets and rung back from deep dollies of the air, in a prostrate city, distant capitals of kingdoms illuminated at the tidings, generals returning home under flaming arches and showering amaranths and the shout of empires—that is poetry.

Chilled and half blanketed, lying on the wet earth; feet sore with the march and bleeding at the slightest touch; hunger pulling on every fiber of flesh or attempting to satisfy itself with a scanty and spoiled ration; thirst licking up the dew or drinking out of filthy and trampled pool; thoughts of home and kindred far away while just on the eve of a deadly strife, where death may leap on him from any one of a hundred bayonets; the closing in of two armies, now changed to 100,000 machines; the ground slippery with blood and shattered flesh; fallen ones writhing under the hoofs of infuriated chargers maddened with pain; the dreadfulness of night, that comes down when the strife is over; the struggle of the wounded ones crawling out over the corpses; the long, feverish agony of the crowded barrack and hospital, from whose mattresses the fragments of men send up their groans. The only music of carnage and battlefield; desolate homes, from which fathers and husbands and brothers and sons went off, without giving any dying message for sending a kiss to the dear ones at home, tumbled into the soldiers' grave trench, and houses in which a few weeks before unbroken family circles rejoiced, now plunged in the great sorrows of widowhood and orphanage. That is prose.

But there is now on the earth a kingdom which has set itself up for conflicts without number. In its march it tramples no grainfields, it sacks no cities, it impoverishes no countries, it fills no hospitals, it bereaves no families. The carnage and victory of Solferino and Magenta without carnage. The kingdom of Christ against the kingdom of Satan. That is the strife now raging. We will offer no armistices. We will make no treaty. Until all the revolted nations of the earth shall submit again to King Emmanuel "in the name of God we will set up our banners."

The Ensign.

Every army has its ensigns. Long before the time when David wrote the text they were in use. The hosts of Israel displayed them, the tribe of Benjamin carried a flag with the inscription of a wolf, the tribe of Dan a representation of cherubim, Judah, a lion wrought into the groundwork of white, purple, crimson and blue. Such flags from their folds shook fire into the hearts of such numbers as were in the field when Asa fought against Jehoram, and there were 1,200,000 soldiers, and more than 500,000 were left dead on the field. These ensigns gave heroism to such numbers as were assembled when Asa fought against Zerah, and there were 1,580,000 troops in the battle. The Athenians carried an inscription of the owl, which was their emblem of wisdom. The flags of modern nations are familiar to you all, and many of them so inappropriate for the character of the nations they represent it would be impolitic to enumerate them. These ensigns are streamers borne on the point of a lance and on the top of wooden shafts. They are carried in the front and rear of armies. They unroll from the main top gallant masthead of an admiral's flagship to distinguish it among other ships of the same squadron. They are the objects of national pride. The loss of them on the field is ignominious.

The three banners of the Lord's hosts are the banner of proclamation, the banner of rectitude and the banner of victory. When a nation feels its rights infringed or its honor insulted, when its citizens have in foreign climes been oppressed and no indemnity has been offered to the inhabitants of the republic or kingdom, a proclamation of war is uttered. On the top of batteries and arsenals and custom houses and revenue offices flags are immediately swung out. All who look upon them realize the fact that uncompromising war is declared. Thus it is that the church of Jesus Christ, jealous for the honor of its sovereign and determined to get back those who have been carried off captive into the bondage of satan and intent upon the destruction of those mighty wrongs which have so long cursed the earth and bent upon the extension of the Saviour's reign of mercy, in the name of God sets up its banner of proclamation.

The church makes no assault upon the world. I do not believe that God ever made a better world than this. It is magnificent in its ruins. Let us stop talking so much against the world. God pronounced it very good at the beginning. Though a wandering child of God, I see in it yet the great Father's lineaments. Though tossed and driven by the storms of 6,000 years, she sails bravely yet, and as at her launching in the beginning the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, so at last, when coming into the calm harbor of God's mercy she shall be greeted by the huzzas of glorified kingdoms. It is not the world against which we contend but its transgressions. Whatever is obstinate in the will, degrading in passion, harmful in custom, false in friendship, hypocritical in profession—against all this Christ makes onset. From false profession he would tear the mask. From oppression he would snatch the rod. From pride he would rend off the plumes. From revenge he would exorcise the devil. While Christ loved the world so much he died to save it, he hates sin so well that to eradicate the last trace of its pollution he will utterly consume the continents and the oceans. At the gate of Eden the declaration of perpetual enmity was made against the serpent. The tumult roundabouts Mount Sinai was only the roar and flash of God's artillery of wrath against sin. Sodom on fire was only one of God's flaming bulletins announcing hostility. Nineveh and Tyre and Jerusalem in awful ruin mark the track of Jehovah's advancement. They show that God was terribly in earnest when he announced himself abhorrent of all iniquity. They make us believe that though nations belligerent and revengeful may sign articles of peace and come to an amicable adjustment, there shall be no cessation of hostilities between the forces of light and the forces of darkness until the kingdom of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord. Affrighted by no opposition, discouraged by no temporary defeats, shrinking from no exposure—every man to his position, while from the top of our schools and churches and seminaries and asylums, "in the name of God we will set up our banners."

A Glorious Standard.

Again, it was the custom in ancient times for the purpose of gathering armies to lift an ensign on the top of some high hill, so that all who saw it would feel impelled to rally around it. In more modern times the same plan has been employed for the gathering of an army. Thus it is that the church of Christ lifts its flag for recruits. The cross of Jesus is our standard, planted on the hill of Calvary. Other armies demand that persons desiring to enter the lists of war shall be between such and such an age, lest the folly of extreme youth or the infirmity of advanced age be a clog rather than an advantage. But none is too young for Christ's regiment; none can be too old. The hand that is strong enough to bound a ball or trundle a hoop is skilled enough to fight for Christ, while many a hand trembling with old age has grasped the arrow of truth, and, with a dim eye close to it, taking aim, has sent its sharp point right through the heart of the King's enemies. Many of you have long ago had your names written on the roll of celestial troops, and you like the service well, although your new bear the scars of multitudinous conflicts and can recount many a long march and toll of siege guns, opened on you that you thought never would be spiked. But there may be some who have not yet enlisted. Your being here implies that you are seriously thinking about it, and your attention makes me hope you are only looking for the standard to be hoisted. Will you not, 100 of you, with all the aroused enthusiasm of your nature, come bounding into the ranks, while "in the name of God we set up our banners?"

Through natural modesty do you hold back and say: "I will be of no advantage to Christ. I am too awkward to learn the step of the host, or to be of any service in the shock of battle?" To you I make the reply, Try it. One hour under Christ's drill, and you would so well understand his rules that the first step of your march heavenward would make the gates of hell tremble on their hinges. We may not be as polished and trim as many Christians we have known, and we may not as well understand sharpshooting, but there is rough work which we can all accomplish. We may be axmen and hew a pathway through the forests. We may be spadesmen and dig the trenches or throw up the fortifications. We do not care where, we do not care what—if we can only help in the cause of our king and shout as loudly as any of them at the completion of the conquest.

Serfs or Zouaves.

There are nonprofessors who have a very correct idea of what Christians ought to be. You have seen members of the church who were as proud as Ahab and lied as badly as Ananias, and who were as foul hypocrites as Judas. You admire all that. You say followers of Christ ought to be honorable, humble and self denying and charitable and patient and forgiving. Amen! So they ought. Come into the kingdom of Christ, my hearer, and be just that glorious Christian that you have described. Every church has enough stingy men in it to arrest its charities, and enough proud men in it to grieve away the Holy Ghost, and enough lazy men in it to hang on behind till its wheels, like Pharaoh's chariots, drag heavily, and enough worldly men to exhaust the patience of the very elect, and enough snarly men to make appropriate the Bible warning, "Beware of dogs!" If any of you men on the outside of the kingdom expect to make such Christians as that, we do not want you to come, for the church has already a million members too many of just that kind. We do not want our ranks crowded with serfs when we can have them filled with Zouaves.

There are men now, as in Christ's time, possessed of seven devils. In some instances it seems as though at conversion only six of those evil spirits were cast out, while there remains still one in the heart, the devil of avarice, the devil of lust or the devil of pride. Men of the world, if you would be transformed and elevated by the power of the gospel, now is the time to come. It is no mean ensign I lift this hour. It is a thousand-fold flag. It has been in terrific battle. Dragged in the dust of a Saviour's humiliation from Bethlehem to Calvary. Rent by hell's onset, the spears of a maddened soldiery, and the hands of the men who said, "Let him be crucified." With this ensign in his bleeding hand the Saviour sealed the heights of our sin. With this he thundered the walls of perdition, and amid its very smoke and flame and lurid phrensy he waved his triumph, while demons howled with defeat and heaven.

Thronged his chariot wheels
And drove him to his throne,
Then swept their golden harps and sung,
The glorious work is done.

Again, when a grand victory has been won, it is customary to announce it by flags floating from public buildings, and from trees, and from the masts of ships. They are the signal for eulogy and rejoicing and festivity. So the ensign which the church hoists is a banner of victory. There was a time when the religion of Christ was not considered respectable. Men of learning and position frowned upon it. Governments anathematized its supporters. To be a Christian was to be an underling. But mark the difference. Religion has compelled the world's respect. Infidelity in the tremendous effort it has made to crush it has complimented its power. And there is not now a single civilized nation but in its constitution or laws or proclamations pays homage to the religion of the cross. In the war in India, when Sir Archibald Campbell found in an hour of danger that the men were ordered to the field were intoxicated and asked for the pious men whom the Christian Havelock had under his management, he said: "Call out Havelock's saints. They are never drunk, and Havelock is always ready." That Christianity which gathered its first trophies from the fishermen's huts on the shore of Galilee now has Samsonian strength thrown upon its shoulders and has carried off the gates of science and worldly power. We point not to fortresses and startling armies and navies as the evidence of the church's progress. We point to the men whom Christ has redeemed by his blood.

What if arsenals and navy yards do not belong to the church? We do not want them. The weapon of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. The world and satan have no idea of the strength and heroism which God will yet let out against the force of darkness. As yet they have had only one found from the first regiment. The Lord of Hosts will soon appear in the field at the head of his troops. Depend upon it, that when God inspires the soul with a new life he puts in it the principle of "never give up." In all ages of the church there have been those who have had a faith that was almost equal to sight, looking through persecution and reverses with as much expectation as through palpable achievements. There have been men for Christ who have acted as did the favorite troops of Brien, attacked by Fitzpatrick of Ossory. The wounded soldiers begged that they might enter the fight with the others. They said, "Let stakes be stuck in the ground and suffer each of us, tied to and supported by one of these stakes, to battle in the ranks by the side of a sound man." It is said that 700 or 800 men, pale and emaciated from former wounds, and thus supported by the stakes, struggled through the combat. Thus has it been that multitudes of the children of God, though feeling themselves weak and wounded, perhaps in body, perhaps in estate, perhaps in soul, supported by the staff of God's promise, have warred it up to the hilt in the subjugation of a world of wickedness.

The Battle Cry.

We are mighty in this cause, for we have the help of the plous dead. Messengers of salvation from high heaven, they visit the field. They stand behind us to keep us from ignominious retreat. They go before us to encourage us in the strife. The McCheynes, and the Paysons, and the Martyns, and the Brainerds, an uncounted multitude of the glorified, are our coadjutors. Have you heard the Swiss tradition? The herdsmen say that three great leaders of the Helvetic nation, though seemingly dead, are only lying down under the ground in their old time dress, refreshing themselves with sleep, and that if at any time the liberties of their country are in danger they will immediately spring to their feet and drive back the enemy. May I not have the thought that if ever the church of the blessed Christ shall be threatened with destruction by foes which seem too great for her strength, the Lord himself will not only come to the deliverance, but those great ancients who have seemed to be sleeping among the dead shall immediately hear the trumpet blast of the church militant and fall armed spring back to their old positions in the ranks of God with the battlecry, "More than conquerors through him that loved us." Although we have already much to encourage us in the work of the world's evangelization, yet we must confess that much of our time has been consumed in planting our batteries and getting ready for the conflict. We have not yet begun to preach. We have not yet begun to pray. We have not yet begun to work. On the coasts of heathendom are missionary stations. They have scarcely yet begun to accomplish what they propose. It takes some time to dig the trenches and elevate the standard and direct the great guns. From what I hear I think they are about ready now. Let but the great captain wave the signal and the flinging of celestial weaponry shall quake in every dungeon of hell and sound up among the thrones of heaven. Pagodas and temples shall tumble under the shock, and besotted nations flying from their idols and superstitions, shouting like the confounded worshippers of Baal: "The Lord, he is the God! The Lord, he is the God!"

We go not alone to the field. We have invincible allies in the dumb elements of nature. As Job said, we are in league with the very stones of the field. The sun by day and the moon by night, directly or indirectly, shall favor Christianity. The stars in their courses are marshaled for us, as they fought against Sisera. The winds of heaven are now as certainly acting in favor of Christ as in reformation times the invincible armada in its pride approached the coast of England. As that proud navy directed their guns against the friends of Christ and religious liberty God said unto his winds, "Seize hold of them," and to the sea, "Swallow them." The Lord with his tempests, dashed their hulks together and splintered them on the rocks until the flower of Spanish pride and valor lay crushed among the waves of the sea-beach. All are ours. Aye, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost are our allies!

Precious Seed.

The Mohammedans, in their struggles to subjugate the world, had passages from the Koran inscribed on the blades of their scimiters, and we have nothing to fear if, approaching the infidelity, and malice that oppose the kingdom of Christ, we shall have glittering on our swords the words of David to the giant, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom thou hast defied."

Now the church goes forth bearing precious seed, but after awhile it will be the sheaf binding, and reaper angels shall shout the harvest home. Now it is tents and marching and expedition, then in the ranks of prostrate infidelity and on the very walls of heaven, "in the name of God we will set up our banners."

The earth sends up its long, deep groan of pain and clanks the great chains of its bondage and cries by the voice of sea and land and sky, "How long, O Lord, how long?" There was a tradition on the other side of the water that the daughter of Lir was transformed into a bird of the air, and that she wandered for hundreds of years over river and lake until the arrival of Christianity, and that at the stroke of the first celestial bell her spirit was freed. Uncounted millions of our race, by the power of sin and satan, have been transformed into a state of wretchedness, and they wander like the poor daughter of Lir, waiting for the shall after awhile be released. When the great church of Christ shall in those darkened lands from its tower ring out the glad tidings of the gospel, then millions of wandering souls shall find rest in a Saviour's pity and a Saviour's love, transported from the kingdom of satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

By and by you would hardly know the earth if you saw it. The whole, the whole shall be as greatly improved as the individual heart by conversion. Fraud, leaving its trickery, will go to work for an honest living. Knavery shall begin to make righteous bargains. Passion shall answer to the control of reason. Scoffers shall be changed into worshipers and skeptics into Bible lovers. Christ shall begin his reign on earth. Whether he shall descend on to the earth in person and establish a government at Jerusalem, I cannot say. But it will be an era of more than Augustan splendor. That is enough. Knowing this, we can never despair. But as we see the church of Christ putting on her beautiful garments and arising to shine we will say, with the enthusiasm of Oliver Cromwell, who, standing before the sick and famine stricken soldiers at Dunbar, saw the sun rising out of the morning mist and, pointing to it with his sword, uttered a prayer which hurled his men upon the crushed foe like a sky full of thunderbolts: "Arise, O God! Let thine enemies be scattered." With the ear of faith I catch the sound of the latter day glory. Church of Christ, unsheath thy sword and this moment into the battle! In the name of Christ, march on! Upon every school and hospital, upon every banker's desk and merchant's counter, upon every chemist's laboratory and astronomer's tower, upon shepherd's hut and woodman's cabin, upon ship's deck and sailor's hammock, for out on the sea and high up in the mountain, before the gaze of nations, under the applaudits of heaven, "in the name of God we will set up our banners."

Ensigns and Colors.

My subject has taught you that in this contest we are not without ensigns and colors. All we want now is men to carry them. Before I sit down I must propose to each of you this great honor. Becoming a Christian is not so ignoble a thing as many have thought it. "It makes a man stoop," you say. I know it, but it is only the stoop of an heir of royalty, who on his knees is to receive a crown of dominion. We want standard bearers in all pulpits, in all places of business—everywhere. I do not ask you how old you are, nor how young, how weak or how strong, how dull or how sharp, nor what your home, nor who your ancestors. Without any condition, without any reserve, in the name of the God of Israel, I offer you the honor of carrying the church's ensigns. Do not be afraid of the assaults of a world whose ranks you desert, nor of devils who will oppose you with infernal might. It were more blessed to fall here than stand anywhere else. It were more of an honor, engaged with Christ, to be trampled underfoot with this army of banners, than, opposing Christ, to be buried, like Edward I, in Egyptian pedigbyry.

You know in ancient times elephants were trained to fight and that on one occasion, instead of attacking the enemy, they turned upon their own thousands were crushed under the feet of their trunks and the momentum of their step. These mighty elephants of work for Christ may accomplish things in overthrowing the world and beating to pieces. If we do not wield them aright, advantages will in unguarded hour turn terribly upon us and trample at our heels of vengeance grind us to powder. Rejected blessing are sevenfold. We cannot compromise this matter. We cannot stand aside and let others do as he has declared it, "All Who are not with me are against me." Lord, we render.

The prophecies intimate that we shall before the destruction of the world be one great battle between the forces of uprightedness. We shall see it on earth. God grant we may see it, leaning from the battlements of heaven. On the side of the oppressor arrayed all forms of oppression, cruelty, led on by infamous generals; the votaries of idolatry, led on by their priests; the followers of Mahommedanism, following the footsteps of their sheiks. And glutted with pleasure and sound up among the thrones of heaven. Pagodas and temples shall tumble under the shock, and besotted nations flying from their idols and superstitions, shouting like the confounded worshippers of Baal: "The Lord, he is the God! The Lord, he is the God!"

We go not alone to the field. We have invincible allies in the dumb elements of nature. As Job said, we are in league with the very stones of the field. The sun by day and the moon by night, directly or indirectly, shall favor Christianity. The stars in their courses are marshaled for us, as they fought against Sisera. The winds of heaven are now as certainly acting in favor of Christ as in reformation times the invincible armada in its pride approached the coast of England. As that proud navy directed their guns against the friends of Christ and religious liberty God said unto his winds, "Seize hold of them," and to the sea, "Swallow them." The Lord with his tempests, dashed their hulks together and splintered them on the rocks until the flower of Spanish pride and valor lay crushed among the waves of the sea-beach. All are ours. Aye, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost are our allies!

Precious Seed.

The Mohammedans, in their struggles to subjugate the world, had passages from the Koran inscribed on the blades of their scimiters, and we have nothing to fear if, approaching the infidelity, and malice that oppose the kingdom of Christ, we shall have glittering on our swords the words of David to the giant, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom thou hast defied."

Now the church goes forth bearing precious seed, but after awhile it will be the sheaf binding, and reaper angels shall shout the harvest home. Now it is tents and marching and expedition, then in the ranks of prostrate infidelity and on the very walls of heaven, "in the name of God we will set up our banners."

The earth sends up its long, deep groan of pain and clanks the great chains of its bondage and cries by the voice of sea and land and sky, "How long, O Lord, how long?" There was a tradition on the other side of the water that the daughter of Lir was transformed into a bird of the air, and that she wandered for hundreds of years over river and lake until the arrival of Christianity, and that at the stroke of the first celestial bell her spirit was freed. Uncounted millions of our race, by the power of sin and satan, have been transformed into a state of wretchedness, and they wander like the poor daughter of Lir, waiting for the shall after awhile be released. When the great church of Christ shall in those darkened lands from its tower ring out the glad tidings of the gospel, then millions of wandering souls shall find rest in a Saviour's pity and a Saviour's love, transported from the kingdom of satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

By and by you would hardly know the earth if you saw it. The whole, the whole shall be as greatly improved as the individual heart by conversion. Fraud, leaving its trickery, will go to work for an honest living. Knavery shall begin to make righteous