

HERMANN.

CHAPTER IV.

The morning dawned—a morning of brightness and beauty—and as yet not a shadow of conspiracy hovered upon the precincts of the Roman camp. On the contrary, all still wore the aspect of perfect security and peace when the tents were struck, and the soldiers had resumed their march; and the only war they anticipated was against the obstacles of nature, where thickets were to be penetrated, and swamps bridged over or embanked in their victorious progress. A thick forest lay before them, the recesses of which must be opened; and the axe and saw, those instruments of conquest, more effectual in the hands of Romans than even the sword and the spear, were brought into active operation; and the slow march and frequent halts of the legions were accompanied with the incessant crash of lofty trees, that fell in multitudes before their progress.

The hour of mid-day arrived, and yet scarcely half a league of forest had been won. The soldiers, exhausted with six hours of constant toil, were permitted to seat themselves upon the ground for the purpose of enjoying a slight repast. Scarcely, however, had the meal been ended, scarcely had it even begun, when suddenly every trumpet sounded to arms with startling abruptness, and every troop hurried to its proper standard; after which there was an awful stillness of suspense, while every soldier looked at his fellow, to ascertain the cause of this interruption. What danger could be dreaded now? The tribes had been everywhere submissive—no enemy was visible, or could have mustered in the neighborhood! And yet some immediate danger there must be for Varus, with looks of alarm, and surrounded by his principal officers, was seen hurrying to and fro, at one time arranging the ranks, at another altering his dispositions, and ever and anon surveying with looks of despair the ground which his army occupied. And alas for Rome if here her choicest army is to abide an encounter! In front was the forest which they had begun to pierce, but into the unknown recesses of which they could not safely venture; on either flank steep hills menaced and commanded them; while the rear was enclosed by formidable marshes, where even the solitary traveller could scarcely tread his way in safety. A few moments only had been granted for these observations, when the hills suddenly trembled with the blowing of war-horns; and at the signal the ridges appeared overtopped by armed thousands, hurling an exulting defiance upon the entrapped Romans below, and leaping and brandishing their arms in all the confidence of victory. There was no further room for doubt or enquiry among the invaders: they saw that their last march had been made.

It was but an instant before this ominous alarm that a man exhausted, bleeding and writhing with anguish, had crawled forward to the advanced pioneers, in the wood, and requested them to carry him immediately to their commander, as he had important tidings to communicate. This was done, and in the wounded man Varus at once recognised Rudiger, the friend of Rome and Segest. The fainting German immediately revealed his fearful tale; but Varus, blind to the last, would not even be convinced. Hermann had conducted the army thus far through the perilous ground, and at present occupied the swamps, with the rearguard composed of the auxiliary Germans; and yet—but there is no time for conjecture—the truth must be instantly ascertained! An officer was ordered to hurry to the rear, and summon Hermann immediately into the presence of the commander; but the messenger soon returned at full gallop, and with tidings of dreadful import. The auxiliary bands had been withdrawn from the main body, and were so posted as to block up every path of retreat; and Hermann himself had only answered the summons with fierce denunciations and defiance. At this stunning blow the heart of Varus sank in a moment into utter despair. By what sorcery had he been lulled into such incredible delusion? And above all, how shall he extricate his army from the effects of such an ill-placed confidence? But there was no time for despair, or even for consultation—the battle had already begun. From the hill-tops darts began to descend in volleys, and these ramparts of nature must be stormed. The Roman ranks advanced against the death-shower, and endeavoured to ascend the steep; but no sooner had they reached the base of the hills, than huge fragments of loosened rock were sent rolling down, multitudes. Varus presented a front to the enemy in every direction; but it was an enemy whom he could not reach. Again and again he threw forward strong masses of his troops supported by archers and slingers against the hills—if only one of these could be occupied, he felt that the barbarians might be dislodged from the rest, or at least the retreat of his army secured—but the missiles of the Germans descended as thick as hail, and with a force derived from their descent which the Roman armour could not resist. The morasses in the rear were then attempted, but these were found to be equally well defended; and while the disencumbered and light-footed Germans moved securely among the intricacies of the ground, which were familiar only to themselves, the heavy-armed legionaries were either swallowed up among the

swamps, or securely transfixed with darts, while they stood uncertain of their way. The whole army swayed and reeled to and fro in these successive attacks upon marsh and mountain, while with every moment the carnage was deepening, and the ground becoming more thickly beset with the dead and dying. To add to their miseries, a heavy shower of rain descended, by which every bow-string was relaxed, and every arm benumbed; the ground beneath their feet became so miry that men and horses floundered in confusion; while the Germans, to whom all seasons were alike, seemed only to be inspired with greater alacrity by the torrents that refreshed, while they drenched their naked bodies. Hour after hour the battle thus continued till night; and the Romans had prayed for its protecting covering long before it came. Upon the drenched and miry ground they laid themselves down—the weary to crush and sweeping them away in sleep, and the wounded to die. But alas! the sleep that was snatched on this occasion was brief; or if protracted, it was more painful than waking, from the frightful images with which it was haunted, in which fancy endeavoured to out-picture the most dismal realities.

But who amid these warriors had greater cause to grieve, or grieved more deeply than Varus? In the darkness no tent was lit, no table was spread, no torch or watchfire was lighted; and he sat upon a little mound surrounded by his officers, while each could only recognize his fellows by the sound of their voices. All felt that their danger was indeed imminent; that perchance their ruin was unavoidable; but although the folly of their commander had occasioned these distresses, not a word of murmur or reproach was uttered; they rather respected the depth of his anguish, and spoke the language of sympathy and hope. A deliberation was carried on in whispers upon the best method of extricating the army on the following morning. To advance into the forest was certain destruction; to effect a lodgment upon the well-defended heights had already been found impracticable; and it was resolved that the only chance of safety lay in a desperate attack upon the Germans who blocked up their rear, by which a footing might be gained upon ground more favourable for an equal encounter. While this momentous deliberation was held under the gloom of midnight, and amid groans and corpses, a far different spirit prevailed among the enemy. The tops of the hills blazed with a thousand watch-fires round which the Germans spent the night in merriment and feasting, or in listening to the songs of their bards. But one man there was among them whose cares seemed too weighty for song or festivity, and who watched while others reposed; and need we add that it was Hermann? At this time he deliberated with the most experienced of the chiefs, and at another he animated the warriors to prepare for the morrow. He also glided from point to point over the extensive field, to ascertain that not an avenue of escape was left unguarded; listened anxiously at times to the faintest sound among the Roman soldiery; and strained his eyes through the gloom, if haply he might detect the shadow of any movement. Victory indeed was within his grasp, but still his enemies were Romans.

The miserable Varus having ended his deliberations, dismissed the officers to their posts, after which he folded his mantle around him and stretched himself upon the ground to enjoy a short repose before the toils of the morning commenced. But the hoarse murmuring of the midnight blast, combined with the loud outcries of revelry and triumph from the surrounding fog, kept sleep from his weary eyelids. At length, however, he sank into unconscious lethargy in spite of the heart-sinking uproar; and as he slept a fearful scene unfolded itself to his fevered imagination. A land rose before him, parched and blackened beneath the rays of a withering sun, and stretching far away into vast solitudes; and along its cheerless surface, and in full security, a mighty army swept along, which he knew from its ensigns to belong to his own country. At the head of it also, and invested with the insignia of a consul, marched an aged warrior, whose brow was wrinkled like that of a usurer, although his eye was bright with enterprise and hope; and at his side was a smiling barbarian, who seemed to utter bland words in his "ear and urge him thoughtlessly forward. And who were they? The dreamer shuddered in his sleep, for he knew that leader of evil omen without being left to conjecture. The scene shifted; and he beheld these legions in fierce conflict with an enemy that made the whole field blaze with their steel panoply, and reverberate to the air with the thunder of their huge drums; and the air was darkened with clouds of arrows discharged by Parthian horsemen, who came and went like the whirlwind. Again the scene shifted, for the battle was over, the ground was piled high with the corpses of the Roman army, and nothing in the form of life or motion was there but the dim outline of a phantom that wandered over the scene of carnage, wringing his hands, and lamenting with shrill, feeble murmurings. Varus looked narrowly, and recognized the pale face of the spectre, and the furrowed brow which he had so lately seen; and as he continued to weep, and sternly mourner ceased to weep, and sternly mourner dressed him—"By what fatality, oh Quintilius Varus, hast thou spurned the lesson of my example? But I reproach thee not, for this penalty of thy errors shall be exacted to the full. Behold! such as I am, to-morrow thou shalt be!" Varus started from his rude couch, and exclaimed, "Slay, Crassus, and tell me if my followers shall be spared?" The attendants who watched his slumbers shuddered at the portent, and began to deprecate it with hasty prayers. The unfortunate commander would tempt the agony of sleep no further; he sat motionless, with folded hands, and eyes directed to the east, impatient for the coming of the dawn, that the worst might be ascertained and ended.

At length, when the first gray light broke sadly through the clouds, so that the outline of surrounding objects could be discerned, the Roman army was set in motion, and the general harangued the troops. He concealed as much as possible the precariousness of their situa-

tion and his own disquiet, and he sought them to make one noble effort for safety, for victory, for vengeance. Then answered with shouts of resolution, and desired to be led to battle. According to the agreement of the previous night, an attempt was to be made to force the passes in the rear, by which the whole army might defile into more favorable ground; and the troops were therefore thrown forward in columns to the place of onset, preceded by active unarmed explorers, who generously devoted themselves to the missiles of the enemy for the purpose of discovering the outlets. But wherever the Romans moved they were encountered and almost buried beneath the darts of the Germans; and whenever the ranks attempted to win a stable footing, they were broken by the obliquities of the paths. The battle warmed and deepened, and still while the rages of the heavy showers of darts continued to ply them upon either flank from the hills without intermission. At length, after a desperate struggle of hours, a small portion of the morass was won, and a cohort, diminished to one-half of its numbers, established itself upon a solid isthmus, and gallantly maintained it, although opposed by thousands; and from this landing-place of hope the successful legionaries shouted to their fellow-soldiers to hurry to the rescue. And rescue soon arrived in the form of the eighteen legion, the soldiers of which, struggling through the mire by twos and threes, proceeded to rally and form upon the recovered ground for an effort that might yet be successful. Here was the point of danger; and Hermann, at the head of his followers, threw himself across the path to bar all farther retreat. And now commenced the full fury of the engagement upon a spot where the Romans could avail themselves of their superior arms and discipline; and before their strong, simultaneous onset the barbarian troops were torn asunder, like the stubble soil before the ploughshare. But the Germans, when baffled in front, closed upon the flanks of their antagonists, as if they would have smothered them in their ranks; and when all would not avail, each selected a foe, and grappled with him in a death-struggle, where gigantic personal strength on one side was more than counterbalanced by skill and weapons on the other. But such a contest could not long endure; there was a change, an intermission; the Germans at first gave back, as if exhausted; but many at this awful moment! The invaders are on the eve of winning a safe retreat, if not a victory, and they will return with a terrible retribution!

(To Be Continued.)

ABOUT THE BLACK DEATH

EUROPE ALARMED BY THE SPREAD OF THE PLAGUE.

A Terrible Disease Which is Destroying Thousands in China and India—Its Terrible Ravages in Europe in the Fourteenth Century.

The press of Paris has raised a note of alarm over the danger to Europe of the unchecked spread of the bubonic plague in India and China, and is calling upon Great Britain to take measures in its possessions to protect Europe from the spread of the terrible pest along the lines of trade with the Orient. M. Monod, Director of Public Health in the French Department of the Interior, expresses his conviction that Europe is in danger of an invasion of the plague, and that department has, as a matter of fact, despatched Dr. Yersin to China to make experiments on the disease with a serum of the Pasteur Institute. These experiments have proved so far successful that M. Monod expresses the hope that, in case of an invasion of the Black Death, European countries will find themselves armed with an effective agent to combat it.

Readers of the daily telegraph reports are acquainted with the virulence of the epidemic that is raging in Bombay, where hundreds are dying every week of bubonic plague. Hong Kong and other Chinese cities and the Island of Formosa are also plague spots. Time was when this appalling ailment was prevalent all over Europe, just as leprosy, once well known in European countries, has now passed out of all knowledge of most of the people. It rarely makes its appearance in Europe in this generation, though Dublin suffered from an outbreak in 1866, and there was a destructive epidemic in Russia in 1878-9. The plague is often confounded with Asiatic cholera, though erroneously. The

HORRORS AND SUFFERINGS of the years 1347 to 1350 are preserved in the minds of the humble people of Europe by never-dying traditions. This was the period of the so-called Great Mortality. Modern estimates, making due allowance for all the exaggeration of popular tradition, compute that this visitation must have carried off 25,000,000 lives in Europe, exclusive of Russia. As for Asia's teeming millions, no computation has ever been attempted. In this epidemic the victims were suddenly seized with a violent pain in the chest, blood was expectorated and the breath diffused a pestiferous odor. Great boils or buboes formed in the groin, or the arm pits. Black spots of a putrid decomposition broke out all over the body, giving it the name of the Black Death. Death came in a few hours, or, at most, three days and there

seemed absolutely no remedy for those once attacked.

The virulence of the contagion was so great that all things were infected. Boccaccio relates that he saw two hogs on the rags of a person who had died of plague stagger about for a time, and fall down dead as though they had taken poison. In England the cattle fell victims to a murrain and died by thousands, as did multitudes of other animals. The ground seemed poisoned, so that rats died in their holes. Throughout Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Poland and later Russia, the ghastly disease spread death and destruction. Many were stricken and died as if by lightning. It was believed that even the glance of the eye could carry the contagion. In the North Sea and the Mediterranean vessels were often found drifting about and drifting on shore with not a single man left alive in them.

It was the belief of the period that this most destructive of all epidemics owed its virulence in part to upheavals of nature within the earth and on the earth's surface. In Asia there had been drouth and great famines succeeded by violent torrents of rain. Chinese annals relate that

4,000,000 PERSONS perished in the floods! Mountains fell in and great lakes were formed. In Europe there had been winter thunder storms. Great floods of the Rhine and in France had overflowed the country. Springs broke forth on the summits of mountains and dry tracts were inexplicably inundated. An earthquake overturned the Island of Cyprus and the sea overflowed it. Just before the wind had spread so poisonous a vapor over the island that many died in dreadful agony. German accounts aver that a thick, stinking mist advanced from the east and spread itself over Italy. Earthquakes were more general than ever before, and in thousands of places chasms were formed from which arose noxious vapors. Swarms of locusts, such as were never before known, darkened the air and then died, spreading foul odors of putrefaction. Great and extraordinary meteors were seen in many places. Followed as these extraordinary convulsions were by the black death, it is not to be wondered at that the superstition of the time saw in them horrible portents and warnings, and even modern thinkers have argued that the normal composition of things may have been so disturbed as to conduce to the plague.

The forms and usages of society were overturned and almost ignored. The rich carried their treasures to monasteries, where the monks shut the gates to keep their gold out—for it brought death with it. Men destroyed themselves as if in a frenzy. When the plague was on them, men thought they were still wandering among the dead. Many houses, left without inhabitants, fell into ruins. In many places plague patients were believed to be buried alive. Funeral services were impracticable. Parents deserted their children and wives and husbands abandoned each other to death. Figures convey little idea, but an infallible sign of the great havoc wrought with the race was the great fequidity afterwards observed in women. Marriages were nearly always profane, and

DOUBLE AND TRIPLE BIRTHS were more frequent than formerly. During the continuance of the mortality there spread over Europe the Brotherhood of Flagellants, bands of humble men, poorly clad, who wandered from town to town, scourging themselves with fanatical frenzy and enlisting vast armies of converts. They marched with leaders and singers, clad in somber garments, bearing scourges in which points of iron were fixed. The wanderings of these fanatics helped to spread the plague. They held themselves independent of the Church, and became so numerous as at one time to threaten its then undisputed supremacy.

Another feature of the great mortality was the barbarous persecution of the Jews. They were suspected of causing the plague by poisoning the wells in Germany, springs and wells were built over, and only river and rain water used. All the Jews in Basle were inclosed in a wooden building and burnt without sentence or trial. The same thing occurred in numerous other places. Everywhere the Jews were pursued with fire and sword with merciless cruelty. In many places they set fire to their own dwellings and burned themselves to death. As Boccaccio says, in describing the plague in Florence, "the influence and authority of every law, human and divine, vanished."

Boccaccio says further that many in Florence shut themselves up in their houses, and spent the time in singing and music and other pastimes, no intelligence of death or sickness being permitted to reach their ears. Others ate and drank to excess, and gave indulgence to every gratification. "They wandered day and night from one tavern to another and feasted without moderation or bounds. In the end, so completely had terror extinguished every kinder feeling that the brother brook the brother and sister the sister."

THE WIFE HER HUSBAND, and at last even the parent his own offspring. Propriety and decorum were extinguished. Females of rank seemed to forget the feeling that the brother brook the brother and sister the sister.

WHERE HE WAS. Eastern man (out West)—The steak is fried. I ordered it broiled. Waiter—Boiled, sir? "Broiled. Broiled on a gridiron. On a grille, sir?" A gridiron. Don't you know what a gridiron is? Never heard of one, sir; reckon the cook didn't either. Ain't your steak fried enough, sir? "Yes, never mind. I forgot I was out in the West where gridirons are unknown."

THE DREAM CAME TRUE.

Strange Story of a Vision That Was Often Repeated.

The following narrative was sent to the "Pall Mall Gazette," two or three years back, by a correspondent who, unfortunately chose to remain anonymous. This shyness, of course, lays the authenticity of the alleged "experience" under suspicion. And we have never heard of any attempt to verify or discredit the story, which—true or false—struck us as one of the most artistic of its class. It was headed "Dreams, Idle Dreams," and ran as follows:—

"Sir—I have been much interested in reading the article with the above heading which appears in your issue of August 2. May I be permitted to give you an example of a most curious dream I had some years ago, and which came almost literally true? I was living in London at the time, and I had a correspondent in Dublin. This gentleman was a valued and lifelong friend. One New Year's Eve I dreamt that I stood in a spacious bare-looking entrance hall. Presently I saw a letter put into the letter box on the hall door. I went over, took out the letter, which I saw was addressed to myself, and in the handwriting of my friend. I opened it, and found it to contain an oblong piece of bluish paper, partly printed and partly written in red ink. I read it, and it ran as follows:—

"Order for the burial of (here came my own name) in (here came the name of a well-known cemetery in the vicinity of Dublin) on the 9th day of June, 18—, in grave (a number)."

"I should say I never could recollect any more of the figures. I stood looking at the paper, and as I did so I heard the voice of my friend calling to me. I went over to him, and gave him the paper. He read it, and then said, rather testily, 'Yes, it's all right; come this way.' I followed him up-stairs, and into a barely furnished room, in the very midst of which was a kind of stretcher bedstead, with what seemed to be some sheets upon it. He told me to lie down; I did so; he covered me with a sheet; I closed my eyes, and I thought I was dead. Presently some one else came into the room, and they began talking about arrangements for my funeral. I opened my eyes, and saw with him a strange man, with a stark beard. I then seemed to lose consciousness from terror, and awoke

CRYING BITTERLY.

I wrote and told my friend the dream, and he replied, chaffing me unmercifully about it. However, again and again, I dreamt the same dream, and so terrified did I become as the 9th of June drew near, that my friend actually took the trouble to come over to London and took me down to spend the day at Hampton Court. The next New Year's Eve I dreamt the same dream. My friend—who was a medical man—this time insisted upon my coming over to Dublin for a holiday, and to try to forget all about it. The months passed on, and I did not dream it again. We had a foolish disagreement about something or other, and I, standing upon my dignity, did not reply to several of his—I must admit—good, kind and temperate letters. One night in June I was so restless that I lay awake the whole night, and determined to write a contrite letter to him the next day, for it was I who really was in the wrong, but I was too obstinate to admit it. I went down to the British Museum after breakfast, and returned about 2 o'clock in the afternoon to write my penitent letter. As I entered the hall I saw five telegrams for me upon the hall table. They all told the same tale—my dear friend had died early that morning. It was the 9th of June. I was stunned. A doctor was sent for, who at once ordered me to be taken over to Dublin, in order, if possible, to rouse me from my apparent apathy, for I did not shed a tear. I should mention here that some weeks previous to his death my friend had taken a new house in which I had never been, and which was the chief cause of our disagreement. When I arrived at Dublin, I was taken at once to the house, and the minute I entered the hall I recognized it as the one I saw so often in my dreams. Moreover, a gentleman came forward to meet me; it was the very man to whom my friend had spoken respecting the arrangements for my funeral. For many years afterwards I kept my friend's letters respecting my dreams. They were seen by many, and I regret to say they were accidentally destroyed but a short time ago. The man with the short, dark beard succeeded to my friend's practice, and took the house. A year afterward he died in the very room in which my friend died. What I have here told you is well known among my friends."

ALUM PURIFIES WATER.

A tablespoonful of powdered alum sprinkled into a hoghead of water will so purify it that after a few hours it will be found to possess nearly all the clearness and freshness of the finest spring water, and impure particles sinking to the bottom. One teaspoonful will purify four gallons.

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