

AT BAY.

This is the end, then, of striving; this is what comes of it all—Darkness and foes just behind one; before, an impassable wall.

Ah! but the soul that is faithful knows it is well to have fought. Knows it is good to have acted, whatever the doing has brought.

Here, at the end of my conflict, I counsel not yet with despair. Though to all seeming my struggles are his who but beareth the air.

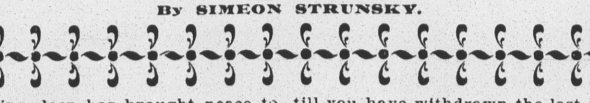
Darkness and foes are about me, yet I stand with my back to the wall, Facing whatever Fate sends me, and facing Fate thus I shall fall.

—Oscar Fay Adams.

“DIOCLES.”

An Athenian Fable by Henryk Sienkiewicz, Translated from the French.

By SIMEON STRUNSKY.



Divine sleep has brought peace to Athens and a silence so profound that the ear might catch the faint drawn-out breath of the dreaming city.

Young Diocles alone keeps vigil with the night. He has pressed his forehead against the feet of Pallas Athens where she rises, glorious, in the gardens of Academus.

He lifts his forehead from the base of the cold marble and raises his eyes to the face of the virgin, which is illumined by a single beam.

The heart of the young man is possessed with an infinite sadness and from his eyes, swollen with much weeping, tears trace a way down his beautiful face.

“You, and you alone, I adore and long to celebrate above all other divinities—you my protectress. But you, too, have lighted the fires of desire which consume me, and given me over to torture.

“Celestial guide,” asked Diocles, “when I shall have torn off the first veil will not Truth appear dazzling to my eyes?”

“Tear it off,” said the goddess. He caught at the border of the shroud and pulled it away sharply. The light burst forth with increased intensity.

“Come now, Diocles, your father has amassed a vast fortune of which you have complete enjoyment. What keeps you from bringing off a magnificent feast like those our godlike Alcibiades has tendered to the youth of Athens?”

“Who calls?” he demanded. A hand of marble weighed down his shoulder. “You have summoned me,” spoke the goddess. “Your prayer has been heard. Behold me!”

“A divine horror seized upon Diocles. His hair rose in fear as he fell upon his knees. For terror and delight he could only repeat, ‘You are near me, you, the Incomprehensible, the Awful, the Inexpressible One!’”

“I renounce the whole world and the very light of the sun,” cried Diocles, quite beside himself.

The olive trees and cypresses stood with bowed head, like servants, before Jove’s omnipotent daughter, as she pondered over the youth’s vow.

“And you, too, shall not see her all at once. Every year, on a night like this, I will bring her into your presence, and on each occasion you must tear off one of her veils and cast it behind you. My immortal power shall ward off death from you

gled in the disputes of the philosophers or the debates of the public assembly, his reputation for eloquence and wisdom grew.

When the old age came Diocles built himself a hut out of branches of willow near the quarries of Pentellicus. He left the city and lived far from men.

Several Olympiads rolled by. His hair had turned white, his form was bent to the ground, his eyes were sunk deep in their sockets.

“Behold Truth,” said Athena. “Her rays, you see, intercepted by many wrappings, pierce through nevertheless and give light. Their feeble radiance, gathered, on earth by the eyeball of the philosopher, is all that saves men from stumbling about blindly in the gloom of perpetual night.”

“Behold, I said,” she said, “what glory! What splendor! But before you extend your hand for the last time, listen to me. The veils which, year after year, through so many years, have fallen from your hands and escaped in the form of swans, were your illusions. Will you spare the last one? Or does fear cramp your heart?”

“To this single moment my whole life has been consecrated,” cried Diocles, and with beating heart he approached the radiant form whose glory dazzled him.

“The night grew pale and dawn rose cold and melancholy gray. Thin lines of cloud appeared in the sky, and heavy snowflakes began to fall, covering the mortal remains of Diocles.”

“We Are All Lopsided.” A person’s eyes are out of line in two cases out of five, and one eye is stronger than the other in seven persons out of ten.

“Horrors of Horrors!” People have curious ideas as to the treatment patients receive in asylums. A nurse who was on sitting-room duty recently heard a newcomer asking people who had been visitors for some time as to the treatment of patients.

Dissection of human bodies by medical students has been practised since B. C. 320.

LONDON’S OUTCASTS.

With the Men Who Have Touched Bottom in the Great City :::::

I spent two nights last week with the homeless and the outcast, one on the Embankment and the other in a County Council lodging house.

At Charing Cross and Waterloo there were 1100 men snatching eagerly chunks of bread and the bowls of soup which the army officers kindly distributed. The police constables were gentle and considerate, but it was a sad sight to see hungry men marshalled to receive a charity.

Over twenty-five per cent. were young men, many of them mere lads; and the police officers confirmed the opinion of the social experts who maintain it is not misfortune that brings this class to the doss house and the Embankment.

One of the Bloomsbury Sisters who accompanied me called our attention to an old man who had fainted at one end of the long, sad line. He lay full length on the steps of Waterloo Bridge, his head pillowed on a cruel ledge of stone.

The case of these 1100 men suggests a rich study in contrasts. By our side is a dark river heaving its bosom like a living thing, with a light reflected here and there like a sinister gleam of a serpent’s eye.

“The one bright spot of hope is the self-sacrifice of the Salvationists. For the soup is handed round by voluntary workers, workmen who have come all the way from Bermondsey and give their night’s rest and their kind labor in order to feed the hungry and relieve the hapless. They, too, were once in the gutter, but they saw something; and that vision is the secret of their sacrifice.”

“Oh, it is painful. Near a whole city-full, Home they have none.” —London Daily News.

How Water Acts. Water contracts as it falls from the normal boiling point, 212 degrees, until it reaches thirty-nine degrees. Below that degree it expands, and at thirty-two degrees, the freezing point, it will expand enough to burst pipes and vessels holding it.

When the pressure of the air is below normal, water boils at a lower temperature than 212 degrees. This is noticed before a rain, when the barometer shows by a falling mercury a decreased air pressure.

The second night I dispensed with tie and collar and overcoat and cuffs, and greatly enjoyed my emancipation, as I dived down into one of the narrow streets of central London and asked a bewildered and suspecting constable for a doss house.

“Oh, was one reply, ‘they treat the poor things cruel here. They give ‘em a bath every week.’” —American Home Monthly.

Dissection of human bodies by medical students has been practised since B. C. 320.

The Submerged Individual

By JUSTICE JOHN WOODWARD, of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York.

It is undeniable that the despot, if he be benevolent, can accomplish more good than the divided and myriad minded many. An unwise and precipitate democracy can, on the other hand, degenerate into that worst of despotisms, an irresponsible and selfish oligarchy which appropriates all of the benefits and denies every burden.

And such, it must be confessed, is the present attitude of many of our overgrown corporations. They have been entrusted with the welfare of the people, and have abused their trust. They have become pirates, where they should have remained benefactors.

“It is well, then, that they should be controlled and regulated. It is time to drive the money changers out of the temple and to substitute for the worship of gold the worship of character.”

On whom, then, shall our salvation depend, if not upon the individual? The many will never make the attempt to regain their lost rights unless they are led by a man.

And the man will come. Comes the crisis, he will not be found wanting. There is always the great personality who shall lead his people out of the wilderness to the promised land. He may not be one of the shining intellectuals, he may not be one of those subtle and brilliant advocates that stand arrayed in behalf of private interests against the cause of the people; but he will have that quality of manliness which inspires confidence.

Beware of those that provoke the storm that they may reap the rainbow. If, then, those corporations which have sprung like mushrooms from the decay of public virtue reveal such appalling defects, can we expect that the State, when it shall have become, as many desire, a universal corporation, will prove otherwise? Is not the danger in proportion to the size of the monopoly? Will not such a solution tend to crush that sense of individuality and that civic consciousness which is our sole refuge?

Society owes to each his opportunity. It is the supreme duty of the State to inspire ambition. To thwart, to limit, or to exclude by legislation the enterprise of the individual, is to deaden the world’s capacity for progress. To quench the spark of personality is to impoverish the whole social organization.

To attempt by law, therefore, to limit all men, irrespective of skill, endeavor or attainment, to a common wage would be as fatuous as it is unjust. Personality, indeed, can be subject only to the laws of nature. Needless to say, the souls of men are not amenable to statistics. You may measure material results; you can never calculate the aspirations of the mind.

To bring about the readjustment of social conditions many fantastic remedies are proposed; but there can be no panacea for political ills. The law never rises higher than its source. Our hope, then, is in the education of the public through the individual.

It is for you and for me to decide whether public opinion shall become a despotism. The aim of democracy is, I take it, equality before the law, and to guarantee to each his personal liberty—the liberty to be himself. When upon this shall be superimposed a burden of restrictions, hedging the individual about with “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not,” then surely democracy will exist only in name. Every law, therefore, which encroaches upon your personal prerogative as a man and as a citizen is a usurpation of your individuality. To submerge the identity of the person in the mass is to destroy all possibility for progress. This applies to us all. The ordinary man, indeed, may possess qualities far greater than those of the same nature in his more distinguished brother, yet it is to the exceptional faculties of the few that the world must look for its advancement.

To give encouragement to personality, to kindle by opportunities for reward the incentive to labor, and to nourish tenderly the progressive intellect, this should be at least one of the chief functions of government.

Severe Treatment. The following is a quite modern Chinese conception of the foreigners’ treatment of infectious cases: “If an epidemic broke out two foreigners took the sick away and put them in a little room, washed them with lime water and then locked them up, so that no one could see them, on purpose that they might soon die and not propagate the disease. Wives and children might cry and weep, but the foreigner would not drive them away with sticks, for until dead no one must see those faces again. Better for all of us to jump into the sea than submit to this.” —South China Post.

In the last hundred years there have been made in the United States, some seven or eight score of experiments in community life.