The Sumter Banner.

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Miscellaneous.

THE SIEGE.

BY DOUGLASS JERROLD.

'This morning, Reinhold Dort, the money changer, was found dead in his bed.'

'Yesterday, Helena Hecht, the fair young wife of Peter Hecht, the clothier, in the market-place, was taken from him.'

'Old Abraham, the apothecary at the Elephants, is gone too.'

'And the pretty babe of Martha Gratz.'

'And the burgomaster's page.'

'And Gottfried, the blind beggar, at the western gate.'

'Shame! shame!' cried twenty voices in according chorus, and some frowned their discontent, and some idly shook their clenched hands above their heads.

'Ye are bold citizens, to cry thus out on death, and death's works,' said a young man, who leaning against a door, listened with thoughtful face to the tragic gossip of the talkers.

'Death's works!' exclaimed one of the knot; 'marry, yes—death and the governor.'

'And the governor? A money-ringer of three-score and odd sleeps in death; a young wife defies the doctors; the man of rhubarb finds all physic vain; a baby dies teething; a beggar of eighty needs at last a grave; and all these deeds,' cried the young man, with a contemptuous laugh, 'ye lay upon the governor.'

And on none but him,' replied one of the crowd; and a shout from his fellows approved his answer. 'On none but him. There is no hope of relief for the city.'

'How do you know that?' calmly asked the youth.

'I—I have no hope,' said the man, doggedly.

'Happily, Simon Holzkopf, though, as I believe, the quickest tailor of your quarter, the safety of the city rests not upon you. It may be saved, though you have lost all hope.'

And are we to behold our wives and children fall down dead before our faces!' cried Simon; 'hear ye that, my masters? we are to starve, and starve in silence, too!'

'The governor, I doubt not,' cried another of the crowd, 'finds patience in his larder.'

'I saw him yesterday,' said a third, 'and it made my blood boil to see how sleek and fat he looked. Ha, Simon! I wish that you and I and every honest burgher among us, had no more than a lark for every capon swallowed by his governorship since the siege—only one mouthful of sour wine for every quart that he has taken of the best Rhenish.'

'Ay, ay,' cried the tailor, and he clutched his jerkin, 'our clothes would hang with better credit to the makers, eh, Master Caspar? for I think I have seen the day when your feathers have been finer, ay, and have shone upon plumper limbs. That's hardly the leg of Martinmas last,' and Simon Holzopf glanced askant at the attenuated figure of the young man, who had braved the displeasure of his fellow-townsmen by advocating the policy of the determined governor.

'Never heed the leg, Simon,' said Caspar, airily, 'it may dwindle to a rush, still my heart shall not be too heavy for it.'

'And is there no hope of a capitulation? will the governor not relent?' asked more than one of the mob.

'Another week—only another week—'tis said, he purposes to keep the enemy out. If, by that time, no succour comes——'

'It matters not,' cried an old man, 'what banner floats upon our walls, since death, death will be at all our hearths.'

'Men!' exclamed Simon Holzof, 'shall we endure this? Shall we drop into our graves whilst the pampered governor——'

'Down with the tyrant!' shouted the mob, and Simom, animated by the cry, proceeded in his oration.

'Whilst the pampered governor feasts upon the best? What cares he for our shrieking babes, our weeping wives?—he, gorged with the fat of the earth, drunk with the wine of—'

'Peace, fool!' cried Caspar, and, at his indignant voice, the eloquent tailor stood suddenly silent with open mouth; 'peace—this is no hour to babble falsehood, foolish at any time, most base and wicked at a time like this. We have all suffered—all must suffer; not one throughout the city but has felt the fierceness of the war. In every place has hunger had its victims.'

'The nuns of St. Ursula have eaten their grey parrot,' exclaimed Hans Potts, an idle wag, known to many of the mob; and, while some laughed at the sally, some condemned it, and called out for Caspar to proceed.

'Not one among us,' cried the young man, 'hath fared more hardly than the governor. You—you, Simon Holzkopf, who know every dish upon the governor's table, every flask of wine in the governor's cellar, tell me the dainty that he fed on yesterday. You cannot guess—no; it is too rich, too costly, for your simple apprehension—you cannot dream of such a rarity! Fellow townsmen!' and young Caspar turned for a moment from the abashed Simon to the still increasing crowd, 'you remember the holiday at Easter last? The governor rode through our city, and feasted with the merchants at their hall. The horse he sat, a king might have backed—a beautiful, a glorious thing—a creature that scarcely touched the earth—an animal of perfect frame and blood. You all remember how your eyes were fixed upon it, and the brute, as conscious of its beauty, pranced to your shouts. Yesterday the governor dined off that horse; with the meanest of his men he drew lots for a choice morsel of that noble steed.'

'A burgomaster's wife,' cried Hans Potts, 'has made a roast of her monkey. Hard times, my masters, when the siege sends our best friends to the spit.'

'Silence, hound!' exclaimed an old man; 'is this an hour to fling about your sorry jests, when those we love are dropping dead around us? Peace, mummer! Speak you truly, Caspar, is the garrison so straitened?'

'Go you to the walls, ask not of me,' replied the youth; 'go and behold the sight I've quitted; if that convince ye not, hang up the governor, and call in the foe.'

'What sight? what sight?' roared the mob.

'Famine feeding on a thousand men—burly soldiers shrunk almost to skeletons; their flashing, hopeful eyes deep set, and flickering with a horrid glare; their manly cheeks pinched in with want; their hearty, jocund voices sunk to a hoarse whisper; their gallant bearing changed to slow decrepitude; their looks of victory to the blank stare of coming death.'

'Horible! horrible!' down with the governor!' eclaimed the crowd.

'They suffer this, but suffer nobly,' cred Caspar; 'not a murmur, not a look of treason to the stern will of him who rules them. Martys to the glory of their arms, the stand resolved—come what will, they have sworn with the governor to hold the citadel another week.'

'Glory! a pretty word, i'faith. Shall we dry our wives' eyes with it? will it fill our children's bellies?' cried one of the crowd.

'I trow the've something more toothsome than glory for supper,' said a second; 'or does the governor's lady and his delicate daughter feed off the insipid dishes? If so, 'twill spoil their pretty looks.' A derisive shout followed this remark, and again the crowd called for vengeance on the governor.

"Let's to the citadel!" cried fifty voices, and 'To the citadel!' hallooed the mob. With the words, the crowd rushed onwards, but soon halted in their course.

Nany paused, as they avowed to reconsider their determination; the greater part slunk home; and when, at length, the discontented townsmen halted at the outer gate, few were to be seen save the half-dozen immediate partizans and admirers of Simon Holzkopf and Hans Potts. Whether they demanded instant audience of the governor, at the time surrounded by his family, gazing wistfully from the walls for expected succor, or whether, contented with his stern answer just rendered to the civic authorities then in the garrison, they held their peace, the archives of the city give no note. Quitting the discontented, self-dubbed deputies, let us return to the hero of our story, Caspar Brandt.

'And the good widow, Caspar? asked the old man who had rebuked the wit of Hans Potts, and who, on the flight of the crowd, walked slowly towards the market place with the youth. 'These are sorry times for neccessities like her's; how fares she?'

Caspar answered not; strove, with manly strength, to suppress the emotion; but a deep groan burst from his lips: he paused, and quivered like a struck reed.

'Caspar—Caspar Brandt!' cried the old man, and caught the youth in his arms. 'Blessed Virgin! what ails the boy?'

'Nothing—nothing; a sudden faintness, nothing more; and Caspar, with a sickly smile,, pressed the old man's hand.

'By all the saints! your hand burns like heated stone. Come—come to my house; I have yet a cup of wine, that for the love of old times, for the grateful thoughts I bear your mother, kind in the days of misery and death to me, and mine, shall be spared you. Tell me, how fares the widow?'

'Sick, Master Martin, sick almost to death,, answered Caspar. 'For two months she has kept her chamber—for two months has been almost helpless. Still her state brings this poor comfort with it: she knows not the extreme misery of the town—knows not the bitter suffering of her friends and neighbors.'

'And her wants, Caspar? Alas!' cried the old man, 'affliction has made me selfish—steeled my heart to old acquaintance, else I had sought you long since. Now, Heaven help me! I can do nothing. Her wants—how are they supplied?'

'She needs but little of the simplest kind, and that—Heaven be thanked!—I have obtained, may still obtain for her. She will die—she cannot wrestle with the sickness that consumes her; she will die!' repeated the young man, in a hallow, hopeless voice, and big tears started from his eyes, 'but not—not with famine;' andas he spoke, the youth clenched his hand, and trod the earth with new strength.

'Nay, her years give everything to hope,' said Martin. 'At little more than seventeen—ah, me! it seems but yesterday—she was your mother. And still she has kept her youthful face—still, in looks, has seemed no other than your eldest sister.'

'Ay, Master Martin, ay. God pardon me!' exclaimed the youth, and the tears poured anew down his cheeks, 'God pardon me, and make me humble! but now, now I cannot think of losing her, and pray for meekness.'

'Hope, should be the young man's staff, as it is the old man's crutch,' said Martin. 'You will not lose her, trust me—no; the present troubles past, all will become well again—in a half cup of poor wine,' said Martin, lowering his voice as he passed a passenger, who paused a moment, and leered with the malice of keen want at the old man talking too loudly of a priceless luxury; 'let us, good Caspar, drink to better times. A half cup, boy, a poor half cup, and the old man sighed as he paused at his threshold. Drawing the key from his pocket, he unlocked the door, and led the way into a house, where once comfort and heaped plenty gave a constant welcome. 'Sit down, Caspar: your father has sat in that chair, when the roof quaked with the laughter of fifty throats; when Fortune herself served at the hearth, and seemed my handmaid. Well, well, the hearth is quenched now: the old, old faces, have passed like morning shadows; the sweet, constant voices, are heard but in my dreams; and I sit at my old fireside, an old, grey-headed, solitary man. But come, my boy; the wine.' And Martin took a small flash from a shelf.—'What starts you?, asked the old man, seeing Caspar start.

'Your pardon, Master; is not that bread?' and Caspar pointed to a small loaf by the flask on the shelf. At the same moment a deep blush crimsoned the young man's face, and he sat as though detected in an act of shame.

Martin took the loaf, and gazing in Caspar's face, a tear stood in the man's eye, and his voice trembled as he spoke. 'It is so, lad? God help you! it is so?'

'Forgive me, pray forgive me!' stammered Caspar.

'I have another,' said Martin; 'your mother was the playmate of Margaret my own bright girl—tended her in, sickness and would, with the love of early girlhood, watch her in death; I tell you, boy, I have another,' cried the old man with vehemence! 'take it, and God increase it to you!'

'Never! I am not that sordid, selfish wretch to rob old age,' cried Caspar, and he sought to reach the door.

'I tell you, boy, I have another,' exclaimed Martin; 'you hear? I have another,' and he placed himself before the youth.

'Where is it?' asked Caspar; 'make me see it; and so bitterly has the time wrung us, that, for her sake, I will, I must despoil you.'

'The loaf—'tis locked up—the key is in my chamber; I have wine—have feasted twice to-day,' said Martin; but Caspar mournfully shook his head, and, hurriedly embracing the old man, attempted to depart. 'You do not quit me thus,' cried Martin, holding the youth. 'Heaven forgive me! I knew not that things had gone so hardly with you. Hear me; to-morrow I have a new supply—a friend, an old, old friend has promised me. If, boy, you would see your mother live, cast not away her life upon an idle form. Caspar Brandt, in the name of your dead father whose spirit at this moment lingers at this hearth, share this with your father's friend.' Saying this, old Martin forced the loaf, into Caspar's hand and broke it. 'Now, boy, get you home,' said Martin, seating himself; bear my good wishes to your mother, and leave me to my supper.'

Again Caspar embraced the old man, and, swallowing a half cup of wine, forced upon him by the hospitable host—for surely hospitality was in that broken bread, that meagre vintage and hastened from the house. Martin, for the first time, tasted food that day, but he sat not in solitude at his deserted fireside, for he ate his crust, and drank his humble draught, with the spirits of the dead gathered about his board; and the dry bread became manna, and the wine a draught for saints.

Caspar hurried to a distant quarter of the city, where, at the commencement of the siege, he had secured an asylum for his sick mother; where, day and night, he had watched her sinking health. The rent of three small houses bequeathed to her by her father, most frugally applied, had enabled the widow to support herself and child; but since the war had closed about the city, all trade had ceased, debts were no longer paid, social obligations no longer respected or acknowledged. It had been the chief care of Caspar to disguise from his mother the extent of the calamities that pressed around them; and though, deceived by his filial tenderness, she knew not half the misery that threatened them—half the horrors raging in the city—she read with a mother's eye the haggard story written in her son's face; it was plain that he was sinking beneath the task of administering to her comfort and her repose. He had, on the day on which our story opens, been many hours from home; and the widow sat with a beating heart, and with a thousand thoughts of undefined danger busy in her brain, watching the declining rays of a spring sun. Every sound smote her soul with disappointment, for it was not Caspar's footstep. Thus she sat, until suspense became a torture, until, she filled her chamber with phantoms of terror, until she was surrounded by a host of fears.

'Caspar! Caspar!, she shricked, and sprang from her chair as the youth entered the house.

'Mother!' exclaimed the boy, and in a moment he stood in the chamber embracing his parent.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

We once heared of a traveller at a hotel, who rose from his bed at night to examine the weather, but instead of looking out at the sky, thurst his head through a glass window of a cupboard. Landlord, cried the astonished man, this is very singular weather the night is as dark as Egypt, *and smell of cheese.*

Lord! said Mrs. Partington, 'what monsters them cotton planters must be. I'm told one of 'em has as many as a hundred *hands!*

From the Boston Evening Post.

FREE PASSES FOR EDITORS,

ON RAILROADS, ETC.

The community were somewhat startled, a few weeks since, by an announcement made that editors were not allowed to pass over a certain railroad free—and still more so, when some heroic gentleman started up at that meeting and with courage exclaimed:—'Glad of it.' For our part we see no particular cause for rejoicing, and the gentleman who thus spoke must not look deeper into the subject than we have as yet. Elizur Wright at the time wrote a short article upon the system of free passes, and concluded by promising not only to ride over the rails and pay his fare, but to become a stockholder, if the companies would pay a fair price for the hundreds of articles which directly or indirectly tend to improve railroad stock, and which editors insert daily and weekly, gratuitously. Let us look for a moment into this subject, and see how much newspapers have to do with the formation of railroads. A few men meet and talk over a route for a railroad. The resources of the country are looked at, the amount of travel is reckoned, and then the public pulse is touched through the medium of the *newspapsr*. The editor is called upon and becomes interested in the plan, and he is employed to portray the advantages which must accrue. Other editors copy the articles, the community is awakened, and then comes a call for a public meeting, and the *newspaper* again lends gratuitously its services to induce the people to be present. The work goes on! the *newspaper* records its progress. The annual meeting is holden—a reporter is dispatched, and the absent stockholders, ere twenty-four hours have elapsed, are posted up; and finally comes the opening, when two columns in the *newspaper* announce to the world that there is such a road in existence, refers to its prospects, alludes to the beauties of Nature which can be seen during a ride over the road, and establishes in the minds of the people a confidence in the stock. What pecuniary reward is received for this? An advertisement at a low price is obtained, and the money received for this is paid out in recording the success of the road. This is what the *newspaper* does for railroads. What should be the reward of those who spend time and money in improving the stock of railroads? What does a free pass amount to? It costs the railroads no more to convey one hundred and one passenger than it does one hundred. Editors are not generally migratory in their habits, but when an opportunity offers they sometimes avail themselves of it. An invitation is sent perhaps to an editor to pass over a road at his own convenience. A leisure day presents itself, and away he flies over the road, noticing everything he sees, and giving a sketch of his trip in his paper which is read by thousands and thousands. Perhaps a few only may be induced to follow his example. They go and see, and these few speak of it to others, and so the ball is set in motion. What does the corporation lose?

There is a policy in few passes—there is economy in well directed liberality, and some roads have studied the system and have been gainers, while others have pursued a narrow contracted course and the result is seen. Look at the flourishing villages which have sprung up on some of the roads, contrasting strongly with the deserted hamlets on other routes, where high fares have not only driven people away, but kept others from settling, and where the meanness of the president and directors has become proverbial along the route.

For our part, we care little or nothing about free passes, we are tied to the oar, and cannot avail ourselves of complimentary and unsolicited invitations to ride on a rail, which have been kindly extended to us; but we do like to see the Press treated with some little respect, and if any class in the community doserve to travel without expense, in consideration of services rendered, it is that, which belongs to the Press. We do not include in this list a set of half-fledged reporters, belonging tot no particular paper, representing no established journal, who float round the country, living by their wits, and their power of eloquence in persuading conductors and landlords that they are correspondents for some fourteen different papers—for they are merely leeches, and are entitled to no courtesy.

Punch says he knows a man so fat that they grease waggon wheels with his shadow.

HAPPINESS OF OLD AGE.—Nor are advancing years marked always with unpleasing qualities. The eye that is growing gradually dim, may yet beam with the soft light of joy, as well as become heavy with the tear of affliction. Age often displays gentle and holy affections, deep as the foundations of the soul, that diffuse benignant sunshine throughout the circle of their influence; radiant, celestial hope sometimes cheers the declining path, and creates a delightful composure of the heart, altogether unlike "comfortless despair;" deserved honors crown a useful life, and attract veneration and love; for not always is transcendant merit, though retiring from high stations in the world, made the sport of "bitter scorn and grinning infamy." Manhood has magnanimous virtues, as well as degrading vice; victories nobler than war's grandest triumphs, as well as tempestuous temptations; worthy, as well as ignoble ambition. What sight is more beautiful, and it may be seen, of friendship, whose corner-stone was laid by the hand of youth, growing upward in majestic simplicity, as every year adds materials to the enduring fabric, until at last the sunset of age gilds the structure with a grace like that of Paradise? Yes, it is true, that age may meet the smile of faithful regard, as well as the "altered eye of hard unkindness." "Amid severest woe" a hopeful, quiet uncomplaining temper, alive to the keenness of sorrow, yet wearing the look of heavenly patience, is sometimes seen, as well as well as "moody madness laughing wild." And, finally, age, though "slow consuming," often reaps the earnest of immortal life, and ripens for the skies.—*Literary World.*

A HELP TO ENERGY.—To-day I found myself compelled to do something, which was very disagreeable to me, and which I had long deferred; I was obliged to resort to my 'grand expedient' in order to conquer my aversion. You will laugh when I tell you what this is; but I find it a powerful in one great things as well as small. The truth is, there are few men who are not sometimes capricious, and yet oftener vacillating. Finding that I am no better than others in this respect, I invented a remedy of my own, a sort of articificial resolution respecting things which are difficult to perform—a means of securing that firmness in myself which I might otherwise want, and which man is generally obliged to sustain by some external prop. My device, then, is this: I give my word of honor most solemnly to myself to do or to leave undone this or that. I of course am exceedingly cautious and discreet in the use of this expedient, and exercise great deliberation before I resolve upon it; but when once it is done, even if I afterwards think I have been precipate or mistaken, I hold it to be irrevocable, whatever inconveniences I foresee likely to result, and I feel great satisfaction and tranquility in being subject to such an immutable law. If I were capable of breaking it after such mature consideration, I should lose all respect for myself; and what man of sense would not prefer death to such an alternative?

RELIGION.—Bright as the morning star, dressed in the radiance of the sun-beams, cometh the seraph of immortality.

She approacheth in white robes, her eye is fixed on the heavens, her knee is humbled in the dust, she giveth laws to the daughters of women.

She teacheth the way of virtue, her precepts are simplicity and truth.

Her profession is pure and undefiled, her temple is not filled with priests.

The duties she enjoineth are plain and easy; she dealeth not in the system of speculative and vain philosphy.

She perplexeth not the mind with the hypothesis of scepticism, neither the cavillers nor the sophists are the teachers of her precepts.

Attend to her counsel and abide by her instructions; so shall peace be the companion of thy reflections, and happiness the partner of thy contemplations.

In the practice of piety there is satisfaction on earth, and its reward is on high, in the regions of bliss and immortality.

An Irishman riding to market with a sack of potatoes before him, discovered that his horse was getting tired, whereupon he dismounted, put the potatoes upon his own shoulder, and again mounted saying, that it was better that he should carry the praties, as he was fresher than the poor baste.