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THE DOWNFALL

BY EMILE ZOLA



ON JULY 19, 1870, THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY BEGAN. ON THAT DAY, IN A SMALL FRENCH VILLAGE

"SO, WE ARE AT WAR. WE WILL TEACH THOSE PRUSSIANS A LESSON!"



AND IN THE CROWD

BUT JEAN, WHY ARE YOU RUSHING TO ENLIST? WHEN YOU LEFT THE ARMY YEARS AGO, YOU TOLD ME HOW MUCH YOU HATED WAR.

YES, I'VE SEEN ENOUGH WAR TO KNOW IT'S A BAD THING. BUT IF THE EMPEROR NEEDS HELP TO SAVE FRANCE, I CANNOT HAND BACK.



Napoleon III

LATER

I KNOW THE 106th REGIMENT WILL BE GLAD TO HAVE CORPORAL JEAN MACQUART BACK. BUT WHAT WILL YOUR WIFE SAY?

SHE DIED LAST MONTH.



OH, SORRY TO HEAR THAT. NOW, IF YOU'LL JUST MAKE A MARK HERE, CORPORAL, I'LL WRITE YOUR NAME UNDERNEATH.

NO, I'VE LEARNED TO SIGN MY NAME, THOUGH I GUESS THAT'S ABOUT ALL.



ON THE SAME DAY IN SEDAN, A LARGE FRENCH CITY ON THE BELGIAN BORDER ...

MAURICE WEISS, MONSIEUR MAURICE LEVASSOEUR WISHES TO SEE YOU

MY BROTHER, HERE? I DO HOPE HE HAVN'T GOTTEN INTO TROUBLE AGAIN



A FEW MINUTES LATER

MAURICE, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU BUT WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?

DON'T WORRY, HENRIETTE FOR ONCE YOUR TWIN BROTHER IS DOING SOMETHING TO MAKE YOU PROUD OF HIM. I'VE COME

TO SEDAN TO ENLIST IN THE 104th REGIMENT, WHICH WILL BE THE FIRST TO CROSS THE RHINE RIVER INTO GERMANY.



WHEN HENRIETTE'S HUSBAND CAME HOME

WELL, I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU, MAURICE BUT WHAT'S THIS I HEAR OF YOUR GOING OFF TO ENLIST?

OH, EVERYONE SAYS THE PRUSSAINS HAVE NO REAL ARMY AT ALL. ANYHOW, THEY'RE SCARED TO DEATH AT THE VERY NAME OF NAPOLEON. SURELY MY SISTER MUST HAVE TOLD YOU THAT OUR GRANDFATHER FOUGHT UNDER THE GREAT NAPOLEON.



YES, MY BOY, BUT DON'T FORGET THAT THIS IS ONLY HIS NEPHEW — RAPULSON THE LITTLE, AS FOR THE PRUSSAINS BEING UNPREPARED — I DON'T KNOW I'VE HAD TO MAKE MANY BUSINESS TRIPS INTO GERMANY LATELY, AND FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN.

EVERYONE'S SURE OF A QUICK VICTORY WHY, THEY HAVEN'T EVEN ISSUED ANY MAPS OF FRANCE TO THE ARMY? IT'S SO CERTAIN WE'RE GOING TO MARCH RIGHT ACROSS THE RHINE THAT THEY'VE ORDERED ONLY MAPS OF GERMANY? I HAD BETTER BE OFF OR THEY'LL WIN THE WAR WITHOUT ME

LATER ...
HE'S A BRAVE YOUNG MAN I WISH I WERE AS SURE AS HE IS THAT THE EMPEROR AND GENERALS KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING



OH, I HATE WAR! MY BROTHER AND SO MANY OTHERS CAN BE KILLED JUST AS EASILY WINNING AS LOSING WHAT A DREADFUL, NICKED THING WAR IS!

COME, COME, MY DEAR YOU MUSTN'T TAKE IT SO HARD SOMETIMES WAR IS NECESSARY

NO, NEVER! WHY CAN'T NATIONS ADJUST THEIR DIFFERENCES WITHOUT SHEDDING BLOOD?



MORRICE WAS ASSIGNED TO JEAN'S SQUAD. HE FELT HUMBLED TO BE UNDER THE COMMAND OF A PEASANT.

THAT WILL BE FINE, IF THE WEATHER HOLDS OTHERWISE, WE'LL ALL BE WASHED AWAY. LET ME SHOW YOU HOW TO DRIVE IN YOUR PEGS TO MAKE IT SAFE.

NO, THANK YOU IF I NEED ADVICE, I'LL ASK FOR IT.



THAT NIGHT

HOW CLOSE IT IS IN HERE WITH THOSE FELLOWS! I DON'T CARE HOW COLD IT IS OUTSIDE, I CAN'T BREATHE IN HERE.



IT MUST BE HARD FOR A YOUNG GENTLEMAN LIKE HIM, NOT USED TO ROUGHING IT, TO BE THROWN IN WITH ALL SORTS LIKE THIS.



LATER

POOR FELLOW, HE'LL FREEZE OUT HERE WITH ONE THIN BLANKET. I DON'T REALLY NEED THIS IN THE TENT.



The following morning

AH, HERE COME OUR RATIONS, ONLY TWELVE HOURS LATE!

NEVER MIND AS LONG AS THE COMMISSARY HAS CAUGHT UP WITH US AT LAST WE'LL HAVE SOUP FOR BREAKFAST.

YES, BUT I COULDN'T SLEEP ALL NIGHT, MY STOMACH WAS SO EMPTY.



AH! NOW IT'S BEGINNING TO SMELL LIKE SOMETHING IN JUST ANOTHER HOUR OR SO.



Suddenly

THE PRUSSIANS HAVE CROSSED THE RHINE! THEY MAY BE HERE IN AN HOUR! IMMEDIATE RETREAT TO PARIS IS ORDERED!



BUT THE SOUP?

MY STOMACH!

I WON'T GO A STEP BEFORE EATING!

YOU CAN'T MARCH WHILE FASTING!



BUT THE ARMY RETREATED, AND SEEING THE ARMY RETREAT, MOST OF THE PEASANTS, IN PANIC, ALSO FLED FROM THEIR HOMES. THEY HAD BEEN SO CONFIDENT THAT THE WAR WOULD BE FOUGHT IN GERMANY—AND NOW FRANCE WAS INVADED!

CONWARDS! THE RHINE IS NOT THERE! THE RHINE LIES THE OTHER WAY! CONWARDS! CONWARDS!



THEN FURTHER WORD CAME TO THE FRENCH ARMY IT WAS ALL A MISTAKE THE PRUSSIANS HAD NOT CROSSED THE RHINE

IT IS TOO RIDICULOUS! WE MARCH UP AND BACK, AND NOT SO MUCH AS A HOUSE IN FRONT OR IN BACK OF US

WHAT OFFICERS WE HAVE TO COMMAND US? I WONDER WHAT THEY WOULD DO IF THEY FACED A REAL ARMY, IF THEY ACT THIS WAY WHEN THERE'S NOT A PRUSSIAN IN SIGHT

THE NEXT FEW DAYS WERE A PERIOD OF MONOTONY, FULL OF UNCERTAINTY AND ANXIOUS FOREBODINGS THEY CAME THE ORDER TO MOVE THIS TIME, THE PRUSSIANS HAD TRULY CROSSED THE RHINE INTO FRANCE THE 10th REGIMENT WAS BUNGLED INTO CATTLE CARS AND STARTED OFF



IF NAPOLEON AND BISMARCK* HAVE A QUARREL, WHY DON'T THEY FIGHT IT OUT WITH THEIR FISTS? WHY INVOLVE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MEN WHO DON'T EVEN KNOW ONE ANOTHER?

*German Chancellor

WILL YOU BE SILENT? I DON'T DENY WAR IS A TERRIBLE BUSINESS, BUT DON'T DISHEARTEN MEN WHO ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH TO DO TO KEEP THEIR COURAGE UP



WHAT'S MORE, THE PRUSSIANS ARE IN OUR LAND? HAVE YOU NO FEELINGS, WAR? WE MUST DRIVE THEM OUT!



DAYS LATER, THE MEN OF THE 106th REGIMENT RESUMED THEIR MARCH. THEY STILL HAD SEEN NO ACTION.

THAT GOOD-FOR-NOTHING COMMISSARY HANST CAUGHT UP WITH US FOR THREE DAYS!

LET'S SLIP AWAY AND SEE IF WE CAN GET SOMETHING AT THE NEXT FARMHOUSE.



REHILLY! UNCLE FOUCHARD'S FARM MUST BE JUST ACROSS THOSE FIELDS. I HATE TO ASK THE OLD MISER FOR ANYTHING, BUT I'M SO HUNGRY I'D TAKE A PIECE OF BREAD FROM THE DEVIL HIMSELF!

REHILLY'S WAY



AT FOUCHARD'S FARMHOUSE

THERE'S NOT A SCRAP OF FOOD HERE FOR ANY OF YOU. CLEAR OUT OR I'LL FIRE!



BUT NOT ON ME, UNCLE. YOU WOULDN'T SHOOT YOUR OWN NEPHEW, WOULD YOU? THE MEN ARE REALLY STARVING, AND SO AM I. SO GIVE US SOMETHING TO EAT.



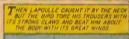
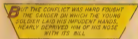
I HAVE NOTHING TO SPARE. IT'S THE GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS TO FEED ITS SOLDIERS' NEPHEW OR NO NEPHEW. I'LL SHOOT THE FIRST RASCAL WHO TRIES TO BREAK IN HERE.



THERE'S A POTATO FIELD BACK THERE. MAYBE THE OLD MISER HAS LEFT SOME POTATOES IN THE GROUND.

WE'LL TRY OUR LUCK IN THIS DIRECTION. REMEMBER -- FAIR SHARES FOR ALL, IF ANYONE FINDS ANYTHING.





ALL THE SEARCH PARTIES WERE SUCCESSFUL, AND RETURNED TO CAMP WITH THEIR PRIZES AS THEY PREPARED THE FOOD, JEAN CAME BY

YOU KNOW IT'S STRICTLY FORBIDDEN TO LOOT THE COUNTRYSIDE. DON'T TELL ME THAT ANY FARMER GAVE YOU A FINE BIRD LIKE THAT! IT MUST WEIGH TWENTY POUNDS!



WE WERE OUT WALKING FOR AN APPETITE, WHEN WE MET THIS FINE BIRD AND HE INSISTED ON MAKING OUR ACQUAINTANCE



WELL, WHAT'S DONE IS DONE NOW, IF WE HANG OUR FRIEND UP HERE, AND SOME OF YOU TAKE TURNS TWIRLING HIM ABOUT WITH A STICK SO THAT HE COOKS EVENLY, WE'LL ALL HAVE A TREAT



CAMP NIGHT



TWO DAYS LATER

OH, NOW THIS HURTS? I SHOULD HAVE TOLD JEAN WHEN HE ASKED WHY I WAS LIMPING YESTERDAY BUT, AFTER ALL, HOW CAN A FELLOW WITH A HIDE LIKE AN OX BE EXPECTED TO SYMPATHIZE WITH A CHAP SILLY ENOUGH TO HAVE FEET THAT BUSTER?



BUT

LOOK HERE, THAT IS BECOMING SERIOUS. THAT FOOT OF YOURS MUST BE ATTENDED TO FIRST, WE'LL BATHE IT



THANKS THAT FEELS MUCH BETTER



YOU SHOULD HAVE SHOWN IT TO ME BEFORE NOW, MY BOY, WILL YOU HAVE A CIGARETTE? I HAVE SOME TOBACCO LEFT



HE CAN DO EVERYTHING HE CARES FOR HIS MEN LIKE A FATHER, TO THINK HOW LONG I FELT MYSELF ABUSED TO BE SERVING UNDER A PEASANT!



EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, JEAN AGAIN EXAMINED MAURICE'S SORE FOOT

IF WE ARE TO DO ANY MARCHING TODAY, YOU HAD BETTER GET A PLACE IN ONE OF THE WAGGONS

NO MY FOOT FEELS MUCH BETTER, AND I DON'T WANT TO GET SEPARATED FROM OUR REGIMENT IF THERE'S ANY CHANCE OF ACTION I THINK I HEAR CAVALRY ON THE ROAD



IT MUST BE THE FIRST DETACHMENT OF THE CAVALRY MEN WHO WERE STATIONED ON THE LEFT FLANK OF THE DIVISION. THE CAPTAIN SAID SOMETHING ABOUT THEM ALL BEING CALLED INTO THE CENTER.



WHAT'S THE SENSE OF THAT? THEY SHOULD BE DISPERSED ON OUR FLANK TO SCOUT AND OBSERVE THE ENEMY WHO MUST APPROACH FROM THE LEFT



YOU'RE RIGHT BUT WHAT'S THE USE OF TALKING? THIS PUSHING CAMPAIGN AND THESE STUPID, BLOODY GENERALS! THEY KILL OUR HORSES AND LET US ROT IN IDLENESS IT'S SICKENING



WELL, WHAT WILL BE WILL BE AND WHOEVER LIVES LONG ENOUGH WILL SEE IT





A NO SURPRISE
CAME WITH
STILL NO SIGN
OF THE ENEMY
BY THEIR
MARCHING
WAS ON
SENTRY DUTY

WHO GOES
THERE?



IT IS I. NO ONE KNOWS WHERE
THE PRUSSIANS ARE, OR WHAT
THEY'RE DOING, BUT OUR ORDERS
HAVE BEEN CHANGED-- WE'RE TO
RETREAT IMMEDIATELY-- THE
WHOLE DIVISION

WHY?



NO ONE KNOWS. SOME SAY THE EMPEROR
HIMSELF CAME TO LEAD THE ARMY, AND
MARSHAL MACDONALD SHOWED HIM WE
WERE IN NO STATE TO MEET THE
PRUSSIANS ANYWAY, WE'RE TO TURN
AROUND AND MARCH RIGHT BACK THE
WAY WE CAME, AND ON THE
DOUBLE, TOO



OH, WHAT GENERALS! THEY
KNOW NOTHING, THEY FORESEE
NOTHING. IT'S ALL UP WITH US!



THAT'S AS MAY BE. MEANWHILE,
WE MUST DO OUR BEST. HOW'S
YOUR FOOT?



WHEN I THOUGHT THERE WAS TO BE A FIGHT, MY FOOT FELT CURED NOW, IT HURTS LIKE PURY AND I'M HUNGRY AS THE DEVIL. WEREN'T THERE ANY RATIONS GIVEN OUT LAST NIGHT?



NO, AND THERE WON'T BE ANY THIS MORNING EITHER. BUT I HAVE THREE BISCUITS IN MY KNAPSACK.



THIS IS THE FOURTH TIME YOU'VE SHARED YOUR FOOD WITH ME. I'M ASHAMED TO TAKE IT, BUT I'M STARVING. DON'T YOU EVER GET TIRED OR HUNGRY?



I'M AN OLD CAMPAIGNER AND YOU SEE I HAVE TWO BISCUITS LEFT.



I'D BETTER PUT THESE TWO BACK. WE MAY NEED THEM LATER.



YOU TOLD ME THAT YOU GREW UP IN THAT TOWN WE PASSED THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY. YOU OUGHT TO GET PERMISSION TO DRIVE INTO TOWN AND HAVE A GOOD NIGHT'S REST. WE CAN PICK YOU UP AS WE GO BY TOMORROW.



FOLLOWING JEAN'S ADVICE, MAURICE RECEIVED PERMISSION FROM THE RESIDENTIAL DOCTOR TO GET A RIDE INTO TOWN

WHY, IS IT POSSIBLE?
THE LEVASSEUR BOY?



I'M GOING TO ASK MY
OLD FRIEND, THE NOTARY,
TO PUT ME UP FOR
THE NIGHT

OH, NO, YOU
CAN'T! THE
EMPEROR IS
STAYING AT
HIS HOUSE!



SO THAT'S WHAT
THOSE BAGGAGE
WAGONS ARE FOR!

YES, AND YOU SHOULD HAVE
SEEN THE THINGS THEY TOOK
FROM THEM: THE BOTTLES
OF WINE AND THE BASKETS
OF FOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL
LINEN! AND THE STEW PANS!
THEY SHINE LIKE SILVER!



BUT HERE I AM TALKING, WHILE YOU MUST
WANT A HOT BATH AND A BED COME, YOU
CAN HAVE A ROOM IN MY HOUSE, JUST
ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE EMPEROR



A FEW MINUTES LATER

NOW YOU GET INTO BED, AND
I'LL HAVE YOUR CLOTHES
BRUSHED AND PRESSED! MY
HUSBAND WILL BRING THEM TO
YOU AS SOON AS HE RETURNS
FROM HIS WORK IN THE
TELEGRAPH OFFICE

THANK
YOU



THAT EVENING, NAPOLEON WAS AWAKENED BY HIS HOST

WHAT A DAY! THIS MORNING, MARSHAL MACMORON TELEGRAPHED THE EMPEROR THAT THE CROWN PRINCE OF PRUSSIA WAS APPROACHING, AND THAT OUR ARMY MUST WITHDRAW



SO THE EMPEROR SENT A TELEGRAM TO THE EMPRESS AND THE MINISTERS IN PARIS AN HOUR AGO, & WERE CAME FROM THEM THEY SAID THERE WOULD BE A REVOLUTION IN PARIS IF OUR ARMY WITHDREW



WHAT WILL THE EMPEROR DO?

THE EMPEROR HAS SENT FOR MARSHAL MACMORON -- YOU GO BACK TO SLEEP NOW I'LL CALL YOU IF THERE'S ANY NEWS



LATER

WAKE UP MY BOY YOU HAVE NO TIME TO LOSE IF YOU WANT TO REACH YOUR REGIMENT THE EMPEROR HAS ORDERED THE ARMY TO MARCH BACK TO MEET THE PRUSSIAN NEAR SEDAN



PUT THESE HIS SHOES ON
RIGHT OVER THE BANDAGE,
AND YOU WON'T HAVE ANY
MORE TROUBLE WITH
YOUR FOOT



THEN

LOOK! THERE
IS THE
EMPEROR--
POOR MAN

I WONDER WHAT HE IS
THINKING MAYBE HE
KNOWS BETTER, BUT IT
SEEMS STRANGE TO ME
TO RUN AWAY FROM A
BATTLE IN THE MORNING,
AND AT NIGHT, TO FLY
BACK INTO THE VERY
SAME BATTLE



AND THE EMPEROR WAS THINKING

MARCH! FORWARD, WITH NO
LOOK BACKWARD, MARCH
THROUGH MUD, THROUGH
RAIN, TO BITTER DEATH,
SO THAT THE FINAL GAME
OF EMPIRE MAY BE PLAYED
OUT TO THE LAST
AGONIZING CARD



MARCH! MARCH! DIE A HERO'S
DEATH ON THE PILED CORPSES
OF YOUR PEOPLE, SO THAT
THE WHOLE WORLD MAY GAZE IN
AWE-STRUCK ADMIRATION AT
THE HONOR AND THE GLORY
OF YOUR NAME



SAUCE REACHED HIS REGIMENT JUST IN TIME TO JOIN THEM WHEN THEY WERE ORDERED INTO ACTION

LISTEN HOW THE FLIES BUZZ ALL AROUND US. THIS PLACE IS FULL OF THEM.

THOSE ARE NOT FLIES. THEY ARE BULLETS.



THE DEVIL! YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE A PRUSSIAN TO FIRE AT! WE SIT HERE, AND THEY SHOOT FROM NOWHERE AND KILL US!



THEY'RE ALL ABOUT US.



I MUST SEE THEM.



ARE YOU CRAZY? DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE YOUR BONES HERE?





WITH HEAVY LOSSES, THE MEN REACHED THE TOP OF THE HILL, ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES UNDER HEAVY FIRE FROM SEVERAL DIRECTIONS.

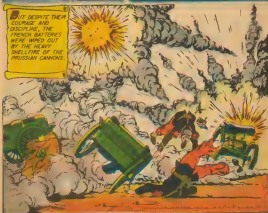


BUT SIR, IT'S ABSURD! WHO EVER HEARD OF PLACING A REGIMENT IN THE AIR LIKE THIS, AND GIVING IT NO SUPPORT? WHERE ARE OUR BATTERIES?

THERE THEY COME NOW AH, THE BRAVE FELLOWS? SEE HOW THEY CHARGE UP THE HILL IN ORDER, AS IF THEY WERE ON PARADE!



BUT DESPITE THEIR COURAGE AND DISCIPLINE, THE FRENCH BATTERIES WERE WIPED OUT BY THE HEAVY SHELLFIRE OF THE PRUSSIAN CANNONS.



Left with no hope of support, the men could no longer maintain their position under the fire of the heavy Prussian guns. They began running wildly downhill.



Halfway down, Jean was hit.





THE PRUSSIANS CAPTURED EVERY POSITION ABOUT SEDAN LONG BEFORE SUNSET. MOST OF THE FRENCH SOLDIERS RETREATED TOWARD THE CITY.



BUT HENRIETTE HAD HAD OTHER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT, AS WELL THE EVENING BEFORE.

MY EMPLOYER, MONSIEUR DELAHERNE, IS TRYING TO BAZELLES TO SEE IF ALL IS WELL AT HIS DYE WORKS THERE. I WILL GO ALONG AND RETURN WITH HIM IN THE MORNING.

PLEASE DON'T DO MY BROTHER, MAURICE, MAY BE LYING WOUNDED SOMEWHERE THIS VERY MINUTE, AND NOW, YOU, TOO.

DON'T BE AFRAID IF BAZELLES IS ATTACKED, I WILL COME HOME AT ONCE. IT IS ONLY A FEW MILES.

REMEMBER, IF YOU ARE NOT BACK IN GOOD TIME, YOU WILL SEE ME OUT THERE LOOKING FOR YOU.



AN HOUR LATER, IN BAZELLES

I WILL SLEEP AT MY DYE WORKS. MEET ME THERE IN THE MORNING. WE MUST MAKE AN EARLY START OR WE MAY BE CAUGHT IN AN ATTACK.

ALL RIGHT — I WILL SLEEP HERE AT MY SUMMER COTTAGE.



In the morning . . .

WEISS, THE BOMBARDIER IS STARTING THERE IS A WHOLE ARMY SECTION STATIONED IN MY DYE WORKS. COME AND SEE! WE WILL LEAVE FROM THERE.



AT THE DYE WORKS, WEISS WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THE HOUSKEEPER

WHY DIDN'T YOU LEAVE YESTERDAY WITH EVERYONE ELSE?

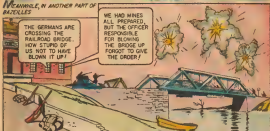
MY LITTLE BOY IS DELIRIOUS WITH TYPHOID FEVER, AND THE DOCTOR SAID IT MIGHT BE FATAL TO MOVE HIM



MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF BATELLES

THE GERMANS ARE CROSSING THE RAILROAD BRIDGE. HOW STUPID OF US NOT TO HAVE BLOWN IT UP!

WE HAD MINES ALL PREPARED, BUT THE OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR BLOWING THE BRIDGE UP FORGOT TO GIVE THE ORDER!



THE BATTLE BECAME MORE INTENSE AT THE DYE WORKS . . .

COME, WEISS! I HAVE SEEN ENOUGH THIS IS NO PLACE FOR CHILDREN



AS THEY WERE ABOUT TO LEAVE



THEY HAVE TAKEN TO KILLING WOMEN! THIS IS INHUMAN!



WEISS, COME, OR I WILL LEAVE YOU. DON'T BE A FOOL! YOU'LL GET KILLED!

NO, NO! I WON'T GO NOW! I CAN'T! VILLAINS! VILLAINS! MURDERERS! THEY MURDER WOMEN! THEY DESTROY CHILDREN! I WON'T RUN FROM THEM! I WILL STAY HERE!



AFTER DELAHERGHE HURRIED OFF, WEISS SEIZED A GUN AND BEGAN TO FIRE

THEN

THE ORDER HAS BEEN GIVEN TO RETREAT. COME ALONG.

NO, I WILL LEAVE MY SON HERE FIRST. COMRADES! MAKING WAR ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN! BEASTS!



WESS GATHERED UP THE AMMUNITION LEFT BY THE RETREATING SOLDIERS AND BARRICADED HIMSELF IN HIS COTTAGE A SHORT WHILE LATER.

WHO'S THERE?

WE HAVE WATCHED YOU BLAZING AWAY AT THE ENEMY SINCE MORNING. LET US IN AND WE WILL HELP YOU TILL THE END.



COME, MEN, STATION YOURSELVES AND WE MAY YET SELL OUR LIVES AT BETTER THAN TEN FOR ONE.



BUT LATER THAT DAY

THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO SURRENDER IF THERE ARE ANY CIVILIANS IN THERE, REMEMBER THAT A CIVILIAN CAUGHT FIGHTING IS TO BE TAKEN BEFORE A FIRING SQUAD AND SHOT AT ONCE.



MEANWHILE, HENRIETTE HAD LEARNED THAT HEISS HAD REMAINED IN BAZELLES. SHE IMMEDIATELY SET OUT TO FIND HIM.



ARE YOU CRAZY, WOMAN? WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

TO BAZELLES, TO FIND MY HUSBAND.



BAZELLES? YOU SHOULD TAKE US WITH YOU, MY DEAR. I'M IN HOPES THAT WE'LL GO BACK THERE SOME DAY, TOO, BUT THE TEMPERATURE OF THE PLACE IS TOO HOT FOR US—AND YOU—JUST NOW.



BUT HENRIETTE QUIETLY SLIPPED AWAY TO A PATH SHE KNEW ACROSS THE FIELDS. SHE WALKED FOR SEVERAL HOURS, WENT DEEP IN FLOODED MEADOWS, THROUGH THE SMOKE OF BURNING FARMHOUSES. SHE SEEMED AS HOPPERENT AS A SLEEPWALKER TO THE HAUL OF SKELETS WHICH FELL ALL ABOUT HER. WITHOUT TOLDING HER, FINALLY, SHE REACHED BAZELLES.





THE BATTLE ABOUT SEDAN CONTINUED UNTIL THE SLAUGHTER BECAME UNBEARABLE.

THEN, NAPOLEON III SENT A GENERAL TO THE PRUSSIAN COMMANDER—VON ENSEY, THE CROWN PRINCE WILLIAM, ASKING FOR THE TERMS OF SURRENDER.



THE ENTIRE FRENCH ARMY OF THE RHINE WAS FORCED TO SURRENDER BOTH ARMS AND MEN TO THE PRUSSAINS.



*Napoleon was not related to William. He meant only that they were brother-in-laws.

WELL, IT'S ALL UP WITH US WE ARE TO BE MARCHED INTO GERMANY AS PRISONERS OF WAR, AND HENRIETTE STILL DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER I AM ALIVE OR DEAD.



LONG RASSED
COLUMNS OF
FRENCH
SOLDIERS, MANY
OF THEM SICK
OR WOUNDED,
WERE BRUTALLY
HERDED
THROUGH THE
STREETS
OF SEDAN



THE GUARDS WOULD NOT LET THE HUNGRY
PRISONERS TAKE FOOD OFFERED THEM BY
THE CIVILIANS



THEY WOULD NOT ALLOW A MOTHER TO
EMBRACE HER SON AS HE PASSED,
PERHAPS NEVER TO RETURN



THE EXHAUSTED FRENCHMEN WERE FORCED
TO MARCH RAPIDLY TOWARD GERMANY



LISTEN WE WILL
WAIT UNTIL WE
COME TO A
WOOD THEN WE
WILL BREAK
AWAY AND RUN
FOR IT AMONG
THE TREES

HAVE YOU TAKEN
LEAVE OF YOUR
SENSES? THE
GUARDS WILL FIRE
ON US AND WE WILL
BOTH BE KILLED



THE NEXT DAY, THE PRISONERS FINALLY CAMPED, AND THE FRENCH VILLAGERS WERE ALLOWED TO SELL THEM BREAD AND WINE.



BUT SOME PEASANTS WERE NOT THERE TO SELL FOOD. IN THEIR BASKETS WERE CIVILIAN CLOTHES FOR THE FRENCH SOLDIERS, TO HELP THEM ESCAPE.



A FEW MINUTES LATER



MORICE AND JEAN MANAGED TO SLIP AWAY FROM THE CAMP BUT THAT NIGHT

HALT, OR I'LL FIRE!



THE SENTRY FIRED INTO THE DARKNESS





A SHORT TIME LATER



ALL THROUGH THE LONG NIGHT, THEY FORCED ONWARD, THE HORSE TREMBLING IN EVERY LIMB, THE MAN UPON HIS BACK A HELPLESS MASS, THE OTHER WILD-EYED AND PALE AS DEATH, KEEPING HIS FEET ONLY BY A DESPERATE EFFORT. THE SPECTACLE THEY PRESENTED WAS ONE OF TOTAL MISERY.



WHEN THEY REACHED REMILLY.

WHY DON'T YOU TAKE HIM TO THE HOSPITAL?

TO THE HOSPITAL? AND HAVE THE PRUSSIANS PACK HIM OFF TO GERMANY AS SOON AS HE IS WELL? NO, I DID NOT BRING HIM HERE TO GIVE HIM UP!



DESPITE HIS UNCLE'S PROTESTS, MAURICE HAD JEAN CARRIED INTO THE KITCHEN



YOU MUST ALL THINK IN A CHARITABLE INSTITUTION! FIRST YOUR SISTER QUARTERS HERSELF UPON ME



MY SISTER? HENRIETTE? WHERE IS SHE?

IN THE TOWN HOSPITAL. SHE DOESN'T EVEN THINK OF HELPING WITH THE HOUSEWORK, BUT GOES EVERY DAY TO WORK IN THE HOSPITAL



WHEN HENRIETTE CAME HOME, SHE HAD JEAN PUT TO BED IN A SMALL ROOM HIDDEN OVER THE STABLE. A DOCTOR FROM THE HOSPITAL CAME TO EXAMINE HIM.

WE WILL TRY TO SAVE THE LEG, BUT IT WILL TAKE A VERY LONG TIME.



AND YOU, MY GOOD FELLOW, WOULD BE BETTER OFF IN BED. IT'S ALL ENDED AND THE ONLY THING TO DO IS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.



IT'S NOT ENDED, NO, NO! WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE END. I MUST GO AWAY. I MUST GO AT ONCE TO PARIS AND JOIN THE ARMY THERE.



THAT EVENING

SOOBY, OLD FELLOW THANKS

FOR HAVING ALWAYS BEEN SO GOOD AND THOUGHTFUL. I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN HOW OFTEN YOU GAVE ME YOUR RATIONS, COVERED ME WITH YOUR OWN BLANKET, HELPED ME CARRY MY PACK AND CARED FOR MY INJURIES.



HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR YOU, I WOULD CERTAINLY BE LYING NOW AT THE BOTTOM OF A DITCH LIKE A DEAD DOG.

YOU OWE ME NOTHING. THE PRUSSIANS WOULD HAVE GATHERED ME IN ON THE BATTLEFIELD. HAD YOU NOT PICKED ME UP AND CARRIED ME OFF, AND YESTERDAY, AGAIN, YOU SAVED ME FROM THEIR CLUTCHES.



HE WHOM I LEAVE TO YOUR CARE, DEAR SISTER, IS MY BROTHER. WATCH OVER HIM FOR ME. LOVE HIM AS I LOVE HIM.



MONTHS PASSED CAREFUL NURSING HAD ALMOST RESTORED JEAN TO HEALTH ONE DAY

A LETTER FROM MAURICE? READ IT TO ME, QUICKLY!



The despising Prussian armies are closing in around Paris. The people have forced the abdication of the Emperor and now once again a republic. France is now a body of melting forged... the National Guard... which is composed entirely of volunteers, mostly students and working-men. It is sworn to burn Paris and die to the last drop rather than let the Prussians enter our beloved capital.



WHAT WILL BECOME OF THEM IN PARIS? I MUST GO. MY POST IS WITH THE ARMY THERE



NO, I BEG YOU, DO NOT GO. YOU ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH YET



BUT LATER THAT DAY

FAREWELL!



PARIS, WHICH STOOD ALONE AGAINST THE ENEMY, WAS IN DESPERATE CONDITION.

IS IT A POUND OF BREAD OR THREE QUARTERS OF A POUND FOR EACH PERSON THIS WEEK?

I DON'T KNOW DO YOU SUPPOSE THERE'S ANY HONSEMAT?



HONSEMAT? THERE'S NOT EVEN ANY CAT OR DOG MEAT LEFT IN THE CITY! THOSE THAT CAN CATCH A RAT ARE THE LUCKY ONES!



EVERY OTHER DAY, BALLOONS WERE SENT UP WITH DISPATCHES AND CARRIER PIGEONS.



IT WAS AN ATTEMPT TO GET FRANCE'S MESSAGE TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.



BUT NO HELP CAME. FRANCE SURRENDERED ON JANUARY 28, 1871. IN MARCH

WELL, WE HAVE NOTHING TO DO BUT WAIT TO BE SENT HOME.

ARE YOU GOING TO LEAVE PARIS THIS WAY?



WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

DESERT AND JOIN THE MEN OF THE NATIONAL GUARD THEY HAVE SWORN TO DIE FIGHTING BEFORE THEY ALLOW A GERMAN TO SET FOOT IN PARIS AS A CONQUEROR.



WELL, I DON'T KNOW AFTER ALL, WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO?

COME, LET US NOT GIVE PARIS UP WITHOUT A FIGHT!



AGAINST ORDERS, THE NATIONAL GUARD FOUGHT ON FOR THREE MONTHS. FINALLY, THE REGULAR FRENCH ARMY WAS ORDERED OUT TO DESTROY IT



JEAN WAS ONE OF THE SOLDIERS ORDERED TO GO THROUGH THE STREETS KILLING THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD. IN THE EVENING, HE CAME UPON A BARRICADE WITH A MAN BEHIND IT. IMPELLED BY A BLIND FATE, HE RUSHED FORWARD.





POOR OLD FELLOW, DON'T
GRIEVE YOU HAVE DONE
ENOUGH FOR ME TO MAKE
UP FOR THIS. I WOULD
HAVE DIED AT THE BE-
GINSING OF THE CAMPAIGN,
IF NOT FOR YOU

HUSH! TWICE YOU
SAVED ME FROM THE
PRUSSIANS. IT WAS MY
TURN TO DEVOTE MY
LIFE TO YOU



CAN YOU WALK?
I WILL HELP YOU.
BUT WHERE ARE
WE TO GO?



MY ROOM IS
ON THE
OTHER SIDE
OF THE
RIVER

THEN I
WILL GET
YOU THERE





DEAR SISTER, HOW GLAD I AM TO SEE YOU ONCE MORE BEFORE I DIE

DON'T TALK OF DYING.

DO NOT GRIEVE FOR ME, HENRIETTE. AND JEAN, DEAR FRIEND, DO NOT BLAME YOURSELF. YOU ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO LIVE AND REBUILD FRANCE, BUT I AM ONLY STRONG ENOUGH TO DIE FOR HER.

HE IS DEAD? HE FOR WHOM I WOULD HAVE Laid DOWN MY LIFE-- I HAVE MURDERED HIM! WHAT IS TO BECOME OF US?



I WILL STAY HERE AND NURSE THE WOUNDED, YOU ARE BRAVE ENOUGH TO GO ON ALONE

TO GO ON ALONE YES, FRANCE MUST LIVE. FIELDS CAN BE CLEARED, HOUSES CAN BE REBUILT, CROPS WILL GROW

SO JEAN WENT HIS WAY, HIS FINE SET TOWARD THE FUTURE, TOWARD THE GLORIOUS TASK THAT LAY BEFORE HIM AND HIS COUNTRYMEN--THE TASK OF CREATING A NEW FRANCE



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EMILE ZOLA

ONE OF Emile Zola's first memories was of a huge festival in his home town of Aux, France, in 1844, to celebrate the beginning of a tremendous waterworks project planned by his father, an engineer. But less than two years later, the elder Zola died, leaving his wife and six-year-old son almost penniless.

Zola, growing up in a poverty-stricken household, had an anxious, unhappy childhood. The school he attended was a very poor one, and there was so little competition that without much interest in his studies, the boy was able to rank second or third in most classes. Zola's real education and greatest joy was his close friendship with two classmates. One of them was Paul Cézanne, who later became a famous painter.

Zola, Cézanne and the third boy were inseparable, spending all the time they could wandering about the French countryside. On their backs were knapsacks usually holding their fishing rods, crusty French bread, a leg of chicken or lamb, and a book written by some great French writer.

When Zola was eighteen, he got a scholarship in Paris and he and his mother moved there. Two years later, however, Zola failed his examinations and left school.

For the next few years, he drifted in desperate poverty. He lived in an unheated garret, often eating nothing for weeks but bread dipped in olive oil. Then he began to write, working from his bed to keep warm, holding a candle in his left hand for light.

Finally, a friend of his father's helped Zola get a clerical job with a French publishing firm. Small as the salary was, it enabled Zola to rent a tiny apartment for himself, his mother and, later, a wife. Within the year, he began to increase his income by doing freelance journalism and, in addition, he finished his first book.

This was published before his twenty-



fourth birthday. A second novel appeared three years later.

Encouraged by this, Zola, at twenty-seven, gave up his clerk's job, determined to make his living entirely by writing. The next year, this poor, almost unknown author approached an important publisher with the suggestion that the publisher guarantee him an income to enable him to begin a series of twenty novels about French life. In 1871, the first novel in this Rougon-Macquart series was published. The series was completed in 1893. It contains twenty-one books with over 1,200 characters. *The Downfall* is the next to the last novel in the series. When it appeared, in 1893, Zola was already a very famous writer.

By that time, a whole group of young writers had grown up who spoke of him as their teacher, and called themselves naturalists because Zola had used the word *naturalism* to describe the realistic kind of literature he developed.

In 1898, Zola, a respected, successful author, became involved in the Dreyfus case, the most sensational public controversy of the day. In an open letter to the President of France, beginning with the words *J'accuse* (I accuse), Zola defended Dreyfus. The letter rocked the world. Zola was attacked by most of the French newspapers, his books were boycotted, he narrowly escaped being killed by angry mobs, and finally, he was forced to leave France and live in hiding in England for almost a year. But his letter did what it was intended to do. It led to a reopening of the Dreyfus case, and, eventually, Dreyfus was proved innocent.

But Zola never knew the final outcome of the Dreyfus case. In 1902, the writer was accidentally killed by the fumes of a defective charcoal stove in his bedroom. His funeral was an occasion of great public mourning, not only in France, but all over the world.

NAPOLEON'S RETURN

There are few men in history as interesting as Napoleon Bonaparte. His military exploits changed the map of Europe. His great civil achievement is the Code of Napoleon — still the basic law of France. But the most unusual of his triumphs was due neither to his military power, nor to his administrative ability. It was an achievement won mainly on the basis of his strong personality.



motionless, staring at the familiar figure in the well-known gray coat and cocked hat.

Then Napoleon said, "Soldiers, if there is one among you who wishes to kill his Emperor, he can do so Here I am!" And he threw open his coat. Immediately the cry went out, "Long live the Emperor!" and the soldiers threw down their guns and hailed him. Napoleon ordered the entire battalion to join his escort, and they marched on together.

After Napoleon was defeated in 1814 by the combined armies of England, Prussia and Russia, he was exiled to the small island of Elba, between Italy and Corsica. His conquerors then put Louis XVIII on the throne of France. The new king was the younger brother of Louis XVI, who was beheaded during the French revolution.

For ten months, Napoleon remained at Elba. But it was impossible for him to be so near France without attempting to reconquer it. In March, 1815, Napoleon secretly slipped away from Elba, and with an army of less than 1,200 men, set sail to retake France.

As Napoleon himself had foretold, 100 men would also have been sufficient. For when he landed at a little French seaport, every inhabitant flocked to welcome him, and many begged to join his march.

The next day, in the next city, the same thing happened. The entire population crowded about him to welcome him, and to ask for deliverance from the government of Louis XVIII.

On March 5, for the first time since he landed in France, Napoleon met a battalion of soldiers wearing in their hats the white cockade of King Louis XVIII. Without hesitation, Napoleon walked forward. The officer told his men to fire. The soldiers stood

At the first strongly fortified city they approached, the commanding officer refused to admit Napoleon. But the garrison troops stood by and laughed while the townspeople battered down the gates and formed a procession to Napoleon. They said that since they could not present him with the keys to their city, they came to offer him the gates.

The same thing happened in city after city, until some one hung a sign on the ceiling of Louis XVIII's palace. It read: "Napoleon to Louis — My Good Brother: It is useless to send me any more troops I have enough."

On March 20, when Napoleon reached Paris without having fired a single shot, Louis XVIII packed up his baggage and ran away.

Napoleon ruled for three months. Then, on June 18, 1815, he was defeated at Waterloo. This time the defeat was final. Napoleon never ruled again. He was exiled to the island of St. Helena, 1,200 miles west of Africa. He died there on May 5, 1821.

Shortly before his death, one of his companions asked him what was the happiest period of his life. He replied that it was the time of his bloodless triumphal march to Paris.



THE LAST LESSON

By Alphonse Daudet

Ed Note: Ever since it was first invaded by Julius Caesar over 2,000 years ago, Alsace-Lorraine has been both a place of battle for opposing armies, and the prize awarded to the winner of the battles.

At the time of the Franco-Prussian War, Alsace-Lorraine belonged to France. After France was defeated, she was forced to give most of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany. This meant the people of that area had to change their citizenship, their laws and their language.

The situation inspired many French writers. One of them, Alphonse Daudet, a friend of Emile Zola, wrote of the change as seen through the eyes of a French schoolboy.

A FRENCH farmboy, who was not very fond of school, was truant for one day. The next morning, he started out for school late, hoping he would not be noticed in the general confusion of the first period of the day.

To his surprise, when he arrived at the school, he found everyone seated very quietly. And the old teacher, instead of being angry with him, said gently, "Take your seat quickly, Franz. We were going to begin without you."

Then Franz looked around the schoolroom, and he was even more surprised. Why, most of the villagers were there, including the mayor and the postman, and other such important people. And some of them held the battered books they used when they went to school half a century before. What did all of this mean?

Soon, everything became clear. The teacher, who had taught in that little schoolroom for forty years, announced that an order had come from Berlin forbidding any further teaching in the French language. The new German schoolmaster would arrive the next day. This was to be the last lesson in French.

Franz was called upon to recite. Oh, how he wished he had studied more carefully! What wouldn't he give to be able to repeat

now, from beginning to end, the rule for the use of participles, loudly, distinctly, without a single mistake! But he became all mixed up with the first few words, and he remained standing at his seat, swaying from side to side, not daring to look up.

The teacher spoke, sadly. "I will not scold you, Franz," he said. "Your punishment is great enough. This is the way life is. We say to ourselves each day, 'I have enough time. I will learn tomorrow.' And now you see what happens!"

Then the teacher took the grammar and read the lesson, and Franz was amazed at how well he now understood it. Everything seemed so simple, so very easy. And everyone in the room was listening so attentively. It seemed as though the poor old teacher, anxious to share everything he knew before his time was up, was trying to strike a single blow that would drive all of his knowledge into his students' heads at once.

Then the church clock struck twelve. At the same moment, a trumpet blast under the window announced that the Prussians had returned from drill.

The teacher rose. He became very pale. "My friends," he said, "my friends, . . ." But something choked him. He could not finish the sentence. Instead, he turned and, taking a piece of chalk, he wrote on the blackboard, as large as he could, "Vive La France!"

The teacher remained standing at the blackboard, his head resting against the wall. He said nothing. But a motion of his hand meant, "That is all. The class is dismissed."



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