

# LIFE and DEATH By Henryk Sienkiewicz

An Allegory by the Famous Author of "Quo Vadis."

HERE were two regions lying side by side, as it were two immense plains, with a clear river flowing between them.

At one point the banks of this river sloped gently to a shallow ford in the shape of a pond with transparent, calm water.

Beneath the azure surface of this pond could be seen its golden bed, from which grew stems of lotus, on those stems bloomed white and rose-colored flowers above the water, and above them, small insects and butterflies circled around the flowers and among the palms of the shore, while higher up in the sunny air birds gave out sounds like those of silver bells. This pond was the passage from one region to the other.

The first region was called the Plain of Life, the second the Plain of Death.

The supreme and all mighty Brahma had created both plains, and had commanded the good Vishnu to rule in the Region of Life, while the wise Siva was lord in the Region of Death.

"Do what ye understand to be best," said Brahma to the two rulers.

Hence in the region belonging to Vishnu life moved with all its activity. The sun rose and set; day followed night, and night followed day; the sea rose and fell; in the sky appeared clouds big with rain; the earth was soon covered with forests and crowded with beasts, birds and people.

So that all living creatures might increase greatly and multiply, the kindly god created Love, which he made to be Happiness also.

After this Brahma summoned Vishnu and said to him:

"Thou canst produce nothing better on earth and since heaven is created already by me, do thou rest and let those whom thou calllest people weave the thread of life for themselves unassisted."

Vishnu obeyed this command, and henceforward men ordered their own lives. From their good thoughts came joy, from their evil ones, sorrow; and they saw soon with wonder that life was not an unbroken rejoicing, but that with the life thread which Brahma had mentioned they wove out two webs as it were with two faces—on one of these was a smile, there were tears in the eyes of the other.

They went then to the throne of Vishnu and made complaint to him:

"Our Lord, life is grievous through sorrow."

"Let Love give you happiness," said Vishnu in answer.

At these words they went away quieted, for Love indeed scattered their sorrows,

which, in spite of the happiness given, seemed so insignificant as to be undeserving of notice.

But Love is also the mighty mother of life, hence, though the region which Vishnu ruled was enormous, it was soon insufficient for the myriads of people; soon there was not fruit enough upon trees there, nor berries enough upon bushes, nor honey enough from cliff bees.

Thereupon all the men who were wisest fell to cutting down forests for the clearing of land, for the sowing of seed, for the winning of harvests.

So people glorified sleep, and repeated:

"Be blessed, for thou art far better than life in our waking hours."

Thus labor appeared among people. Soon

I am free to make that which will cause it to halt, and rest will then come to you."

And Vishnu made Sleep.

Men received this new gift with rejoicing, and very soon saw in it one of the greatest boons given by the Deity thus far. In sleep vanished care and vexation; during sleep strength returned to the weary; sleep, like a cherishing mother, wiped away tears of sorrow and surrounded the heads of the summing with oblivion.

So people glorified sleep, and repeated:

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to the neighboring ford, and beyond ye will find that for which ye are seeking."

The people heard the god's voice and went on legions immediately. They went to the ford, and, halting there, gazed at the shore lying opposite.

Beyond the clear calm, and flower-bordered surface stretched the Plain of Death, or the Kingdom of Siva.

The sun never rose and never set in that region; there was no day and no night there, but the whole plain was of a lily-colored, absolute clearness. No shadow fell in that region, for clearness inhered there.

So people glorified sleep, and repeated:

"Be blessed, for thou art far better than life in our waking hours."

and resting in continuous slumber, unthreatened by waking.

In the clear air not the slightest breeze was discovered, not a flower was seen moving, not a leaf showed a quiver.

The people who had come to the shore with loud conversation and clamor grew silent at sight of those lily-colored, motionless, speechless, and sleeping.

"What quiet! How everly rests there in clearness!"

"Oh, yes, there is rest and unbroken repose in that region."

So some, namely, those who were wearied, said after a silence:

"So the region belonging to Siva is sweeter and better."

And they began to pass to that shore in increasing numbers. There were in solemn procession old men, and men in ripe years, and husbands and wives, and mothers who led little children, and maidens, and youths, and then thousands and millions of people pushed on toward that Calm Passage, till at last the Plain of Life was depopulated almost entirely.

Then Vishnu, whose task it was to keep life from extinction, was frightened because of the advice which he had given in his anger, and not knowing what to do else hastened quickly to Brahma.

"Save Life, O Creator!" said he. "Behold, thou hast made the inheritance of Death now so beautiful, so serene, and so blissful that all men are leaving my kingdom."

"None remain with thee, thereof?" inquired Brahma.

"Only one youth and one maiden, who are in love beyond measure; they renounce endless bliss rather than close their eyes and gaze on each other no longer."

"What dost thou wish, then?"

"Make the region of Death less delightful less happy; if not, even those two when their springtime of love shall be ended will leave me and follow the others."

Brahma thought for a moment and answered:

"No! Oh, no! I will not decrease beauty and happiness in the region of Death, but I will do something for Life in its own realm. Henceforward people will not pass to the other shore willingly, they must be forced to it."

When he had said this he made a thick veil out of darkness which no one could see through, and next he created two terrible beings. One of these he named Fear and the other one Pain. He commanded them then to hang that black veil at the Passage.

Thereafter Vishnu's kingdom was as crowded with life as it had been, for though the region of Death was as calm, as serene, and as blissful as ever, people dreaded the Passage.

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"And they entered the water. The rainbow-hued surface opened straightway before them, as if wishing to lighten the passage."

all had to turn to it, and labor became not merely the basis of life, but life itself very nearly.

But from Labor came Toll, and Toll produced Weariness.

Great throngs of people appeared before Vishnu a second time.

"O Lord!" exclaimed they, stretching their hands to him, "toll has weakened our bodies, weariness spreads through our bones; we are yearning for rest, but Life drives us always to labor."

To this Vishnu answered:

"The great and all mighty Brahma has not allowed me to shape Life any further but

and they had one regret only, that it did not continue forever. After sleep came awakening, and after awakening came labor with fresh toll and weariness.

This thought began soon to torture all men so sorely that for the third time they stood before Vishnu.

"O Lord!" said they, "thou hast given us a boon which, though great and unspeakably precious, is incomplete as it now appears. Will thou grant us that sleep be always to labor."

Vishnu wrinkled his brows then in anger at this their insistence, and answered:

"I cannot give what ye ask of me, but go

to the neighboring ford, and beyond ye will find that for which ye are seeking."

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## The Only Statue A Goddess Sat For



Caligula's Barge as It Appeared on Lake Nemorensi in Ancient Times.

THE Emperor Caligula, who ruled the Roman Empire from 37 to 41 A. D., was a very old and unpleasant tyrant. He made a favorite horse a Senator and he made his sister Drusilla, who was very beautiful and of whom Caligula was very fond indeed, a goddess. He stripped his subjects of all their wealth and placed a part of it in a gigantic pleasure barge which floated on the beautiful Lake Nemus, which was Lake Nemorensi of the ancients and also "the Mirror Diana," because the lake was also the site of a temple of Diana.

Caligula's pleasure barge lies now sunken with that of another, Emperor Tiberius, at the bottom of the water. From time to time objects of ancient art, jewels and gold have been recovered from it.

The latest object to be recovered is a very great prize. It is a bronze statue, life size, which has been declared by experts to be a portrait likeness of the very Drusilla whom Caligula deified. It occupies the unique place in art of being the only statue of goddesses ever found.

While the figure was brought up there were also recovered a number of exquisite small bronze statuettes about a foot high. These, it is thought, formed part of a shrine to the goddess Drusilla and are meant to represent priestesses in the act of worship.

It would appear, however, that Caligula did not stop at his sister so far as to make her the tutelary deity of his pleasure barge. His friends and acquaintances there must have been very numerous, their worship of the tyrant had at most uncomfortable way with those who did not join heartily in his caprices.

As the experts believe, the bronze statue representation of Drusilla, its value is enormous.

The two galleys of Caligula and Tiberius lie at the bottom of Lake Nemus for nearly 2,000 years. When about they surpassed in splendor of equipment and ornamentation anything that the ancients have ever made. In modern times has dreamed.

The galley of Caligula was about 200 feet long. The walls were covered with mosaic work of porphyry and serpentine, intermixed with colored glass. Such bits of treasure as have been recovered from the sunken boats prove that it must have contained a wealth of rare statuary, ivory carvings, bronze and silver plaques, everything of worth and beauty known to the age.

These details are enough other information to enable archaeologists to picture with reasonable accuracy the larger of these two ancient pleasure crafts, have been gained in the several attempts to dive to recover the treasure in gold and jewels that went down with them. They have brought to the surface—and museums in Italy now contain them—many sections of the leaden plates and the bronze grillings which held them fast to the outer sheathing.

Sections of beautiful bronze grill-

ings and other odds and ends have been recovered.

Two Odd "Worshipping Figures" and a Medusa Head from the Sunken Barge.

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