GERMINAL,

Or, the Story of a Great Miners' Strike.

BY EMILE ZOLA.

Translated from the French.

SUMMARY OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Anton Lantier, a young mechanic out of work, reaches the coal mines of Monston, France, cold, hungry and penniless. The death of a miner makes a vacancy and he secures employment in the Vulture mine. Mahon, one of the miners, and his daughter Catherine, explain the work to him and assist him the first day. He hears the mutterings of the miners against the company and threats of a strike. The exactions of the superintendent and the small wages received goad the workmen to the verge of desperation and paved the way to the coming struggle. Mahon again befriends Anton, and secures lodgings for him at Rassaneur's, a tippling house near the mine. Anton's determination to leave is overcome by the kindness of the struggling miners, and he decides to battle with them. The owners of the mines revel in luxury, and turn a deaf ear to the appeals of the starving families of the workmen, who, in debt for food obtained during a strike three years previous, are barely able to secure sufficient food to sustain life.

CHAPTER VII

In a darkened room, through the closed blinds, little by little, appeared the faint gray streaks of dawn, spreading themselves to the ceiling, but in a close atmosphere all continued their slumbers; Lenore and Henry in each other's arms, Alzire lying on her hump back, with head thrown backward, while old Bonnemort, with mouth open and snoring loudly, occupied the bed belonging to Johnnie and Zacharie. Not a breath came from the little room where the mother had fallen asleep while nursing Estelle.

The wooden clock down stairs struck six; along the alley was heard the sound of closing doors, and the click-clack of wooden shoes on the sidewalk. It was the screenets going to the mine. Until seven o'clock all was again silent. Then shutters were thrown back, and through the wall came the sounds of yawning and coughing. Now the grinding of coffee was heard; yet no one awoke in that room.

But, suddenly, the noise of slaps and barking aroused Alzire. Knowing what time it was, she ran barefooted to shake her mother.

"Mother! mother! get up, it's late, you know you have to go out. Take care, you'll mash Estelie."

And she pulled the child from beneath its mother.

"Sakes alive!" stammered the woman, rubbing her eyes. "I am so tired, I could sleep all day. Dress Lenore and Henry, I'll take them with me; you can mind Estelle, I don't want to drag her along, she'll catch cold in this weather."

She hastily washed herself and put on an old blue skirt, her best one, and a gray woolen jacket, on which she had sewn two patches the day before.

"What shall I do?' murmured she. "The little ones must have something to eat."

As her mother descended the stairs, Alzire re entered the room, taking with her Estelle who was crying. But she was accustomed to the rage of the little one; and though only eight years old she calmed and amused her with the tender air of a little woman. Placing her in her still warm bed she coaxed her to sleep again. Now another uproar arose, and she was obliged to make peace between Lenore and Henry who had at last awakened. These children only agreed when asleep. The girl of six years, on awakening flew at the boy of two, who could not defend himself. Both had large heads covered with yellow hair. Alzire pulled her sister out of the bed. Then they stamped while she washed them and put on each article of clothing. They did not open the shutters for fear of arousing old Bonnemort, who continued to snore amid the confusion.

"Come on down, if you're ready," cried the mother.

Then she opened the shutters, raked the fire and put on some coal. A glance into the empty sauce pan dispelled the hope that the old man had left a little soup. She cooked a little handful of vermicelli which had been held in reserve for three days. The cupboard was empty; not a crust, not even a bone remained there. What would become of them if Maigrat stopped their credit and the rich people at Piolaine would not give her a hundred sou? When the men and girl returned from the mine there must be something for them to eat. They could not live without food.

"Come down, right away," she cried again, "I must be off."

When Alzire and the two children were there, she portioned the vermicelli out into three little plates, saying, she did not wish any. Although Catharine had already used the coffee grounds, left from the day before, a second time, she poured water over them and drank two great bowls of coffee so weak that it looked like water with a little iron rust. It was good all the same. It would strengthen her.

"Listen," said she to Alzire, "you must let your grandfather sleep, and see that Estelle does not break her neck. If she wakes up and cries too much, here's a lump of sugar you can melt and give her in spoonfuls. I know you're too sensible to eat it yourself."

"How about school, mamma?"

"That'll have to wait another day. I need you now."

"And the soup, don't you want me to make it if you're late?"

"No, you'll have to wait 'till I get home?"

Alzire, with the precocious intelligence of an invalid, knew how to make soup. But she did not insist, she understood why she must wait. Now the whole valley was astir; troops of children were going off to school with loitering step. Eight o'clock struck; the sound of voices arose at the house of Levaque, on the left.

The wives' day had begun, which would be spent in going from house to house, their hands on their hips, their tongues running without a break.

He smiled at the children and passed on, leaving her standing in the middle of the road. She was not religious, but the thought had come to her that the priest might give her something.

The journey through the black and sticky mud was resumed. There were still a mile to drag the now worn out children. At each side of the road were the same moss-covered fences, inclosing manufactories discolored with smoke. Then came the open fields, large and flat, like an ocean of brown turf. Not a tree was visible, but a purpling line denoted the forest of Vandame.

"Carry me, mamma."

And tucking up her dress, with a desire to arrive as neat as possible, she carried them by turns. Twice she nearly fell in the soft road. When they had at last reached the doorstep, three large dogs jumped upon them, barking so loud that the little ones screamed with fear, as the coachman whipped them off.

"Leave your shoes and come in," said Honorine.

In the dining-room the mother and children stood motionless, overcome by the sudden heat, and uneasy under the glances of the old gentleman and lady who were stretched out in armchairs.

"You must attend to them, my daughter," said the latter.

The Gregorys charged Cecil with their alms-giving. That entered into their idea of a good education. It was necessary to be charitable, they said. But they flattered themselves that they dealt out charity with intelligence, having a continual fear of being mistaken and encouraging vice. No, they never gave money, not ten sous, not even two, for it was well known that as soon as a beggar had two sous he spent them for drink. Therefore, their charity especially consisted in the distribution of warm, winter clothing to the poor children.

"Oh! the poor darlings!" said Cecil; "they are pale from the cold! Honorine, go up stairs and get the bundle."

The maids were also eyeing these miserable people with the pity and feeling of girls never in want of a meal. While the chambermaid went up stairs, the cook, forgetting herself, set the milk-bread back upon the table and stood looking on with folded arms.

"I still have two good woolen dresses and some little capes," said Mademoiselle. "The poor little things shall be warm."

Then Mahon's wife found her tongue, stammering: "Thank you, Miss. You're very good."

Her eyes filled with tears; she was sure of a hundred sous, she only occupied herself in studying how to ask for them, if they were not offered. The chambermaid not returning, a moment of embarrassed silence followed. On each side of their mother, holding tight to her skirts, the little ones fixedly regarded the milk-bread.

"Have you only those two?" asked Mrs. Gregory, to break the silence.

"Oh! Madame, I've seven."

Mr. Gregory, who had resumed his paper, gave an indignant start.

"Seven children, good heavens?"

"It is imprudent," murmured the old lady.

The mother excused herself with an uneasy gesture. At their house they never would have been able to live if two of the boys and the eldest girl had not been old enough to go into the mine. For it was necessary to feed the children, though they earned nothing.

"Have you worked in the mine for a long time?" asked Mrs. Gregory.

The woman smiled.

"Ah! yes, I worked there until I was married. But my husband's people have been below for centuries. They struck the first blows of the pick at Requillart."

Again Mr. Gregory dropped his paper and glanced at the woman and those children with waxen skins, faded hair and pinched features, slowly dying of hunger. Silence fell again. No sound was heard save the cracking coal, which threw out a jet of gas. The warm room had that air of comfort only found in the apartments of the rich.

"What is the matter with her," cried Cecil impatiently. "Melanie, go and tell her that the bundle is in the bottom of the armoire, on the left."

Meanwhile, Mr. Gregory finished aloud the reflections with which these famished people had inspired him.

"It is very true, there is some bad in this world; but, my good woman I cannot help saying the workmen are not always wise. Instead of putting a few sous aside, like the peasants, the miners drink, run into debt and end by not having enough to feed their children,"

"Monsieur is right," replied the woman sedately. "They are not always sensible. That's what I say to them when they complain. I'm much behind, though my husband drinks but little. On wedding days he sometimes takes too much, but it always ends there. So that don't hold good with us, you see, for before he was married he drank all the time. And yet there are days like to-day, when you turn your pockets inside out, without finding a sou."

She was thinking of the hundred sou pieces, and her voice at first low and timid, became loud and eager, as she explained that fatal debt. They had paid regularly for some months; but one day they got behind, then all was ended, for they could not catch up again. The hole grew larger, and the men were disheartened with the work which did not pay them enough to keep straight. They could not get out of this scrape. But they must understand the whole affair. A shoemaker in want of a drink to wash down the dust, had begun their trouble. Perhaps it was no fault of his. At any rate the workmen did not earn enough.

"The company gives you fuel and houses, I believe," said Mrs. Gregory.

With a glance at the coal flaming in the fire-place she answered:

"Yes, they give us coal. It's not very good but it burns. The rent's only six francs; that don't seem like much to you, but sometimes its pretty hard to pay it. Why, to-day, if they were to cut me too pieces I couldn't hand them a sou, for you can't give what you haven't got."

The gentleman and lady were silent and yawned a little languidly, depressed and uncomfortable by the exposure of this misery. She fearing she had offended them, added with a wise and calm air of a practical woman.

"It does no good to complain. Things are so and we'll have to stand them. No matter how much we tried, we couldn't change anything. So it's best to be honest and work on with the strength the good God has given us, isn't it?"

Mr. Gregory nodded his head approvingly:

At that moment a wan face, with large lips and a broken nose, was flattened against the window pane, while a woman cried:

"Listen! I've something new to tell you."

"No, not now," replied Mahon's wife. "I'm in a hurry."

And, refusing the offer of a cup of warm coffee, she set out, pushing Lenore and Henry before her. From the room above, Bonnemort's regular snore filled the house.

Outside, the mother was surprised to find it was no longer blowing. The sky was heavy, and a chilly thaw was dampening the walls and filling the roads with the mud peculiar to coal regions, black as soot, thick and clinging. Boxing Lenore's ears for heaping the mud on the toes of her shoes as upon the end of a shovel, she left the alley, passed along the canal-road, and then, to shorten the distance, cut through fields enclosed by moss-covered fences Manufactories succeeded each other, with high chimneys denoting a country of industry. Behind a group of poplars was the old mine Requillart, of which the carpenter-work of the tower alone remained standing. Now, turning to the right, the woman came out upon the main road.

"Stop! stop! dirty pigs," cried she. "I'll make mud balls for you."

This time, Henry had gathered up a handful of mud and was rolling it into a ball. The two children, after being slapped, returned to their mother's side, laughing at the imprint of their hands in the middle of the road. They were already covered with dirt, and exhausted with their efforts to plod through that sticky mud.

On one side of Marchennes was two leagues of straight road, while the other side wound down into Monston, built upon a slope of the plain. These roads of the north, laid out by rule and line, between manufacturing villages, were well made; little by little, buildings were going up, tending to make of this part of the country only working towns. The small brick houses, to prevent sameness, were painted, some yellow, some blue, and others black, while a serpentine line of black ran across the village from right to left as far as the end of the hill. There were two low pavilions and houses belonging to manufacturing officials. The church, also of brick, resembled a new kind of furnace, with its square steeple, already dirty from the flying coal dust. And among the sugar mills, warehouses and wheel shops, the dance halls, smoking rooms and saloons were so numerous that, of the thousand houses, five hundred sold liquor.

As she approached the ware houses and shops belonging to the company the mother decided to take the hands of Henry and Lenore. Before them was the house of M. Hennebeau, an enormous building which was separated from the road by a railing and garden in which a few trees were reluctantly growing. A carriage had stopped before the door from which a gentleman and lady were alighting, visitors arriving from Paris, for Mrs. Hennebeau, who appeared in the vestibule gave an exclamation of surprise and joy.

"Come on now," muttered the mother, pulling the children out of the mud.

Very uneasy, she arrived at Maigrat's house, which was next to the director's, a simple wall separating them. The store in front contained every saleable article, meat, fruit, bread, beer, crockery and notions. A former overseer of the Vulture—he had started out in a small way; then thanks to the protection of the chiefs, his business had enlarged little by little, driving out all other shops in Monston. Having monopolized trade, he was able to sell cheaper and give credit. But he still remained in the hands of the company, which had built for him his little house and store.

"Here I am again, Mr. Maigrat," humbly said the woman, finding him standing before the door.

He eyed her without a word. Fat, cold and polite, he prided himself on never changing his mind.

"You won't turn me away like you did yesterday, will you? We must have bread to eat until Monday. I know we have owed you sixty francs for the last two years."

She spoke in short, faltering tones. It was an old debt, contracted during a strike. Twenty times they had promised to pay up, but were unable to do so; last pay day they had given him forty sous; then, a shoemaker, whom they owed twenty francs, threatened to have them arrested, and they were obliged to pay him all the money they had left. That was the reason they were now without a sou. At other times, like their comrads, their money held out until more was received.

Without opening his mouth, and with arms crossed over his stomach, Maigrat shook his head at each supplication.

"Nothing, but two loaves of bread, Mr. Maigrat. I'm reasonable, I don't ask for coffee. Only two three-pound loaves a day."

"No!" he thundered at last.

His wife came forward, a wretched creature, who passed her days over a register without even daring to raise her head; but she moved away in fright on seeing the unhappy woman turn her beseeching eyes toward her. They said she yielded her conjugal relations to the girls of the town. It was a known fact that when a miner wished a prolongation of credit, by sending his wife or daughter, whether pretty or ugly, if they were compliant, it was obtained.

Sick at heart and followed by the cold looks of Maigrat, the mother turned away, pushing her children before her.

"This won't bring you luck, Mr. Maigrat, remember that!"

Only one hope remained; the rich people at Piolaine. If they would not give her a hundred sous, they must all lie down and die. Turning to the left she took the Joiselle road, in an angle of which was the director's house, a veritable brick palace, to which a number of the great men of Paris, princes and persons of authority, came each autumn to enjoy great dinners. Walking on, she planned how she would spend the hundred sous; first, some bread, then coffee, potatoes, a quart of beer, and, perhaps, a little hogshead of cheese for the men who needed meat.

The Montson priest, the Abbe Joire, passed her, picking his way through the mud like a well-kept cat who was afraid of soiling itself. He was a good man, who lived as peace with all the world.

"Good-morning, Monsieur le Cure."

"With such sentiments, my good woman, one is above misfortune."

Honorine and Melanie brought in the bundle. Cecil opened it and took out two little dresses and capes, also some stockings and mittens. Those would do very well, and with the maid's assistance, she hastily tied up the bundle, for her piano teacher had arrived at last, and she pushed the mother and children towards the door.

"We are so short," stammered the woman. "If you've only a hundred-sou piece."

The words choked her, for the Mahons were proud and would not beg. Cecil uneasily glanced at her father, but he slowly refused with an air of duty.

"No, it is not our habit. We cannot."

Then the young girl turned to her mother, wishing to give something to the children. They were still looking at the milk-bread, and cutting it in two she gave it to them.

"Here! this is for you."

Then she took it back and asked for an old paper.

"Wait, you can share with your brothers and sisters."

And, under the watchful glances of her parents, she ended by pushing them aside. The poor, hungry little things went off holding the bread carefully, their little hands benumbed with cold.

Pulling her children along the road, the mother no longer noticed the barren fields, the black mud, or the livid sky. When she arrived at Monston, she resolutely entered Maigrat's store, begging so piteously that she ended by carrying away two loaves of bread, other provisions, and even a hundred-sou piece, which was lent her for a week. When he told her to send her daughter to get the provisions she understood his kindness. But she did not fear; Catherine was a good girl, and for any insult would slap his face.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Railway Time Table

All trains arrive at and depart from Omaha by Central Standard time.

Trains of the C., St. P., M. & O., arrive at and depart from their depot, corner of 14th and Webster streets; trains on the B. & M., C. B. & Q. and K. C., St. J. & C. B. from the B. & M. depot; all others from the Union Pacific depot.

a, daily; b, except Saturday; c, except Sunday; d, except Monday.

WESTWARD.

DEPART				ARRIVE	
A. M.	P. M.			A. M.	P. M.
.....	8 20a		**Union Pacific.** Pacific Express	7 50a	.....
11 20a	.....		Denver Express	.....	4 10a
			O. & Rep. Valley		
.....	1 20a		Mail and Express	.....	2 10a
			B. & M. in Neb.		
8 10a	.....		Mail and Express	.....	6 35a
.....	6 00a		Night Express	10 40a	.....
			SOUTHWARD.		
			Missouri Pacific		
11 00a	.....		Day Express	6 00p	00a
.....	9 00p		Night Express	.....	.....
			K. C. St. J. & C. B.		
9 10a	7 45b		Via Plattsmouth	7 00d	.....
8 50a	7 00b		Via Council Bluffs	7 50d	35a
			Wabash Route.		
.....	.....			.....	.....
.....	2 20p		St. Louis Express	.....	.....
			EASTWARD		
			C. M. & St. Paul.		
8 15c	.....		Day Express	.....	7 35o
.....	4 20b		Night Express	9 45d	.....
			C. R.-I. & Pacific.		
8 15c	.....		Day Express	.....	7 35o
.....	4 20b		Night Express	9 45d	.....
6 40c	.....		Accommodation	.....	5 45a
			C. & N-W.		
8 15c	.....		Day Express	.....	7 35a
.....	4 20b		Night Express	9 45d	.....
			C. B. & Q.		
9 20a	5 30a		For Chicago via Plattsm'th	9 30a	7 55a
8 15a	4 20a		For Chicago via C. Bluffs	9 45a	7 35a
			NORTHWARD.		
			C. St. P. M. & O.		
8 30a	.....		Sioux City Express	.....	5 30a
	5 40c		Oakland Accommodation	10 00c	.....
6 40a			**Iowa Div. S. C. & P.**		
.....	.....		St. Paul Day Express	.....	7 35a
.....	6 55a		St. Paul Night Express	9 45a	.....

OMAHA BRIDGE TRAINS.

DUMMY TRAINS—Leave Omaha at 6 25, 7 25, 8 50, 10 00, 11 15 a m, 12 50, 2 00, 3 00, 4 00, 4 55, 5 55, and 11 10 p m. On Sundays the 7 25 and 10 00 a m, and 2 30 and 4 00 p m trains do not run.

Leave Council Bluffs (Broadway depot) at 6 55, 7 55 9 30, 10 30, 11 40 a m,; 1 30, 2 30, 3 30, 4 28, 5 25, 6 and 11 45 p m. On Sundays the 7 55 and 10 30 a m and 2 35 and 4 28 p m trains will not run.

Transfer Trains—Leave Omaha at 8 15, 8 53 a m.; 12 35, 2 20, 4 20, 6 00, and 7 00 p m daily.

Arrive at 9 45 and 11 15 a m., 1 20, 3 43, 7 35 and 8 05 p m,

SUNDAY TRAINS

To and from Chicago via Tripartite Alliance.

C. M. & St. P.	C. R. I. & P.	C. & N. W.	MONTH.	C. & N. W.	C. R. I. & P.	C. M. & St. P.
18	20	2-27	SEPTEMBER.	12	5-26	19
4-25	11	18	OCTOBER	3-24	17	10-31
15	1-22	8-2	NOVEMBER	14	7-28	21
6-27	13	20	DECEMBER	5-26	19	

STOCK YARDS TRAINS.

Time Table of Passenger Trains between Omaha and Union Stock Yards. In effect, Wednesday, Aug. 20th, 1885—

WESTWARD TRAINS.			EASTWARD TRAINS.		
No.	Omaha.	U. S. Yards	No.	U. S. Yds	Omaha.
	A. M.	A. M.		A. M.	A. M.
81	6 40	7 55	082	7 10	7 25
49	8 20	8 40	48	8 05	8 30
083	10 00	11 15	....	....	.....
....	.....	....	.....	P. M.	P. M.
3	11 20	11 36	084	12 01	12 16
....	P. M.	P. M.	.....	....	.....
41	1 30	1 48	43	1 23	2 10
085	3 50	4 05	4	3 55	4 10
087	5 15	5 40	086	4 40	5 05
....	....	....	187	6 10	6 25

Train No. 49, daily Except Sunday. Other trains run daily.