

of the troops. He immediately made a bridge of boats across the river just above the city, and another just below it, so as to unite the two camps. And in the course of two days following he and his men built four very large and strong forts with their own hands, for the pioneers, who were to do the digging, had not then arrived.

Maestricht had six gates, and Parma first attempted the one on the south-west side, which was called the gate of Tongres. But when at length he had battered down a portion of the wall near it he discovered that the resolute men and women inside had meanwhile been building up another fortification right against the gap. So his soldiers could not get in, after all, without crossing the new moat, and breaking down the new ravelin. He therefore concluded to leave that quarter for the present, and try the gate of Bois-le-Duc, which was on the opposite side of the city, next to the river. The ground there was rather swampy, not to mention that the moat itself was sixty feet wide and sixty feet deep. But they contrived to drain off a good deal of the water into the river, and began again to batter the walls.

In the meantime, however, something else was on foot at the Tongres gate, though the Spaniards kept it very still. Parma had a very cunning engineer named Baptist Plato, who had secretly commenced making an underground passage to the new ravelin, in order to blow it up. But the Maestricht people suspected it, and as they knew how to dig subterranean passages as well as the Spaniards, they began countermining in their turn. Among the rest, one of the women-regiments now devoted themselves to this underground work, and historians tell us that they proved very handy at it. They had overseers chosen from their own number, who were called "mine-mistresses."

So while the besiegers were stealthily burrowing their way toward the ravelin they wanted to blow up, they were suddenly interrupted by the besieged breaking right into their mine. You may be sure there was some desperate fighting down there under ground, for each party was determined to drive the other away. But the Maestricht people contrived to stop up

the passage behind the Spaniards, and then deluged them with hogsheads of scalding water. At another time they filled the mine with a dense and suffocating smoke, blowing it through the long winding galleries by means of the great bellows of a church organ, at length the besiegers abandoned their mine, though it was only to begin another. I will tell you how it turned out the next time.

THE BEST THAT I CAN.

"I CANNOT do much," said a little star,
 "To make the dark world bright!
 My silver beams can not struggle far
 Through the folding gloom of night;
 But I'm only a part of God's great plan,
 And I'll cheerfully do the best I can."

"What is the use," said a fleecy cloud,
 Of these few drops that I hold;
 They will hardly bend the lily proud,
 Though caught in her cup of god;
 Yet I am part of God's great plan,
 So my treasure I'll give as well as I can."

A child went merrily forth to-day,
 But a thought, like a silver thread,
 Kept winding in and out all day
 Through the happy, golden head.
 Mother said "Darling, do all you can,
 For you are a part of God's great plan."

She knew no more than the glancing star,
 Nor the cloud with its chalice full,
 How, why, and for what all strange things were,
 She was only a child at school!
 But she thought, "It is part of God's great plan
 That even I should do all I can."

She helped a younger child along
 When the road was rough to the feet,
 And she sang in her heart a little song
 That we all thought passing sweet;
 And her father, a weary, toil-worn man,
 Said, "I will do likewise the best that I can."

Our best? Ah, children, the best of us
 Must hide our faces away,
 When the Lord of the vineyard comes to look
 At our task at the close of the day;
 But for strength from above 'tis the Master's plan
 We'll pray, and "we'll do the best we can."

WHEN you send your prayers, be sure to direct them to the care of the Redeemer, and then they will never miscarry.