



ADNAH

J · BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS



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For Emanuel

from James.

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ADNAH

A Tale of The Time of Christ

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By

J. BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

Author of

"Garcilaso," "The Dread and Fear of Kings," etc.



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Dedication

Whence comes the beauty of the Rose?
Not in a day its wonder grows,
But many a night and morning sees
It drink the perfume of the breeze,
And draughts of clear-gold sunshine cooled in mellow dew,
And song of birds, and voice of love forever new.
Then, when at last its Day has come, with every grateful leaf unfurled,
It but returns in other form that which it borrowed from the world.

Whence comes a Book-thought? Not as sped
Full-armed Minerva from the head.
Nay, many a passing year has seen
The dust-thoughts blown about some theme
Till it becomes one's own. This book is but the flower
Of thoughts long fed upon song, light, and hope,—love's
dower.
So in this book I but return the borrowed gifts, true, pure and rare,
Which a FATHER and a MOTHER gave in other form of love
and care.

If there is music in this book,
From them its sweetest tones I took.
If sunshine gleams along its line,
It was their smiles that made it mine.
If truth eternal precious perfume breathes
Of heavenly message from its outspread leaves,
That, too, is borrowed. As the rose doth dedicate its bloom to
earth,
So I this tale to those from whom its modest merits have their
birth.

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Adnah

A Tale of the Time of Christ

CHAPTER I

A LOOSE PLANK

HERE, at last, was the opportunity for which Miriam so long had waited. Her father, who was one of King Herod's chief officers in Capernaum, had departed for the custom-house. Her mother and her brother Reuben had left home at the same time, the latter to attend school. Thus Miriam and the servants were left in possession of the large estate.

She hurried into the front court where a fountain sparkled in the midst of flowers; and the house, freshly whitewashed, seemed to smile and say, "Who would ever believe that I am made of black lava?"

But Miriam did not pause to admire the beauty of the court, for this she saw every day,—she was tired of it; and she never forgave the high stone wall that surrounded it, excluding from sight the

slightest glimpse of the road. However, it was not the street that excited her thirst for exploration, but the court that adjoined her father's. In the cool of the evening when the family were accustomed to gather upon the flat roof of the house, Miriam sometimes caught sight of a forlorn figure in the next yard. It was a boy, older than herself, she thought, and surely very miserable; for when the family next door gathered upon *their* roof, this youth did not ascend with them, but either crept forth into the court to sit beside the fountain, or else kept within doors.

Miriam often wondered why the boy was so sad, and why he did not mingle with the others. "He is a slave, no doubt," Reuben had suggested. Since Reuben was two years older than Miriam, his sister never dared to contradict him. But she was sure the solitary child was no slave. "He is a very wicked child, no doubt," her father had once suggested; "for you know how religious Iddo is,—a strict Pharisee. Iddo would not forbid a good child from sitting with him and his wife upon the roof." Again Miriam did not reply, although she felt certain that the boy was not very wicked.

Yesterday one of the broad planks of the gate that stood between the two courts, had suddenly fallen to the ground, while a strong wind was

blowing. One of the servants, an old man whose name was Zuph, had replaced it. For, since Iddo moved next door, this huge gate had never been used. "I must make this strong with nails," said Zuph. Then he went away and forgot all about it. This was the opportunity for which Miriam had waited. She hurried to the loose plank. It was an hour after the noon meal, and Iddo, the Pharisee, had left with his wife,—or rather, he had been followed by his wife, since Iddo was too good a Pharisee to make a woman his equal. And the boy was in the court. Miriam had seen him from the latticed window of an upper chamber.

Looking quickly behind her to see that none of the servants were at the windows, the girl seized the thick dusty board by means of a rusty spike that had failed to do its duty. She tried to lift the board out from among its neighbors, but it was too heavy. She put forth a more vigorous effort, and suddenly the top trembled, and then the entire plank bent forward. She had barely time to spring out of the way before it fell into the court at her feet. She uttered a low cry of alarm, but in a brief time recovered her courage and crept to the opening. There stood the boy, peering into her court.

"How shall I ever get it up again?" she exclaimed.

"It fell yesterday," said the boy. "Get a slave to put it up. But how did it fall? For no wind blows."

"I pulled it down," said Miriam.

The boy stared at her. "Will they not beat you?" he whispered.

Miriam laughed. "I am not afraid," she said. "But why have you been crying?"

"I have not."

"But the tears are not yet dry upon your face," said Miriam. "When I cry it is because I am not a boy; but why do *you* cry?"

"It is the water from the fountain," said the other. "The water-drops splash upon my face and you call them tears. But cry no more to be a boy. It is no great thing to be a boy! Sometimes I think I would rather be Iddo's dog, for then I should have enough to eat."

"Why do you call your father so?"

"Iddo is not my father, but my uncle."

"Is, then, your father dead?"

"You had better call a slave to put up the plank," said the boy sharply. "I do not wish to talk with you!"

"*Do* not say that," exclaimed Miriam. "I will not speak another word about your father. But there is something I wish very much to know."

“I can tell you nothing, for I know nothing. I can neither read, nor write, and there is no one to teach me the law. But now, there are tears in *your* eyes,—wherefore are they?”

“Because you want me to go away, and you have spoken to me, as others do not speak.”

“I am sorry I have grieved you, Miriam,—yes, that is the name they call you. Often, ah, often, I have longed to see Miriam, for they will not allow me upon the housetop. And when your family is gathered upon your house, I dare not look up to see. So I have often sat wondering how looks the girl they call Miriam,—the girl who is tired of her flowers and playthings,—while I have nothing. And when the plank fell, and I saw your face,—it was a dream coming true, but so much fairer than the dream! But when you spoke of my father, a devil entered within me.”

“I will never, never mention him again,” said the girl.

“It is on his account that I am treated so,” said the other. “Is not the sin of the father visited upon the child? That is about all of Moses and the prophets that I know! Well we will say no more about it. Forgive my anger. Tell me what you would learn.”

“I would ask if you were at Cana last year,

when Iddo and his wife went down to the marriage feast."

"Iddo takes me nowhere. I know when you mean, for then I was very ill. I heard Iddo say to his wife, whose name is Hodesh, 'If he dies,—' but no matter what he said."

"I am sorry you were not there. But you may have heard your uncle speak of the wonderful thing that happened there."

"He tells me nothing. But I pray you, tell me what you heard, for there is none who ever speaks with me, unless to say, 'Do this,' or, 'Come, take your beating,' or, 'The master says you are to fast this day.'"

"Then this is what I heard," said Miriam; "for one of the servants of Iddo told Zuph, and Zuph told my father. At this marriage feast, the wine gave out. There was a man there of Nazareth,—His name is Jesus. His mother said to Him, 'The wine is all gone,' and her son said, 'Why do you come to Me? Am I the master of the house?' 'I know you can give them whatever good thing they need,' His mother answered, or something like that. Well, there happened to be a dozen big water-pots standing along the wall, and Jesus said to the servants, 'Bring water and fill them to the brim.' They did so. And Zuph says, that the

servant of your uncle told *him*, that the water turned into wine then and there, upon the spot!"

"It is a strange story," said the boy. "And if it is true, He must be a strange man, this Jesus; a magician, doubtless."

"I am sorry you were not there," said Miriam, once more, "for I would know what word Jesus said when He turned the water into wine, or how He moved His hand, and how it tasted, afterwards."

"I would I knew the magic, also," said the other, "for in that case, I would turn this whole fountain into the choicest vintage; though to be plain, I would rather convert these stones into bread and meat."

"Stay here," cried Miriam, "and I will bring you something."

"How swift and beautiful your feet!" exclaimed the boy. "You go and come like a thought that the mind has grown fond of. And what have we here? Dates,—bread,—cold mutton,—and an angel; all four!" He began to eat ravenously. "I do not see this," he said apologetically, as he took a large bite of meat. He was very thin and white, and Miriam enjoyed his eating more than she could have imagined. "Things don't taste very good to me, any more," she mused. "There are

days and days when I would as soon not eat as eat. But you have eaten bread, meat and dates; you must save the angel for another time!"

"If I could only do something to make you as happy! Iddo is a miser. That is why he makes me fast so often, and feeds me upon bread and water, till I grow a shadow. And he only keeps one slave,—the one who knows your Zuph. Iddo is growing rich. He is a great Pharisee. He spends most of his money in almsgiving, for others to see. You think I ought not to speak so of my uncle. Perhaps. How old are you?"

"I am fourteen. But I dare not stay longer. I am afraid they will find me here,—does that show I am doing wrong? But I am not a very good girl. I do not go to the Synagogue if I can help it. Any way, religion is for men, Reuben says; Reuben is my brother; he will be a priest. You must help me lift up this plank, although you don't look very strong, do you?"

The boy blushed. "Why do you mock me?" he returned. "I would not have thought that of you."

"Why!" exclaimed Miriam. "It is for that very reason,—your not being strong,—that I like you, and talk to you. Don't you understand? But I must go, now. I would I knew your name; then

when I see you in the court, I can give my thought a name, and send it to you."

"I am Adnah," said the boy, "and my age is sixteen. And the next time you are upon the roof of your house, and I am in my court, I will look up, and see you, and think, 'There are good wishes for me up in the blue sky!'"

The heavy plank was now in place once more. "Good-bye," said Miriam. "Good-bye," answered Adnah. The girl knocked with her knuckles upon her side of the plank. "What a friendly sound that is!" cried Adnah, and he knocked also. Then Miriam ran away.

CHAPTER II

THE PLANK IS NAILED UP

“I HAVE been looking for you, Zuph,” said Miriam. “Let us sit upon this bench. I have a favor to ask.”

The old servant smiled kindly at the girl, and obediently followed her across the court to a spot where the flowers formed a cozy retreat. “Now we are all alone, Zuph, and you are to hear my secret. It is this, that a very unhappy boy lives on the other side of that ugly fence, a boy who never has enough to eat, and no one to talk to. And although the house is large, and his uncle is rich,—for Iddo is not his father,—does that matter? For if I lived in the palace of King Herod, and there should be no love for me, I might as well be a bird in a cage.”

“How know you these facts and this philosophy?” asked the old man, rumpling his white hair in some perplexity.

“As to how I know these facts, that is a mystery. As to philosophy, I know it not. But when one is without food, he is apt to be hungry,

is it not so? His uncle is a miser, and starves him."

"I cannot imagine how you know these things," remarked the old man. "Who has been here? Surely the gate has not been opened."

Miriam laughed. "I have a story you do not know. But I will tell it, if first you tell again about that marriage feast in Cana."

"You have heard it twenty times, Miriam."

"But I like to hear it over and over again. It is just as strange as when it was new."

"Iddo's slave told me," said Zuph. "He went with his master to this feast. There was great rejoicing, and three days were to be the limit of the festivities. But it appears that the bridegroom was so taken up with thoughts of his fair bride, that he had failed to provide for the wants of his guests. The wine gave out. At this feast was Mary,—the widow of Joseph of Nazareth,—and her son, Jesus. His mother told Him the wine was no more. There happened to be eight water-pots——"

"Was it eight? I told Adnah twelve."

"And who is Adnah?" demanded the old man. "And where have you been telling this tale?"

Miriam laughed. "I will tell you story for story," she said. "But go on; eight water-pots——"

“And Jesus turned the water into wine. Here is a strange thing; only the water that was drawn from the vessels became wine; that in the vessels was still sparkling water. And the master of the feast said it was the best they had drunk. You see, he didn't know where it came from.”

“And did no one know but the servants?”

“Yes, Jesus has five followers, who think Him some great one. Four of them are of Bethsaida,—you know that little town just north of here. John and Philip, are two, and the other two are brothers; Andrew and Simon. The fifth lives in Cana, itself. He is Nathanael. They saw what Jesus did, and now they believe Him to be some great prophet. But who is this Adnah?”

“In a moment, Zuph. But why do these five men follow Jesus? Have they no homes of their own?”

“I know not. But this I know, that Jesus is but a simple carpenter. However, there are most marvelous tales about Him, and these I have not from Iddo's slave, but from many who have seen Him. But why should I speak these things? Are you not the daughter of a nobleman, a great Sadducee, the officer of King Herod? It is not for *your* ears to learn of a poor carpenter!”

“Ah, but tell me, dear Zuph. My ears have

never been proud because their mistress is the daughter of a nobleman."

"That is true,—you are a kind child, Miriam, and never impatient with an old man. Jesus is about thirty years old. Now, what I am about to tell you are reports, merely. I know not if half is true. I care not if you disbelieve it all, so you are entertained. When Jesus was born, some great men from the far East came to do Him honor because they thought He was a prince and would one day become king over the Jews. Herod, the Great, the father of *our* King Herod, heard of the birth, and being naturally jealous of any one in power, and always afraid his throne would pass to another, decided to kill the child. Joseph heard of his intention, and went far away to Egypt with his wife and babe. Herod had every infant in that part of the country killed from two years old and under, thinking he would certainly destroy the prince,—if prince He was.

"After Herod the Great died, the family came to Nazareth. Joseph was a carpenter, and he followed his trade. He had other children, sons and daughters, but somehow, they were never just like Jesus. They were not educated; no one taught them to read and write. The others didn't want to learn. But Jesus was studious. He loved the synagogue,

and He would listen to the law with such an attentive face and large serious eyes! as if His childish mind was seeking to grasp its meaning,—something that is beyond the accomplishment of a lifetime,—He was the admiration of the scribes. They said, ‘That lad will one day be a great Rabbi,’—for you know the poorest and lowliest may, by study, become famous as a teacher.

“When He was twelve or thirteen years old, His parents took Him up to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover. The robbers were very numerous in those days, just as they are now, and in the same way as now, many people went together. You have heard of Simon the leper?”

Miriam shuddered. “Yes, I have heard.”

“He was not a leper, then. He lived in Bethany. He met the caravan that went up from Nazareth, he and his family.”

“I never heard that the leper has a family,” said the girl.

“Yes,—he has a son, of about the same age as Jesus, whose name is Lazarus. It is from Lazarus that I got this story. The two boys became greatly attached to each other on the journey, and during the seven days of the feast. They were much alike in their gentleness and kindness. On the

eighth day, the caravan set out on its return. Scarcely had they lost Jerusalem in the distance, when the rumor of a band of thieves spread among them. The women were put in the midst, and the men stood with stout clubs waiting for an attack. Suddenly Lazarus cried out, 'Where is Jesus?' And sure enough, the carpenter's son was not to be found! Full of uneasiness the whole party hastened back, searching along the way, thinking He might have been captured and carried off for ransom. They entered the city, and went to the inn where Mary and Joseph had been staying. Nothing had been seen of the boy. 'Perhaps He is at the Temple,' said Lazarus.

"And there they found Him! Mary asked, 'Jesus, why have you treated us so? Your father and I have been looking everywhere for you, and our hearts were torn with fears and grief.' The boy answered, 'It is strange you searched for Me; you might have known I would be only in one place,—the Temple. Do you not know,' He said, 'that I must be about My Father's business?' Those were His words; Lazarus heard them. What did He mean? Surely a strange boy was this son of Joseph! If you will believe me, Miriam, that child was surrounded by a circle of doctors, and was listening attentively to their words, and

answering their difficult questions in such a manner as to overwhelm them with astonishment."

"What sort of questions were they, Zuph?"

"Questions about the Christ who is to come."

"The Christ?" repeated Miriam. "Who is that?"

"No matter, dear. This is not for women to know. Besides, your father, as a Sadducee, does not believe in any such. But Jesus went back with His parents and lived with them, and worked at the trade. Joseph died—but this is enough. You must tell me of Adnah."

"Dear Zuph, tell me more about Jesus. I know I should have loved Him. Tell every word."

"There's little more, that I know. Year by year He grew more and more unlike His brothers and sisters. He seemed to be always thinking,—thinking,—thinking. His face grew brighter as if there was an inward light that flamed higher all the time. And although the living was sufficient, and affairs went well, a sadness began to settle upon Him, as if He felt more and more some strange, wild destiny. Yet when He was with others, He strove to throw aside this melancholy. He was accustomed to wander at night in solitude, and sometimes when He returned there would be tears in His eyes. He was never heard to blame Providence, nor to cen-

sure the faults of the poor. Once He disappeared for forty days and nights in the wilderness, and when He came back, He was changed. He wore the look of a man who has accepted the inevitable with meekness, and who has resolved to bear sorrow with cheerfulness. Yet what is this sorrow? Nobody knows.

“After He turned the water into wine, He and His disciples went up to Jerusalem to the feast. After that I know nothing. It has been nine or ten months ago. Now, who is Adnah?”

“He is the boy who lives next door. And oh, Zuph! this is my request, do not nail up that loose plank in the gate!”

“Ha!” cried Zuph. “Now I see it all! So it was through the opening that you two became acquainted. Who would have thought it!”

“But, Zuph, you are not angry? You will leave the board loose?”

“Let it be nailed up at once!” said an angry voice behind them. Miriam turned pale. It was her brother, Reuben. “So you have spoken to that wretch!” continued the boy advancing. “Well it is, that the Rabbi was sick and we held no school to-day! Some one is needed to watch over you. What will you do next, I wonder? Truly did our wise Rabbi say, but yesterday, ‘there are

two things never to be left alone; a fire, and a woman.' ”

Reuben was a handsome youth, sixteen years old, and full of the authority that belonged to so great an age. Tears sprang to Miriam's eyes. “I saw no harm in speaking to him,” she said.

“It is not for a girl to see the wrong, nor the right,” said Reuben more calmly. “I do not blame you, for such is your nature. But while I do not blame, I shall protect, for you are my sister. Besides, if you knew about that Adnah, even *you*, perhaps,—I am not sure, but *perhaps* you,—would scorn him.”

“Tell me,” said Miriam, while old Zuph hastened away to nail up the plank.

Reuben's voice assumed tones of awful meaning. “Miriam, girl, that Adnah is the son of a thief! His father is even now a slave in the palace of Pontius Pilate. Pilate took a fancy to him, and spared him from the cross. Do you understand? Justice demanded his crucifixion!”

“But what did Adnah do?” inquired Miriam.

“What did he do? Is not his father's sin *his* sin? But you do not know these things. It is well. The law is not for women.”

“Do tell me this, Reuben, since you have studied all such matters. Do you believe in angels?”

“I am a Sadducee, and believe in nothing but the law. Angels? No more than in the resurrection! Who has been speaking to you of angels? Old Zuph?”

“No, brother.”

“Then it was this profligate thief, Adnah. For there is no talk of angels in *this* house! What said he? I command you to tell.”

“He said nothing,—only—he called *me* one.”

For a moment Reuben stood spellbound in his wrath. Then he dashed across the court to Zuph. “Hammer, hammer with a will!” he said. “And if there are not enough nails in Capernaum, send to Cana!”

CHAPTER III

BLUE EYES

MIRIAM was very unhappy until her mother returned from her visit. The girl sat in the large living-room, furtively watching her brother. Reuben held a long roll in his hand, his eyes austerely fastened upon the Hebrew text. Once she had spoken. "Brother, will you tell about Adnah?" Reuben did not lift his eyes. Instead of answering, he read aloud,

" 'If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall be no blood shed for him.' " Why did he read about thieves? Was it not because Adnah's father was a thief? And so by the law, the killing of a thief is not to be a matter of retaliation. A thief is nothing,—his life of no account. But what then? Adnah was no thief. Could he help what his father had done? Was he not to be pitied for having such a father? True, the law held him guilty, or at least so Reuben said, and Reuben must know; but Reuben had said, also, that the law was not for women. Then Miriam could pity Adnah; and she did, with all her heart.

Her mother returned. Miriam said to herself, "Now Reuben will tell." But her brother put up his roll, still looking stern and threatening. The mother had many things to relate concerning her visit. Her daughter listened with a heavy weight upon her heart. Would her mother smile so tenderly, and speak so cheerily, if she knew about that episode of the loose plank? "I am sorry," she thought, "so very sorry! If the plank were *gone*, I would never go there again."

"How still you are, my daughter!" said the other at last. "You ask not a word about your aunt. And Reuben, you appear sorrowful. Has anything happened?"

Miriam held her breath.

Reuben looked upon the floor. "It is nothing," he said and left the room. Miriam's eyes filled with tears. She loved her brother dearly, and she hastened after him, although she felt a little afraid.

"My brother," she said, "I am so very sorry it happened. I will never do that again."

"Truly, since the plank is nailed up," returned Reuben coldly.

"But even if it were loose! It is because I have offended you; and I fear my mother and father will feel as you. Are you going to tell about it?"

“So *that* is it!” said Reuben. “I have not yet made up my mind.”

“No, that is *not* it, Reuben. Well you know how I ever seek to please you, my brother. What would I not do to increase your happiness! But always, yes, always, you treat me as if I were altogether out of your life.”

“No, Miriam, you are unjust. My affection for you is not shown in idle words, but in the nailing up of planks and in making other hedges about you.”

“Hedges! It is because I am a girl that no trust can be put in me.”

“Miriam, we might stand here and argue for hours, but that would not alter this fact; *you have sinned*. A sin which is not punished, is like a good deed unrewarded. However, I do not say I shall tell about your misdeed. But leave me now; I would meditate,—and your face reminds me of your secret dealings with that wretched Adnah.”

A little after sunset, Miriam's father returned home, his manner denoting a pleasant excitement. “A treat for us all,” he cried. “Lucius, the centurion, takes a moonlight ride upon the sea to-night, and he has invited me and my family. Get you fine apparel, little girl, and look as brave as you may!”

Miriam looked at Reuben beseechingly. Suppose he should speak now! In that case, perhaps she would be ordered to remain with the servants. "Why don't you hurry?" Reuben asked her, not unkindly. She could have fallen at his feet with joy at his tone. Perhaps he would never tell about her adventure; perhaps he thought her punished enough.

There were two reasons why Joel, the father of Reuben, did not hesitate to associate with a Roman. In the first place, he was a Sadducee, and his party was the friend of Rome, having a contempt for the "purifications" of the Pharisees. In the second place, this centurion was only half a pagan. He had lost all belief in his own gods, and being won by the purer religion of the Jews, he had built for them the beautiful marble synagogue in Capernaum.

The moon rose early, and its light fell upon the deck of a small Roman galley which the centurion had built for his pleasure. The Roman officers and their wives and children had thrown off the restraint of garrison life. Joel, as a nobleman, the chief official of the custom, mingled with them as an equal, although, of course, it was never forgotten that he had not been born in Rome. Lucius the centurion seated himself upon a rich cushion by the side of Anna, the wife of Joel, while at his feet lay

a boy of about Reuben's age, whose features were neither Roman, Jewish, nor Grecian. Miriam, who sat beside Reuben, looked at the boy curiously, wondering to what barbarous nation he belonged. The boy's eyes were blue, and as fair as the Sea of Galilee over which the galley-slaves were speeding the ship. His hair was long and yellow, like the moonlight which flooded the deck. His face and hands were white, and in contrast with them, Reuben's face appeared unusually stern and dark. The monotonous splash of the oars, the rushing of the water as it sped past the vessel, and the continuous hum of voices, mingled with music from a band of players.

It was the gayest scene in which Miriam had ever been placed. With deep breaths of delight she watched the great moon circling above the hills which drew their skirts back from the water's edge; and the line of brilliant white left in the wake of the ship, which foamed and bubbled till far away it melted and became lost in blue; and that strange white face of the blue-eyed youth. Presently she stole forth her hand and found Reuben's and drew his hand to her. "Is it not all beautiful?" she said.

Reuben drew his hand quickly away. "Your touch is cold," he said the next moment, as if to ex-

plain his impatience. But Miriam suddenly remembered that he was offended,—she had forgotten all about her sorrow. And then tears came to her eyes and blotted out the sea and the moon, and happiness.

Lucius, the centurion, was speaking to Anna. “Does not Iddo’s house adjoin yours?”

“It does,” Miriam’s mother replied. “There is only a high wall between.” Reuben began to cough significantly. Miriam turned cold.

“So I thought. And I suppose he is no great friend of your husband, since Iddo is a Pharisee?”

“He has a true Pharisee’s contempt for us all,” said Anna, smiling contentedly.

The Roman laughed. “I would you could have seen him to-day! He passed me in the street, and my robe touched his hand. He scowled. ‘See what trouble you have given me!’ he snarled. ‘What trouble, my friend?’ I asked. ‘What trouble?’ said he; ‘must not I now go home and baptize myself and all my garments in water?—for a Gentile has polluted me with his touch!’ And away went he. By the way, that boy who lives with him—his nephew,—he is the son of a thief, Iddo’s brother. But Iddo has renounced his brother, of course, as he is now Pilate’s slave.”

Reuben groaned.

“Yes, this brother of Iddo,—his name is Samuel,—right good cause have I to know! For Samuel was under me, he sat at the receipt of custom. It appears that he would never study, when young, or cultivate a liking for the law. He was an easy-going fellow, with a healthy scorn for his brother’s sect. So he was content to be a publican, and collect the taxes. That is how he became a thief. He had no friends on account of his trade, for who will speak with a publican, in *your* country? I suppose the temptation was too great, and he saw before him a short cut to riches. So his receipts diminished. I suspected and watched. His account was correct, but the money in his bag,—where was it? So he became subject to Rome, and Pilate took a fancy to him and spared him the cross. There is another man in his place, now, with two names, it appears, for some call him Levi, but he calls himself Matthew.”

“But this brother of Iddo, this thief whom you call Samuel,” said Reuben, “has he a family?”

“Only the boy. His wife,—there is another strange thing,—is a Samaritan woman. Oh, this Samuel was a reckless fellow, by all accounts! His wife went back to Samaria, where she married four more times,—her husbands having a convenient manner of dying. If she has got her a sixth hus-

band, now, I know not. But one thing is sure,— she cared nothing for her son, Adnah.”

“Then this Adnah’s father is not only a thief, but his mother a Samaritan!” exclaimed Reuben.

“You have said,” replied the Roman. Reuben looked at Miriam. “Now do you not hate this wretched son?” he whispered. A sudden spirit of revolt rose up within the girl. She turned to the centurion. “But wherein is *Adnah* to blame?” she demanded in a clear voice.

“Miriam!” exclaimed her mother. “Is it for a girl to speak in the presence of men?”

“She speaks as a Roman!” cried Lucius admiringly. “I thought no Jew would have asked *that* question!” Miriam became suddenly ashamed and hung her head. Reuben rose impatiently, and backed from her, as if he could no longer endure her presence. But his youthful dignity was destined to a brief existence. He had forgotten that he was near the railing of the deck, and as he retreated with indignant eyes and tossing hair, he suddenly struck against the top-rail, lost his balance and fell backward. His body disappeared from sight in the very water that was being beaten by the strokes of the massive oars. Anna and Miriam each gave a loud shriek, for his doom appeared certain. The soldiers in their heavy armor remained motionless, surprised

at the cries, and Joel, the father, was so far away that he did not even notice the excitement.

The rowers were each chained by a leg to the bench upon which they sat, so no help was to be expected from these slaves. The centurion in a hoarse voice shouted to the master to stop the ship. The command was obeyed, but not instantly, since the ship had gained an impetus which was for a time irresistible. In the meantime Miriam, without an instant's hesitation, had run to the youth with the yellow hair and blue eyes. She scarcely knew why she did so, unless it was because she had observed his strong, massive limbs, and the look of gentleness, yet resolution, upon his face. The boy still sat cross-legged upon the deck. Miriam fell upon her knees beside him and clasped her hands wildly. "*You* can save him!" she faltered.

The youth sprung to his feet and lifted her from her knees. Then he fell upon one knee before her, and said, in a foreign accent, "I ask no more, than to die for you." The next moment he rose, and, leaping upon the top-rail, stood poised in that dangerous position, while his flashing blue eyes scanned the water eagerly. Suddenly he threw himself into the sea.

CHAPTER IV

MIRIAM'S PUNISHMENT

REUBEN lay cold and dripping upon the deck. He was still unconscious. The youth who had rescued him from the sea, was below. Anna and Joel were chafing the limbs of their son. Miriam wept apart. Lucius, the centurion, had taken his own red cloak from his shoulders to wrap about the boy. The ship had been turned about, and was making for the northwestern shore where Capernaum's white-washed houses gleamed in the moonlight. The band of players had stopped their music, and the Roman soldiers conversed in low tones.

At last the pale boy sighed and opened his eyes. Anna gave a glad exclamation, at which Miriam sank down beside her brother in the sudden revulsion of hope. Now she dared open her eyes and look at him. Yes, he was alive! Miriam caught the passive hand and pressed it to her lips. "What is it?" Reuben asked. "Why are your faces so anxious? But it is very cold?"

"We shall soon be home," said his father. "You fell into the sea, but now you are safe enough."

Reuben rose upon one elbow. "Who drew me from the water?" he asked, weakly; "for I know nothing."

"It was the youth with the blue eyes," said Miriam. His sister's voice recalled him completely to himself. Why was she holding his hand? The boy drew it away, as he said to her in low tones, "What know you of the color of men's eyes?" Certainly this sister was a great care to him; he vaguely wondered what would become of her, when he went up to Jerusalem, as he would soon go, to be initiated into the priesthood. Who, then, would call her "Angel"? Whose eyes would she then find blue? She was not like other girls, content to keep snugly in the women's quarters till old enough to walk the streets with a discreet veil hiding her face. She seemed ever thinking of the outside world, and she took an unlawful interest in green fields and market-places, and even in throngs of beggars and sinners. •

"Who is this blue-eyed person?" inquired Joel; "for we owe him thanks,—and something better."

"He is my slave," said the centurion, "a faithful lad, but a barbarian. One of our legions was sacking a town in Lower Germany, when I chanced upon him, then about three years old, lying deserted in a hut of earth and stone."

"I noted him as he sat at your feet," said Anna. "I wonder his parents would desert so fair a child."

Lucius shrugged his broad shoulders. "No choice of theirs, I warrant you, lady! For his father was put to the sword, after killing many of our auxiliaries,—his own countrymen, against whom he was outrageously incensed, because they had entered our service against their native country, for pay."

"And his mother?" asked Anna.

"I forget who took her captive," replied the Roman. "But whoever it was, sent her as a present to our most glorious emperor, the saintly Tiberius,—for she also was fair. As for me, I took this infant, and went lugging him from camp to camp, till I grew fond of him, and he of me. For I never married, lady; and it was sweet to feel his tiny fingers close upon my great hand, as if he would say, 'You are now my only hope.' Perhaps he *did* say so, in his barbarous tongue."

"I pray you call him up," said Joel, "and though he is your slave, do not forbid me giving him a token of my gratitude."

"Well—well—as you like. Soldier, call for me Gothinus,—I named him so, because he was of the tribe of the Gothini." The slave quickly appeared, dressed in dry apparel, and fresh and rosy, as if the

cold bath had been much to his liking. "These Germans,—you can never kill them," said the centurion, giving Gothinus a hearty blow upon the back that would have sent Reuben reeling, at his strongest. The German smiled merrily, and it was easily to be discerned that Lucius treated him more as a son than as a slave.

"Slave," said Joel, kindly, "I wish to thank you for the recovery of my son." Gothinus smiled, but made no answer except his bow, for it was not etiquette to speak to a freeman.

"But thanks are not enough," continued Joel, thrusting his hand into his pocket, "though doubtless they are better than nothing. Since the value of a slave is thirty shekels, and since my son is worth twice as much to me as a slave, and since we never give more than a sixtieth part of the value of a thing for the thing,—if we can help it,—behold, here is a shekel. Take it, my boy."

"Ask not this of me, also," said Gothinus.

"How say you? Is it not enough?"

"Yes, my lord; a shekel too much."

"But I insist. Come, you must obey me!"

"I saved your son," said Gothinus, "and that I did willingly. But to take money is more than I can do for any man,—unless my master bids me," he added, looking beseechingly at Lucius.

"He is a strange barbarian," said Lucius, shaking his massive head. "Remember,—a German!"

"If you will not take it from any man, perhaps you will from my daughter. Here, Miriam, offer the money to this very peculiar slave."

Reuben watched his sister, and was scandalized to see that she showed not the least hesitation, or embarrassment.

"Yes, just as if she were a boy!" he thought. "She does not draw back, but takes the shekel in her hand. So far from her cheeks blushing with righteous modesty, her eyes sparkle, yes, actually sparkle with pleasure!" Reuben groaned.

"Are you in pain, my son?" Anna asked.

Miriam advanced fearlessly to the blue-eyed slave, just as if she were not a Jewess. "I pray you take the money," she said, "and with it, our love. And to-night your name shall be first in my prayers."

Gothinus took the money gravely.

"Now, my son," cried Joel, in high spirits, "it is your turn to say a word of thanks."

"If any more can be said," replied Reuben, coldly, "let it be imagined that I have said it! He has the money, and he has been promised our love; and my sister has agreed to pray for a Gentile."

"A Jew, a Jew!" cried Lucius, laughing. "I myself think you have had your share, Gothinus!

Get below, or we poor Romans will receive not a glance!"

Reuben thought to himself, "And now my sister has two friends; the son of a thief, and the slave of a Gentile!" As he mused over this, it suddenly occurred to him that his sister took delight in others because he, himself, gave her little attention. He loved Miriam, though he did not think it consistent with his dignity to proclaim the fact. Now it appeared otherwise. As they went up the street towards their home, he fell behind with Miriam. As they entered a dark shadow, he took her hand. She was overjoyed. "I know you are glad," he said, "that your brother does not lie out yonder in the still sea."

"Never would I again have been happy," said Miriam with a sudden sob. "It was as if the sun of my life was about to go out."

"Ah," said Reuben, "but there would have remained the stars!"

"I would never have seen them," returned Miriam, "for a cloud would have been between."

"Then, dear sister, since I am so much to you, why will you not try more to please me? Hold this thief, Adnah, in contempt——"

"Adnah is no thief, brother."

“But his father is; and pray not for this heathen German, this proud Gentile!”

“Dear brother, what would not I do for you, because you have been saved? I can say to my feet, ‘Go thither,’ and they go; or to my hand, ‘Do this,’ and behold, the thing is done. But I cannot say to my mind, ‘Think thus,’ or to my heart, ‘Here thou shalt love, and here hold in contempt!’ For the soul is not a horse that one may turn it over to another’s guiding and spurring.”

Reuben drew away his hand. “You mock!”

“No, brother. For if I were not true, I would promise anything to content you. But never will I promise that which my heart whispers, ‘You shall not perform!’”

“Girl,” said Reuben severely, “you are a model to be copied,—in your *words!* but when it comes to peering through broken planks,—but I say no more. I pray you go on with your mother, and leave me to my thoughts.”

The next day Reuben was ill from his drenching in the lake, but, while he could not attend school, he would not go to bed. At noon Miriam came to him and said, “Reuben, may I not bake for you your favorite cake?”

“Why does not mother prepare the meal?” inquired Reuben.

“So she does; but I would like to do this for you.”

“I shall not be sick,” returned the other impatiently. “To-morrow I shall be at school. I do not need any one to do things for me. Let mother cook what she pleases. But I think it my duty to tell about that loose plank.”

“Reuben!”

“Well,—may be not; we shall see.”

At night he was worse, but he insisted on sitting with the others upon the flat roof. Miriam glanced shyly into the neighboring court. There sat Adnah beside the fountain, while Iddo and his wife were upon their housetop. Iddo was praying at the top of his voice, in the manner of Pharisees. Reuben caught Miriam looking at the forlorn figure by the fountain. When she found herself watched, she started and turned pale. “It is my *duty!*” he whispered. Suddenly Miriam sprang up and fell upon her knees beside Joel.

“Father,” she said, speaking rapidly. “I have been very wicked and I must tell you all about it, for it is breaking my heart.”

“I was not going to tell,” spoke up Reuben with the irritation that belongs by right to the sick. “Come and take your seat.”

But Miriam had gone too far to retreat. “A

plank was loose in the gate. I pulled it away and talked to that boy, Iddo's nephew. It was yesterday, when no one saw me. I knew it was wrong, but I didn't seem to care though it *was*. But since then, my life has been very unhappy. And I carried Adnah things to eat because he was so hungry. And then I came away."

"But not before Adnah had hailed her as an angel," spoke up Reuben, who would not have told this, if he had not been overpowered by surprise and shame at hearing of the provisions.

Miriam burst into tears and hid her face upon Joel's knee. "Well, my daughter," said her father, "it was a great wickedness, without doubt! A fearful thing, indeed, to feed one who was hungry! But it seems that the worst part is that you did it secretly."

"Yes, yes, and I am very miserable, father."

"What! Have you not been miserable long enough? Kiss me, Miriam, and forget it all!" She fell into his arms, but Anna looked very grave.

"Adnah, the son of a thief!" expostulated Reuben.

"My son speaks with wisdom," said Anna.

"And he called her 'angel,'" cried Reuben.

"I know not if there be so many as two angels," observed Joel, as he smoothed Miriam's hair. "But

if there are, Miriam is certainly one, and Adnah was right. If there is but one angel, her name is Anna, and Adnah was wrong."

"Joel," said Anna, "treat not this case so lightly. See how Reuben is grieved!"

"Thus I shall settle the case," said Joel, rising and leaning over the parapet. "Zuph, come up, for I would speak with you." Then turning to Miriam,—“My daughter, promise me never again to secretly remove a plank from that gate, or hold converse with any one through openings in walls.”

Miriam smiled through her tears. "How could I remove one of those planks, father?"

"But come! a promise!"

"Then I promise, indeed."

By this time, white-haired Zuph had joined them. "Zuph," said his master, "to-morrow when I do is from home, draw out every nail from that plank,—which I have reason to suppose, by my son's expression, he has put into it; and leave the plank loose!"

"It is folly," said Anna.

"No, dear wife, it is faith."

Miriam kissed her father again.

CHAPTER V

THE SEVENTH HOUR

THE next morning Reuben was not well enough to leave his bed. His cheeks were flushed with fever. "I want no physician," he persisted. "I can be sick enough without hiring an assistant." Joel's duty called him to the custom-house, and all morning Anna and Miriam stayed in the sick chamber. Of course these two were uneasy, which irritated the youth. "I shall be up to-morrow," he said. "I wish you would do as usual, and not sit so silent, looking at me." But Anna remained by his side. Miriam longed for her mother's place, but her mother had no intention of letting even Miriam supersede her. The noon meal came.

Now was the girl's chance. While Anna was superintending the cooking, she crept to her brother's side, and timidly felt his cheek. She shuddered because his flesh was so hot. Reuben turned his head on the pillow, and looked at her. He smiled. "You will be glad," he said, "when I am a great priest, and go with my course to Jerusalem twice a year. You will say, 'I am the sister of Reuben,

the high priest,'—perhaps. Who knows what will happen. Caiaphas must die presently. Who will succeed him? Perhaps his son. No matter, I can wait. But I must become a great friend of the procurator. Pilate can do what he wishes. He can make me high priest, when I am old enough. Will you not be proud, then?"

"So proud," said Miriam with a delighted smile, "that my feet will say to the earth, 'Earth, you are not good enough for me,'—and then they will begin to tread upon air."

Reuben laughed. "What a girl you are! And I will not need to lay up riches, since father, who was once a priest, but has been made a nobleman, has enough to influence even a Roman procurator. Aristobulus was high priest at seventeen. But I am in no hurry. I care not if fame marches slowly, so it comes my way."

"While you march to meet it," said Miriam, pleased extremely at this very unusual confiding of hopes. And certainly Reuben would not have conversed with her so freely, if he had not been ill.

"Sister, I pray you bring me yonder fifth book of Moses, which you see upon the table. I must be prepared for my fate."

"But will it not make you ill to read?"

"Ill! What know you of the effects of reading?"

Reading is not like a malaria to catch one unawares. Do me this favor."

Do him a favor? Miriam sprang up breathless. "Now, Miriam," said Reuben's warning voice, "do not be careless. Walk slowly. There are many things on the table, and the book must not be injured."

Miriam laughed as she ran across the room. "A favor loses half its worth when it is done slowly," she cried gaily. She seized the roll of parchment, and in her haste, struck it against a little jar. "Oh! oh!" she cried.

"What is it?" asked Reuben sharply.

"Oh, brother, I have spilled some ink on the book!"

"Bring it here. I expected this! Why did I ask you to do anything for me? For it is always thus. Yet I cautioned you, I said, 'Walk slowly.' You would not. You ever think your way the best, and your girl's wisdom equal to a man's. Let me see the place. 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, from thy brethren, like unto Me; unto Him ye shall hearken.' You have blotted it all over! A Prophet like unto Moses. . . . It is yet to be fulfilled; a leader; a ruler. He is yet to come. Isaiah,—Jeremiah,—Elijah,—these were not as Moses. So you

weep? I am not angry, but I am just. You did wrong, and is a wrong to be passed lightly over? Leave me to my thoughts, girl, you make my fever rise."

Miriam fled to the upper chamber, and threw herself upon her bed, where she sobbed wildly. But it was not long before she was again in the room. Anna was at the coveted place of honor,—by Reuben's side. The youth had not tasted food. Soon he was forced to lay down the manuscript. "Mother, put it away, I pray," he said faintly. "Miriam is so heedless, but you are sure!"

Anna beamed and Miriam caught her breath. Later in the day Reuben asked to have his face and hands bathed with the clear water from the fountain. "Let me! let me!" cried Miriam.

"You indeed!" exclaimed Anna, smiling, but relentless. "Am I not his mother?"

"But I can bring the water," said the girl eagerly.

"No," said the calm, judicial voice of Reuben. "You would doubtless spill it upon the floor." But while Anna was gone with the leathern bottle, here was another opportunity. Miriam slipped into the seat beside the bed. "Oh, Reuben," she whispered, "I wish I could lie there in your place!"

"Yes," said Reuben gravely. "You ever wish to assume another's duty. Why not heed your own?"

You have a place to fill, and if you do as well as you can, the part you are given to act, Herod in Tiberias, or Tiberius in Rome, could do no more. You are a foolish girl to wish to take my place. Such wishes,—what do they accomplish? Such wishes are but words! It is when I ask you to *act* for me that you fail.”

When Anna came with the water, she found her son alone. “Where is Miriam?”

“Who can tell?” said Reuben fretfully. “She passes from smiles to tears before half-a-dozen thoughts can follow after their captain. She is heedless and full of faults, but she cares not, so you are blind to them. A word sends her to her bed to weep, and a smile almost makes her dance for joy!”

The next day a physician was called. A week later he said, “It is useless; the boy will die. If all is well, he may last two days. But there is no power to save him longer. He was delicate from hard study, and the sudden shock of falling into the lake was more than he could endure.” Joel, who had never left the place since the physician was called, attended him to the gate. Then he sat down beside the fountain, and wept bitterly. His only boy, the pride and hope of his life,—and all about him the flowers sent up fragrance towards the blue

sky, and the water of the fountain sparkled joyously.

“My master,” said a voice near him; it was Zuph. “May I speak? For I have a thought.”

The haggard father did not raise his head.

“Listen, my master. I have told you of the man who turned water into wine. Now since He could do so marvelous a thing, may He not be able to do even more? Why could He not turn sickness into health, or sorrow into joy? For you and I could no more make water redden into wine, than we could heal poor Reuben!”

The nobleman looked up. “Where is this man?”

“I know not. But this I know; four of His followers have come to Capernaum, where now they live. They were formerly of Bethsaida. They are a pair of brothers. You know of Zebedee? Two are his sons,—James and John. They live in one house. Then Andrew and Simon are in another. They have become partners in the fishing business. Andrew and Simon are not very well off, but Zebedee has hired servants. Perhaps it would not be greatly below you to go thither. At least you need not go into the house, but call them forth.”

Joel had risen. “Show me the way,” he said briefly. Zebedee’s house was not far from the

coast. As they came up, they found James in the doorway, mending a net. John sat apart, his eyes fixed dreamily upon the distance. Salome stood beside James, her more practical son, making butter by shaking a bottle of goatskin filled with milk.

“Peace be with you,” said Joel. “Are you not followers of Jesus of Nazareth?”

James looked up and smiled. “We *were* His disciples. We went with Him up to Jerusalem, and then, through Samaria. But now we have gone back to our old business.”

“If you were with Him in Cana, about ten months ago, you saw Him turn the water into wine.”

“We saw that; and many marvels afterwards. He is a great prophet, this Jesus. He is another Elijah. Perhaps He is even more.”

“What more could He be?” said Joel.

John now spoke. “You know how it is written in Malachi, ‘Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare My way before Me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, and He shall sit as a refiner of silver, and purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.’ Is this not spoken of the Christ, who is to become our King, and raise the Jews to the highest among nations? John the Baptist has himself said that he

was sent before this very Jesus to prepare the way for Him; so there is the 'messenger' spoken of in the prophets. And Jesus is 'the Lord.' One day I was with John the Baptist, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, He said, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' Whereupon we followed Him, Andrew and I.

"Yes, we saw the water turned into wine, and we believed on Him. He came here to Capernaum, after that, He and His mother and His brethren with us, but we continued here not many days, because the passover was at hand. And so we went up to Jerusalem, and Jesus found in the Temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting; and when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the Temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money; and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, 'Take these things hence; make not My Father's house a house of merchandise.' Was not this the very event predicted by Malachi? We disciples recalled the words written so long ago, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up!'"

"Tell me, where is this worker of wonders!" cried Joel. "You stir up hopes in my breast. For my son is at the point of death, and perhaps Jesus can make him well."

“Jesus is in Cana,” said James, “the very place where He attended the wedding feast; He stops with Nathanael for a time, but we expect Him to come presently to Capernaum.”

“It is twenty-five miles away, perhaps a little less,” said Joel excitedly. “I can reach the town by the seventh hour, for it is yet early.”

“Master,” said Zuph, “if you would talk longer with these, I will saddle your beast and bring Him hither in all speed.” Joel approved the plan, and Zuph hurried away.

“And you think this is the Christ whom the Pharisees look for?” said Joel. “And you think He will become a mighty king? Ah, you do not understand the power of Rome! I am a nobleman, a Sadducee. Of course *I* look for no Christ. But I do indeed believe this is a prophet; I believe He can heal Reuben, if I can persuade Him to come up hither in time.”

“Have no fear,” said John, “no one ever wishes Jesus in vain. He turns from no one. When we journeyed through Samaria, where was Jacob’s well, Jesus, being wearied with His journey, sat on the well, while we went away into the city to get meat. When we came back, we marveled to see Him talking with a woman of Samaria, one who was a sinner, and had five times been mar-

ried! Yet no one said, 'Why do you talk with her?'"

"At Jacob's well!" said Joel. "That is by Sychar. Could this have been the mother of Adnah? But see how calm I am! I cannot understand why my grief is gone. But ever since I determined to go to Jesus, my heart has sung like a bird with hope of the spring!"

In the meantime Reuben was delirious. "Here is my genealogy," he muttered, fancying he had applied for a sub-position in the priesthood. "You will find I am descended from a priest of Solomon. Put not the black robe upon me, but the white tunic, for I am free of the one-hundred-and-forty bodily defects. I shall be at the head of the Sanhedrin, mother. I shall be high priest! Then father will be glad. I shall serve in the first course. Have ready the ox for a sin-offering. And the oil for my hair. How long it takes to become great!"

An hour later he opened his eyes. Consciousness had returned, but not so his strength. "Mother," he whispered, "I feel very strange. I seem to be floating in the Sea of Galilee, as I did that night. What is it? Mother, what did the physician say? Shall I get well?"

Anna burst into uncontrollable weeping. After

a pause he whispered, "And how long did he say I might last? Shall I die at once?"

"No, no, no; not—he said two days."

"Poor mother!" said Reuben. Then he added, "Where is father?"

"He has hurried to Cana, to find a greater Physician, my son. Perhaps ours did not know."

There was a long pause, while Anna held her boy's hand. Then a voice broke the stillness. "Reuben, Reuben, have you no thought of me?"

"Hush, Miriam!" said Anna, gently.

"You and father are always upon his lips," said Miriam in rebellious grief, "but me he never mentions!"

"Miriam," said the weak voice, "come hither." His sister crept to his side. "Miriam, we were very happy when we were little ones, is it not true?"

"So happy!" sobbed Miriam.

"When we played with laughter in the court, beside our fountain,—ah, the cold, cold water,—how we plunged our arms into it! And we chased each other upon the house-top, from parapet to parapet. And the time Lucius, the centurion, sent us that curious dish from his feast, made of peacocks' brains,—how we laughed!"

"I had even forgotten!" said Miriam.

“Now, daughter,” said Anna, “you have talked enough. You will make Reuben worse.”

“A moment more, dear mother. But, Miriam,—since we have grown older, we have not been—just——”

“But it is always my fault,” said Miriam, “for I am a very wicked girl.”

“There is one thing I must tell you, sister.”

“I shall always remember it, I know.”

“So I wish you to. It is this,—and no doubt you would never have thought it——”

“For I am not wise, Reuben. But tell me what it is and I will do it. Anything, anything!”

“It is nothing I want you to do. It is just—that,—I am very fond of you!”

Miriam gave a little cry that was broken half into by a sob. Anna said, “You may kiss him, but after that, you must draw away.” Was Anna just a little jealous? Reuben kissed his sister, and then as he looked up at his mother a faint smile passed over his face; but he said nothing. Presently he fell asleep, and his breathing grew so halting that Anna was alarmed and sought to waken him.

Reuben could not be awakened. Some of the oldest servants came in, among them, Zuph. Their weeping was audible. Anna did not try to still them. It no longer mattered. The hour of the

noon meal was at hand, but no one in the room stirred. Anna sat with her eyes fastened fixedly upon the white face, while Miriam sobbed with the servants. Reuben was struggling for breath. He was still unconscious. As a servant passed by the stone dial in the court, her words were distinctly heard, as they drifted through the open window; "It is the seventh hour."

Even while she spoke, Reuben opened his eyes, sighed naturally, and then rose to a sitting posture. Anna who had constantly held his hand, gave a loud cry of amazement. The pulse had become regular, the hot fever was gone! "He recovers!" she cried.

"I am already well!" said Reuben. He rose to his feet, and they saw that he had spoken true.

Miriam cried, "Father has seen Jesus!"

CHAPTER VI

IN DANGER

THAT evening they expected Joel to return from Cana, but they were disappointed. Joy over the recovery of Reuben needed only the father's presence to be complete. Early the next morning Zuph wished to start forth and meet him, and tell the good news. Anna gave him permission, and he set forth with a few of the servants. They had not gone far when they met Joel returning.

"Your son lives," shouted Zuph. With bright faces, the other servants echoed, "He lives!" Joel also was radiant, but he did not appear surprised.

"At what hour did he begin to mend?" he inquired.

"Yesterday at the seventh hour, the fever left him."

"That was the time!" Joel exclaimed. "Now, indeed, I know that Jesus is a great prophet, and a mighty worker of wonders, as well!"

"Then you saw Him?" said Zuph.

"I reached Cana about noon, dear Zuph. I went unto Him,—He abides with one Nathanael. I told

Him that Reuben was at the point of death, and I besought Him to come down to Capernaum and heal him, for in some way, when I saw His face, I could not doubt His power. 'I know you can cure him,' I said, 'for I have heard of the miracle you wrought at the wedding feast.'

"Then He answered, 'Except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe!' At that I began to grow alarmed. I felt He could help Reuben, but what if He refused to come? I plead with Him then, for was not my dearest interest at stake? And I cried, 'Sir, come down ere my child die!'

"But He had not intended to refuse my petition,—He was only trying me,—I saw that by the wonderful look of kindness and mercy that shone in His eyes. He said, 'Go your way; your son lives.' And the time at which He spoke these words was the seventh hour. I believed Him. I was as certain Reuben had recovered, as if I had seen him rise before me, although he was more than twenty miles away. I set forward towards home, but I felt no hurry. I was too happy to be anxious about my journey, and the meeting with Jesus had filled me with strange thoughts and feelings. So I stayed at night at the half-way inn, to think it over."

"And what do you think of Jesus?" asked Zuph.

“As I said,—a great prophet, one who can overcome the ordinary course of nature.”

“And no more?” said the servant.

“This is enough, surely. I believe in Him.”

“But do you think Him the Messiah?”

“Zuph, I am a Sadducee, as you know.”

“True, master. But if Jesus could raise Reuben from his deathbed, while twenty miles away, why could not God raise up one who is quite dead, though He is as far away as Heaven?”

“I perceive, Zuph, that you believe in the resurrection.”

“To my mind,” replied the favored servant, “the resurrection and Jesus go together. I think Him the Christ. And I believe He will presently become great and drive Rome out of Judea, and take His royal seat in Jerusalem. Where, then, will Herod Antipas and Pontius Pilate be? Either in exile, or crushed beneath the powerful foot of the great and new king!”

Joel smiled at Zuph's enthusiasm. “I warn you,” he said, “not to express these views to Lucius, the centurion.”

Anna would not allow Reuben to return to school for several days, although he had perfectly recovered. When at last he was suffered to go, Miriam felt very lonesome. She had spent many

happy hours in the sick room, for every time she could be of service her heart bounded with joy. And that time Reuben said, "I am very fond of you!"—would she ever forget it? Since his recovery, Reuben had appeared rather ashamed of his confession, it is true, and he had done nothing to prove it. But he had failed to find fault with his sister, and was not this more than enough? She could still sit and watch him, in dumb devotion.

But now he was away, and she went into the court. Suddenly she remembered the plank which had caused her so much trouble. But she would not look at it. There was no danger of her betraying her father's trust. But after all, she would like to see if Zuph had drawn out the nails. There could be no harm in that. She crossed the court to examine. Yes, there were the empty nail-holes. And had *she* moved that great heavy weight! Sure enough, here was the very spike she had pulled upon,—Miriam seized the spike. She gave it just a little pull.

"Miriam?" said a voice on the other side; the voice of Adnah. Miriam shrank back. "Miriam!" the voice said, entreatingly.

Miriam wrung her hands. What could she do? She had promised not to talk to this wretch. But to wound him was more than she could endure.

So she compromised. She knocked upon the plank.

“Have they ordered you not to speak to me?” said the boy.

Again Miriam knocked.

“Then listen, and you need say nothing. Miriam, something dreadful is going to happen to me. I overheard Iddo and his slave plotting. I dared not draw very close, and I did not hear everything. But I know this much; I am to be taken from here and something is to be done to me. After I have disappeared, Iddo will say I ran away. But Miriam, it will not be true. For how could I escape? The gate is locked always, and you know I could not scale the wall. I am in a cage. I suppose Iddo will murder me, he and the slave; for Iddo hates me, oh, Miriam, he despises, loathes me in his soul; and why, I know not. I would have slipped through this opening, and begged you to get the key to *your* gate, that I might flee. But I heard your servant nail up the plank again. So there is no help. And no one would believe my story but you. Only this; when they say I ran away, you will know better.”

Miriam was in great perplexity. Should she break her promise, and tell Adnah that the plank was loose? But how could she get the key to the

gate and let him out, even if the plank were gone? It must be at night, and Zuph slept with the key under his pillow. She could not attempt *that*,—she was not so wicked. And yet, what if Adnah were killed? But surely a good Pharisee, such as Iddo, would commit no crime.

“Miriam, do you believe my words?”

She knocked upon the wall. At that instant Anna called her! Miriam went to her mother feeling guilty and miserable. How could she explain her knocking upon the wall? She stood with downcast eyes. What, now, would her father think? And Reuben? She trembled.

“Miriam,” said her mother’s cheery voice, “I called to ask you to fill this jug, from the fountain.”

“You dear, good mother!” cried Miriam, throwing her arms about her, “I would fill a thousand jugs for you!”

CHAPTER VII

THE TWO BROTHERS

ADNAH could not remember his mother, because when he was only a year old, his father had given that lady a bill of divorcement and had sent her away. Back to Samaria, her native country, went this lady, and presently married again; and yet again; five times, in all. Whenever Iddo wished to reproach Adnah most bitterly, he would refer to his mother. Iddo seemed to take exquisite delight in tormenting his nephew. This was because he hated the very sight of the young man. Adnah could remember his father, Samuel. They had lived together six years after the divorce. What a jolly person his father had been! full of laughter and mad pranks, a very boy, though whiskered over with tough gray hair. Despised by his countrymen because he was a publican, and because he had married a Samaritan, Samuel found solace in his child. When he left the receipt of custom, straight home to his little cabin he would go, and "Ha, Adnah, what do you say to going fishing, to-night?" Then they would take to the

boat, and push off from shore. Darkness would surround them. What of that? Samuel would light a torch and place it where the fish could see its beautiful glory. For a fish dearly loves a light, whether sun, or lantern. So the fish would set their tails wagging, and come straight into the net. And what then? Perhaps it would be midnight; no matter. They would light a fire upon the shore, and broil their fish upon the coals. And then, pure happiness,—without a thought of indigestion!

Or, Samuel might say, “Shall we take a tramp to-night?” Adnah was always ready for anything. In the dusk of evening they would set forth, and perhaps enter the hills and sit upon the huge boulders, or even climb the mountainside; or make an excursion to Bethsaida, and think it great fun because all the town would be asleep and these two so much awake. And Samuel would go to work the next day as if he had slept all night. Samuel was not religious, but there was one object he worshiped; this was his brother Iddo. And indeed, Iddo was so great a Pharisee, and so learned a Rabbi, that most of the common people looked up to him. And to think that this great and pious man was his own brother! Samuel visited him regularly, and lavished upon him a great part of his

wages, while Iddo never ceased to upbraid him for being a sinner and a publican.

“Alas, that this money is made by the extortion of your own countrymen!” Iddo would exclaim, pocketing, meanwhile, the money. “How can you be content to take from the Jews and give to these vile Romans? Were it not for the Pharisees, the Jews as a people would cease to exist. Renounce the custom; become a Pharisee, and help us oppose Tiberius Cæsar. What grander work than to fight for your people against greed, idolatry, and oppression?”

“Alas, dear Iddo,” Samuel would return, waving his powerful arm, “some men are not cut out to do great things. You are; I am not. It is enough that my brother is great,—that the people bow before him,—that those from afar come to sip at his fountain of knowledge. Of you, I am very proud; with myself, I am content.”

“Think of the day of resurrection!” cried Iddo. “While we Pharisees recline in Abraham’s bosom, where will be you publicans and Sadducees?”

But never did Samuel lose his serene indifference. Iddo could not offend him. The day of desolation came at last,—the day that found Adnah a happy child, and left him miserable. The Roman soldiers were in the room, and by Adnah stood Samuel and

Iddo. "It is true I stole the money," said Samuel, boldly. "What would you have? So great a stream of coins pouring through my fingers every day,—should not I close my hand some time?"

"Come!" said the officer sternly. "No more words. You confess the deed. To Jerusalem!"

"Iddo," said the prisoner, turning to his brother, "remember; you take charge of my boy; you will treat him as your own child; you will bring him up to become great and good."

Iddo threw himself upon the publican's shoulder and wept and sobbed. "He shall be my son!" he declared. Never before had Adnah seen Iddo kiss his brother. Iddo did not appear in the least ashamed of his brother, though a thief. And Adnah was taken to the home of Iddo. At first Iddo seemed very fond of the boy, and would often throw his arms about him, and burst into wild weeping. But at the end of a few weeks, this sudden love cooled. Then Iddo began to hate his nephew. Why? Ah, why? What had happened?

There were three in this household; Iddo, his wife Hodesh, a most irritable woman, and the slave, a man with a cruel face, and with few words. The house was scantily furnished, the board frugally set forth, after the manner of Pharisees. "Teach me to read," once Adnah implored.

“First I will teach you to be good,” returned Iddo. “You may begin by fasting, to-day.” After that Adnah fasted often, but he grew no better. In fact, his mind became filled with bitter and rebellious thoughts. Often he did not confine himself to thoughts, but ventured into open rebellion. Then Hodesh would beat him severely. He longed in the evening to sit with the others upon the house-top for very company’s sake, but this was not allowed. He tried to make friends with the slave, but to no avail. He sought to soften Iddo’s wife, but she was adamant. Thus cast upon himself, ever brooding over a happy past and a desolate present, Adnah grew up, and was now sixteen.

But life is unbearable without love. To be loved is the priceless blessing of a few, and like other priceless blessings, is held cheap, compared with blessings that may be bought with a price. But to love, is the privilege of all generous natures. To whom should Adnah’s heart go out? At first, it was a voice that stole its way into his soul,—a childish voice, laughing, singing, on the other side of that cruel fence. Once he heard the same voice in another tone,—for now it was sobbing. What had happened to that unseen one? Adnah’s heart thrilled with sympathy. “I grieve with you,” he

whispered,—no one could hear. “Have you been beaten? I, also, am often beaten. But who could injure you,—dear, laughing, singing voice!” For it was just a voice he had grown to love.

A week later some one called, “Miriam!” and that clear voice answered, “Here I am, Reuben.” Then,—her name was Miriam. Miriam!—a musical name, a name that almost melts in the mouth before it can be spoken. Miriam,—he liked that name. He would have had her named nothing else. The next day he heard her singing. “Miriam sings,” he said with a smile, as he listened. “She is happy.” A sudden thought,—why should he slink to his room every evening, while the others were upon the house-top? Would not Miriam be upon her own roof? And in the dusk he crept out by the fountain. He scarcely dared look up. For here was a strange thing; he feared her as much as he loved! When at last he raised his eyes, there were Joel and Anna and Reuben; and a girl sitting with her back to him. And it was so dim up there. How dim all the world had suddenly grown! At last he saw the form of Miriam, of her whose voice and name had become the hope of his life! At last, after all these days, he saw her; but why did she not turn around? And why was the world growing so dim? Now she was turning her face. But at that

moment the world was blotted from his sight. Foolish tears, to spoil so fair a picture!

But at last he saw her face,—he talked with her. It was that day when the plank fell down. He dated all after events from that day, until the next time came when he spoke through the boards, telling her how his life was in danger.

“Boy,” said Iddo that very evening, “you go with me, to-night, upon a journey.”

“Whither?” Adnah asked, drawing back.

“Do you ask me, ‘Whither?’ What is that to you? It is enough that you go.”

“I shall not go,” returned Adnah. “You mean to harm me, perhaps kill me.”

Then Adnah was beaten by the slave. “Will you go?” demanded Iddo. This time it was quite dark.

“What will happen to me?” asked Adnah.

“Miserable child of a Samaritan and a thief!” cried Iddo. “Do you think you can resist my power?”

“Yes,” said Adnah, “I can resist you. I will not go. Now beat me again!”

“Bring the mule to the gate,” said Iddo to the slave. The slave departed. “Wretched boy,” hissed Iddo, “who must ever be a blot upon the world, what can you hope? There is nothing for

you. To touch you is to become defiled. You are unclean, spotted with sin. Yet you defy me; you ever defy me. I give you food and lodgings,—you return me harshness and impudence.”

“Give me a little kindness,” said Adnah, “and I will run to do your bidding.”

“Kindness! Is not food kindness? Is not shelter kindness?”

“But what are blows and curses?” said Adnah. “You would crush me,—make me a slave. But while I live, there is one thing I can do. I can tell you my thoughts. Ah, had my father known——”

Iddo struck him to the earth. When Adnah recovered, he found his limbs tied, and his mouth stopped by a bandage so he could not cry out. Iddo said, “True, you can speak your thoughts; but he who speaks his thoughts indulges in a luxury for which he must pay a price!”

“The beast is ready,” the slave called from the open gate in a low voice. “Come, tie this fellow upon his back,” said Iddo; “and leave the gate wide open. Then we will say, ‘He ran away.’” Adnah was lifted in strong arms, and tied upon the mule. They set forward through the dark night. He was prepared for the worst, and his determination was to die bravely.

They entered the hill country and at last came to

wild ravines, where rocks in fantastic shapes loomed up in the darkness. Presently Iddo said, "We are here." The mule stopped. Adnah was dragged from the beast, and the ropes taken from him. The bandage was removed from his mouth. But Iddo grasped his arm in an iron clutch. "Now shriek," said Iddo. "Now howl! Now implore and beg and pray! Be not afraid. No one will hear you but the slave and your uncle. Ask for your life; plead for your freedom!"

Adnah said not a word. Iddo was in a curious kind of frenzy, as if he were going mad. His eyes blazed with fury. "You dog, you Samaritan, you thief! Are you dumb? Speak before I strike you to the earth!" He spoke not, and a blow on the head sent him reeling down. "Speak! Ask my forgiveness, my mercy. So? Then a last blow,—for this is the last chance I will have with you!" And he struck the prostrate form. "Now, slave, we are ready. Drag him in."

Adnah, half stunned, and suffering cruelly, as much from indignant rage as from physical pain, was clutched by the arm and dragged over the sharp stones. The rope coiled itself about his leg and trailed after him. They had come to a perpendicular cliff that rose many feet above the gorge. But there was a small opening in the rock, over

which a mass of earth and stones projected. It was the opening of a cave, so low that the slave was obliged to go upon hands and knees, as he dragged the youth after him. At last Adnah was left alone in intense darkness.

What were Iddo and the slave doing, outside the cave? A sudden terrific crash was heard. An enormous mass of earth and stones had been dislodged, falling to the ground, and stopping up the mouth of the cave. Suddenly from a not remote part of the cave sounded the voice of one who had been awakened by the thunder of the avalanche: "Unclean! unclean! unclean!"

Adnah gave a wild shriek of terror. He was entombed with Simon, the leper.

CHAPTER VIII

ENTOMBED IN THE CAVE

AFTER that agonized shriek, caused by the realization that a leper was with him in the cave whose mouth was effectually stopped up, Adnah started to his feet. But he sank upon the ground, overcome by the pain from his wounds, and from his fear.

Again that terrible cry arose from the interior darkness, "Unclean, unclean, unclean!" The terror which had before deprived the youth of strength, now gave him energy. He tottered to his feet, crying, "Keep away, I command you!"

From the intense gloom came the leper's voice: "Who is this that would share the miseries of my home? Why have you come to the abode of an outcast? Do you not know that Simon the leper lives here? *I* am Simon the leper! Depart, depart, I warn you, unless you, too, are a leper."

"Oh, infamous Iddo," cried Adnah, "then *this* is why you brought me here! *This* is why you loosed my feet and hands. But woe to you, oh, Iddo, if we should ever meet again!"

“Iddo?” repeated the leper. “I know him. If you hate him, you are my friend. Wait, I will light my lamp.” After some delay, the lamp was lighted, and by its feeble light, Adnah could gain some idea of the cave. It consisted of a large cavern, almost square in shape, the ceiling dome-shaped, and many feet above his head; but of its height he could not be sure, since it sloped up into darkness; and when he looked up, it was as if he gazed into the depths of a fathomless sky, unlighted by stars. The walls were rough stone, and at one corner of the cavern was a black space, as of an open doorway, not higher than his head, and scarcely two feet wide. At first he had thought it a piece of black cloth hung upon the wall.

In the opposite corner was a mattress, laid upon a heap of straw, some earthen vessels and others of iron, while a gray circle showed where a fire sometimes burned. A heap of wood and brush was piled against the wall, near which lay an ax, and other implements. The lamp stood upon the earthen floor. It consisted of a wick thrust into the neck of a bottle containing oil. As the pale flame played, monstrous shadows danced upon the floor and wall, or fled, as in a magic race, to the blackness of the roof. Adnah hardly knew that his eyes had seen all these things, for his mind was op-

pressed with but one of the objects in the cave,—the leper.

Simon the leper sat upon the ground beside his lamp, staring at Adnah. His leprosy was not in its initial stage, but had already reached a frightful development, so that he might be said to be “full of leprosy,”—the phrase then in use. Had he been wandering abroad, he would have been obliged to conceal his mouth and the lower part of his face with a bandage. But now he was at home, and his hideous deformity was unconcealed. His skin lay in shining white scales, which in places were falling off, revealing disgusting sores. One foot was eaten away, up to the ankle-bone; an eye had disappeared, for the disease had first begun by a small white spot upon his eyelid. Upon one side of his head, the hair grew raven black, but the other half had been invaded by the disease, and here the hair was perfectly white; the contrast was terrifying. Adnah, almost as white from terror as was Simon from his leprosy, shrank to the farthest wall. However, the leper gave but one look at the youth.

“What has happened?” he cried, pointing to the opening of the cave. The avalanche had not only stopped up the mouth, but had rolled a vast amount of earth and stones into the cavern, so that the true opening could not be approached.

“It was Iddo,” said Adnah. “He has buried me alive in this place,—and with *you!*” The leper was more terrifying to him than the thought of starvation.

“Woe, woe!” moaned Simon. “Entombed alive! This, then, is the end!”

Adnah could not take his eyes from his companion in misery. The frightfulness of his aspect fascinated him. He stared until his eyes began to glitter, and his breast heaved convulsively. He hated the leper with a mad passion. Why must he share this tomb with such a being? Life indeed could not last long, for starvation must end all. But there would be days, and all that while his eyes would see that emaciated face, the limbs scaled and eaten with sores, the bones dropping away. Perhaps madness would seize him before starvation. His mind burned with terrible thoughts. He glanced at the ax. A sudden power sprang along his veins. A sudden heat boiled in his blood. His hands clenched with the rigidity of steel, and his young face became terrible. And then, suddenly and unexpectedly, as all dreams come, he seemed to hear a girlish voice singing, singing as if nature had chosen her to express its sunniest mood,—singing of fountain-play, of birds circling in the blue heavens, and of the scent of wild flowers

which only God's hand has trained to blossom. And Adnah sank upon the ground and burst into loud sobs. Thus Adnah was saved from the crime of murder by the remembrance of Miriam. Blessed is that life, the memory of which, coming to one inflamed by passion, is as a divine voice speaking to the tempest raging on Galilee.

"Yes, it is hard for you, poor young man," said the leper, "and it is wicked in me to think only of my own fate. For you, so young and full of hopes have a right to bright dreams. But what have I to expect? If I were outside, free, even rich, instead of the beggar that I am, what could I hope for? Pain, and ever more pain! But thus do the most abject cling to life! My poor boy, these tears are for you, and not for myself."

Adnah sobbed louder with self-reproach.

"Perhaps I can say more to comfort you," Simon added presently. "Doubtless you think my disease contagious. It is a foolish notion with those who are unlearned. It is not true. Was not Naaman, the leader of the armies of Syria, a leper? Think you the soldiers would have fought under him, and encamped with and about him, if he could have imparted his misery? And do not the priests go to the ones suspected of leprosy, and touch them? Yet the priests are clean. Gehazi

was a leper, yet the king conversed with him. And in their own partitioned room, may not lepers attend the synagogue? You must know that. There is a leprosy, so I have heard, that is contagious; but not the flaky disease of the Jews."

"Your words fill me with comfort and despair," cried Adnah. "For I feared you. And more than that, I had wicked thoughts about you. Forgive me, Simon. How small a thing it is for me to witness your suffering, compared to what you suffer in your endurance!"

"Dear friend, your words are like cool water to a parched tongue. For what is sweeter to an outcast, hated by all, and by all avoided, than to hear the word, 'Forgive!' Think no more of your wicked thoughts. Remember that lepers are avoided just in the same way that the dead are shunned. If a Jew touch a dead body, he is unclean; and if he speak to a leper he is unclean; it is all one. Not long ago I ventured into Capernaum, for I was starving. I cried for bread. Iddo saw me, and laid thirty-nine lashes upon my back,—ah, cruel! Yes, that is the law. He loves the law, for he is a Pharisee. But he was not afraid to touch me, nay, to hold me, to tie me to the post!"

"If this is true," cried Adnah, "then he thinks not only to starve me to death, but to drive me

wild by your presence. But I will not fear you, I will not injure you."

"You are brave. But speak no more of Iddo. When one is close to death, he has no time to remember injuries."

"Simon, whither leads yonder dark and narrow opening behind you?"

"I will show you." The leper arose, and holding the lamp, advanced upon a crutch. Adnah, no longer fearing, or hating him, followed through the natural doorway. For a time they passed along a narrow hallway in the rock and then they entered a strange place. Just at their feet yawned a chasm, seemingly bottomless, and in width about twelve feet. It extended the width of the apartment. Beyond this crevice, with its smooth black walls, the floor rose with startling abruptness, at an angle of more than forty-five degrees. It was perforated with curious holes, some very small, others, yards in diameter. This steep floor rose as far as the feeble light of the lamp could illumine.

"Now I will show you something strange," said Simon, and he hobbled with his lamp, back into the hallway. "*Now* look up!" he called.

"I see a light," cried Adnah. "It is far, far above, like twilight upon the peak of a mountain."

Simon returned. "Yes," he said, "up there is the light of day."

"But to reach that place?" faltered the youth.

"Ah!" said Simon. He shook his head. "Hitherto I have had no wish to explore. And now I cannot. For this abyss at our feet cannot be crossed. And if it could, who could go up that smooth, steep wall, so many, many feet? Not you, poor youth, for see! There is blood upon your head where you have been beaten, and in you is no strength."

"No matter!" cried Adnah. "Let us return to your home, and there let us plan. Already hope shines through the darkness of my despair, like a lamp seen in a window when one is on the wild plains with one's father,—alas!"

"Is then your father no more?"

"He is no more," replied Adnah vaguely. "And," he added grimly, "my mother is no more, also! I have had no one to love me but Iddo. And my great object in escaping is to reward him!"

When they were in the first cavern, Adnah asked, "Have you any food, or drink?"

"Yes, thanks to that trip to the city that got me a beating. For some took pity upon me, and as I left, bleeding and hobbling, they came and laid

things along the road, then ran back that I might not pollute them. I made several trips and brought it all here. There is meal in yonder bag to last many days; and in those bottles, wine; and in that great jar, water. That is all. Would you eat?"

"No, no! For who can tell how long we must remain here! Let us save the food as we may. Perhaps some one will see the mouth of the cave covered over, and rescue you."

"Not they; they will think I have deserted this place, and have closed it up, to keep others from being polluted. If, indeed, they come hither,—for all dread and avoid the place."

"Consider, now," said Adnah. "There is an abyss to be crossed, about twelve feet wide, and as deep as the world. How can we bridge it? Here are short sticks; here is brush, even small branches of trees. And yonder is the rope with which I was bound; it caught about my leg, and was dragged with me. It was wrapped all about me, and then about the mule. It is longer than the abyss is wide. Do you see no hope here?"

"Hope not, boy; for can you walk upon a rope, whose ends are fastened to nothing? Hope not; for greater will be your misery!"

Adnah answered fiercely, "I must hope, or die!" Then he added thoughtfully, "Could not the sticks

be tied together in such a way as to form one long pole, strong enough to hold up your weight?"

"But I could never cross on it," said the leper. "You see how helpless I am."

"Well, *I* can cross, and, if I succeed in getting out, return for you."

Simon did not answer, but he sighed to see Adnah clinging to this hope.

"But I am very weary," said the young man presently, after he had sat trying in vain to think. "Let us sleep, for it grows late. And even outside, in the world, it is night. When I wake in the morning, I shall be strong and well. Then you shall see what I will do. Fear not, Simon! If the food holds out,—no,—that is impossible. I was thinking of burrowing through that accumulation in front of the cave. But one can't dig through a mountain with his fingers, even if his hope is bigger than the mountain. Well,—let us sleep."

CHAPTER IX

ONE WAY OF ESCAPE

WHEN Adnah awoke, a bright fire burned upon the ground. The wild and terrible form of the leper hovered over it, while goblin-shaped shadows that seemed akin to him, fled from the circle of fire, then danced back again as the flame sank. It was as if an evil dream had pictured itself upon the black sheet of darkness. But this picture did not fade away. Adnah started up.

“Outside, it is morning,” said Simon, “for I awoke. And I am baking us a cake apiece.”

“Use not the stouter and longer sticks,” said the other.

“Wherefore not? What would you, with them?”

“To make that long pole that may bridge the abyss,” said Adnah rising.

“Alas!” said Simon, but he added no more. He had no hope of ever escaping. Adnah stared towards the mouth of the cave, where tons of rubbish blotted out the morning light. “Is there anything to dig with?” he asked.

Simon answered patiently, "There is the ax. That is all. Think of it no more. Here is a cake. You are already unclean, since you have spoken to me, so it will be no worse for you to eat with me. And there is no water for your purification."

Adnah laughed scornfully. "What is it to me, if I be clean or polluted? What am I that I should cleanse myself after converse with a leper. I am no Pharisee,—I am nothing! In the world, there is nothing for me. In thoughts alone, there are a few sunbeams. Some fancies come,—they are very fair. But of realities, there is only one thing,—this; to escape from the cave, and find Iddo, and thank him for his love! After that,—nothing!"

"Say not so," cried Simon, as they ate together. "The words that fall from your lips, belong to me. There is indeed no hope for *me*. But you, my friend, why! you are young, and so full of life. Alas! for there is no escape. . . . But if you *should* escape, why were not all hope before you? Who are you? What great crime have you done?"

"My name is Adnah. I have done no crime."

"Then do you despair as an amusement? For there are only two things that can make a true man miserable; sin and ill-health."

“Or parents,” said Adnah bitterly. “You forget that the deeds of the parents are inherited by the children,—if they are evil deeds. If good deeds, the world steps in and claims a legacy.”

Simon looked curiously at the young man and did not pursue the subject. After the meal, Adnah began his work of forming a long pole out of the short sticks. He would put the end of one against the middle of another, then wrap his rope about each as tightly as he could draw the knot. He sat upon the ground with his back to the flickering fire. Simon had withdrawn to his mattress upon the straw. Presently he spoke.

“I see you have been very unhappy, Adnah. As for me, my share of happiness has been as great as my misery. In Bethany is my home. There lives a young man,—well, he is about thirty, now,—and his two sisters. These three are my children. Would you make me happy, Adnah?”

“Surely, if I could!”

“Then let me tell you of them. For to speak of one’s children is to be young again.”

“I listen gladly, Simon.”

“Their mother died when the younger girl was but two. So I reared them up till the boy was nearing twenty. So gentle he was, so kind, so

mEEK,—never was there another such born into the world! Adnah, he would not avenge an insult! Sometimes when he was spitefully used,—for you know it is the good who are treated so, and if you have ever an easy time, be sure you are a sinner!—then I would say to him, ‘Lazarus, remember. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!’”

“Ah, yes!” cried Adnah. “What is that? Say that again. Is that written in the law?”

“To be sure. Know you not the law?”

“I know only about children being visited by the sins of their ancestors. But this new one is prime! ‘An eye for an eye,’ yes, I shall remember that! I will remind Iddo of it when we meet!”

“As I said,” resumed Simon, “when I quoted this precept to Lazarus,—that is my son’s name,—he would say, ‘Father,’—I would you could have heard him say, ‘Father!’ You would have thought the southern breeze had found a voice! ‘That law is not for me,’ he would say.”

“Was he, then, timid?” asked Adnah.

“No,—but so kind, he could not hate one who injured him! Even so were his sisters, Martha and Mary. Martha took the management of the household, as soon as she was large enough. We were not rich,—we had no servants, except contentment and love; they waited upon us.”

Adnah looked up from his work. "I should have been very badly served," he said, "if they alone had attended *my* wants."

"Because you had not love," remarked Simon. "First get love, and you will not have to hire contentment. Well,—and Lazarus, when he was about twenty, began to fancy that he wanted very much something which I had not been able to get him,—that is, a wife. She was a lovely maiden, and as gentle as a doe, and he had not the courage to tell her of his love. But I said to myself, 'Let us wait. It is waiting that gives courage. And when he speaks, there is no maiden's parents in Judea who can refuse his suit!'

"It was about that time, Adnah, one morning,—I remember the sun shone very brightly and as it looked through my window, it formed a broad sheet of light that stretched like a bridge from window to wall, while in the light played a million tiny creatures that had been born with the warmth and color. That morning, Adnah,—I felt a strange sensation on my eyelid. I examined the place, and saw a small, round, white spot. And after eating breakfast with my little fold, I told them I must go upon a journey. And I kissed them all,—they wondered at my tenderness, no doubt! And I set forth upon my journey. I went to the wilderness

of Judea, there to wait and see what would happen. What happened, you see."

Adnah shuddered.

"So I sent them a letter, and, not telling any one whither I was bound, I traveled through Samaria, and came to Galilee, a country which the Judeans hold in light esteem. They know not whither I am gone,—I hope they think me dead."

"And since then, you have not seen them?"

"Yes, Adnah, once,—more than a year ago. I had both feet then, and could travel without so much pain. I journeyed by night, when Jews stay at home. Little by little I crept over hills and plains, towards Judea. Sometimes I met bands of robbers. But when I cried, 'Unclean!' they would vanish as mists before the sun. When one is a leper, he fears no one but himself."

"And Iddo," added Adnah, thoughtfully.

"I waited a long, long day, in sight of beloved Bethany," continued Simon. "When it grew dark, I crept towards my old home. I stole forward in dark shadows, and the night *was* dark. The dogs fled from me; no man was abroad. There was a light in the room. And Adnah, there, where I could plainly see them through the wide window,—sat—there were ——"

"Were all three there?" asked Adnah.

“I looked for a fourth,” resumed Simon, presently. “I sought her whom I had left a maiden,—the one Lazarus loved. She was not with them. They were talking about a new prophet who had just arisen, and who, clad in camel’s hair, girded about by a girdle of leather, was preaching repentance and baptism, and the coming of the Christ. Lazarus had just been baptized by this prophet in the river Jordan. The prophet’s name was John; he was called the Baptist. Strange were the words spoken by this Baptist, which my children repeated. Listen to this, ‘The law was given by Moses, but Jesus Christ will give grace and truth.’ John said that!

“Then, as I stood there drinking in the tones of their voices as a wanderer in the desert delights in a new-found spring, the subject changed. And Mary said to her brother, ‘Have you never yet regretted?’ Lazarus answered, ‘Sister, my place is here.’ Then Mary said, ‘I know not how much it will grieve you, but soon you must know. My brother, she is in Tiberias; and she is married.’ There was a brief silence. Then Lazarus said, ‘it is well. Peace be with her. But we three, who have been brought close together by a sorrow so strange and so sad,—it is for us to live together, and in each other find comfort.’ Mary kissed him

and said, 'Till death parts us. But now tell once more that wonderful story of the baptism of Jesus, and how a voice spoke from the sky.' And Martha said, 'But first, I will close the window, for the air grows misty with dew.' Martha was always so thoughtful,—little did she know she was shutting out a father's tender gaze! And I heard and saw them no more."

"Then they did not speak of you?"

"I did not hear my name called. But did not every tone speak of me? Do not their lives speak of me? Ah, Adnah, think not I am forgotten!"

Adnah rose. "Now my bridge is ready!" he announced. "First I shall test it." He leaned it on edge against the wall, and standing under, seized the improvised pole, and threw his weight upon it. At first it shook, then began to bend down like a bow. Then there was a crackling of the wood; one stick broke in two; at another place the rope slipped and unwound. The "bridge" gave way, and Adnah fell to the floor. He rose greatly disappointed. But he said, "There is one comfort however; I am not at the bottom of that abyss! No, it cannot be crossed in *this* fashion. But it may be,—may I light the lamp and explore, Simon?"

"As you wish," said the leper, remaining motionless. "But be sure not to slip over the edge!"

The very thought caused Adnah a shiver. But he lit the lamp, and passing through the hallway, again stood on the verge of the crevice. He held up the lamp, hoping to find a jutting rock upon the opposite side, over which he could throw a slip-knot. He was disappointed. The surface of the floor was perfectly smooth, till it began that strange slant upwards towards the opening that admitted the daylight. But the chasm must be crossed. In its depths was death; but, on this side was death, also. On the opposite side was at least a faint hope. How to cross this space of twelve feet? There was only one way,—no use to revolt from the thought, or seek to deceive oneself; it must be leaped over. And it must be a running leap. The thing could be done,—he could jump farther than that. The main point was, in running up to make the jump, to stop on this side of the chasm; a very important point, indeed! and one not easy. But, if he failed,—if he slipped,—if he did not get a sufficient impetus,—well,—*not* to jump meant death, as well.

Adnah returned to the living-chamber. He measured a line upon the floor with the end of a blackened stick, and set the lamp where it would discover this line. Then he drew back, took a fair start, stopped just before reaching the line, and jumped.

“What is that for?” inquired Simon.

“I am practicing,” said Adnah. “How far do you think I jumped, then?”

“Seven or eight feet,” replied Simon, measuring the distance with a critical eye.

“Watch again,” said Adnah.

CHAPTER X

MIRIAM'S BIRTHDAY-GIFT

It was several days since Miriam had seen Adnah in the adjacent court, when Reuben came home from school with a triumphant smile, holding aloft a parchment. "At last!" he cried.

Miriam's heart sank, and tears rushed to her eyes. "Reuben,—it is not a dismissal?"

"Yes, Miriam, the Rabbi says in this that I am now qualified to go up to Jerusalem and begin my novitiate in the Temple."

"Oh, my brother!" and Miriam sank upon the bench beside the fountain and wept.

"Well!" exclaimed Reuben, stopping to stare at her. "Well! And I thought to make you glad and proud! Only think! I said to myself, 'I will tell the news first to Miriam.' What follows? Tears! Gasps! I shall never understand you, Miriam. God wills otherwise."

"It is not that I fail to be proud, Reuben. Ah, I am proud enough. But can pride make one happy? Perhaps pride and tears belong together. For your sake I am glad; but for my own sake I weep. For

you will be gone from us for years, and when we live together once more, I shall be a child no longer."

"Truly," said Reuben, not regretfully. "But you will be something much better,—a woman; and discreet. Besides, you will see me three times every year when you come up to the feasts. And perhaps I shall sometimes visit home,—who knows?"

"But to see you every day, and watch your life as it is lived beside my own,—this is what I long for. Other people will enter your life,—and their words will dwell in your mind, their faces linger in your memory,—people all unknown to me,—but I shall hate them all, for they have come between us, and stolen my brother from me!"

"These are wicked words," said Reuben, "that you will hate my friends! How say you thus?"

"Because I am a foolish girl, Reuben. And first you came and told me your good news? See how I have turned your joy to sorrow! I wish it were to be done over again. Then I would give you smile for smile. And I would say, 'It is my brother who is about to become great!' But I was so unprepared, and greatness is so sad a thing, since it lifts one from the level where we common people walk and love and die. Now, Reuben, I pray you go back, and come to me again, and say, 'Here is my

leave to enter the Temple-service. For five years I am to leave you.' Then see how bravely I shall act, and what I shall say!"

Reuben frowned and then smiled in spite of himself. "You strange, inconsistent girl!" he cried. "What! Are we to act a play like the Romans and Greeks? Is this a theatre? Is life a play?"

"You smile!" cried Miriam; "that is the door through which a request is granted. Come, Reuben, let us be children for this once. Remember that from this day, your childhood is past. Grant my request. I would have you remember how glad I was to hear of your success."

Reuben hesitated. Then he remembered that he had ever been too averse to humoring this child. With an expression half ashamed he left the court, then entered waving his parchment and crying, "Here is my leave to enter the Temple-service, Miriam. For five years, dear sister, I am to leave you!" And Reuben entered so thoroughly into his part that his eyes sparkled and his breast heaved with exultation.

"Oh, Reuben!" cried Miriam, "I am very gla——" Then suddenly her voice failed her, and she cried harder than before.

"What is that?" cried Anna, who had overheard the loud announcement. "You have passed?"

And you have not first come to your mother to tell the proud news?"

"I did first tell Miriam," said Reuben, looking at his sister with extreme dissatisfaction. "But she takes it so very ill, I think she would rather I had failed!"

"Heed her not, Reuben, she is but a girl, and foolish. It is a mother's heart that reflects back, as from a mirror, the happiness of her child."

That night when Joel heard the news he said, "We will all go up to Jerusalem, and see you safely placed, my lad. A vacation of several weeks will do us all good, and Miriam would no doubt like to see the city." Miriam looked at her father in speechless gratitude.

A few evenings later, Joel had scarcely taken his seat upon the house-top with his family, when Zuph announced a visitor. "Bring him up," said the master. It was Iddo, who never before had polluted himself by entering the house of this Sadducee.

"It is my neighbor!" cried Joel heartily. "Peace be with you! I pray you, seat yourself."

"Not so," said Iddo. "I come not in friendly concourse, but upon an affair of business. You know I am a Pharisee, and hold to the traditions."

"Yes, truly, but I aver, O Iddo, that yonder

corner hath not been sat upon by any one since last the roof was washed; so sit you down; it is not polluted."

Iddo waved his arm. "I am weary, Joel, but I sit not down with you. And well may I be weary. I did pray three hours this morning in the market-place, and as long this afternoon, standing all the while, till husky grew my throat. And I must repair to my house-top and pray three hours more, before night comes. I have not taken a bite to-day. I fasted yesterday. Twice was I touched in the street, once by a Gentile, once by a common person, so twice have I baptized myself. I went to the synagogue and had my slave sound my trumpet and then I gave alms to the miserable beggars. I attended a council of Rabbis, where I argued with much heat,—yes, I am very weary."

"I should think so!" cried Joel. "It makes me weary even to hear of it. And I suppose at this same council you plotted against Pilate and King Herod and all Rome, and how you could raise the Jews to the power they enjoyed under David?"

"Seek not to learn our secrets," said Iddo severely.

"Not I. But, see, Iddo, there is a man who some think is the Christ, at Cana. Why not plot with

Him? He can do wonders,—He saved Reuben from death; why not the Jews from Rome?"

"You speak of Jesus of Nazareth? An impostor—a magician,—nothing more. Why, His father was a carpenter! There is no mystery about *Him*; every one knows where He lived,—they can show you the house,—but I would speak on a matter more important. My nephew has run away."

"Ah!" said Joel. Miriam turned cold. She remembered Adnah's words; indeed, she had often recalled them, but she had not spoken of his fears.

"Yes, an ungrateful boy, a wicked boy. We found the gate wide open. I hear you go up to Jerusalem."

"We do; in two days."

"Should you meet Adnah upon the way, or in the city, pray him to return," said Iddo. "Remind him of my love and care,—how I gave him food and shelter, and the warmest love of this heart. And tell him that every day I pray an hour-and-a-half that his wickedness may be cast out of him. But alas! An evil spirit resides in his breast. And just think! I intended to rear him up, a great Rabbi, a learned man. But his tastes ran contrariwise."

"I shall remember what you tell me," said Joel, and the Pharisee departed. Joel looked after him

thoughtfully. "Now, he will go home and baptize himself anew," he mused, "and then we will harken to the roaring of his prayers till bedtime. I would I had his baptizing in *my* hands! I would so hold him under the stream that he would have enough of purifications for a time!"

"It is his religion," said Anna.

"True enough; and making friends with Rome is mine. That reminds me,—Lucius very kindly has detailed some soldiers to escort us to the city. And you ladies are to ride in a Roman cart."

"No, no!" cried Anna. "Shall I forget my blood? A lady rides upon a mule, not otherwise."

"As you wish. For me, I would as soon go in a Roman chariot. These foolish revolts of the Pharisees simply plunge the Jews deeper into subjection. For me, I stick to Rome, as to my life. There are some who would rather sleep in a patriotic grave, than live upon a foreign soil; but among them is not Joel!"

The next day came Lucius, the centurion, with his soldiers. The centurion made the family a farewell visit, and then entered into particulars relative to business. Anna was very busy in the women's quarters, preparing for the journey. Miriam wandered into the court, feeling delightfully thrilled over the prospect of new experiences. She was

surprised to find some one in the court. It was Gothinus, the blue-eyed slave of the centurion.

"I did not once think of *your* being here!" said Miriam, advancing with a smile.

"My master left me to await orders."

"And do you go up with us to Jerusalem?"

"Alas, no, fair lady."

"But I am not a lady,—only a girl who was fifteen this morning. See what a pretty birthday-gift the sun and sky have given me!"

"I would I could give you something!" said the German slave.

"And so you can. I have just thought! Oh, Gothinus,—what a very strange name! Do you like it?"

"I never did till I heard it from your lips."

"That is strange, Gothinus. But I know exactly what you mean. There are things I have been so used to all my life, I scarce give them a thought,—it may be a flower, or a star, or a name. And suddenly I will realize that the familiar thing has a beauty, and I will wonder! Perhaps everything is beautiful, only we have not thought of it, or seen its beauty in the right light. So with your name,—it is a pretty name, and it goes so well with your blue eyes and yellow hair. Do all Germans look like you?"

“How can I tell, lady? I was taken from my country when a baby. But tell me what gift I can give you.”

“I will. Can you keep a secret?”

“I pledge my soul.”

“I know you so well,—you saved my brother,—and I have thought much of you——”

“Have you, indeed, lady? That was kind. And did you pray for me, a Gentile?”

“Yes, and not once only.”

“What did you pray for me?”

“I prayed for you that you might be happy, Gothinus. And again I prayed that you might always be my friend.”

“That was the same prayer!” cried the slave.

“What beautiful prayers you have, lady! And I would have you pray once again.”

“What then?”

“That I may become free.”

“Is not Lucius kind to you?”

“He is as a father. But if he should die,—ah, well! Tell me the secret.”

“On the other side of that wall lives a Pharisee, Iddo; and with him was his nephew, Adnah, a youth of about your age; a Jew. My family forbade our speaking together. But one day he called to me through the gate, and told me this; that

Iddo meant to carry him away somewhere and injure, perhaps kill him. Then Iddo would say he ran away. Now, I thought Adnah was alarmed by his idle fears. For is not Iddo a great Rabbi? I said nothing. I did not believe. But last night Iddo came, and said, 'Adnah has run away!' Well, I have not seen Adnah in his court for days. So I remember Adnah's fears. But I tell no one. Why? Because they would not believe Adnah's story against great Iddo. And Reuben would say Adnah ran away, and made up his story to me, to make me think otherwise. And all would be displeased because I listened through the gate. And certainly it was wrong. For I am not a good girl, and I am always doing deeds that give trouble and mix up things dreadfully! So this is my secret. And hear what gift you are to give me,—namely, a promise."

"I give it you."

"But hear it first. If it is ever in your power to aid Adnah,—if he is alive,—you will do so. If you can trace his fate, you will do all you can. I have thought he may be chained somewhere to a tree, in the wilds of Arbela; or lying half dead on the plains; or lost in some cave."

"In my leisure moments, I will search for him," said Gothinus, "and alive or dead, I shall find him, unless he lies at the bottom of the sea."

As these two stood conversing, Reuben, who was in the house, seized his father's arm, and drew him to the window. "Look!" he said, pointing at Miriam and Gothinus.

"I see," said Joel. "But it is only a slave."

"But, father, Miriam never remembers such distinctions. A slave, though a Gentile, is to her as a human being! When we get to Jerusalem, keep her fast in the house. What will she not do, if suffered to so much as sniff the air through a window? And what will become of her when she returns hither, and I remain at the capital of Judea?"

"And what would have become of her, and of the Jewish nation, and of the universe, if you had not been born?" returned the Sadducee.

CHAPTER XI

THE MAN OF THE ABYSS

“SEEK not to dissuade me, Simon. It must be done *now*,—to-day,—if it *is* day.” Thus spoke Adnah, in the awful gloom of the cave.

“Be not so rash, young man,” said the leper. “There is food yet for days.”

“That is true. But if I do not make this leap while I have strength and food, then it will be too late. For when I am across the abyss——”

“Ah!” said Simon. “Yes,—if you get across!”

“And why should I not? How often have you seen me leap a farther distance, here before you? Is the abyss wider because it is deep?” But Adnah's words were bolder than his heart. Many times before Simon, the leper, had begged him not to make the attempt. This was his last appeal. He relapsed into gloomy silence. For days Adnah had practiced the skill of making a running jump. It was easy enough, when failure meant only a laugh and a new attempt. But he could not forget that though he sometimes made, in succession, leaps which would more than clear the frightful

crevice between him and life, yet there were other times when most unexpectedly he would jump short of the goal, or fail to stop at the right place. It was this uncertainty that haunted him. Often he carried the lamp through the narrow hallway, and stood at the edge of the chasm, looking across at that slanting floor that rose towards the daylight. If he left the lamp in the other room, he sometimes caught sight of that far away, dim glimmer. It was as if the light said, "Up here is Heaven; but death lies between."

After this conversation with the leper, Adnah crept to the edge of the dividing gap, without a light. He always advanced to this place with an oppressive sense of awe and mystery. Straining his eyes, he caught sight of the mellow glow that told him it was day. Day at last! for he had made this trip many times in the past few hours. Day at last! the day which was to determine his fate. For he could no longer endure the suspense. The terror of uncertainty was shaking his nerves, and unfitting him for the attempt. Vague ideas, as well as real dangers, were beginning to haunt him, and he was more afraid of these ideas than of realities. The phantasm which took strongest hold of his imagination was the Man of the Abyss.

Whence came this strange thought? When did

the idea begin to shape itself in his inner mind? He knew not. But as he stood upon the edge of the chasm, gradually there was outlined before his morbid fancy, a Something, a Personality, down in that bottomless black space. What was in this crevice, which seemed to divide two worlds? Nothing. Yet this Nothing assumed proportions, it became a fantastic being, a living thing with long arms reaching up,—for what? To drag down into its solitudes the one who would dare to leap across its prison-house.

This Man of the Abyss was a prisoner. He could never hope to come forth into the light of day. For ages he had dwelt in that sepulchral darkness, alone, alone, and his heart thirsted for company, even if it be but a cold white corpse, dashed against the walls of stone. Listen, and you can hear a murmur down in those unknown depths! Can stone and earth murmur? Perhaps a stream, lost in the earth, lies there, its black waves, cold as ice, washing lifeless shores. Perhaps it is the breath of the Man of the Abyss, asleep, but ready to start up, and spread out his long sinewy arms. Adnah returned to the room.

“It is day,” he said. The leper did not reply. Adnah lifted from the floor a long pole which he had made of sticks, in the manner already de-

scribed. He knew it could not uphold his weight, but it was strong for his purpose. "Simon," he said, "when I am across, we know not how long I may wander before I escape. Will you not cook me cakes, that I may go prepared?"

The leper rose, and began to prepare the cakes. Adnah poured some of the water from the jar into a goatskin bottle. Into another bottle he poured oil for a second lamp, and he filled the lamp, but it was not yet time to light it. While these preparations were going forward, an oppressive silence reigned between them. Adnah was very white, and his mouth was set in hard lines. Simon looked more terrible than ever, for his face was convulsed with sorrow.

While the bread was baking, Adnah began his old exercise of jumping. He put forth all his strength, and presently sank panting upon the ground. "I must rest," he said, "nor jump again till the great leap. But have no fear. I will save you, Simon. We shall escape. Is not my revenge strong? It will bear me up. Ah, Iddo, Iddo,—see what I have for him!" He held up a long sharp knife. "You will spare me this, Simon. Let your blessings rest upon it! The first stroke shall be at his heart,—that blow for me. The second shall cut off his head,—that shall be your blow. Those

cruel desolate years, when I was hated and beaten,—those days of fasting and starving, while he upon the roof-top prayed so loud and long! There was nothing for me to love, there were none who took a thought of me, except as of a weed which has no right in the marble pavement. Already I feel my hand about his throat. Already I see him with his cruel face and harsh, pleading, lying at my feet. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and for misery and shame, a life, yes, Simon, a life! How easy it would have been for him in those days,—a kind word, a loving touch, a look to encourage. But no, it was always my father, always my mother, always my disgrace! Morning and night, his taunts rang in my ears. Why did he hate me so? What had I done? I cannot understand why he hated me so! He kissed my father when he was arrested. He wept, yes, Iddo wept like a child that day. But after that, all his tenderness dried up. Cursed is the man who has no more tears to shed. Cursed is Iddo! Let him die like a dog!”

“Should you escape,” said Simon earnestly, “beware of Iddo! He is a man; and you, a stripling.”

“Speak not of that,—I am rested. I am ready.” Adnah rose hurriedly, and put the cakes in a bag. He tied the bag and the two bottles to the end of the pole. “Go before with the light,” he said.

The leper took up the lamp and hobbled through the hallway, followed by the young man with his burden. He placed the lamp upon a stone that had been rolled there to serve as a stand. The light streamed duskily across the abyss, and faintly revealed the farther floor. Adnah thrust his pole forward carefully, and succeeded in getting the other end with its burden of food, upon the farther side. "There it will wait for me," he said, placing his end upon the edge. "If it were only strong enough to hold me up! But no matter. You yourself have seen how far I can jump. It will be done in a moment."

"Let us return a moment," said Simon. They went back to the large apartment. "Here I will bid you good-bye," said he. "It is so dark you cannot see me. Forget that I am a leper. You have been kind to me, and I have grown to love you. Soon I shall be alone. If you ever escape, bear my love to Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, and tell them why I never came back, and how I always thought of them, and how the thought of them became the one pleasure of my life."

"I shall tell them, Simon. But fear not,—I shall return for you. Will you come and see me make the leap?"

"No, dear friend, I will abide here."

“I am glad,” said Adnah; “we do so ill when our friends expect much of us! So remain; but pray for me. Good-bye, Simon. There is a girl named Miriam,—but lepers deal not with the living, it is true. As for my father,—he was crucified by Pilate, because he was a thief. As for my mother, I have no message for her. Good-bye. And presently we will say how great a matter we made of a small leap!”

Simon did not answer. Adnah rose, and went to the edge, where the lamp burned. He looked down into that murmuring depth, and seemed to hear the monster stir, and stretch his arms upwards. He went back to the mouth of the hallway, to make his run up to the edge. The feat had never before seemed so dangerous, so hopeless. What if the Man of the Abyss should reach up and drag him down into the chasm? What if the gulf sucked him down between its walls as a feather in a maelstrom? Idle fancies! Vain fears! He set his teeth hard, he put his foot forwards, he gave his body a quick impetus and ran swiftly, with held breath, through the darkened hallway, out into the wider chamber. He saw the flash of the lamp, and it seemed to possess a dazzling brilliancy. In the same moment he was conscious of the appalling depth and width of the abyss. His swift motion

caused the cold unnatural air to stream through his long hair as if he had entered a gale. His feet left the earth with a mighty spring, and as he soared above the chasm, he was terrified by the awful consciousness that he had jumped too soon, that he had lacked several feet of the line which he had marked as his starting-point. How many thoughts rushed upon him in that instant! But more terrible than all was the fancy that the Man of the Abyss had awakened, that he was reaching up, that he was shrieking with victory, with mad exultation, that his slimy, dripping fingers were clutching at his limbs, drawing him down, down. He fell. How long he lived in those few seconds! He reached out his arms wildly. His feet had struck upon the farther edge of the chasm, then had slipped away. His body had fallen upon the floor, and it also was slipping back. His hands fought with the smooth stone floor, and found nothing to which they could cling. So near success! He cried for help, as if that were possible. He delayed his fate, he fought inch by inch for his life. But the floor, as we have said, sloped down towards the crevice,—sloped with fatal abruptness.

A voice answered his, not now the voice of that monstrous Man of the Abyss, but the wild accents

of Simon the leper. "On your right!" it cried. "Reach out upon your right!"

Adnah slowly extended his arm in that direction, slipping almost imperceptibly all the while—slipping more and more toward death. Then his elbow encountered something, other than the smoothness, as of glass, which had filled him with despair. It was a resisting substance. He trusted his weight upon it. It yielded somewhat, but held. It was enough. Slowly, carefully, he drew himself up, putting as little burden as possible upon that saving object. Now his knees were over the edge. Now he was saved!

It was the end of the pole, with its goatskin bottles, which had offered him something to which he could cling. Simon had thrown all his weight upon the other end, thus holding it across the chasm. In this manner the rudely fastened "bridge," incapable of sustaining a heavy weight in any one part of it, had saved Adnah's life, because his weight had been thrown upon it in the direction of its length.

For a while Adnah and Simon stood looking at each other across the abyss. They were conquered by overwhelming emotion, and nothing was said, except with their eyes. These were as points of fire, leaping towards each other

through the distance and the gloom and causing each heart to burst into flame with love and gratitude.

CHAPTER XII

A GLIMPSE OF THE WORLD

ADNAH was the first to speak. "Safe!" he cried. "A wonderful leap!" exclaimed Simon.

"I said I would do it!" Adnah shouted, in his excitement.

"No other would have made the attempt!" the leper declared with tears of pride.

"It was a little thing!" faltered Adnah. Then he sank upon the ground and burst into tears. What a curious ending for an heroic adventure! He soon recovered, however, and said in a broken voice, "What a silly child!" Simon did not answer,—he was doing likewise. Adnah stood up. "Now, dear friend, take hope. This is the first jump toward success. Tie my lamp to your end of this pole, that I may draw it across."

Simon shook away his tears, and did as he was bidden. Adnah drew the pole with its burden, which had been lighted from Simon's lamp, across the abyss. The light from the second lamp gleamed strangely as it hung suspended over that unfathomable chasm. Presently it was landed.

Adnah untied the rope which held the "bridge" together. He wound it about his waist, and placed the sticks where he might find them again in case of need. The bread and water hung from his girdle. His feet were bare. He fell upon his hands and knees, not daring to trust the slippery floor, and pushing the lamp before him, began the ascent. In this position the goatskin bottles dragged upon the ground. For awhile he and the leper continued to shout good-bye to each other, but at last the voices came like faint echoes through the cave, then ceased altogether.

For some distance the floor too preserved its glassy smoothness, calling forth every effort to maintain one's place. But when the cavities were reached, the ground grew rough, while it started upward dizzily. The surface was now perforated with cavities, of unknown depth, but doubtless leading down to the horrible mystery of the abyss. Adnah soon found them all about him. The lamp revealed their ugly gaping mouths, small and large, round and irregular. Sometimes a hole of many yards in width opened its mouth directly in his path; then he must circle round it upon that dizzy slant. At other times the holes were like wells, only a few feet in width, but so numerous, the eye could not see a place where they did not threaten.

Then it was necessary to proceed between them, sometimes upon a neck of rock so narrow, the bottle swung from the rope over chill space. Well for him that the ground was grated and ridged! but its roughness was not always sufficient to prevent him from losing his hold.

Pausing to look back, he saw the leper's lamp like a tiny spark in the engulfing darkness. He shouted a word of encouragement, but his voice was sucked down into the depths. But though his voice had risen cheerily, he was very weary. Now he lay panting upon a little ridge, wondering how long he had been upon the way, and how much farther he must go. He looked up, but his lamp prevented him from seeing any glow of daylight; still, so far from the goal!

And now the grated peculiarity of the surface was disappearing. It rose in ridges, like waves of a raging sea, which had been dashed high and turned into stone. The space between ridge and ridge became smooth and slippery. Sometimes the bottles swung between his feet, and prevented him from making his position sure. As he was obliged to hold the lamp with one hand, his danger was increased. But ever up and up, slowly, painfully he crept, ever nearer to freedom and revenge. And every difficulty he encountered increased his hatred

of Iddo and his resolution to require from him the uttermost.

In one of the most difficult places, while he clung with his feet, elbows, and the disengaged hand, the bag containing the bread swung around and struck one bare foot from under him. Taken unawares, he struggled to regain his place. He slipped and began to slide downward with sickening rapidity. Straight towards the cavities which had nearly all been left behind him, he glided. His hand seized upon the edge of an opening. He circled round it to its base, then hung upon a narrow strip of rock between two abysses. His lamp dropped from his hand, and fell. Clinging there, he watched it disappear in the darkness. It whirled down into the open throat,—it vanished,—he listened, but not even an echo was to be heard. And now, alone in the darkness, he seemed suddenly to find weird company. The Man of the Abyss was seeking him once more.

Cold with terror, Adnah crept from the narrow strip of rock, and began the ascent. He must be more sure, he must go more slowly. Was not the Man of the Abyss darting from cavity to cavity, waiting for a misstep, holding up his black arms? Now he could see that faint halo of the day, towards which his way was directed. He left once

more the cavities behind him, he found himself on the smooth waves of stone. He gained a resting-place, where a boulder had been poised upon the hillside. Here he must rest, for his strength was gone. He crept upon the other side of the refuge, and throwing himself at full length against the shelter, soon fell asleep.

He woke with a chill dread of the darkness. He looked up, but the light was not visible. It was no longer day. He must wait for that signal else how could he direct his path? It was difficult to sleep again. Often he started up, only to find that the time had not yet come. He was rested, he was eager for the battle against nature, and this waiting became very hard to bear. Still the light of the leper's lamp, like a dim spark, shone upward with a friendly gleam.

Day came. Adnah drew forth a cake and ate, for hunger was with him in the solitude. He drank sparingly of his water, then left his desolate bed-chamber, and proceeded up the acclivity. Steadily nearer he drew, and steadily brighter and more defined became the daylight. The vast extent of the cave contracted. The walls rapidly approached each other, the ceiling descended within a few yards of the floor. Now the light shone all about him. The yards between ceiling, floor

and walls, became feet. He had reached the neck of the extensive cave. He pushed his way, as through a small door, into a chamber cut in the rock. The glare almost blinded him. Outside that opening, was the world.

He heard a whirring sound all about him. Winged creatures fluttered above his head, then shot out into the daylight. They were pigeons. Eager to be free of the cave, Adnah did not pause to drink in the fresh air. He rose to his feet, and ran across the room. He reached the outer doorway and looked out.

The wild cliffs of Arbela, which rose hundreds of feet above the wild gorge that directs its sinuous way towards the two Horns of Hattin, were noted for their caves. Far above the valley, inaccessible from below, the mouths of these caverns looked forth, while above them rose the sheer rock, cutting off escape from above. They had their entrances somewhere far back from the visible mouths, but most of these had been closed up and forgotten. In the time of Herod the Great, these caves were inhabited by robbers and their families. They had only been driven out of their airy retreats by means of iron cages, let down from the summits of the precipices,—cages filled with terrible soldiers. Armed with iron hooks, these soldiers had dragged

forth the miserable fugitives, casting them below, to certain destruction. In some caves, bonfires had been built at their entrances, smothering the inhabitants. It was in one of these caves that Adnah found himself.

Far below, lay the narrow green valley. Far above rose the beetling precipice. On a level with the opening,—nothing but a patch of blue sky.

CHAPTER XIII

IN MID-AIR

AFTER that first long despairing gaze, Adnah crept back from the opening of the cave, and threw himself upon the stone floor by one of the walls. That vision of the outside world had filled him with bitterness and futile rage. To have come thus far, and through so many dangers, only to find his hope a mockery! The sight of the sun, and green trees, and a dancing rivulet among the hills, gave him the impulse to hide from these beautiful things,—from all cheering objects. He closed his eyes, as if even the light were hateful to him. But when his eyes were shut, he feared that black space beyond the room, which slanted downward towards the abyss. He could never return to the leper. Here he must die. The very thought of slipping down between those horrible pitfalls without his lamp, caused the image of the Man of the Abyss to peer through the doorway. If he could have closed up that door! Still lying motionless, he looked about him, muttering, “Ah, Iddo, Iddo!”

The room was not large, but in the opposite wall

a hollow place had been eaten out by the teeth of time. The floor was strewn with twigs and leaves which the birds had brought here to use in building. Adnah now observed that a white pigeon had remained upon her nest, her feathers ruffled up about her neck, her eyes alternately looking at the intruder, and the opening. She would have dearly loved to soar out into the sunbath of freedom, but she had her duty at home, as duty is understood by birds, and she was resolved to stay with her two eggs till they were eggs no longer. There was a purple ring about her neck. "I would I had your wings, Purple Necklace," said Adnah.

As he continued to lie motionless, the other pigeons one by one returned. Besides Purple Necklace there were four; one her mate, gaudy in his bronze plumage, a very plump and overbearing bird; then a pair of dove-colored pigeons, the male plainly afraid of the bronze cock, edging away from him continually, till driven to the opening, when he would fly away a short distance, then return to be beaten off again. His mate in the meantime unconcernedly went about her household affairs, which consisted at present in feeding a gawky, scantily-clothed pair of children. Adnah had not observed these young ones before, and he was displeased both by their ungainly motions, and

by the greedy cries with which they divided their worm. The last pigeon was snow-white, and while she felt at home with the others, she was plainly unhappy. She stood upon the ledge that formed the bottom of the window, looking out into the sunny world, and ever looking, turning her beautiful neck from side to side. "Poor Snow-white!" whispered Adnah, "what cruel one has shot your mate with his bow? Or what fate has befallen him? Plainly you are lonely, fair one, though in the midst of such a company."

The pigeons soon lost their fears of Adnah. They held a consultation about him in their alcove. "Clearly this is some huge bird," said the bronze cock; "otherwise, how could he have flown hither? And therefore he is our brother." "It is true; your cooings are those of wisdom," declared the dove-colored male. "And who asked you for *your* opinion?" demanded Bronze Plumage. Then Bronze Plumage began to turn himself about and about, in order to work up his rage; and when he had described many narrow circles, he darted at Dove-color and chased him to the window-sill. Then again he followed his tail round and round till his fury was in such a state that he plunged at poor Dove-color and bounced him out into the unfriendly world. After this demonstration of his ex-

ecutive powers, Bronze Plumage hopped toward his own Purple Necklace, so swelled out with rage and pride that his breast almost smothered his bill. Poor Dove-color circled in the air outside till he thought it safe to enter once more. Bronze Plumage looked at him with his wicked little eyes and said, "If you come cooing around me, I'll do it again!" Then Dove-color hopped meekly over to his ungainly children, and hid his head under one wing. In the meantime Snow-white continued to gaze from her perch with searching eyes, looking for that mate who would never return. Ah, poor Snow-white, he is gone from thee, he lies, not stiff and cold, but hot and browned by his own gravy, upon some cannibal's board. But take heart, Snow-white,—are there not other mates to be sought and found? Fear not! Somewhere in the wide world, a friend is looking for thee, even as thou lookest for a friend.

Night came and found Adnah's bottle of water and bag of cakes materially reduced. All that day he had remained in a dazed state of inertness that comes when hope flees. At night he slept heavily, the result of exhausted sorrow. On the morning he was awakened by the cooing of pigeons. "Good-morning, my friends!" he said, feeling new life steal into his blood with the fresh sun-

light. For in the early morning the light flooded the stone room. He drew in new activity under that golden bath. Purple necklace still sat upon her two eggs, as if the hatching of a pair of squabs was of more importance than the downfall of nations. Wise Purple Necklace! If those pigeons who leave their nests to soar into higher spheres, would only learn of thee! Still stood Snow-white, her eyes circled by red rims, staring into the world, and finding it lonely and desolate. But what was this going forward on the window-sill? A strange pigeon had come, and was battling for Snow-white. How had he heard of the lonely one? Strange how hearts speak together from remote regions!

Bronze Plumage is battling with the stranger. And O, time-serving Dove-color! Thou, too, hast joined thy forces with those of thy domineering, hectoring master. It is two against the stranger. How they fight and roll in their fluffy feathers, and swell and coo with rage as if they were not sweet innocent birds, but human beings without wings! He is defeated,—the stranger turns, his breast quite red with blood, he staggers over the sill, he falls. But his beating wings find the air, and up he soars, and flies away. And Snow-white, who all this time has pretended to see nothing, spreads her wings, and follows the stranger, never to return.

Then Bronze Plumage after swelling till his head is quite hidden by his breast, till his breath comes in gasps through his buried bill, turns upon his recent ally, and gives him chase.

Adnah crawled to the window-sill and looked down at the remote valley, and up at the distant overhanging precipice. He uttered a sudden cry. He had seen something which yesterday was not visible. About ten feet below the sill ran a ledge along the face of the cliff, scarcely a foot in width. It began under the window, and ran past the short turn in the wall. Much farther it did not go, for when the crooked wall turned back again, it was gone. Yesterday he had gazed intently at this ledge, he had seen how he could reach it. At the side of his natural window stood a stone column, to which he could conveniently tie his rope. By the rope he could reach the frightfully narrow ledge. The very thought of standing on that strip of rock in mid-air made his blood turn cold. Hitherto, he had seen nothing to be gained in reaching the ledge. Now, it was different. At that turn in the wall, which for several yards hid that part of the surface from him, something white lay upon the ledge. It was a parchment, such as was then used in the writing of letters.

How had it come there? Certainly not from

above; it was clearly impossible that it could have come from below. A pigeon could not carry so heavy a weight, even granting a bird should show such an abnormal taste as to seize upon a manuscript. The conviction shaped itself in Adnah's mind that the turn in the wall hid the mouth of another cave. Why not? Below him he could see openings. And if the letter had been thrown out of a cave, either somebody was, or had been within. Still, that ledge was not to be traveled without more certainty. Adnah set himself the task of watching that turning point in the wall,—much to the annoyance of his pigeon friends, who wanted the window-sill to themselves. And indeed Bronze Plumage looked at him with eyes that said, “Ah, if you were only a little smaller, my friend!”

On the preceding day Adnah had tied his cloak to the stone pillar, hoping it might be seen by a chance traveler in the gorge. He had put it on at night, as the air grew cold. Now once more he divested himself of the garment and let it flutter as a signal, having little hope that it would be discovered. The day wore on. The sun had passed its highest glory when his watching was rewarded. A stray pigeon, after circling about his window-sill, darted to the right, made straight for that part of the wall that was hidden by its corner, and vanished. Evi-

dently it had entered a cave, only a few feet above the narrow ledge of rock. Or had it simply clung to the rough surface? No, the parchment had surely been cast from a cave. Here was proof. In his excitement Adnah leaped up and by his sudden motion struck the water-bottle. It bounded out of the opening. He watched it fall to earth with a sickening sense of loss. He became aware, at the same time, that he was quite thirsty, for he had been hoarding up his treasure. His nerves were so shaken by this loss that he threw himself upon the ground and wept and bewailed his misfortune. His spirit of adventure was quite gone. The day came to an end, another night, bright with stars, succeeded. His longing for water had become intense. He had eaten more of the bread, but it did not give him ease. Through the long night he tossed and moaned. In the first light of day he arose. "It must be done this morning or never!" he said.

He waited till the sun shone bright, then tied one end of the rope to the stone pillar. Without daring to look down, he seized the swinging rope, and let himself down upon the ledge. Then he crept forward sideways, his face against the cliff, both arms outspread, as if seeking to grasp the grim surface. "If I can keep from looking down!" he thought.

“If I can keep from thinking!” He came to a place where his foot told him the ledge had dwindled to a mere rim of a few inches in width. He stopped. He could not remember any place where the ledge grew narrower. He began to tremble, and a cold perspiration broke out upon his brow. He leaned his head against the wall, thinking, “I am growing dizzy!” But perhaps the narrow place did not extend far. He cautiously advanced his foot. Yes, he could feel beyond it. But could he make so far a step? He must! He dared not delay to consider the danger.

Well for him that he had left behind his bread-bag and all unnecessary burdens! Slowly planting his naked foot beyond the dangerous point, steadying himself with his palms against the wall, he threw his weight upon the advanced limb. Now he was over. And now he had come to the angle where the wall slightly turned. Near him lay the parchment. He saw that it was written over in Greek characters. But that brief glance had also shown him the swimming world far, far below him,—a world that seemed to rise in curious billows as if to receive him. Oh, for the will to turn his eyes away from that enchanting danger, that fascinating terror! How could he gain the resolution?

Think of Iddo and of his revenge! Ah, yes! He was strong again.

He raised his eyes, and scanned the surface of the cliff. One foot touched the manuscript. And yonder the ledge came to a sudden end. But here, within easy reach of his hands, even as low as his shoulders, was the mouth of the cave. Oh,—delicious feeling of safety! He stared into the opening, he laid his arms over the second window-sill.

What sound was that from the interior of this new cave? A wild scream,—a scream of fear and rage. What white thing was this darting towards him through the gloom? Were these the gnashing teeth, the bloodshot eyes of a savage beast? Yes, and of more than a beast of prey!

Two hands caught his arms and tore them away from the coping. He was bent backward over the fearful depths. A frenzied voice shrieked in his ears. He gave no heed to the words.

It was enough to comprehend that the voice was the voice of Iddo.

CHAPTER XIV

ADNAH LEARNS THE TRUTH

WHEN Adnah recovered consciousness,—for in that frenzied grasp of Iddo he had swooned away,—his first sensation was one of surprise that he should recover at all. Coupled with this was a curious contempt for the dangers of the cliff, since he had fallen hundreds of feet, yet was alive! What of his bones? He tried to move, expecting excruciating pains. He experienced nothing of the sort. He opened his eyes, and saw a strange face bending over him. “Where did *you* come from?” said Adnah faintly.

A strange voice answered, “It is enough that I am here.”

“You see before you a strange being,” said Adnah, closing his eyes, the better to enjoy his own greatness; “one who can leap frightful abysses, scale glassy slopes full of gaping mouths, cling like a fly to stone walls, and fall hundreds of feet, yet be perfectly safe and unhurt!”

“As to your being like unto a fly, I know not,”

said the voice. "But as to your falling such distances, think it not. You are in the cave."

Adnah started up. "I did not fall?"

"That you live, proves it," returned the other, who was also a youth of about his own age.

At first Adnah felt a foolish disappointment, as if he had not quite come up to his own expectations. Then his mind grew clearer. He rose to his feet crying, "What of Iddo?"

The stranger pointed. And there lay Iddo upon the ground of the second cave, securely tied to a projection from the wall, so he could scarcely move. His arms were bound behind his back. His legs were so wrapped with cords that they were almost hidden in the meshes. Adnah walked to where he lay upon his side, and gloated upon the prisoner. "Ah, Iddo," he said, "I have dreamed of this moment! I have seen you lying thus, many a time, as Simon and I passed dreary days, and even weeks, in the cave."

"Have mercy upon me!" moaned the Pharisee.

"Listen, Iddo; you know the law. Heard you ever such a saying as 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'?"

"Adnah, my nephew, you will not murder a defenseless old man?"

"I *am* your nephew, and that is one more charge

against you. But you are not too old to die, Iddo. See, this is the knife I have carried next my heart, to keep it warm for you!"

Iddo rolled his terrified eyes toward the stranger. "Do not let him kill a poor, innocent man, who is great in Israel. Save me from him, and great shall be the ransom given you!"

The stranger shrugged his shoulders. "I want no ransom for a dog," he said.

"You are my friend!" cried Adnah, grasping the stranger's hand. "What is the name of him who saved my life?"

"I am Gothinus; but take not my hand, for I am a slave, and no Jew, but a German."

"I care not if you be Jew or Gentile, rich or poor; there is an honest heart in your bosom!" cried Adnah, seizing the reluctant hand. "Good Gothinus, how can I thank you?"

"Thank me not; it is Miriam, the daughter of Joel, who has sent me to deliver you. I saw the signal given yesterday, fluttering from a cave. All last night I was climbing among the rocks. When at last I saw the mule and found the path, and Iddo's slave standing at the back entrance, I rejoiced."

"Ah, the slave!" cried Adnah. "What of him?"

“Nothing of him,” returned Gothinus coolly, “save a breathless head cut from a lifeless body. For he sought to oppose me. We fought, and I hewed him down.”

Iddo gave a despairing cry.

“Yes, Pharisee,” said Gothinus, “no one knows of this place, save we three. Look, Adnah, see what a pleasant occupation Iddo had, before you interrupted him!”

The slave pointed to a spot where a heap of coins lay scattered. “Here he keeps his money,” continued Gothinus. “He comes to count it, to take away what he needs. Only he and the slave know of this place, else he would never cast his money about so freely. How came he by such a store, think you? For Iddo is a poor man! Well, as I stood watching him, suddenly you appeared at yonder opening. You should have seen Iddo’s face turn white! He thought you a ghost! I ran forward, but he was quicker. He seized you, he would have hurled you from the ledge. But with one hand I caught you,—with the other, your uncle. Both of you swooned in my grasp. He fell backward upon the floor, and I could give you all my strength. When he recovered, he found himself bound as you see him. What a surprise for Iddo!”

“Gothinus, I love you as a brother! And you know Miriam? And she sent you hither? Strange, how forces are being put into motion for our happiness, while we, unknowing, despair! As for you, Iddo, prepare to die!”

“Gothinus, save me!” pleaded the Pharisee. “All this money shall be yours. It will make you a rich man. Dear Gothinus——”

“I am a Gentile,” returned the slave, “but I know a little of your law, for Lucius, the centurion, loves it. Does it not say, Refuse to accept the price of a dog? Whether it does or does not, save your wailings! If I were Adnah, I would give you a quick passage to your second world!”

Adnah drew his knife. “In the name of my miserable years,—and not forgetting the wrongs to Simon!” he cried. “But I remember,—a parchment lies outside upon the ledge. Gothinus, can you read?”

“Yes; for am I not a slave? I will get the parchment!” Gothinus hurried to the opening and leaning over, secured the manuscript.

“It goes exceedingly against my taste,” observed Adnah musingly, “to strike a defenseless man. Read, Gothinus. It may be, here is something to soften my heart towards this villain.”

Iddo, seeing the parchment, gave a wild scream,

and fought to free himself, but the attempt was in vain. Gothinus read,

“‘*To Iddo the Pharisee, my dear brother, peace and wisdom and prosperity.*’”

“What!” cried Adnah, starting violently, “his brother? It does not say his *brother*?”

“So it reads,” responded Gothinus, who saw no cause for excitement. “Shall I read on?”

“But when was this written?”

“There is no time specified. But you can see the writing is not very old.”

“Not old! how could it be otherwise? Ah,—but it has been well preserved in this cave; that is it. Iddo’s brother died eight years ago. . . . He was crucified. Read on, Gothinus.” Adnah covered his face with his hands and shook violently.

“‘*I write, as formerly, from the palace. Since you came last in Jerusalem, I have heard nothing of my son —*’”

“Since he came last in Jerusalem?” repeated Adnah, dropping his hands and staring first at the reader, then at his cringing uncle; “I must have been very young at that time. I cannot remember that my father ever left me to go up to Jerusalem. And how could my father have written from a palace? And he says he had written from the palace ‘formerly.’ This is a wild forgery, indeed!”

“I know not,” said Gothinus calmly. “Will you have the rest, or pause to digest what has already been given you?”

“Read, read quickly, good Gothinus!”

“‘——*I have heard nothing of my son, and this long silence has grown heavier than my heart can bear. Remember, Iddo, I am a foolish, fond old father,—old, at least, in sufferings,—and all the happiness of my life now comes from hearing of my dear boy.*’”

“Strange, strange,” murmured Adnah. “This must be to another Iddo, from another father,—but how he loves his child!”

“Perhaps the light will presently dawn,” observed Gothinus stoically; “surely we have had twilight long enough! I read: *‘It has now been eight years and well have you kept your trust.’*”

“Eight years?” interrupted Adnah sharply. “Did you read *‘eight years’*? Eight years since when? God of Israel!—*eight years*?” He turned upon Iddo. “Who wrote that letter? When was it written? What does it mean?”

Iddo lay stretched upon the floor with a livid face. There was a white foam upon his lips. He made no answer. His eyes wore the glassy stare of one who is suffocating.

“Read—read—*read!*” cried Adnah, wildly. “Eight years,—oh——” he caught the arm of Gothinus to steady himself.

“‘*Dear brother, cease to reproach yourself. Banish your foolish and vain regrets. For what you did in those fatal days, surely you have altogether atoned by years of tender devotion to my darling boy. Do not brood upon my tramp to Jerusalem,—the soldiers on horseback dragging me by a rope,—I was scarcely conscious of those tortures, for the shadow of the cross fell upon the world, look where I might; and still less do I care for my sufferings, since I have escaped crucifixion——*’”

“Read that again!” came Adnah’s voice, low, muffled, dangerous.

“‘——*I have escaped crucifixion, therefore I pray you think of this, and be of good cheer. What though eight years have dragged by? Has not my Adnah——*’”

“It says ‘My Adnah’?”

“‘——*Has not my Adnah grown up under your care and instruction, one of the most promising among the coming great ones of Israel?*’”

“He was not crucified,” whispered Adnah to himself; “my father lives!”

“‘*Therefore, Iddo, let your conscience no longer reproach you, since my Adnah is already in the*

palace of King Herod, one foot upon the ladder of greatness, the other about to leave the earth.' "

"Ah!" whispered Adnah with a glance at his uncle. Iddo quivered convulsively.

"Truly," said Gothinus, glancing up at Adnah, "I knew not I was dealing with so great a personage! But I read; '*I am strong,—I am able to bear the blame into the grave.*' "

"I begin to understand," said Adnah in the same curious whisper, while his face grew more white and terrible.

"*'After all, I was not a fit father for so talented and gracious a boy. I could not have trained him aright. You who know everything, and who have done everything well—except that one time,—you are the one to educate him and develop his powers. So he is the son of a Pharisee, not of a Publican! Ah, if he could be taught to love me just a little!—then it would not be hard for me, this life as a Roman's slave. But that cannot be, of course, for he must believe me a thief, and believing thus, cannot feel for me even kindness. Better so. Now for this time, farewell, my brother, but I beseech you, delay not to write and tell me how fares my child. For I cease to be a slave in this great palace, and become its master, when I have tidings of my Adnah.'*"

"Villain!" shrieked Adnah, finding his voice at

last, and rushing upon the prostrate Iddo, “so it was *you* who stole the money from the receipt of custom, while my father took the blame! It is you, *you*, Iddo, who are the thief and who should have been crucified! Your heart is black with that crime while your hypocritical lips pray that I may be forgiven the sins of my father. *His* sins? nay, *yours*, the infamy, doubly infamous because of your pretense of innocence. Woe unto you, Iddo! whose crime is visited upon your brother by his own consent, who is a slave in your stead—an innocent man,—my father; a noble man; but a foolish man, to imagine that his son could receive aught but curses from the one for whose guilty sake he endures shame and suffering. Better for you, O Iddo, if you had never been born!”

CHAPTER XV

REVENGE

IDDO struggled to rise upon his knees.

“Speak!” cried Adnah, “speak, false uncle, false brother, false Pharisee! Speak, or this dagger will find your heart. Confess! Were you the thief?”

“Adnah, Adnah, mercy!”

“Did you steal the money? Quick——”

“Yes, O yes—— Stay your hand, Adnah, my nephew.”

“And you let my father bear the blame?”

“Hear reason, Adnah, hear me; that was not my fault. It was his choice. Before I could confess, he cried out to the soldiers that *he* was the thief, not I. Do not condemn me, since he, of his own choice, went to meet crucifixion, which the mercy of the Romans changed to slavery.”

“Yes. . . . But why did he take the blame from you?”

“O, Adnah, he loves, he venerates me. Adnah, Adnah, remember your father loves me with his very soul!”

“Nay, he loves not you, but a dream which

his fancy has named 'Iddo.' But speak: what were you to do for me?"

"Give you food and shelter; have I not done so?"

"And no kindness, withal?"

"I would have been kind, Adnah, had you let me."

"False Iddo! Were you to educate me, and place me in Herod's palace? The truth, Iddo,—or instant death!"

"But yes, I still mean to do so, Adnah. Did you think I meant to starve you in the cave? Oh, no, my slave and I were coming this very night to tell you it was only a—a—little jest, it was only to try your courage, it was only a—a ——"

"You hear him?" said Adnah, gazing a moment at the wretched man with unutterable scorn, then turning to Gothinus—

"I hear," said the German calmly.

"What would you do with him, Gothinus?"

"Silence him," advised his friend darkly.

"The dagger is too quick a death," said Adnah, still awful in his wrath. "After my revenge is completed, what does life offer? My father is a slave and I am homeless, outcast, scorned. Who will believe my word against Iddo's? The world would call this letter a forgery, as even I declared it half an hour ago. If I drag Iddo before the tri-

bunal, his words will cast me into a dungeon. And though I slay him, what can my father do? Eight years he has declared himself a thief. Suppose he should say, 'After all I am innocent. The great Pharisee, my brother is the thief.' He would be mocked as a liar, and reviled for seeking to cast a blot upon his dead brother. There is no justice for me, no help for him,—save in my revenge. Therefore let my revenge last long, ay, let it last till there is not a drop of blood in this vile body that can leap with the thrill of agony!"

Iddo uttered a terrible cry.

"Gothinus, you are my friend. You will reveal to none that Iddo is my prisoner?"

"Your secret is safe with me."

"Iddo," said his nephew, "my father is a slave in some palace in Jerusalem. Whose palace? and does he still bear the name of Samuel?"

"Adnah, Adnah——"

"Quick—the truth will buy you a respite!"

"He is the slave of Caius Marcellus and he goes by the name of—of—of—Galba."

"Let us go," said Adnah to Gothinus; "I shall leave Iddo here till Simon is liberated from the other cave. I am very thirsty."

"Mercy, mercy, Adnah! Will you leave me alone to die of starvation?"

“I shall return, fear not! and I leave you in good company.” And pointing to the slave’s head, he departed, followed by Gothinus, deaf to the frenzied supplications of the miserable prisoner. Wild and well-nigh impassable were the heights about the back entrance of the cave. Gothinus who knew the way, led Adnah forth with the greatest difficulty. There was no danger of any one seeking Iddo in these almost inaccessible cliffs. He was entirely at the mercy of Adnah. The white countenance of the youth boded no good for his uncle, as he proceeded silently among jagged rocks and wild brambles. At last they left the worst part of the way, and came to the place where Iddo’s mule had been fastened. As they proceeded, Adnah led the beast, and told Gothinus about Simon’s captivity.

The first thing to be done, was to liberate the leper. Lucius the centurion would send men to dig through the accumulation that buried the entrance of the first cave. There was to be no secret about the part Iddo and his slave had taken in the throwing-down of the avalanche, nor of the imprisonment of Adnah. Of course no one,—at least, no Jew,—would believe the story. But Iddo and his slave would be gone. Presently people would begin to suspect they had run away. At last their guilt would appear manifest.

“And in the meantime, what of Iddo?” said Gothinus.

“I have not yet decided. But I shall keep him there for days, as I was kept in the cave,—ever with the fear of death, as I feared the dark abyss. Some times I shall let him almost starve, or perish for water; perhaps at last I shall cast him down into the valley, as in his intention, he cast me down. ‘An eye for an eye,’ Gothinus!”

“You enjoy your revenge!” remarked Gothinus.

“It is all I have in the world,” said Adnah. “My soul is wedded to it.”

“A ghastly bride,” said the slave.

“Yet you, my friend, cannot blame me?”

“Who could? Only if it were *my* revenge, I would have it quickly over, the sooner to enjoy my victuals!”

Adnah went to the centurion with Gothinus, and told him how he and the leper had been entombed by Iddo, and how Gothinus had found him and led him to freedom,—not mentioning the second chapter of Iddo’s story. The Roman, who had a great love for his slave, agreed to send some workmen to clear away the avalanche.

Adnah sighed with relief. “I feared, O centurion,” he said, “that my words would not find belief.”

“To be frank,” said the Roman, “this much I believe; that as you and the leper lay in the cave, the avalanche fell; and that you had run away from home to the cave, not knowing the leper was within. As to Iddo and his slave picking up a mountain of stone and earth, and laying it against the mouth of the cave, that is manifestly false. Had Iddo done such a thing, Hercules must by this time have melted in his own hot blushes!”

“Yet, my master,” said Gothinus, “you know how easily a mighty avalanche is started.”

“And I know this even better,” said Lucius; “that when you hate a man, you make him the villain of your romance. Enough. The avalanche shall be cleared away. As to Iddo, I shall not molest him.”

“It is well,” said Adnah gloomily. “But behold, here is his mule we found upon the road. Take him for I shall never return to Iddo’s home.”

“I know not how you came by the beast,” said Lucius. “That proves nothing. But leave him not here. Is my garrison a stable for the stray mules of Pharisees?” Adnah turned the beast loose. A deep draught from a spring that he had encountered among the stones had given him strength. He went with the few slaves who were sent to dig before the cave. Indeed no men were

found who would go willingly, since none wished to defile himself by approaching so near a leper. A work of many days lay before the three workmen who had been forced to go, and these days promised to become weeks, since the laborers talked a great deal, and rested, to do so with more ease. Lucius needed Gothinus, and Adnah alone was present to oversee the work. Although Lucius had given him this position, which earned him a shelter and food, he was so young and ragged that the slaves paid no heed to his commands. There was one comfort; Simon would hear the digging, and know help was drawing near. The leper had enough food to keep him alive, even at this tedious rate, since he had kept all the wine, and much flour. But the stubborn perverseness of the diggers fretted Adnah without ceasing, and kept him in a continual state of nervous excitement.

Nor did he forget Iddo. How well he grew to know the way among the rocks! Almost every night he found his way to the high second cave, there to taunt and mercilessly punish his captive. Had he not eight years to avenge,—and not only his own wrongs, and those of Simon, but the sufferings of his father? And terrible, indeed, was the punishment of Iddo, with that ghastly dissevered

head of his slave ever grinning at him, when daylight shone through the opening!

What had become of Iddo? was the question asked by the outside world. Impossible that Adnah's story could contain a grain of truth!—but if Iddo had gone to Jerusalem as Hodesh asserted, why had she been left without a farewell? Of course, it was not the duty of a well-regulated Pharisee to tell his wife when, or whither, he was going. Still, it was strange. The mule had ambled back to his home with the dignified, serious mien assumed only by mules who design mischief, or know of mischief designed. Where was Iddo? Where was his slave? Why did they not come home and chastise Adnah for the tale he had spread broadcast?

“Come, Adnah,” Gothinus said, one morning appearing where the workmen toiled intermittently between their more serious occupation of conversation. “Soon your friend the leper will be free. The master has given me this day, and I would have you walk with me, and ease your mind.”

“You are kind,” said Adnah, who never succeeded in shaking off his gloomy mood. Then raising his voice he shouted, “Simon!”

Faintly came back the cry, “Adnah!”

“He hears, he hears!” cried Adnah, and tears came to his eyes.

“Ah,” said Gothinus, “you said revenge was all there was left for you. But was it not worth while to live, to hear the call of a friend?”

“It was well worth while,” responded the other with a tremulous smile.

“So I would persuade you that there are many things in the world to woo you to a love of life. Let us walk hence. There is the sunshine, the flowers; and yonder the blue sea; and there are ever thoughts of good women and brave soldiers,—are not these enough? Adnah, kill this Iddo to-night, and have done with him!”

Adnah put his hand to his heart. “Here is my father’s letter,” he said. “It cries for revenge, and ever more revenge!”

“Revenge!” echoed Gothinus. “A slow revenge is a slow death to him who seeks it. In these days past, you have been dead to smiles and happiness, dead to comforts and interests. All of you might as well have been buried deep in some grave, except that part of you which is kin to the wolf,—to the wild beasts!”

“What say you?” cried Adnah angrily. “The wild beasts? Speak not thus to one who seeks revenge as his honor, and his duty! Think

you it is a pleasure to torment Iddo? It is no pleasure."

"Well, well, Adnah, let us talk of other things. But I wonder whither go this multitude?"

"I wonder also. Behold, they take the direction of the mountain."

"It must be," said the slave, "that they follow Jesus of Nazareth; for no multitude is so great as that which follows in *His* footsteps."

"Jesus? Where have I heard that name? For it is like no other. Ah, it was Miriam who told me; He it was turned water into wine."

"I know nothing of that, Adnah. But sure it is, He raised Miriam's brother from his deathbed, while over twenty miles away,—such was His magic! After that, He came here to Capernaum to live. He has selected four of our fishermen to be His disciples, whom formerly He had taken to Jerusalem with Him. Peter and Andrew, are two; and John and James, brothers. I will tell you how I know so much of Him."

"Do so; and in the meantime, let us go with the throng."

"This carpenter is hated of the learned Rabbis," said Gothinus. "Therefore Iddo despises him. I have lately been tracking Iddo, hoping thus to learn your whereabouts,—or fate. Once I followed Iddo

to Nazareth. Jesus had been preaching in the synagogue. His doctrine did not please the Pharisees. Iddo and others stirred up a mighty tumult. And they seized the Preacher, and dragged Him to the brow of a dizzy cliff, meaning to cast Him down, as Iddo would have cast you."

"And how did he escape?"

"I know not. Escape He did, from their very midst. Perhaps in the same way that He heals people. The mother of Peter's wife He has healed of a terrible fever. He has cast out a devil. He has made a man stricken with the palsy, walk. And a great number He has made well, who had all manner of diseases. So you see He is as great a physician as He is a preacher, or carpenter. But, shall we go up this mountain?"

"Yes, with the others. How we are jostled! The people seem in a strange hurry."

"Yonder He is!" cried Gothinus. "Those about Him are His disciples. They sit,—Jesus is about to speak."

"He looks like no man that ever I saw," said Adnah, as the vast concourse seated themselves, he and Gothinus with the rest. "Do but see His eyes! I believe a man with those eyes could do wonderful things!"

"Hush!" said Gothinus; "He speaks."

Over the vast audience floated the words as sweet and clear as the music of silver bells; "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

CHAPTER XVI

ALONE WITH HIS ENEMY

It was night. Adnah made his way among the giant rocks that lay strewn upon the heights of Arbela. The moon shone brightly over the wild scene. The young man reached the back entrance of the second cave, and entered with slow steps. He was greeted by a low wail from his prisoner. Iddo remained in the same position in which he had first been bound. Adnah lighted his lamp.

The ghastly head of the slave lay upon the floor, unspeakably repulsive. The Pharisee was white and emaciated. A burning thirst shone in his eyes. Adnah carried a leathern bottle containing water.

“Adnah, Adnah,” groaned his enemy, “give me to drink, and then let me die!”

The boy sank upon his knees beside the prostrate form, and held the water to his dry lips. Iddo drank. When the bottle was put aside, he said, “You give me strength for a while, that you may torture me more effectively. Is it not so?”

Adnah took up the knife which had been lying for days just beyond the reach of Iddo’s hand. The

Pharisee began to implore. "Save me, good Adnah, do not kill me at once! Since I drank, oh, how I long for life! With the water, I drank this love deep into my being. Only for a few days—only till to-morrow! Do what you will except that—beat me, starve me, but let me live."

Adnah bent forward with the knife.

"I have been a very wicked man, Adnah, it is not that I deserve mercy. But there is so much I would do,—there are so many to whom I would speak a farewell! Oh, Adnah, I *cannot* die,—all is so unfinished,—so incomplete!"

Bending over the prisoner, Adnah began to cut with his knife in silence. The blade severed the rope in several places. Iddo felt the intolerable agony of his bondage relax. He could move at last. He stretched his hands and feet, luxuriating in his new freedom. But his mental distress increased with his physical relief. What was about to happen to him? He watched Adnah as a beaten dog watches its master.

"You may rise," said the youth.

Iddo remained upon the ground. "Adnah, mercy, I beseech you! Adnah, remember that your father loves me."

At those words Adnah buried his face in his hands, and remained motionless. A struggle was

going on within him. Presently he repeated, "You may rise."

"Good Adnah, strong and powerful Adnah, what will you do to me?" Iddo rose, not daring to refuse the permission. He stood unsteadily upon his feet, before the strong youth.

"Iddo, you are free. Go!"

The Pharisee stared at him fixedly. "You know I cannot escape you," he whined. "If I should seek to run away, I should fall. Do you play with me? Well,—since it is your will." He stumbled towards the opening. He had not gone far when Adnah in a whisper said, "Stop!"

Iddo stood motionless.

"There is something else," said Adnah raising his voice unsteadily. "Yes, and this is the hardest part. Iddo, I have been cruel to you."

"Adnah, child, what do you mean? You cannot intend that I am to go *free*? You do not mean that I am no longer your prisoner? That I am to *live*?"

"Yes, yes, have I not said so?"

Iddo fell before Adnah, and sought to kiss his feet. The boy shrank back with a shudder. "Touch me not, thou thief, thou merciless man!—Nay, Iddo, forgive me those words. But come no nearer. It is enough that you are free. You want

no more. But, oh, there is more that I must do!"

Iddo remained upon his knees, looking at Adnah as if he doubted his sanity. Adnah approached him with a white face. Iddo crossed his hands upon his breast, expecting new tortures. Adnah laid his hand upon the feverish head. "O my enemy, I bless you," he said. "May you be happy and prosperous in life, and henceforth avoid evil, and injustice, and cruelty. May the blessings of God rest upon you, and clear your path before you, and crown the memory of you with glory and dignity."

Iddo's head sunk upon his breast. Adnah now knelt beside the Pharisee and raised his eyes upward. "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name," he prayed. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. I pray for Iddo, who has despitefully used me, and who has persecuted me. I pray that Thou wilt forgive him even as I forgive him, because I know my own sins will be forgiven only as I forgive. So has Thy Prophet spoken, and His words are true. The sins of this man are many, but I pray that I may not seek to judge of them lest I be judged. But however great his wickedness has been, Thou art God; Thou canst forgive. Therefore, I pray Thee,

take this shadow from him, and help him to be a good man, and help me to love him, O God, help me to love him as if he were my brother. Grant that evil thoughts may not rise within me when I think of him, but that ever and ever, when my mind goes back to those days to remember my wrongs, and my father's wrongs, and my enemy's face rises before me—grant that at the same time I may remember the words and the face of Jesus of Nazareth!”

Adnah rose to his feet, and helped Iddo from the ground. The Pharisee was sobbing. “There is this more,” said Adnah; “can you forgive me for what I have done to you?”

“It is not for you to ask my pardon,” returned Iddo. “It is for me, upon the ground, to implore you to forgive my wickedness.”

“Iddo, you are forgiven, as freely as if you had never done wrong!” Adnah put his hand upon the man's shoulder, and bending forward, kissed him.

When Iddo's voice was more sure, he said, “I will go up to Jerusalem at once. I will seek Pilate, and tell him the truth. Your father shall be free once more. In his place, I will bear captivity without a murmur. This little I can do, to repair the past. This little I *will* do for the goodness you have shown. Life seems all changed since an

enemy has blessed me! Strange that I owe my life and your kindness to Jesus, Him whom I sought to kill in Nazareth!"

"Ah, Iddo, how could you!"

"It was His doctrine I despised. Listening to the sermon hardened my heart. But seeing it lived out in a human life, has softened my soul. Farewell, dear boy. Blessings be with you!"

"Nay," said Adnah, "I will help you through the desert, for you are weak."

"This also!" cried Iddo, and he began to weep again. Adnah put his arm about him, and the two went forth into the moonlight. Adnah raised his face, and there was a light upon it more dazzling than that of the moon.

"Iddo," he whispered, "this is the happiest night of my life!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE CENTURION'S SLAVE

WHEN Iddo was safe in the narrow streets of Capernaum, Adnah left him, and returned to the first cave. The work of a few hours would liberate Simon the leper, and this last labor the workmen refused to do, because they feared a nearer approach to the imprisoned man. Adnah could have freed him some hours earlier, had he not been engaged in a terrible struggle; this was a battle against his desire for vengeance. After listening to the Sermon on the Mount, he had left Gothinus to lose himself in the vast throng. But it was as if he walked alone. In his mind two thoughts fought for supremacy; that of Iddo, that of Jesus. It was as if the Friend of Man had placed his hand upon Adnah's enemy. Jesus conquered. Whenever the remembrance of the Pharisee's villainy threatened to become dominant, Adnah seemed to hear these words repeated: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use

you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your father who is in heaven."

Wonderful hour that heard these words spoken in the world! Wonderful words, such as had never before been spoken, the significance of which had never entered the mind of man! Wonderful words which still ring muffled in the unheeding ears of mankind, their meaning lost, or veiled so deeply, the light breaks not through; which yet contain the power to revolutionize the world, and make it new. And still man builds up innumerable theories of happiness, upon the wrecks of former theories, still he looks for a golden key to unlock a golden future, blind to the path that has already been pointed out, and to the key which has been given.

It was nearly morning when Simon was liberated. Adnah's first impulse was to rush to him with extended arms. But he remembered in time; and as if divining his intention, the latter exclaimed hastily, "Unclean!" Then he crept forth from the cave.

"You have not suffered from hunger?" Adnah asked.

"No, dear friend. Nay, come no closer. Ah, how sweet smells the world!"

"Here is cool fresh water," said Adnah. "How

my heart beats to see you free once more!" And presently he had told his adventures, beginning from the time he leaped across the abyss.

"I am glad it is still dark," said Simon. "I wish you to leave me before it is day. Try to think of me as if I were no leper. Adnah, never seek me again; let the remembrance of me lie clean and fresh in your memory. But what of Iddo?"

"This night I loosed him from his bonds and turned him free."

"Ah? But what did you first to him? Lop off an arm, or leg? Put out his eyes? You do not deceive me by saying you turned him free! You terrible one, I know you well."

"It is true I did something to him."

"Ha! What said I? Let us hear."

"I blessed him, I did good to him, I prayed for him, and I sought to love him."

There was a brief silence, then Simon said, "You do not speak as if you jested. It is rather as if you had lost your mind, Adnah."

"I care not what I have lost. What I have found, O Simon, is a peace that passes all understanding. I heard Jesus speak to the multitude. Yes, He spoke to them, but every word was for *me*, for me, the outcast, the despised. When He spoke of love, it was for me, when of an enemy, He

meant Iddo; when He said 'Blessed are the merciful,'—yes those were His very words,—He was looking into my heart; when He said 'Blessed are they who mourn,' it was as if He had wiped away my tears. When He taught us to pray to God thus,—'Our father,'—He remembered that I had been deprived of my own dear father; and when He said it was wrong to require an eye for an eye, He was reading my wicked purposes. It was all for me,—every word. Few, indeed, have been the chances I have had to hear men expound their doctrines. But on those few occasions, it was as if the speakers said, 'Why are children fetched hither to stare gaping at the moon? These words be for gray hairs!' It was not so with Jesus. Though untaught and young, I, as well as the aged, knew His meaning."

"A strange pass indeed, if we are not to hate our enemies," said Simon. "Whom then *are* we to hate?"

"No man, I think, dear Simon."

"What, then, are we to do with this great accumulation of hot passions and indignant heat that surges in our natures, like volcanoes that seek a crater?" demanded Simon. "You yourself know that where we love one man, we hate ten."

"I have thought of that, Simon. Perhaps it is

this; hate the evil men do, and hate it so much that there will be no hatred to spare for the doers of the evil."

"These are curious theories," said Simon, "and I confess they are better suited to the disposition of my son Lazarus, than to mine. But beside these fancies, let me place a fact, this; that Iddo will surely put an end to you and your fancies at the first merry chance! So beware of him! Now leave me, for it begins to grow light. Farewell forever, my friend. It has been sweet to know you, and to have a little company once more, though entombed in a cave. Beware of Iddo! Leave me, now,—my courage fails."

When the morning came, Adnah went to the centurion's to bid Gothinus farewell, as he intended to set forth for Jerusalem to seek his father. He was dismayed to learn that Gothinus had been suddenly smitten with paralysis. Lucius admitted Adnah to the chamber, and these two watched beside the pallid form, for the Roman dearly loved his slave. It was strange how soon his robust health had vanished. Shaken by the palsy, wracked by agony, he lay a ghost of his former self.

When Adnah would have left, Lucius said, "Nay, he loved you; stay and wait upon him, and this shall be your home."

Adnah remembered Jesus. At mention of His name Lucius started up. "It is the only hope," he said, "since the physician despairs."

In order to increase his hope, Adnah hurriedly related how Jesus had healed Reuben. The centurion sought out the elders, and sent them to the Nazarene. Although the centurion was a Gentile, the Jews were ready to become his envoys, since Lucius had built for them their synagogue, and had ever shown a partiality to their religion. Lucius returned to Adnah in the sick-room. "The elders have gone," he said. "Presently they will be at the house."

He seated himself, but a shriek from Gothinus caused him to spring up shuddering. After that cry the slave lay still and white. "He is dying!" Adnah wailed. "Is he not already dead?"

"Nay, he breathes. Now they must be with Jesus. But how can I bear this uncertainty! I will go to meet Him, to plead with Him. Alas, Adnah, were I a Jew! I am not worthy to appear before a prophet of that exalted race. Their God is the true God, and all others are false. Ah, if I were a Jew, how I could love that God, and this, His prophet!"

"Go to Him, my lord," cried Adnah. "I do not believe He will turn away from you, although you are a Roman."

“Do you not, Adnah? You are a Jew; you should know. Will He hear me, think you?”

“I know He will. Jesus will hear all who sorrow; yes, and He knows how to comfort them, too.”

“But what can I say to Him? Yes, I will go, for Gothinus is about to die; I can do this for him. I will say to Jesus, ‘Trouble not yourself to come to my house, I am not worthy for you to enter under my roof. Even as I have authority over my servants, saying to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, even so have you authority over fell diseases, and evil thoughts and cruel despair.’ And I will say, ‘Speak but one word, it will be enough,—my servant shall recover.’”

“He will hear you, O my lord; hasten for the sake of Gothinus!”

Adnah was left beside the stricken slave, but great was his hope. Gothinus presently opened his eyes, and they fell upon Adnah. The slave smiled.

“I have had a pleasant dream,” he said, lying still, as if to keep it from slipping entirely away. “I was in such a beautiful place,—yet now, I cannot remember if there were flowers, or birds. And some one told me that in that place were no Gothini, nor Jews, nor Romans; but all were brothers, children of one father.”

“You are much better!” cried Adnah joyously.

“Better? Nay, I am well!” And when Lucius returned, they met him at the door. The centurion caught Gothinus in his arms and embraced him, while his eyes glowed.

“What said Jesus?” Adnah inquired.

Lucius answered in a tone that rang with exultation. “He said He had not found such great faith in all Israel!”

The next day Adnah set forth for Jerusalem, seated upon a mule, the gift of Lucius. He was alone, but his heart sang to bear him company. For was he not to see once more his father? Yes, and he would plead for Iddo's release from voluntary captivity. He had learned that Iddo had already set out for the capital of Judea. Adnah did not wish to overtake him, therefore he traveled leisurely. The first night he put up at a quiet caravansary, and the next morning resumed his way with a merry heart.

A man who had reached the open inn the night before, set forth at the same time. He was a middle-aged man, with a long, black beard, a broad and open countenance, cheerful eyes, and a manner of walking as if he would make all mankind his friend. Adnah was so drawn towards him, that he

let his beast walk. "Go you far upon this road?" he asked.

"To Jerusalem," said the man with a smile, as if there were so much sunshine in his heart, he did not have to hoard it up.

"Why, so also go I thither," cried Adnah. "Why cannot we go in company?"

"Your wish is a jewel in the setting of my desire!" the pedestrian declared.

Adnah laughed. "Then do you first take turn upon the mule!" and he sprang to the ground. "Ride till I grow weary,—and I promise you, that will be a long time hence! It is a joy to walk in the world, when happiness is at the end of the way. But you would know my name; Adnah."

"Adnah? Why, surely, I have heard of you!"

"Doubtless; for my story has gone abroad. And you,—what name do you bear?"

"You once knew me," said the other with the same sunny smile, "as Simon, the leper. But since our parting, I have seen Jesus!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GLADIATOR

JOEL hired a house in Jerusalem befitting his dignity. Reuben was accepted in the temple to do simple service and learn by object-lessons the complex system of sacrifices and modes of worship. He could not expect to be admitted into the Sadducean priesthood,—the vast majority of the priests were Sadducees, and were held in light esteem by the learned Rabbis,—until he should become twenty,—how long that period of waiting seemed!

In the meanwhile Miriam was looking about her. Anna made it a strict law that the girl must not go alone into the streets; Joel added the clause that she might venture forth in the company of old Zuph. He, himself, sometimes went with her, for he knew the city well, and in his company Miriam was shown the temple, the pool of Bethesda, the palace of Herod and all the wonders of Jerusalem. Beautiful and grand stood that temple perched upon its lofty hill, from which Solomon and all his glory had passed away. So many years the wise monarch had labored in the building of the former

temple, so many workmen had toiled and suffered with its brick and mortar and in the hewing of its cedar! But a few centuries had drifted their sands across the world; monarch, workmen, bricks and cedar lay buried, and the new temple of Herod stood proudly overlooking Jerusalem, in its turn to fall. Did these thoughts haunt Miriam?

“Of what do you think, my daughter?” Joel asked, seeing her looking up from the Tyropœan Valley, to the crowning glory of Mount Moriah.

“I was thinking,” said Miriam, “that in there is Reuben.” What to her was Solomon and the passing of ages?

And there was the magnificent bridge stretching from Mount Moriah to Mount Zion, that holy mount where once stood the palace of King David. Gone now that palace, and in its place the frowning castle where Pontius Pilate rules the Jews with a Roman rod. Even the bridge that hangs in mid air is not the one which knew the feet of David and Bathsheba, the haughty step of Absalom, the passing of Joab with his soldiers. The power of David, the empire he consolidated and bequeathed to a wise son,—all are crumbled to ruins, nothing left of him but a voice,—a voice, indeed, that can never die. But will not all this in its turn pass away, this material majesty and beauty?

After all, the most transcendent thing a man can do is so to speak that, after his death, his voice rings on, rings through the ages, rings true to the harmony of eternal truth.

“Well, my daughter, and *now* of what do you think? For your eyes seem to gaze upon great things!”

“It was that beggar under the arch of the bridge,” said Miriam; “see, he is blind!”

The next day Joel went up to the temple, and left Miriam in the care of Zuph. “Whither shall we go?” the old servant asked.

“To the bridge,” said Miriam. The beggar was at his place, for the arch was at the edge of the road. The man,—he was past thirty,—sat upon the ground, his back against the stone pillar. A stout stick lay across his lap, and before him was his cap, in which already lay a coin,—a kind of nest-egg, to show passers-by that the cap was a nest.

“Here is a coin for you,” said the fresh voice of Miriam. “And how are you, to-day?”

“I am blind,” said the man.

“How, then, do you find your way hither?”

“My father or mother conducts me, and leads me home.”

“And is it always very dark to you?”

“Dark? I have often heard the word. But I do not understand what it means.”

“If you don’t know when it is dark, or when light,” said Miriam in wonder, “being blind is then not so terrible a thing, after all!”

“Miriam,” said Zuph, “let us pass on.”

“I know this,” said the beggar, “that those who are not blind can go where they please, without beating a stick before them, and can handle fire without being burnt, and can tell the time that is called day. But a blind man can only beg.”

“And you get tired sitting all alone, do you not?” inquired Miriam,—“everybody passing and passing,—sounds of hoofs and feet and wheels, and shouts, and music, and the soldiers marching,—and you seeing nothing!”

“My life is a weary one,” said the man. “But I must sit here, or at the temple gate, and beg, for otherwise I would be a burden to my parents.”

“Miriam,” said Zuph, “what would your father think? Or Reuben! Let us away! Is it for the daughter of a nobleman to pause and converse with blind beggars?”

“Now, good Zuph, forget I am the daughter of a nobleman, and remember I am but a girl with more wonders in her mind than there are in Jerusalem. Tell me your name, poor man.”

“It is Rinnah,—Heaven bless you for your sympathy!”

“I have a thought, Rinnah. Would you like to walk? I am going to my home. If you follow behind me, I will steer you clear of dangers. I have already given you more money than you could get in alms. And afterwards, Zuph shall bring you back to this place again, and you will not be lost. Now, Zuph, you will do it! Good Zuph, remember when you cut your finger it was I who bound it about with a clean fresh cloth!”

“If you did, it was for your sake I cut my finger,” said Zuph, “trying to make you a wooden ball to play with,—and served me right! What would a girl do with a ball?”

“Oh, Zuph! I like that ball all the better because I am a girl. Come, follow, Rinnah, for when Zuph scolds, he is about to consent.”

“I am worried beyond my judgment!” exclaimed Zuph. “To have a blind beggar trailing behind us, as if we were a triumphant army, bringing home a captive! But Miriam, who is that? He comes this way. Surely ——”

“It is Adnah!” cried Miriam.

“Why, so I thought,” exclaimed Zuph, staring at the one approaching who had not yet discovered them. “He rides a goodly mule! What think you, Miriam?—he has spread abroad the story that Iddo, the great Pharisee, did seek to entomb him in a cave

with Simon, the leper! And Iddo does not appear, to contradict the story."

"Iddo?" repeated the blind beggar. "He gave me alms yesterday; I heard him say he had just come up to Jerusalem."

"If he gave you alms," said Zuph, "we know well he had some one with him to see him do it! But I wonder what will happen when he meets his nephew and hears the tale he has told?"

"Do you not believe Adnah's story?" said Miriam. "Iddo must either confess the truth, or hide with shame."

"I cannot imagine him doing either," said Zuph.

"What a hurry he is in!" exclaimed the girl. "Oh, Zuph, I fear he will pass without seeing us."

"And what then?" returned the old slave.

"Oh, call him, Zuph! It would be a pity for him to pass and never know friends were so near."

"Why, where are his friends?" inquired the other somewhat sharply. "You have seen him but once, and then only through a crack in the wall."

"Adnah!" cried Miriam.

He was almost abreast of the little group, but his eyes had been fixed upon the distant road. Now he started violently and turned his head.

"Oh, Miriam!" he cried, leaping to the ground as soon as he could check the mule. He approached,

his face beaming. "Gothinus saved me, and he told me it was you who sent him."

"We must not detain you," said the old man.

"I thought I would call you," said Miriam timidly; "I wanted you to know there were good wishes for you here in the street."

"It was so like you, Miriam! *You* are not one to let a friend pass without a kind word. And you *are* my friend, Miriam!"

"Not so, not so!" cried Zuph. "Miriam can have no friend who does not enter through the door of her father's approval. If she sent Gothinus to save your life, thank her and go your way, lad; for if your path through the world runs east, hers runs due west. Or, if *yours* runs west——"

"Old man," cried Adnah, "would you rob me of the only flower my life has known? That is the thought of Miriam, which has never faded from want of care and nurture. Oh, Miriam, say you do not despise me as all the world despises, because my father is a slave. Say you do not shrink from me even because he is thought to have been crucified as a thief; tell me I may always think of you as my friend."

Miriam caught his hand, which he had not dared hold out to her, and clasped it a moment in both of hers. "If the thought of me is a flower in your

life," she said, smiling upon him, "may it grow and bloom there, always!"

"Although I am a blind beggar," spoke up Rinnah, "I can see when two fish are caught in the same net."

"What does he mean?" asked Miriam, dropping Adnah's hand.

"I mean two hearts," Rinnah explained. Miriam blushed scarlet.

"You have heard what has befallen me," said Adnah hastily, seeking to overcome her sudden embarrassment. "But you have not heard the best. Iddo has confessed that it was he who stole the money, and my father assumed the guilt to spare him. My father was not crucified, but is a slave in the palace of Caius Marcellus. I go to him,—that is my errand,—the only cause, I am sure, that could ever have led me past you in the street, blind to your presence. Oh, I shall soon see my father! And Iddo, doubtless, has already gone to Pilate with his true history. My father will soon be free, *free*, Miriam! Are you not glad for me?"

"So glad!" said Miriam, with downcast eyes.

"Look up, friend Miriam," said Adnah gently. "You do not mind the words of a blind beggar. Look up and let me see my happiness in your eyes before I go."

Miriam looked up an instant and met his gaze, but the words of Rinnah came to her afresh. She dropped her head, seeking to hide the surging color over which she had no control. Tears came to her eyes. "Come, Zuph!" she said hurriedly, "father will wonder why I am gone so long. Good-bye, Adnah; indeed I am glad for you. Hurry now, Zuph!"

"The time for hurry was at the other end of this meeting," grumbled old Zuph. "But come!"

Adnah in great distress mounted his mule, feeling, with a sad sinking of the heart, that his absence would relieve "friend Miriam."

Miriam and Zuph started homeward, the girl walking rapidly, her head still downcast. Presently she heard the voice of Rinnah; "No one has a care for me. Take me back to the bridge, lady, do not leave me in the road alone."

"I forgot you," said Miriam, running to his side. "Here is my hand. But you were a wicked man to say those words. And do not call me, 'Lady.' I am yet but a girl, so young,—I do not understand you when you speak as you spoke to Adnah."

"I thought you would like it," said Rinnah simply. "I only meant to make you smile. I thought you and the young man were lovers."

"But I am only a girl,—a girl, Rinnah. Oh,

Rinnah! do not say such hateful words, or I will lead you back to the bridge, and not take you to my home, where I meant to give you so happy a day."

"Forgive, forgive!" cried the beggar in distress. "How could I know you would feel thus? You are the first lady I ever knew who thought 'Love' a hateful word."

"But I am *not* a lady; it will be years and *years* before I am grown; I do not mean to be a lady until I am old,—*so* old! And now I am but a girl. Zuph, *tell* him I am just a child, for remember, he is blind."

"She is taller than I," said Zuph drily, "and she is fifteen years old, and she stops young men in the street who talk to her about her eyes. You can make of that what you please. But I know this very well; I shall take her no more about these streets till we have come to an agreement touching young men and blind beggars. As to her being a flower in anybody's life, that is a piece with her being called an angel. You can make of it what you please. But as for me, I am an old man and have my duty, which is to guard this lady, damsel or girl, as you please ——"

The old man stopped, not because his breath or irritation had failed, but because he was startled by

an approaching tumult. The disordered sounds drew nearer.

“Look, look!” cried Miriam, forgetting her tears. “They come this way,—what a multitude! Oh, we shall be trampled underfoot!”

“Alas, alas!” cried the blind beggar, grasping her hand more securely.

“And look the other way!” cried Zuph in terror. “Roman soldiers, hurrying to meet the mob! We shall be caught between the two forces.”

Zuph had clearly foreseen what must happen. From the direction of Miriam’s home advanced a fierce mob composed of Jews armed with staves and knives; their faces were wild with the light of patriotism,—or fanaticism; from their throats burst harsh cries,—“Down with the tyrants of Rome! Down with Pilate! Up, up, brave Judeans, fight for your God and your liberty! Barabbas, Barabbas, forever!” As they rushed along the road they were joined by a few Jews, but others ran away as if to escape the contagion of revolution. Irresolute faces looked from doors along the way, to see what would be the issue.

Behind Miriam and her companions came the Roman soldiers in regular array, as if pushed forward by a single hand. The sides of the road were hemmed in by high smooth stone walls that

ran under the bridge. Zuph groaned with despair; there was no means of flight. At the head of the mob was a man of towering stature, his face lighted by the fire of enthusiasm. He was Barabbas.

“How much longer, O countrymen,” he cried, “will you lie prostrate with the Gentile foot upon your neck? Remember Judas the Zealot! Remember the Maccabeans! Remember the former glory of Zion! Remember that these who approach would keep us slaves forever! Remember the history of our race and the bondage of our children,—and forward!”

The stone wall formed a concave deflexion on either side of their course under the bridge. Zuph hurried Miriam into one of these doubtful protections, while Rinnah followed closely. Scarcely had they secured this position when the soldiers swung by, an organized unit, and just beyond the bridge encountered the frenzied rush of the mob. The first onslaught of the men under Barabbas was so furious that it drove the Romans back under the bridge.

“Out of my way!” cried a Roman soldier, falling back with drawn sword. Zuph was thrown to the ground. Miriam fell upon her knees and bent over him for his protection. Thus kneeling, she looked

up piteously at the swaying throng. The air rang with shouts, death-cries, and the clash of arms.

“What have we here?” cried another soldier. “Is this a place for women? Oh, it is only a Jew-ess!” Back and forth trampled the mailed soldiery, while their huge shields clanged.

“Barabbas! Liberty!” cried the Jews.

“Now, soldiers,” came the steady voice of the centurion; “once more!” A stream of blood slowly moved its sluggish way across the road towards where Miriam crouched.

“Another sword!” said a voice. “I broke mine on a Galilean’s skull!”

Another laughed. “Tough heads, these Zealots! See this blind beggar! These wretches would come for alms to a crucifixion!”

“Here, beggar, take my sword and help us fight,” said the first, thrusting his broken weapon into Rinnah’s helpless hand.

The Jews renewed their desperate charge.

“Now, soldiers,” came the steady voice of their officer, “remember you are Romans!”

“Death seize you!” hissed a veteran, stumbling over Miriam’s foot. “Twice have I circled around you and missed my enemy.” He raised his voice; “Where is Pilate’s gladiator?”

“Here!” answered a man of herculean appearance.

“Hither! This girl, old man and beggar,—slay them or carry them hence; they confuse the men.”

As the gladiator hurried up he pushed aside a soldier who stood in his way.

“Who jostles me?” snarled the other. “By the deified Augustus! if it is a Jew——”

“It *is* a Jew,” said the gladiator; “what then?”

“Oh,—is it Sextus? It is nothing, then!”

Sextus reached the niche in the wall. “Here is insolence!” he said, staring. “You three spoil the sport. Will you have your heads lifted off?”

“Have pity!” sobbed Miriam.

“Quick then,—old man, climb upon my back. Girl, catch your breath.” He caught her up in his powerful arms and carried her towards the rear, crying, “Make way in the name of Pilate! I am Sextus.”

A great feeling of safety soothed the maiden in those powerful arms. “The poor blind man!” she murmured.

“Make way, make way!” shouted Sextus. “Let the blind man die in his own darkness. Am I an elephant to carry three at once? In Pilate’s name! Now! here we are, safe as may be.” He placed Miriam gently upon her feet and Zuph dropped be-

side her. "It is easy, you see. Now, say there is no use in the world for a gladiator! And what is this? Behold, the blind man. Lo! you cannot kill a beggar. Victory, victory,—the mob flees,—Barabbas escapes,—ah, we shall have him, one day!" The Romans swept on in pursuit of the panic-stricken Jews. As the road under the bridge was deserted, Rinnah was exposed to view standing beside the wall, the broken sword in his hand. "The last soldier!" shouted Sextus with a great laugh; "he sticks to his post!"

Miriam ran to the beggar and took his hand. "Here I am," she said, "did you think I would leave you?" Zuph had sunk upon the ground, his strength exhausted.

Sextus stood beside Miriam. "I am waiting for a kind word," he said with his genial smile.

"I owe you my life!" exclaimed Miriam. "Come to my home, and father will reward you."

"Nay, girl, no one can reward me but you."

"I am but a simple maiden; I own nothing of value."

"Not so, maiden. There is a look in your eye worth all your father's wealth. Let us sit here under the bridge and talk until the old man is rested,—that is all I ask."

They sat in a row, the old slave, the blind beggar, the gladiator, the maiden.

“What an assembly!” cried Sextus with his boisterous laugh. “We all look as dirty as slaves,—and as happy as kings! Nay, never mind your torn dress, you cannot go through a war unscathed. What is your name, child?”

“Miriam.”

“Miriam? Why, I like the sound; yes, it is a good name, it will do to call by! And whence?”

“Capernaum, Sextus.” She called his name,—it was a sign she liked him, and he understood.

“Capernaum? What! Then,—do you know one, Iddo?”

“He lives next door.”

Sextus grew excited, while Zuph still panted, showing no disposition to resume his journey. “Next door, Miriam? In that case perhaps,—yes, surely,— Poof! The dust has choked me. There was—there is—a young man——”

“Do you mean Adnah?” asked Miriam, looking brightly at the gladiator. Rinnah dropped the broken sword, and a blush dyed the maiden’s cheeks.

“Perhaps I do,” said Sextus. “Adnah, you say? I believe Adnah is what Iddo calls him. You must have seen him, since he lives next door.”

“Yes.”

“What a strange world!” cried Sextus, clasping

his hands nervously. "If I had cut off your head, you would never have told me this! You have seen him more than once?"

"Yes, Sextus."

"I think I have heard he is a very ugly youth,—a miserable pinched nose—a stuttering voice—knocking knees—leering eyes—shambling feet—ay, Miriam?"

"No," said Miriam, indignantly.

Sextus looked at her wonderingly. "What has happened? Your words have grown as short as if I were a beggar. Surely you cannot dislike Adnah! yet you will give me no word of comfort, though I would hear all the good that might be said of him."

Miriam lifted her head with an effort and shook back her hair while she answered with a flush, "He is very handsome; and though slender, he is as straight as a palm; and his voice is like music in the Temple; and I like him as my dear friend; and the thought of me is a flower in his life."

Old Zuph groaned deeply.

"Heaven bless you!" cried Sextus, and tears rushed to his eyes.

"Surely *you* know Adnah, also!" cried Miriam, forgetting her embarrassment at sight of the tears.

"I know Iddo," said Sextus hurriedly, "and he has told me of his nephew—of this Adnah who has

been received into favor in King Herod's palace. I love Iddo, and therefore I love the boy."

"But look! but look!" cried Miriam suddenly, "yonder comes Adnah now!" From their position they could see the road at the point where it turned to cross the bridge. Adnah was visible one moment before the sound of his passing mule could be heard overhead. Sextus covered his face with his hands till the rider had crossed the bridge. Then he rose hurriedly.

"Must you go?" asked Miriam regretfully.

"Yes," he said abstractedly, "yes,—good-bye, Miriam,—good-bye. Duty calls me to the palace; duty—duty——" He hastened away. Zuph rose stiffly.

"What a strange man!" exclaimed Miriam, looking after the retreating form.

"Truly," said Zuph, "any man is strange who is both Jew and gladiator! A singular combination!"

"But I like him," added Miriam gently.

"And truly, he loves Adnah!" observed the blind beggar thoughtfully.

"What said he of King Herod's palace?" muttered Zuph to himself.

CHAPTER XIX

IDDO

THUS far Iddo has hovered dimly in the background of past scenes, his presence rather felt than descried. A villain is more endurable in the life of which we form a part, than in the history of a life whose leaves we turn, helpless to wound the man there painted, with the shafts of our indignation. But the time has come to look into Iddo's soul that we may better understand the story of Adnah. We have seen his shadow; let us scrutinize the man.

Given a few leaves from the childhood of a man, one may write a history of his maturity. When Iddo was a boy, he and his brother Samuel dwelt with their father in Jerusalem. Their father was a Rabbi, therefore a Pharisee, and saturated with all the pride, and slave to all the rites, of his caste. The boys never knew a mother's influence. Iddo was the first-born, the pride of his father's heart, and no pains were spared to perfect him in a knowledge of the traditions and the law. But Samuel, three years younger, showed a hostility to learning. Having deprived himself by his own

choice of the only legitimate ambition a Pharisee could entertain, the younger lacked a motive to hold him to a steady course of life. Willingly he would have renounced the privileges of his race, if he could have become a soldier; but alas! a Roman is born, not made, and a Jew is a Jew forever.

Finding time hanging heavily upon his hands, Samuel sought to lighten its burden in his own free way. He shunned the Temple and the schools and mingled with great throngs,—the common rabble so despised by his father and brother. His father looked upon Samuel as a disagreeable incident in a life devoted to learning. Samuel regarded his father as a rainy day when one desires to travel. But the boys were closely knit together, as most dissimilar characters may be, by a lonely childhood.

Samuel had two objects in life; the first, to find amusement; the second, to enjoy the greatness of his brother. And Iddo loved Samuel with a condescending half-ashamed affection, as if he felt that his love should have known better. They were young men when the revolt of Judas, the Galilean, struck at the Roman government. Their father held secret meetings with Judas and at last carried his sons to Galilee to aid in stirring up the Jews. Taking advantage of the indignation which had been aroused against the Roman Prefect, Quirinus, the

revolutionists embarked upon a sea of war, to find shipwreck against the legionaries of the Imperial government. Judas and Iddo's father were slain. Iddo, one of the wildest enthusiasts, succeeded in hiding from the authorities the fact that he had been engaged in battle. His protestations of innocence found credence because Samuel, who had shown no sympathy with his countrymen, had openly, and in defiance of the custom of his race, married a Samaritan.

Iddo hugged his secret to his breast while his friends and kindred were falling victims to the ruthless vengeance of the Romans. When a spy, to test him, met him one night with the watchword of Judas, "No master but God!" Iddo retorted in his sonorous voice, "And Tiberius!"

The spirit of revolt did not die with Judas the Galilean. Presently a new leader arose who employed secret methods. His name was Barabbas. Iddo entered into communication with him, and aided in weaving an intricate network of plots. For years they worked in the dark ever with the danger of crucifixion hanging over them; but the fire of liberty in these hearts threw all dangers into shadow. Iddo's life of scheming reacted upon his character. He became secret in private life, the generous traits of his disposition were consumed by

hidden fires. He was living two lives; one for the observation of his neighbors, another, as he thought, for the future glory of his race. Thus the falsehood of his life, which he imagined devoted to religion and patriotism, was built upon the foundation of hypocrisy and deceit.

A nation cannot be rescued by love alone. There are those who see both sides of a question in the same light, until the gleam of gold throws one side into darkness. Patriotism and enthusiasm must be bought, but whence the money? Alas! the Rabbi is not allowed to charge for his instruction; even his daily wants are at the mercy of generous friends. For it is the glory of a Pharisee to be always poor, always great. It is the hated Sadducees who are known for their material prosperity, their holding of lucrative offices, their aspirations to the high priesthood. Money must be had before the power of Rome crushes forever the spirit of God's peculiar people.

Whence shall this necessary money come? From that very iniquitous taxation which defies sacred liberty. When one has a brother who is at the receipt of custom, and who holds the money-bags, may not means be found of sounding the capacity of those money-bags? Is not this money extorted from righteous Jews by idolatrous Gentiles? This

is not theft! It must be snatched from the Roman's Publican, though one's own brother, and returned to its rightful owners,—Barabbas and his agents! This does not make Barabbas a robber, but a martyr. Thus Iddo blinded his eyes, called evil deeds by fair names, and committed them with a smiling conscience. And even if one's brother be punished for the good cause, it will be no more than his desert, when one remembers his baseness in falling in love with a pretty face, and in marrying the owner of that face,—her, a Samaritan, hated of all true Jews! But perhaps Samuel will not be suspected! Then Iddo committed the crime, and hoped for the best.

When Samuel found the money gone, the night after he had shown Iddo its place of concealment, he almost lost his mind because he dared not trust its logic. White and terrible he sought the Pharisee, and in piteous broken tones, told how some evil spirit had visited the treasury. But Iddo, in sudden terror at sight of Samuel's agony, confessed the truth. "But, oh, my brother, it is for the glory of our poor people. Have mercy upon us, Samuel, we are very near success! Liberty hovers over the head of Barabbas. Soon he will reach forth his hand, clutch her and perch her upon our standard. Yonder come the soldiers, brother, quick—promise

to deliver us! I ask this not for myself, but for my race,—for my God!”

Samuel, with his simple heart, blinded by the brotherly adoration which had sweetened his life from the cradle, consented to bear the blame, if Iddo would promise to treat Adnah as his own son, and to rear him to be a great Rabbi. It was promised with sincere tears; the soldiers came; Samuel vanished from Capernaum. When Iddo gave his promise, he meant to keep it; and during the first days of Samuel's disgrace, he was tender with the child; and when he felt tenderness no longer, still, when others were present, Adnah could not detect the change. We are ourselves only when we are alone; Hamlet is not Hamlet when conscious of an audience. When Iddo was alone, his conscience whispered that he was a thief,—that for his sake a simple heart must suffer. As he realized deeper and deeper the misguided heroism of Samuel, his sentiments towards Adnah darkened from indifference to hatred. For Adnah's sake he had been spared disgrace; therefore he hated the boy. This hate became a monomania,—the revenge his crime played upon him. The sight of the pale face,—pale because of his cruelty,—drove Iddo at length to the attempt upon Adnah's life.

At last in that cave where the stolen money had

been hoarded and where other ill-gotten wealth had accumulated,—at last came Adnah with a blessing, a prayer, a kiss. It was so wonderful, that revelation of love from an enemy, that living out of a divine command, that every motive for hatred, every reason for hiding his guilt, was swept from Iddo's soul. To become great in Israel became a thing pitiably small and weak, beside the kindness of the youth he had loathed. When Adnah left him, the Pharisee had but one object,—reparation. He put Hodesh aside bluntly; he was deaf to the questions of his neighbors as he hurried from Capernaum upon his swiftest mule. If he should die before he had an opportunity to confess! Let him but be spared to implore the pardon of his brother, to take his place, and, if it must be, suffer death! Adnah's prayer echoed day and night in his ears, and as Jerusalem drew near, he thought heaven drew nearer.

The course of a lifetime is seldom changed in a moment. Even when melted by Adnah's kindness, Iddo did not tell the truth concerning Samuel; he was not known as Galba, his master was not Caius Marcellus. Samuel, upon being dragged to the Holy City, had escaped crucifixion to become a gladiator of Pontius Pilate; and he was known as Sextus.

When Iddo rode into Jerusalem, he did not repent of his repentance, but he feared the return and mastery of his old self. The city was so full of fond and proud memories! Yonder he had gone to school seeking to build stairs of thought to greatness. Here he had stood with Barabbas, making a program of the destinies of nations. On that corner his father had predicted for his boy great things, and in that market-place he had prayed long prayers for the delectation of the passers-by. Iddo turned his bloodshot eyes from one familiar object to another, and everywhere was the sunshine to which he was about to bid adieu,—everywhere were faces he would see no more. But Adnah had kissed him! And at last he was about to free himself of the horror of his life,—the thought of his terrible wrong to Adnah's father. Giving himself no time for reflection which might result in weakness, Iddo hurried to the palace of Pontius Pilate,—the castle of the Asmoneans, which looked across the valley upon the temple. Having traversed the open space before the magnificent pile, riding along embowered paths from which one caught glimpses of sparkling canals and clear lakes, Iddo was halted at the huge gates of the Prætorium.

“Stay, Jew!” said the gatekeeper superciliously.

“I must see the Procurator,” faltered Iddo.
“The case is urgent.”

“Are you not Iddo, the Pharisee, brother of Sextus, the gladiator?”

“Yes, yes—quick, I must see Pilate!”

“The brother of Sextus is not admitted,” said the Roman stolidly. Iddo stared, breathless. This was the first time he had been refused entrance.

“Not admitted? But I must be admitted. There is a matter concerning my brother which must be made clear.”

“Does a Jew say ‘must’ to a Roman?” sneered the gatekeeper. “I tell you, it will be the worse for a Pharisee, if you are found here disputing my commands!”

“But why—but why,—what has altered my coming and going?”

“It is this, Iddo; after each of your visits, we find Sextus as weak as a woman. Therefore the sports of the arena are delayed, and we perish of dulness in this accursed land of phylacteries and money-sharks. Away, away, or you will be cooled in our dungeons, O Iddo!”

Destiny had intervened to save him. Destiny—or God? Was not this the finger of God, pointing out to Iddo his true duty,—to work for his race, to give his life for his people? What if he had suc-

ceeded in reaching Pilate with his story? What if he had been crucified and the gladiator liberated? That act of justice for the sake of one person was nothing compared to what he might hope to accomplish for tens of thousands. He felt he had been swayed from the course of duty by a kiss; he must be strong and put from him the thought of Adnah's prayer and of Samuel's captivity. Now, when he rode the street and felt the sunshine bathing his person, his heart leaped; it was his sunshine,—his world! The horror of crucifixion was gone; his heart, freed from the cage of fear, soared to meet the birds.

At a turning in the narrow street he met Barabbas. The fierce enthusiasm of the revolutionist re-animating the fires in Iddo's breast. Liberty, liberty,—all things, whether justice, truth or virtue, must become slaves to the idea of liberty! As he went home with Barabbas, he reflected upon his future course. He decided nothing definitely regarding Adnah; he knew his denial of Adnah's story would find belief, if Gothinus could be silenced. Simon, the leper, was not to be feared, since his disease isolated him from the companionship and the confidences of men. No one would listen to Adnah, the obscure one, when he should bring grave charges against the holy and celebrated Iddo.

But Gothinus? True, he was a slave and a Gentile; but his master, Lucius would believe,—and Lucius was a great man in Galilee. The thought of Gothinus tortured Iddo as he pretended to hear the impassioned words of Barabbas. After all, it must be a contest between the Pharisee and the Gothic slave. Surely the Jews would espouse the cause of Iddo. Thus Adnah's uncle entirely renounced the thought of reparation, and while he did not feel that loathing for Adnah which had brought its own punishment during many years, he felt fear, even terror; fear because Adnah who had blessed him, must be overcome; terror because Adnah who had prayed for him, must in some way be crushed; yes, must be crushed, that the work for the uplifting of the Jews might prosper. Iddo told himself that if he alone could bear the consequences of Pilate's anger, nothing could prevent his atonement. But if he were torn from his position in Galilee a hundred schemes would fall to the ground; and since for a greater cause he must preserve himself, his heart bounded with self-exaltation because he could call his self-preservation a sacrifice.

The next day Iddo, finding that Barabbas intended to make open revolt in the city, slipped from the conspirators lest he be brought into danger. His nature was fitted for secret machinations, not for

heroic daring. As he wandered afoot along familiar ways, suddenly he saw a form ahead of him which caused him instinctively to crouch in a low doorway. It was Adnah, riding a mule. With cautious footsteps Iddo followed, still without a definite course of action shaped in his mind.

Adnah paused and accosted a stranger; Iddo heard him inquire the way to the palace of Caius Marcellus. He was seeking his father, thinking to find him a slave, as Iddo had declared. The Pharisee had given Caius Marcellus as Samuel's master, not from any deep-laid plot, but because his nature had forbidden him, even in the hour of apparent death, to speak the truth. There *was* a Caius Marcellus, and he possessed a palace; the name had flashed upon the captive's mind, and he had spoken it. Now Adnah would go thither, he would inquire,—what would happen when he learned that the slave "Galba" was a fiction? Iddo continued to follow silently.

"Ha, Iddo! afoot!" exclaimed a voice; "where is the mule you rode so gallantly yesterday?"

"Hail, Joseph," said Iddo in a disturbed voice, scarce glancing at his friend.

Joseph plucked his sleeve. "The reason I ask, friend,—just now I met a young man riding a mule that looks like yours,—see, yonder he goes. Now,

finding you afoot I fear there may be an evil deed."

"It is Adnah!" exclaimed Iddo, staring after the rider as if he had for the first time observed him.

"Adnah? What! that nephew you so often speak of,—the wicked young man who despises the law and the prophets, and who reviles you openly? How comes he in Jerusalem? Why is he here?"

"Ah, *why?*" murmured Iddo striking his breast with his clenched hand.

"I understand, I understand!" said his zealous friend; "but you shall not thus be hindered by foolish sentiment. I will do this duty for you!" Then raising his voice he shouted, "A thief! Stop the young man. He has stolen his master's mule. He has slipped from home and come to the city to betray his master's secrets!"

While eager hands caught Adnah's bridle, other Jews flocked about Iddo. "What! is it true? Does he know aught of our plans,—of Barabbas?"

"I tell you he knows everything!" cried Joseph, as Iddo hung his head. "But he is related to Iddo, therefore this weakness."

"*Related!*" shouted several voices in fierce wrath, "what is *that*, when you weigh our——"

“Hush!” warned Joseph. “The soldiers are coming.”

“A thief, a thief!” cried the Jews, fear of exposure giving vehemence to their denunciation. Adnah’s mule had been forced about, and now he was led towards Iddo. Adnah fastened his burning eyes upon his uncle’s face.

“What is this?” demanded a soldier making his way to Adnah’s side,—the same soldier who had forced his broken sword into Rinnah’s hand. “Speak up, Pharisee; is this your mule? And has he stolen it?”

Iddo raised his head and stared at the soldier with glazed eyes; he spoke one word in a thick voice; “*Yes!*”

“Oh, Iddo, Iddo!” cried Adnah in a sharp voice of sudden wonder and misery. “Look, Iddo, this is *not* your mule! It was loaned me by Lucius the centurion.”

“Shame, shame!” shouted Joseph. “Did we not see Iddo riding that mule but yesterday?”

“We saw, we saw!” testified the throng.

“Is it likely that a centurion lends mules to Jews?” sneered a warrior.

“Enough,” said the merry soldier, bestriding the animal in question; “more than enough, since two witnesses, only, are required. Arrest the fellow,

comrades, and as for me, I will arrest the mule!"

In consideration of Adnah's youth, he was spared the death of the cross, and was sold to a Roman nobleman. His master was Caius Marcellus.

CHAPTER XX

DESPAIR

CAIUS MARCELLUS had come to Jerusalem to escape the dangers threatening the rich of the Imperial City. The power of Sejanus was in its zenith, and a word spoken against Tiberius was not safe in the ear of a brother. But Marcellus found life in Judea not worth the security it insured; his heart ever pined for Italy and for the luxury without which a Roman of the Empire found life tasteless. While meditating a return to his native land, he was offered for easy purchase a great estate in Sicily which promised an extensive income. To manage such an estate, at least 10,000 slaves were necessary, and as Marcellus made preparations for departure, he looked about him for strong arms and fleet limbs. Adnah appeared desirable, and the overseer purchased the youth the day of his trial, which was the day of the knight's departure from Jerusalem.

Adnah had not recovered from the shock of horror at his uncle's base treachery, when he learned that Marcellus had no slave known as "Galba," and had never possessed such a one since coming to Judea.

He sought to tell his story; he demanded that Lucius the centurion be advised of his unjust captivity; but he was silenced by the overseer who was seeking slaves, not justice. On the way to Cæsarea he was fastened by the waist to a gang of slaves who were driven forward under the singing of the lash. At Cæsarea they took ship for Sicily and Adnah was thrown into vile quarters, where slaves of many nationalities were huddled close for want of room.

During the long voyage, not once did he see the face of Marcellus. "As many enemies as slaves" was the Roman saying, and Marcellus had no desire to view his valuable enemies close at hand. The name of the overseer was Scipio. He had risen from the lowest depths of slavery by industry and cunning. He retained the good-will of his master by industry and cruelty. The fact that he had once belonged to a gang of slaves did not soften his heart towards those under him. Adnah left his country a prey to dull, sullen anger. When he remembered how Iddo had lain in his power yet had been spared, had been blessed and prayed for, had been kissed and aided to walk from his prison-cave, —then recalled the day of the arrest and Iddo's "Yes," it seemed to the young man that everything in life was false except revenge. He could not

credit Iddo with those few faint efforts towards virtue which had proved the Pharisee a man instead of a monster. He believed his uncle had all the time intended to consummate his ruin. In the cave Iddo had given "Galba" as his brother's assumed name, Marcellus as the master. He had hurried to Jerusalem there to await his victim. He had gathered his friends in the street, and had trained Joseph to play his part. He had pretended shame and hesitation,—had made a show of being unwilling to accuse. At the trial he had hung his head, looking more guilty than the prisoner. Ah, the hypocrite! Adnah despised his uncle more for what he believed a pretense of grief than for the beatings of his childhood.

It was Scipio's policy that there should be no ties of friendship between the slaves. Conversation was forbidden, and in this enforced silence, Adnah brooded over his wrongs, seeing no help, not even the hope of revenge. Once when he would have exchanged his story with a neighbor, Scipio discovered their low voices, and gave both a terrible flogging. Adnah endured the torture in silence, saying in his heart, "This, also, I owe to Iddo!"

Many a time there came the thought of Miriam, but it was as the thought of cool waters to a shipwrecked sailor who perishes of thirst. He loved her better than his life,—how gladly he would have

died for her! The sound of her voice had been the music of his boyhood. Her face and form with their varying lights, and her attitudes as she rested upon the house-top in the cool of the day, had formed the picture gallery of his life of dreams. The three days when she had talked to him were three golden lamps which at the touch of memory had made the darkness of his sorrows disappear. Now all was changed,—the music hushed, the pictures dim, the lamps untrimmed. Never to see her again,—never! to toil as a slave till death should follow upon exhaustion and abuse, without again seeing Miriam! “This, also, I owe to Iddo!” he reflected.

Like most of the great Sicilian estates, that of Marcellus was stocked with sheep. Adnah became a shepherd. The home of the master stood fifteen miles from the sheepfold, where a thousand sheep were shut up in the low brick *ovile*, during inclement weather. Each shepherd was put in charge of a hundred sheep, given a dog for a companion and assistant, and sent forth to live as he might. If he did not choose to sleep upon the ground, he must build a hut; if he did not care to starve, he must plant a garden,—or turn brigand. In no case must he draw near his master's residence; in no case must he make friendships among his fellows,—the

terrible servile wars were too recent in the memory of Sicilians to risk another confederation.

Adnah's dog was a huge white animal which Scipio had purchased from a distant estate. He and Adnah were brought together, both strangers in the midst of an unknown land. He called the dog, "Friend." It pleased the lonely youth to give that name even to a dog. "Friend" was one of those ferocious creatures which from time immemorial have helped guard the sheep of the Roman Campagna. Fierce as the wolves which continually menace the flocks, the white breed is preferred to distinguish the dogs from the voracious enemy. At first the beast was kept muzzled, for he showed a desire to rend all who approached. But presently he learned that one from among the strangers brought him meat and drink day after day. "You, too, have been stolen from your home and carried a slave into a far country," said Adnah.

The dog did not care for the meat,—a terrible homesickness gnawed at his vitals; but the tone of Adnah's voice stole his heart away, and when he heard that voice calling "Friend!" the savage snarl vanished. In the meantime Adnah ate the meat which the dog refused. The first day that he reached forth his hand to seize the neglected food,—for he was faint from fasting,—the savage beast sprang upon him,

throwing him to the ground, and wrenched at the chain which held him back from the prostrate form. But now it was different. As the young man slipped under his ragged dress the portion that had been left, the dog, tall and rigid, stood with an eye on the alert for Scipio.

The overseer was usually present when the dogs were fed, but when the meat had been thrown upon the ground, he seldom lingered to see it devoured. The Jew had found all appeals for food in vain. "You starve?" sneered Scipio; "turn brigand, then, and eat your fill!"

When he had taken forth his flock into the lonely grazing-lands, he built a little fire and cooked the meat while the dog sat watching him, wrinkling his huge nose with satisfaction, and stirring the stump of a tail which was too short to wag,—it had been docked to prevent hydrophobia. As time passed by, the dog regained his former appetite, but still he left part of his repast untouched for his master; still he sat unmoved during the cooking, though the moisture would trickle from his massive jowl. But to others he became more dangerous, more untamable. All day he kept an outlook for wolves while the sheep straggled over the green, and Adnah, seated in a shady nook, brooded upon his fate.

At evening when he had taken his flock to the

fold, Adnah's day's work was over. Then if it were chilly he sought the hut built by his own hands on his first arrival. It was fashioned of wattled reeds, the long hollow stalks forming a cone. The room was just wide enough to allow one to stretch at full length, and only in the centre could one stand erect. The bed was a pile of straw, the cover a mat made of the skins of wolves. Here Adnah slept with his dog curled beside him, and from the heap of straw a ladder of dreams reached up into a heaven of love. When it grew cold and frost whitened the earth, and a wind moaned over the vast uplands, Adnah and the dog lay close, one dreaming of Miriam, the other of wolves.

In the first spring Adnah planted a garden, the seeds generously furnished by the *villicus*. As he watched the springing up of the vegetables, and saw them coming to maturity, he felt his passion against Iddo dying away, and once more he could see the face of Jesus and hear His gentle voice. He worked hard, urged not so much by necessity as by love. His garden became a friend, and its changing face furnished a never-failing source of interest. He thought that page of nature never read the same on different days. It was a garden too valuable for a slave to possess,—Adnah had overshot the mark, and Scipio quietly waited without a hint of

what was to happen. Turnips, carrots, onions, asparagus, cucumbers, cabbage, lettuce, beans, peas, melons,—all these he had in generous profusion, and he saw the day approaching when he need not live upon the dog's rejected meat.

But the day did not come. The overseer took from him his garden when it was beginning to ripen, and sent him into a remote pasture-land with a new flock. Here, in bitterness of spirit, he built another hut, and all his spare time was needed in clearing the land of thorny brambles so dangerous to newly-sheared sheep, and in watching for snakes which were numerous. So, since coming into captivity, he had lost one friend,—his garden; he had but one left,—his dog. At night as he lay upon his straw, bright dreams ceased to visit him; revenge sang the only song his ears could understand.

A change came over him during the course of the next year. He ceased to feel any emotion keenly; even his hate was dulled. He sank into that lethargy which distinguished the lives of his fellows. The lonely watch by day, the rude hut by night, the isolation which prevented his hearing any voice but that of the cruel overseer,—all this helped to rob his nature of its graces. He became more and more like his dog. He ceased to speak to himself, he sel-

dom patted his companion. During the rainy season his hut leaked, his bed became sodden. He gave up the care of his person, and there was nothing in his dress or mien to differentiate him from the rude shepherds of his master. His life began to tell upon his health. A hacking cough announced his approach; his sleep became broken. He had long ago learned the nutritious herbs that were to be found near the base of the mountains, and the skill that devises traps without tools for the ensnaring of birds and wild beasts. Thus he was sometimes able to invite "Friend" to his own table; and when his trap was empty, and the herbs had lost their succulence, he found "Friend" a hospitable host.

A change came when Scipio, one day, discovered the dog's meat hidden in Adnah's clothes. "Aho!" cried the overseer with a furious grin, "it is *thus* you are enabled to live, stealing from the dog when a dog is worth two slaves. It is thus you subsist without your garden, yet never become a brigand. Strip yourself, fellow, that I may write upon your skin a lesson to be learned at your leisure!"

Adnah gave one despairing glance at the brutal face, at the powerful bared arm, at the long coiling whip. His cough came upon him and his form was racked.

“Quick—quick!” shouted Scipio. “Do you think to soften me by such frauds? The bare skin instantly, or this blade will be driven through your heart!”

Adnah realized his helplessness, his small value,—since slaves could be bought at prices directly controlled by the enormous quantities upon the market,—and his uncertain hold upon life,—since masters had a right to kill their slaves when and in whatever manner they desired. He slipped his rude garment from him and stood naked before the lash. The overseer flung back the whip to bring it down with all his force upon the statuesque form.

Then “Friend” stepped between, and showed his teeth while his huge breast quivered with subterranean growls. “So be it!” said Scipio, dropping the whip,—“then starve together!” But the overseer knew Adnah would not let the dog die of starvation; he believed the young man would now be forced to subsist by robbery.

It was thus the shepherds of great estates were expected to procure their living. The homes of the peasants were usually at their mercy, and if they attacked travelers on the highroad, there was no redress to the outraged, on account of the power of the patricians, and the laxity of the law. For this one cause of banding together to extort wealth

from defenseless travelers, the slaves were allowed to hold meetings and enjoy brief social intercourse. A *magister operae* was always present to see that the conference did not deflect from its avowed purpose, and become the nucleus of a rebellion against authority. Thus far Adnah, with a horror of robbery and violence in common with his race, had held aloof from such marauding expeditions. For himself, he preferred starvation to the crime of thieving,—more ignoble and despised than that of murder. But the dog? Adnah could subsist upon berries, herbs and the few wild creatures that were entangled in his nets. But “Friend” scorned berries and herbs. The few wolves that fell victims to his powerful teeth were rare incidents in his life. Adnah’s game reminded him of the delights of living rather than furnished him with such tangible delights.

“Friend” grew gaunt and thin, and, if possible, more dangerous than before. Three years had passed since he and his master became acquainted. No one who had known Adnah, the youth, could have recognized Adnah, the man. He was tall and thin, his complexion swarthy, his hair unkempt, his face bearded, his brow heavy. He wore a dress of goatskin, which reached his knees. His breast, one shoulder, and his legs were bare. Upon his

feet were wooden shoes,—the *villicus* furnished each slave with a pair every two years. He wore no covering for his head. Every day except in the rainy season, he might have been seen, his staff in hand, going forth with his flock, attended by a half-famished dog. In the midst of a deserted landscape, he would sink beside a rock, or lie under a tree, staring up at the sky, while “Friend” kept guard. His eyes wore that dull, glazed look which tells of utter surrender to misfortune. Never did the thought of escape visit him. Sometimes when he glared with loathing at the scene around, hating the very trees, the very grass, the very sheep,—he fancied he saw his own grave here in the wilds of Sicily. Here he would surely die and be buried. When he thought of Miriam it was no longer with pleasure, but as one who seeks to recall the name of an old acquaintance. When he remembered Iddo, the cause of all his misery, he felt no longer the fierce blood leaping through his veins. Loved one and enemy,—both were growing dim memories.

Once it was borne upon him with a stinging pain to which he had grown unaccustomed, that he was losing the power to feel any emotion keenly,—that he was becoming a dull brute, unable to lift his thoughts above shelter and food. The knowledge smote upon him and he broke into bitter sobs,—

heavy, dry sobs that presently died away because he could not sustain the emotion of sorrow. Fainter and fainter grew the pictures of the past; stronger became the supreme importance of the moment. In another respect Adnah had become like the dog; both were starving.

“Friend,” said Adnah, “let us wait one more night, and if the traps are empty, perhaps we will become brigands, after all.”

The dog laid his massive head upon the naked knee, and wrinkling back his forehead, looked up into his master’s haggard face. The night came, but the traps were unsprung.

The next day Adnah said, “We will wait another night, Friend. Courage!”

But the night brought no food. In the morning when they were in the pastures, Adnah threw his arm about the dog’s neck and said, “It is no use, Friend, I cannot become a brigand; we must die before that. I cannot forget that I am a Jew; and Friend, my father was not a thief; no, my father was not a thief!” As he spoke the words he felt the stirring of a passion that had smouldered all these years,—the thirst for vengeance.

The dog read the note of hopelessness. He slowly turned away, and crept from his master. Adnah felt that even the dog had deserted him. He lay with his

face in his arms as if dead. An hour passed thus unheeded, then the dog's tongue touched the back of his hand. He started up. There stood the famished dog over him, the great frame painfully distinct from the shrinking of the skin. The dog's mouth was bloody. Adnah started up, glancing down at the same time. The back of his hand which the hot tongue had touched was bloody, also.

“Friend!” cried Adnah in wonder.

The dog drooped his head, then crept away. He looked back and whined for his master to follow, then crouched close to the earth as if ashamed.

Adnah whispered with a white face, “Is he going mad?”

The dog looked back, then advanced slowly.

The young man seized his stout staff and followed. He was conducted towards the forest that stretched to the mountains. “Friend” led the way without hesitation, but never with a sign of happiness. They came to the traps and Adnah uttered a glad cry; apparently some beast had been caught in the snare. The dog crouched close to the ground, quivering, casting furtive looks at his master. Adnah drew nearer the dead animal. It was a lamb, its throat bathed in fresh blood. The dog had killed it while Adnah lay despairing, and had dragged it all the way to the traps.

“Oh, Friend, Friend!” cried Adnah, falling upon his knees beside the dog, “you have written your own death in the lifeblood of this lamb.” The tears streamed down his face, for he knew that his only friend must die. The dog still quivered upon the earth, abject but heroic.

“But I will keep the secret,” whispered Adnah, “they will find out soon enough. You have killed your first lamb, poor Friend; you have tasted the blood of innocence; your course downward is certain. Alas! is not every sheep counted each night? What can I say for you, Friend?” His tears rained down upon the crouching form. The dog licked his hand.

Tortures of hunger for a time overcame his sorrow. He built a fire and roasted the meat, while the dog returned to guard the flock. But the eyes that watched the grazing animals were now as fierce as were those same eyes when turned upon any man but the master. Each sheep had become to “Friend” a potential dinner. He realized that some terrible punishment awaited him, since he had by his voluntary act outraged a life of training. But in the meantime he could eat, and his starving master as well. When the meat was cooked, Adnah crept to the edge of the forest and called the dog cautiously. They ate ravenously but in guilty

silence. Adnah hoped the cooked meat might prevent the dog from further depredations. Yet when the overseer's *magister operae* should count the flock,—what then? Accuse the wolves of a successful attack? In that, also was danger. The *villicus* had more than once recently dropped the remark that the dog was growing old,—that before long he must be killed to give place to a fresher guard. This act would hasten the fate of Adnah's friend.

That evening as Adnah drew near the *ovile* with his flock, the huge dog swung before him in the path and stopped, looking wistfully up into his master's face. In spite of Adnah's barbarous garb and disheveled hair and neglected person, "Friend" thought him the handsomest man in the world. Adnah stopped, and laid his hand upon the great head. The dog whined mournfully and licked the hand, and then fawned upon the wooden shoes.

"Come, Friend," said Adnah, starting on. But "Friend" did not come. He stood motionless, gazing after the young man with a subdued cry dying in his throat. Adnah coaxed, then commanded, but the dog remained like a statue. Then the master returned and sank upon his knees beside his faithful ally. "Is it good-bye, Friend?" he mur-

mured, putting his face against the coarse hair, "Is it good-bye?"

The dog whined dismally and licked his hands and knees. Adnah arose when he dared linger no longer, and started towards the sheepfold, scarce able to see his white charges for his tears. Once he looked back. Far away across the horizon that shut in the uplands, swung a long, gaunt form, which, but for its white color, might have been mistaken for a wolf. Thus Adnah parted from his second friend.

When he turned the sheep over to the counting of the *magister operae*, he discovered Scipio engaged in conversation with a stranger.

"Here he is, now," said Scipio. Adnah was approached by the stranger, who regarded him critically.

"He does not look strong," said the man.

"But his muscle is like steel," said Scipio. "His endurance is wonderful. His thinness deceives you."

"He has a fearful cough," the stranger objected.

"That is his fraud," said Scipio with an evil leer at the Jew. "He has tried to move me with his fraud, for he holds himself above his fellows; he will not rob the curs that run our highroads!"

"You will sell me none other?"

“Not I. Marcellus is buying slaves, not selling. But this fellow does not fit into our life; he is an eternal drawing-back upon the cord of my content.”

“Well, well,” said the stranger, “after all, it is numbers I seek rather than valor. No one can withstand Sextus. Come, fellow, receive the chains.”

Adnah’s heart leaped. Any change seemed desirable. “What has happened?” he ventured to ask Scipio.

“What has happened, is your transfer to a new master,” said Scipio with a grim smile. “What *will* happen is your death in Pilate’s amphitheatre, —whither you are about to be carried!”

“Back to Judea!” shouted Adnah; this fact was more important to his mind than the danger at which the overseer hinted.

“Why, yes,” said the stranger as he secured Adnah’s arms, “Pilate gives a game in honor of Tiberius, and I am seeking many slaves to make sport in the arena. I think, in spite of Scipio’s brave words for you, fellow, that Sextus the gladiator will make short work of this muscle, and this endurance!”

CHAPTER XXI

PURSUIT

REUBEN BEN JOEL was returning to Capernaum after his consecration as a priest. As he drew near the walled city, his eyes turned upon the sea of Galilee, but they saw not the fishers' boats that were tacking towards the shore. A Friday evening was drawing to a close; the Sabbath was about to begin. The young man's gaze was fixed upon the future which his ambitious fancy painted for his feet. Already a priest, already a friend of Lucius the centurion, already the recipient of honors from Roman officials, the Sadducee saw himself walking with ease to seats of greatness. The tendencies of the youth had, with the passing of years, become hardened into fixed traits of character. As a Sadducee wealth and glory were accessible, and being fettered by few of the traditions which made the life of the Rabbi a monotonous round of ceremonial observances, he exulted in the absence of weights which might have checked his course. Everything was to be devoted to obtaining this authority which distinguished his class. And everything had yielded to his wishes except——

A frown crossed his face as he drew nearer his native city. It was very hard that the only definite check to his career had come from his sister! What would he not have done for her? What had he not done, which an affectionate brother could do? And she had always pretended to love him; he had believed in her love. But it had consisted in words,—words! Now that she could assist him by an act, she shook her head. Yet what he asked was not only for his advancement, but for her welfare, and for the gratification of his parents. One of the most influential members of the Sanhedrim, a Sadducee who had it in his power to advance Reuben to a higher step in the Jewish aristocracy, one who was old and staid and faithful to the cold and polished doctrines of his caste, one who was old enough to be Miriam's father, had asked for her in marriage. And she had refused! On Reuben's insisting, pleading, even commanding, she had wept, she had fasted, she had paled day after day,—but she had refused; and still refused; and declared passionately that she would never marry, never! Her mother urged her, even for her brother's sake, to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity. But Joel would stroke his daughter's hair and say, "It shall be as the child wishes."

"As the child wishes,"—a maiden,—a *sister* whom

one naturally expects to do as she is told, from whom one has a right to exact silent obedience and unreasoning affection. The great Sadducee was waiting for Miriam to come to her reason; but the jeweled hand that stroked his flowing white beard was becoming agitated; the cold, proud eyes that met Reuben's gaze were growing less friendly than their wont. The young priest read danger ahead, unless Miriam could be taught her duty. Still, he did not despair of working upon his sister's soft nature; only,—the loss of time irritated him, and— as he believed with all his heart,—irritated him most justly.

Why did the maiden object to this marriage which any other damsel might count a crowning glory? Why does a maiden of a marrying age, full of health and remarked for her beauty, declare that she will never marry, never? It is not the nature of a girl to see clear to the end of her life and discover no shadow of a husband in her path. Reuben was betrothed to the daughter of this very white-bearded suitor,—and yet a woman inclines towards settled life long before a man! The Sadducee had been a widower five years; his daughter was Miriam's age; what companions they might become!

“It is either Gothinus or Adnah,” mused the

priest. "A maid's resolution never to marry, evidently springs from her inability to obtain the man of her choice. Alas! that *I*, but newly come to honor, should be hindered by a sister who has a man of her choice. What! Is it for maidens to have any choice until they are married? Yet it must be that Miriam loves! That will explain the change that has come over her; what else can explain it? There is Gothinus,—a heretic, a gentile, and a barbarian; and there is Adnah, a thief and the son of a thief,—how the sin of the father is visited upon the child!—a slave, an abandoned wretch,—his uncle, the despised Pharisee, and worse than all ——"

Reuben groaned aloud. At that moment from the synagogue of Capernaum which Lucius the centurion had built for the Jews, came the first trumpet-blast announcing the advent of Sabbath. The sun was setting. The laborers in the fields ceased from a week of toil. By the time the third blast had warned the inhabitants of the city to stay all labor, the young man had reached the gate. Here he found a matter of some excitement going forward. Lucius, at the head of soldiers from the garrison, was listening to the rapid words of a courier. As Reuben came nearer, the centurion called him in a friendly tone. Reuben,

always proud of recognition from a man of authority, drew rein and bowed profoundly.

“A runaway slave with an iron collar welded around his neck!” called Lucius. “If you discover such a one, report him, or better,—capture!”

The soldiers began to scatter, to commence the search of Capernaum.

“I am happy,” said Reuben, “that a chance is offered me of aiding you, O Lucius.”

“I am sure he entered this gate,” said the courier, “and I do not think he could possibly have passed through the others before my comrades were there on guard.”

“I go *your* way,” said a young man, riding up beside Reuben’s mule. It was Gothinus, formerly Lucius’ slave, but now a freedman.

“In truth?” murmured Reuben coldly.

“The runaway is a young man,” said Gothinus, as if he had not noticed the unfriendly intonation, “and his garment is made of the skin of wolves, which hangs short upon his bare legs. His hair is so wild and matted, it falls over his face, almost hiding the eyes. Thus you may know him.”

“Very well,” said Reuben shortly.

Gothinus always thought of Reuben as the brother of Miriam. He controlled himself. “The fellow was a thief,” he said mildly. “He is a desperate

creature. As soon as the ship touched at Cæsarea he broke bonds and almost eluded the master. Then an iron collar was welded about his neck,—a dog collar for a dog! And when they reached Jerusalem he got free again, and has come all the way hither, dodging through streets of cities, crouching in caves of Samaria,—a wonderful chase! a wonderful criminal!”

“Think you not,” said Reuben, “we shall stand a better chance of finding him, if we separate and search in different streets?”

“As you please, Reuben,” quietly answered the young man who had once saved his life. Gothinus directed his horse towards Joel’s home.

“Nay!” said Reuben quickly, “let *me* take that road, and do you go in the opposite direction!”

Gothinus made no reply, but drew his horse aside that the mule might pass. Then he took the way the brother of Miriam had indicated. At the first turning he came upon the runaway slave, advancing stealthily. There could be no mistaking the wretched attire, the ferocious mien, the swaying locks. Both were taken by surprise, and the slave uttered a low wail of desolate anguish. After his terrible flight, his days and nights of acute suffering, he saw the end. His strength was gone, and for once his cunning had failed him.

Gothinus was the first to recover. He leaped from his horse with drawn sword and rushed upon the crouching form.

“Yield!” cried Gothinus.

The fugitive looked up through his shaggy hair.

“Reprieve, Gothinus!” he said hoarsely. “Give me but half an hour. Give me but the space of time for the killing of Iddo. Give me this time, dear Gothinus! Let me go free for this deed. Nay, take me to his house, keep guard over me if you please, but let these hands find his throat! It is all I ask. It is all I came for. After he is dead, what do I care what can happen to me? I am a wreck, the ruins of a man. Gothinus, we were friends. Gothinus, you saved me from falling to my death. Do not snatch this life from me till I have had revenge. Oh, my revenge! dear Gothinus, kind Gothinus, brave friend, true man—let me have my revenge and then I will come to you.”

“Adnah!” cried Gothinus.

“What does a little time matter to you, or to my Roman master, or to Pilate and his gladiator? Half an hour,—a few minutes!—let me go to Iddo, let me find him, let me hold him in these hands, let me see the light die in his eyes. Gothinus! Gothinus! Look at me. See what I have become,—it is Iddo’s work. Try to fancy what I have suffered.

But no, you cannot. Yet you *must* try to imagine it,—no friend but a dog,—three years! Then this iron band about my neck; the amphitheatre in store for me—think of that,—a Jew cast into the arena! A Jew, a Jew to meet a Roman gladiator! You cannot comprehend, you who are no Jew. Yet try, try to see what I have endured! Now let me go to Iddo. On my sacred word, my hope—but no, I have no hope; but by all that I hold dear I swear—but what do I hold dear? Nay, what can I say? I promise not to seek escape,—only to find Iddo!”

“Hush, Adnah, hush! You are wild,—you will make yourself heard. You will bring the soldiers hither!”

“Do not thwart me, Gothinus, in my only desire. What! it is you, it is Gothinus! you saved my life. Give me my revenge!”

“But hear me, Adnah, hear me!”

“Then you will not give me this poor half hour? Is this the end of all? For *this*, was I born into the world?”

“Adnah!” cried Gothinus desperately, “I *am* your friend, but you are mad with grief and suffering. Hear me, Adnah! Do you think——”

“Then a curse upon you!” cried Adnah, his red eyes glaring, “yes, on you, too, on you who were

kind to me! Do I think you would gratify the dying wish of an outcast? No, no, you belong to the world, and all the world conspires to crush me,—all,—there is not one voice of love in all the world for me! Come, do your work, I am unable either to resist, or flee.” He ceased his wild words as his emaciated form shook with terrible coughing. With uneasy glances, Gothinus watched the road to be sure they were undiscovered. When Adnah’s paroxysm was over, he sank upon the ground, and his head fell upon his breast.

Then Gothinus stooped, and brushed back the unkempt hair from the outcast’s forehead. At the touch Adnah started, and his glittering, despairing eyes were turned upward. Gothinus bent lower, and kissed the Jew upon the brow. “There *is* a voice of love for you in the world, Adnah,” he said softly; “are your ears so dull they have not heard it calling?”

Then Gothinus leaped upon his horse and dashed down the street. At the corner he met a Roman soldier.

“Do not come this way,” said Gothinus.

“You have searched well?” inquired the other.

“Well,” said Gothinus. Both rode forward and presently met Reuben. Gothinus was surprised to hear Miriam’s brother call him.

“Ho, Gothinus!”

He checked his horse.

“Did you hear,” inquired Reuben approaching, “the name of the runaway slave?”

Gothinus did not reply, but his companion burst into a laugh. “We do not know runaway slaves by names, we soldiers!” he said insolently.

“I have been musing on what you told me,” said Reuben to Gothinus, ignoring, as a Jew must, Roman impudence, “and I have been wondering if that slave can be Adnah? You say he is a thief; you say he fled hither all the way from Jerusalem; you say he is a young man and desperate. Surely this is Adnah! and if I find him ——”

Reuben smiled.

CHAPTER XXII

MIRIAM'S VOICE

As soon as Adnah realized that he had been granted a reprieve, his madness for revenge gave him strength. He had laid bare his heart to Gothinus in declaring that this was his only object in life. As soon as he killed Iddo, he would give himself up to the Romans. He realized the impossibility of finding his father, or of making any one believe his word against that of the revered Pharisee. Samuel must live out his life of captivity, he must suffer wherever he might be; his distress could not equal that of his son. And Iddo, also, would suffer,—Iddo, the cause of these two ruined lives! Adnah's encounter with Gothinus made him more cautious. He lay in a deserted hovel until it was dark, then stole to his uncle's house.

As the familiar place came in sight, all his desolate childhood seemed to rise from the ground, urging him to a desperate deed. And there stood Joel's house, upon whose roof he had so often seen Miriam. Miriam! Where was she now? Whose wife had she become? Ah, what matter? She must long

ago have forgotten him, after she had learned to despise him as a thief. What matter, indeed! Yet the thought of Miriam sent his blood like molten iron through his veins. His eyes caught fire from his fury. The thought of her was a burning-glass upon the hate that smouldered in his heart. Forgetting caution, he rushed upon Iddo's gate, he tried to force it open.

Suddenly he desisted with a startled cry, which was only half subdued. It was rapidly growing too dark to distinguish objects, but his fingers had found the edges of the gate sealed with wax. He stared overhead and discerned a board nailed upon the top of the gate. It was too dark to read its inscription, and Adnah could not have read it, had the sun been shining; but he knew its meaning. Iddo's house had been confiscated by the Roman government. The sealed gate and the placard could mean nothing else. The young man sank at the foot of the gate, breathing convulsively. Iddo was gone! His terrible flight through Samaria had been in vain, his life of sorrow must remain unavenged. But what could have happened? Perhaps Iddo had been detected in his crime; perhaps Samuel had been cleared. Could it be that Adnah's father was free, seeking his son?

Suddenly the outcast remembered a means of en-

trance. He slipped around to the rear of the court, and felt carefully for certain holes which perforated the wall of sun-dried bricks. Soon after, he had climbed to the coping, and his descent into the court was easy. At home again! *Home?* A bitter smile crossed his face as he thought of his failure to find Iddo and of his promise to return to Gothinus. It might be that his uncle lay hiding in the house. Adnah tried the doors. All were sealed. He crept to the window of the little room where he had slept; he wrenched it from its frame.

It was now intensely dark, for the sky was clouded, and the moon was on the wane. Adnah made his way from room to room with arms outstretched. He found every apartment deserted; nothing but bare floors,—bare walls. The house had been stripped by the soldiers. Gothinus must have known of Iddo's absence when he granted the slave a reprieve. His show of mercy had been a mockery! But the kiss? Adnah trembled. Every room had been searched, and as he stood once more in his old cell where he had so often crept after a beating, where he had so many times felt the acute pangs of hunger, his breath threatened to fail him. He climbed out the window, and staggered to the margin of the fountain.

Sinking upon the pavement he bathed his face

and hands, and felt relief. There was nothing now but surrender. Yet he hesitated to give himself up. Here at last were a few hours of security. No one would look for him in the confiscated house. Just before dawn he would steal to the home of Lucius, put himself into the hands of Gothinus, and so,—the end. But until then he had a wild yearning to enjoy liberty, to feel himself free and at home. He stared in the direction of Joel's home, which scarce made a blur in the gloom. Could it be that Miriam slept there? Could it be, after all, that sometimes she gave him a thought of pity?

He felt a strange thrill,—it was like the shadow of approaching happiness,—when he realized that she might be on the other side of that dear old stone wall. The thought of her brought him to a miserable sense of his degradation. Then it became an actual pleasure to imagine that he could make himself more worthy of the dream of his youth. "I must be clean before I think of Miriam," he whispered. He laid aside his dress of wolves'-skins, and stepped into the pool. How long had it been since he had taken such a bath? He could not remember. When he stood dripping upon the pavement, he felt younger, stronger, more innocent. Alas! he had but the wolves'-skins to clothe his nakedness.

It was a balmy night, and the clouds shut in the warmth for him, making the world a pleasant dressing-room. There was a stillness in the air, a solemn hush, as if the earth lay asleep waiting for love to come with its awakening kiss. And now as he sat upon the bench, he could think of Miriam. He was worthy. But he thought of her only as the girl who had brought him food,—who had blushed to meet his eyes in the street of the Holy City. He dared not think of her grown to maturity, for fear the gates of another love stood between her and his dream.

At last the house of Joel began to grow definite in its outlines; the tardy moon had come to look upon the wanderer. As it grew lighter, Adnah's heart leaped. Surely there were forms resting upon the house-top! He glided from the bench to seek a corner where he would be in shadow. The moon rose higher; three forms, and two of them were women; were they not Miriam and her mother? Adnah scarce dared breathe as he strained his eyes. Soon it would be light enough to distinguish their features. Soon he would see Miriam again! Soon he would be gazing up at her from his obscure position as he had so often gazed, years ago. But no, the three forms arose, and passed down the stairs that ran along the outside of the building. They

disappeared in Joel's court. The young man buried his face in his hands and wept. The great tears streamed over his emaciated fingers. When he looked up again, the moonlight was shining brilliantly upon the neighboring house-top, making every outline vividly distinct.

"I hate you!" said Adnah, glaring at the moon.

The next moment his hand went to his heart; there were footsteps in the adjacent court.

"Do not stay up for me, Zuph," said a voice. *Her* voice—Miriam's voice! Adnah struggled upon his knees. He had grown as white as the pale moonlight upon the stone wall.

"But your father and brother will not return till day," said the old slave; "they will search for the runaway till morning light. What care *they* for the niceties of the Sabbath?"

"I am not afraid, Zuph. I will walk here in the dear moonlight, for I cannot sleep."

Adnah lifted his head, and looked up at the moon. "I love you!" he whispered.

"Your mother is going to bed," grumbled the old man. "Are you wiser than she, Miriam?"

"Good Zuph, I have not become wise enough, yet, to throw away the chance of a happy hour. Leave me to enjoy the night. The clouds are rolling away so rapidly, I love to watch them, and

yet—that poor slave! it will make it harder for him to hide.”

“So much the better. Surely, child, you do not want that vile thief to escape? That would be wishing poor luck to your father and brother! But you were always so strange,—to have a father who is wealthy! Do you remember that blind beggar and the gladiator? And even Adnah, you had a kind thought for *him*, once; I do think you were sorry when he was sold and carried out of the world! It is so strange for the daughter of a great man to soil her mind with the thoughts of such low creatures!”

“But you know, Zuph, he was innocent, for that mule belonged to Lucius. And his father was not a thief, either. And he is not a low creature, and I will not have you say so!”

“At any rate you cannot deny his uncle was discovered conspiring against Tiberius, and now lies in Pilate’s dungeon, presently to disport himself in the arena!”

“I know what Iddo is, well enough. But that is not *his* fault.”

“Why! whose fault is it but his own?”

“Of course it is his own, but not *his*, and you must not call *him* a low creature to me, Zuph!”

“I am glad of one thing,” grumbled the other;

“you may say ‘*his*’ and ‘*him*,’ but you never speak his name. I don’t think I have heard it upon your lips since he was dragged out of Judea!”

“There is no need; you know whom I mean.”

“No need, indeed, child, and I am glad you see that so clearly, for it is not a name worthy the lips of my master’s daughter.”

“In truth, Zuph, that is not why I never speak it, and you deceive yourself; and, Zuph, you take liberties from our old friendship, and forget I am no longer a child.”

“I shall take one more liberty,” retorted the old man with some asperity, “and ask why you never speak his name, but always avoid it if possible,—unless it is because you know it is not worthy to be spoken by those proud lips.”

“But they are not proud lips, Zuph.”

“No!” groaned the other, “but they *should* be proud lips.”

“I cannot answer your question, because I do not know the answer. However, it seems that when his name is about to be spoken—but I cannot tell.”

“Then *I* know!” cried the other gleefully. “It is your blood, protesting in spite of your heart. I have not sought to train you for nothing. You

have some of Reuben's haughty spirit after all, and know it not!"

"Zuph, Zuph, it is not true!" cried Miriam, so eagerly that her tone seemed to tremble with anger. "Do not imagine I am *ashamed* to speak his name. *Adnah!* Do you hear? I say it—*Adnah!* and there is not a drop of blood in my veins that is ashamed. No! Adnah, Adnah! It is a precious name to me, for it is the name of a friend. The thought of me is a flower in his life. It is not because of my lips but because of the ears of others, that his name—*Adnah's* name—is not heard. When *you* hear his name, you think of a slave with a terrible cloud resting upon his fame. But when *I* hear it ——"

"What then?" demanded Zuph drily.

"Leave me in the court, dear Zuph; you are old, good Zuph, and the aged soon grow sleepy, and the sleepy are cross. You were always so cross, faithful Zuph, when past your bedtime! Let me think and think in the quiet night. See! God has set His lamp upon the hill of heaven."

Adnah heard the old man return to the house, muttering to himself. Presently a door closed. Silence succeeded. He listened intently, but Miriam made no movement which his eager ears could detect. Only that wall between them, after years

of longing and despair! Adnah remained upon his knees, his eyes fixed upon the moon whose light was shared by Miriam.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE VOICE OF LOVE

As the fugitive knelt in Iddo's court, every drop of blood tingling with the consciousness of Miriam's near presence, his mind slipped over the rough path which for three years had torn his feet. Swifter than the flight of a bird, his thoughts flashed back to the scene on the Horns of Hattin where a man of about thirty years sat addressing a great multitude. Again he heard those wonderful words which had brought him the greatest happiness in his life; "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

In the tender silence, while Miriam's virgin soul seemed speaking to him in some inexplicable manner, and the moon which she had called "dear," was smiling down upon those two—just those two, Miriam and Adnah!—his heart grew tender. The intolerable burden of hate rolled away as that divine voice continued to ring in his ears; "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good

to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your father which is in heaven." Again Adnah heard the tones and saw the face of Jesus. He had forgotten Jesus,—he had had his wrongs to think about, and as he brooded over them they became large enough to shut out all the earth and heaven. The voice of Miriam had changed everything. Before the dawn of day he must give himself up to captivity, never to see that maiden who sat so near his kneeling form; but now all was different. Happy the woman whose unconscious tones makes God audible to ears which have ceased to hear His voice!

"Oh God, I thank Thee," whispered Adnah, "that I did not find Iddo here. Oh God, take from me that thirst for revenge which has made my hard life harder all these years. Oh God, help me to love that man, that I may call Thee, 'Father!'"

A sound reached him from the other side of the fence. It was the light passing of sandals over the pavement. Adnah clasped his hands upon his bosom and listened as to the footfalls of an angel. Miriam drew nearer. The young man arose and crept to the wall, his bare feet making no sound. She stood just on the other side. They were divided by the plank which had fallen that first

day, three years ago, leaving them face to face. He could hear her breathing. If he could call her name, if he could look into her face again,—but no! his uncouth appearance, his savage attire, and the collar of shame about his neck—no! Reason sealed his lips.

Miriam knocked gently upon the plank. His heart bounded. Did she know he was there? Impossible! She, too, was living over the past. Why did she go back to that long ago? The words of Gothinus suddenly rang in his ears with startling distinctness: “There is a voice of love for you in the world; are your ears so dull they have not heard it calling?” What had Gothinus meant? *His* voice? Surely his own voice! But could it be ——

Miriam was weeping. He heard a smothered sob.

He heard her passing her hand over the plank. Then she whispered as one speaks to a beloved form which memory has conjured up from the dead— “Adnah — Adnah — Adnah — Adnah — Adnah!”

“*Miriam!*”

She was answered at last. Reason still held her finger upon his lips. But there was a voice of love for Miriam in the world, and it had spoken.

“Oh!” Her voice sounded sharp and startled,

as her sorrow was shattered into fragments of fear and wonder. It was like the fall of a thin vase upon marble.

“*Miriam!*” He did not recognize his own voice. It was as if a heart-throb had made itself audible in speech.

She whispered the name of God.

“Miriam,—it is Adnah!”

“Adnah?” she faltered, bewildered, her voice sounding as one whose strength has suddenly failed. “Adnah?” she said again, and the note of faith gave strength to the music of her voice.

“Fear nothing, Miriam, I am all alone.”

“Fear?” repeated the other, her tone vibrating with such thrilling gladness that its broken harmony was akin to pain; “ADNAH!”

He sobbed aloud.

“How did you come?” she asked in a low tone. “How long have you been here?” Then she wept to answer his sorrow. “I thought they carried you from Judea,” she murmured. “I thought you and your father were slaves of Marcellus.”

“I was carried to Sicily, I was his slave; but I have not seen my father. That was Iddo’s lie—that my father is known as Galba and belongs to Marcellus. He deceived me even as he falsely accused me.”

“I know you are innocent,” said Miriam. “But if you were taken to Sicily——”

“I escaped; I am here in hiding; I am still a slave, Miriam.”

“But we will clear you; Gothinus will prove how Iddo treated you, and Lucius will testify he lent you the mule. You will be cleared, Adnah!”

“No, Miriam. I am sold to another master; I have run away from him. It is nothing to him whether I am innocent or guilty; I am his property.”

“But you have escaped,—you will not let them find you. Oh, Adnah!—if you will stay in Iddo’s home till they cease searching for you——”

She paused and there was silence between them till she added, “I will bring you food through this plank. . . . Do you remember?”

“Could I forget, Miriam?”

“Then when they have given you up, I will slip you some disguise and you shall go forth under another name and hunt your father. And if you ever find him—I have thought it all out, year after year—you will go with him to Pilate. For your sake he will accuse Iddo, who is even now imprisoned for conspiracy. Then you will be free to go where you please.”

“*Here,*” said Adnah softly. He saw it all

as in a dream,—as in a dream that could never be.

“But how can you get the food to me?” he asked.

“This plank is still unfastened. Do you remember that day? But you said. . . . Will you tell me something of your life? We are alone, and no one will come till morning, at least until they find the thief; father and Reuben are searching for a runaway thief. Strange, strange, strange! Here we stand and talk with the gate between us just as we did. . . . Just as I was imagining—— Did you hear me knock upon the plank—*our* plank?”

“Yes—and did you hear my heart, Miriam?”

“Did it remind you, Adnah?”

“Oh, Miriam, I love you, I love you!”

Again there was silence, broken presently by a timid voice in which laughter and tears were mingled; “Has the thought of me been a flower in your life, Adnah?”

“Miriam, let me see your face once—but once! I will remove this plank——”

“No, no, no! I am all alone. No, Adnah, I say, no!”

He made no answer. Suddenly he remembered his condition; he had forgotten himself in his passionate love.

“Adnah,” she said timidly, “you are not offended?”

“No.”

“Because,—you will stay there a long time, and of course you will see me—if you want to see me—often. I will be upon the house-top every evening. And when it is day,—not late at night as now,—sometimes when all are gone I will bring you food; then you will see me—do you remember?—Dates—bread—cold mutton—and—and ——”

“And an angel,” said Adnah gently; “yes, I remember, Miriam. It was so long ago! Oh, Miriam, those three years in Sicily! I was forbidden to speak to any one—even to the vilest outcast,—until I should agree to join a band for plundering. I was starved because I would not steal. Miriam, I had only the meat that my dog would not eat. I slept as I might, on sodden straw, the rains pouring upon me and my dog; we two were comrades—poor ‘Friend!’ I called him ‘Friend.’ Year after year . . . no hope . . . starvation . . . cruelty from the overseer . . . the dog’s meat!”

“But you did *not* steal!” cried Miriam fiercely. “You never, never became a brigand, Adnah!”

“Never. God bless you, Miriam!”

“I *know* you never did!” she said. “You would rather have died, Adnah. You would prove your-

self worthy of your father, of your father whom wicked Iddo allows to bear his crime."

"Yes, Miriam."

"Adnah, you may remove the plank if you desire."

"It is better not," he answered hurriedly.

"Why do you say so? Then you *were* offended."

"Oh no, how could *you* offend me? But—but—you are alone, Miriam—and—it is late."

"I am not afraid to be alone with you, Adnah."

He wrung his hands. "And I grew to hate Iddo, Miriam, to hate him as I hated in my youth. I longed for revenge. I would have killed him. It was the sound of your voice as you talked to Zuph which reminded me of Jesus. But all that is gone. I do not wish to do Iddo an injury. I do not wish him to receive injuries from the hands of others. God have mercy upon him! I wonder, Miriam, if you ever watched the moon and thought of me while I, at the same time, lay upon the ground in Sicily, watching it, forgetting my rags and my wounds, and thinking of you? But what are you doing, Miriam?" he asked suddenly, in a tone of alarm.

"I will remove the plank," she said; "it was I who first threw it to the ground—that day."

"But no, oh no, Miriam, you must not. I *com-*

mand you not to move the plank!" he cried desperately.

"But I do not obey your commands," she retorted; "you must never command me, Adnah, I do not like commands. And you cannot prevent me, for the plank falls upon *my* side and you have no way to hold it back."

"But hear me, Miriam—hear reason—listen to my reason!"

"You do not wish to see me then, Adnah?"

"Wait, Miriam, wait!"

"But I wish to see you!" she said.

"Will you hear me first?"

"I know I was thinking of you whenever you thought of me," she said; "I do not believe I missed one time!"

"Hear me, Miriam! I am the fugitive your father and brother are seeking. I am the one they call the runaway thief."

"*You*, Adnah?"

"I. They search all Capernaum for me."

"But you and I know you are not a thief. That is no reason to keep the gate between us."

"There is more. I am frightful to behold. If you should see me in my wolves'-skins, my hair long and barbarous, my feet burned and bleeding, my bare arms scarred and torn,—you would despise

me, Miriam. And around my neck is the *iron collar of a runaway*. You shall never see me, *never, never*, Miriam, with this band welded about my throat as if I were a dog!"

The plank fell to the ground.

Adnah started away with a low cry, snatching up his rude garment with an agitated hand that he might draw it over the collar of shame. He heard a footstep behind him. Miriam had entered Iddo's court. He paused in his flight.

"Will you not look at me, Adnah?" came her voice sadly. Slowly he turned and looked through the hair that hung over his forehead, still clutching the covering about his throat. The moonlight was full upon them both. It showed the red tide of shame in his cheeks, the red tide of confusion in hers. Both were abashed, and at first neither looked into the other's face. Adnah was the first to raise his eyes. He felt a shock of surprise, for she was changed; she was a young girl no longer. Then came passionate admiration; for her youth had made no promise of grace, beauty or purity which her maturity did not fulfil.

"Wonderful!" he whispered, and for a moment he forgot his wretchedness.

"I see the dress of wolves'-skins," said Miriam softly, "and your hair *is* long and barbarous, Ad-

nah; but I do not despise you. Will you not come to me? or must I follow you?"

He came and knelt before her. But he was painfully conscious of his unworthiness. She laid her hand upon his, and he trembled. Her grasp tightened and strove to push his hand down,—that hand which held the garment about the iron band. He resisted even while the touch of the soft warm fingers thrilled him with ecstasy.

"*Adnah!*" she pleaded, pushing with all her might.

His arm, rigid as steel, kept the wild dress in place.

"*Adnah!*" she panted, pushing upon his proud clenched hand with both of her little palms. "If you love me, Adnah!"

He looked up, then, but his grasp did not relent.

"*Adnah!* It is because I love you."

His hand fell away like that of a little child caught in the grasp of a strong master. The dress of wolves'-skins dropped upon his shoulders. The iron collar gleamed in the moonlight. The lovely head of the maiden bent over the shaggy head of the slave, and the lips of Miriam printed a kiss upon the band of shame welded about Adnah's neck. The next moment love spread her wings of fear. Adnah with a cry started up, his arms outspread.

But Miriam had fled. She did not wait for him, but lifted the plank in its place. Adnah, his brain whirling, rushed to the fence, and whispered her name.

“Good-night!” came a soft voice.

“Miriam!” he whispered passionately.

“Good-night, Adnah.”

“My Father!” murmured Adnah, looking upward.

“Good-night, dear, dear Adnah,” came her voice.

“Good-bye, Miriam,—good-bye!”

“Until to-morrow,” she added.

He made no answer.

CHAPTER XXIV

GOTHINUS

“BUT, my lord, the old woman saw them together.”

“The old woman!” cried Lucius the centurion impatiently, as he confronted Reuben. “This is too much! to be called from my bed to hear a charge against Gothinus preferred by some old woman!”

“But, my lord ——”

“I know, I know very well, Reuben, your hostility towards poor Gothinus; and why? Because he is not a Jew. I, too, am a gentile, but you come to *me*, you seek *my* friendship. But I was never a slave,—I am not poor and dependent,—ah, Reuben?”

A flush darkened the face of Miriam's brother, but he controlled himself. “My lord, you accuse me.”

“Well, well,” said Lucius hastily, “perhaps I do not know what I say,—to be dragged from bed to listen to the tale of an old woman! And against the faithfulest lad in Capernaum,—Jew or gentile!”

“But I can testify that Gothinus bade us not search that street,” said the young priest. “And when I expressed my opinion that the thief was Adnah, he said never a word. He was Adnah’s friend, and so was anxious to shield him.”

“Were he Adnah’s brother,” cried Lucius, “he would not protect him, a runaway slave, from the Roman law. What! Have I nourished Gothinus from a helpless babe, favored him in all things, even to the extent of granting him his liberty, that he might dishonor me? Could he, a man of honor (though a barbarian), find it in his noble heart to aid a fugitive whom he had been commissioned by me to pursue and capture?”

“But, my lord, will you not at least send for Gothinus and question him?”

“By the God of the Jews!” cried Lucius, “you will make a famous priest, Reuben. You are a Sadducee born, not made! You will not believe in the resurrection, after you have risen from the dead!”

They stood in the court of the garrison in which Lucius had taken up his quarters. The centurion called a soldier and sent for Gothinus, and, until approaching footsteps were heard, no further words were exchanged between the Roman and the Jew. The moonlight was struggling against the dawning

of the morning, as if each would be master of the world.

“Gothinus,” said the centurion in an affectionate tone, “you were near at hand.”

“Yes, my lord.”

“You have not been away upon the search?”

“Not since I last saw Reuben.”

Lucius was surprised.

“Perhaps,” suggested Reuben coolly, “he found no further need of searching.”

“Gothinus,” said Lucius hastily, “it is reported that you were seen whispering to a fugitive in a street; that you made no attempt to arrest him after you had once seen his face; and that this fugitive answers the description of the runaway thief.”

“It is true,” answered Gothinus.

“*True?*” echoed Lucius loudly.

“True!” sneered Reuben.

“Gothinus, do you know what you say? Have you aided a runaway slave to elude pursuit?”

“It *was* Adnah,” cried Reuben,—“Adnah was his friend.”

“Gothinus, Gothinus! And do you think,” said his master sternly, “that my former kindness will protect you from the terrible punishment your crime merits?”

“Hear me, my lord,” said Gothinus quietly. “I

saw a form advancing to meet me in a narrow street, and I recognized the runaway. I sprang from my horse to make the arrest, and saw his face; it was Adnah."

"The son of a thief," muttered Reuben.

"What then?" cried Lucius fiercely to his former slave. His endeavor to hide his pain made his manner cruel.

"We know Adnah was innocent," continued Gothinus, unmoved by Reuben's disdain and his master's anger. "It was your mule he rode into Jerusalem, and I heard Iddo confess that the father was not a thief. We know they had no right to sell Adnah to Marcellus."

"What then?" retorted Lucius, "he *was* sold, and sold again! He has not been manumitted nor was his freedom bought by the government or by his friends; yet in his servile condition, he runs away. Who should know the laws of slavery better than you, a former slave? Why do you speak to me of Adnah's innocence? It was nothing to you if he were Adnah or no; he is a runaway, and your crime is manifest from your own lips."

"But my knowledge that it was Adnah gave me a kind feeling for him," said Gothinus. "He craved a brief time, a respite, promising to come to me and give himself up when he had accomplished

his object. He will come. I am not afraid Adnah will betray me."

"Miserable fool!" groaned Lucius. "And you really believe he will surrender his liberty for a word?"

"I believe it!"

Reuben laughed bitterly. "The son of a thief!" he exclaimed.

"What *was* his '*object*'?" questioned Lucius.

"To avenge his wrongs upon Iddo. When he finds Iddo is gone, and after he has looked upon his home again, and brought back his boyhood and—and—— But if he does not return, I freely offer you my life!"

"Miserable Gothinus!" cried Lucius desperately, "did you tell him your life depended upon his keeping this wild pledge?"

"No, dear master, I neither insisted upon his keeping it, nor did I ask him to make it."

"Was his oath one of terrible solemnity?"

"He made no oath, no vow, my lord."

"Are you prepared to die, Gothinus?"

"No, my lord, I am waiting for Adnah's return. But if I could die and thus procure for Adnah the happiness that might have been his,—yet not for his sake, but because I love another——"

"I understand you, I understand!" hissed Reuben

with a look of fury. "But think it not, O false slave! Neither for any gentile nor for any thief is that happiness, but for one of the most highly honored of the Sanhedrim!"

At this moment a voice from the gateway called, "Gothinus!"

"He has come!" said the German as he hastened to the gate. In its shadow stood Adnah. Gothinus threw his arm about the dishonored neck and whispered in the fugitive's ear, "Did you see her,—O, did you speak to her, Adnah?"

"Yes, yes, yes! thank God—*and Gothinus!*"

"The guard! the guard!" shouted Lucius, wild with exultant surprise. "Men, ho! Spread the tidings,—he is found! Bind and guard him. The couriers,—let them be brought. Come hither, Gothinus, and let me embrace you. But it was a terrible risk! How could you trust your life in the hands of any man?"

Gothinus looked at the prisoner whose white but serene face was turned lovingly upon him and answered, "*He* has listened to the voice of Jesus!"

CHAPTER XXV

ADNAH AND IDDO

IN the prison floor was a narrow iron door. It was raised, revealing black space. The beams of a torch showed Adnah a rusty ladder leading down into the dungeon. "Descend!" said one of the guard.

Adnah crept partly down the cold ladder. The door fell into its place overhead and bars were drawn to secure it. He was in the midst of impenetrable darkness, clinging to the rounds, afraid to go lower into unknown depths, among unknown dangers. Here was the end of his long journey,—the flight and the capture. Now he could rest his bleeding feet; he was in Jerusalem; in a few days he was destined to face the gladiator in the amphitheatre. Here was the closing chapter of the evil Iddo had wrought. Loss of liberty, of happiness, of life,—all this he owed his uncle. But he felt for the Pharisee neither the dull despairing hate which had threatened to brutalize his soul in Sicily, nor the deadly, ungovernable fury which had driven him to Capernaum. "If you love them that

love you, what is your reward?" Certainly Iddo would never reward him. From whom, then, could he expect a blessing? "Love your enemies that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven."

Adnah had found a father at last, and with unquestioning faith he gave God all the love and service which is a father's due. Only he who forgives his enemies can claim that heavenly King as Father,—how few! thought Adnah, are His children in the world! Yet he, an outcast, a miserable prisoner, a slave with the iron band of a runaway about his throat,—he was a child of God! He believed God was conscious of his sorrows, and pitied him even as Samuel would have pitied, had he known. He believed that when he whispered "My Father," his voice penetrated the dungeon walls and reached the ear of God.

"I do not ask you to save my life," he murmured. "You can do everything for your children, but everything is not good for them. Give me courage to die,—that is all. And watch over my other father wherever he may be; give him an easy life and quiet thoughts of me."

What prisoner is not eager to learn the limits of his captivity? At last Adnah lost his dread of the gloom, and crept down to the floor. It was wet

and slippery. With outstretched arms he began an exploration of the dungeon. The walls as well as the floor, were of smooth stones, so skilfully fitted together that each side of the apartment seemed one huge slippery block. His bare feet were chilled, his fingers, as they slipped along, were numbed, while cold drops of water ran down upon his arms. In one side he found an iron grating. He clung to it and stared with painful fixedness through the little apertures; no light was visible. When he reached the ladder he knew he had made a circuit of the chamber. Falling upon hands and knees he started across the floor diagonally, that he might know his prison thoroughly. He had not gone very far when his outstretched hand failed to find the floor beneath it. His weight was thrown upon the edge of an opening, from which he shrank with a cry of horror. Far below him came the murmur of water. With a sickened heart he returned to the ladder and lay upon the reeking floor, shuddering at the memory of his danger.

Presently he spoke aloud: "My Father, you were so good to me that night! Isn't she beautiful! You know how I love her! Were you listening when she said 'I love you'? But I know you were. I think the angels all smiled when she said, 'I love you!' And you knew it all the time! You knew it

when I was in Sicily with poor 'Friend,' and when I wanted to die. Did you try to tell me with the flowers and stars? I hated the flowers; and I thought the stars were laughing at my misery. So little did I know you!"

He ceased speaking. The cold and damp seemed to penetrate to the bone. He got up and began to walk back and forth, always careful not to approach the mysterious opening. He hoped to warm himself with the exercise, but he was too weary to persevere. Presently he sank upon the floor. "My Father," he said plaintively, "I cannot keep from shivering, I am so very weak. But I am not complaining. You know why I must be here, and that is enough for me. I know you love me, because I have forgiven Iddo, and I would like to tell him so. If he is ever sorry for what he has done, will you make him feel happy? I wish you would make a good man out of Iddo."

A sudden clashing sound smote upon his ears. It came from the middle of the room. Adnah cried out at the startling noise. Silence ensued.

What had happened? Could it be that he was not alone? He called and there was no response. He began to crawl in the direction of the interruption, fearful of what he might find, yet unable to endure his wild conjectures. The cause was soon apparent.

The opening in the floor had been closed. How, and for what purpose were mysteries. He returned to the ladder.

“My Father,” he said, “sometimes I forget that you are watching over me.” Then he added, “It is such a comfort to talk aloud to you and know that I am not alone! And you always have time for me.”

There burst upon his ears the splashing of water. Then he understood. The grating in the wall was for the admission of water; the opening in the floor had been closed to hold in the flood. Death by drowning! A steady stream thundered upon the floor, an icy wave floated to his feet. Adnah leaped up and climbed to the top of the ladder. He beat his hands upon the iron door overhead, he shouted madly. There was no answer but the thunder of the water. As its sound grew less, his terror increased. The lessening sound meant that the flood was reaching the level of the hole in the wall. At last all sound ceased. It was rising silently, that black pool, it was climbing the ladder.

“My Father!” cried Adnah suddenly. The touch of death had kissed his feet. But after that, it came no higher. With cautious step he discovered that the tide was receding. The opening in the floor was letting the water escape. For this time, at least, he was saved.

While still he clung to the ladder, the door above his head was lifted up, and a light glared into his eyes. A face looked in,—the face of the soldier who had arrested him three years ago; but he was blinded by the torch and did not recognize the merry soldier.

“Why! here is the fellow, like a rat in a trap!” said the merry soldier to an unseen companion, “clinging to the roof of his cage. Down with you, rat! We have another rat here to squeak with you for company.”

“Mercy!” cried Adnah. “Death is in this dungeon!”

“Death? What more do you expect? Out of the way! you thieves thirst for other people’s property,—now slake your thirst, we will send you plenty of water!” Adnah climbed, shuddering to the ground to escape the weapon that threatened him. The second Roman descended the ladder while the first held the torch. The former carried a burden in his arms.

“A curse upon the fate,” cried the man on the ladder, “which made me a Jew’s packhorse!”

“You are never content!” remonstrated the other; “do I not hold the light while you do the work? As for your Jew, it is nothing but bone and Pharisee!”

The burden in the soldier's brawny arms quivered, and found a voice. "Mercy, mercy, mercy! I will see Pilate, I must see Pilate! I am innocent, innocent,—I say I am innocent of conspiracy. I have an explanation to make——"

"Silence!" shouted the man who bore him. "It is enough to feel your Jew's flesh against my bosom. By Minerva, who is a wise lady, I will cast you upon your head if this same head does not couch its tongue for the night!"

"For shame," cried the man who held the torch, "to speak of Minerva so lightly,—she who is a goddess, as Tiberius is a god! As for the fellow's explanation, he can make it in the arena."

"You will kill me, me who am a great man in Israel!" wailed the Pharisee as he was dropped heavily upon the floor.

"Not we," retorted the torch-bearer. "Come up, comrade. Nay, not we, old bones! Why should we wish to kill a shadow? How could we hate *you*? Hate is too great a stone to throw at so weak a bird. But there is a rat in your cage who may gnaw your bonds loose. You have heard of him. Adnah, here is Iddo; Iddo, here is Adnah. Good-night!"

The door closed overhead.

"*Iddo!*" exclaimed Adnah.

A despairing shriek burst from Iddo's throat,—an inarticulate cry of frenzied terror. It filled the dungeon, making the darkness more awful.

“Speak to me, Iddo, that I may find you,” said the young man, feeling along the slippery floor.

“Mercy—mercy—what are you? His voice! It cannot be! But mercy, man or—or fiend—or angel,—oh! ——”

Adnah's hand had found his arm. Iddo tried to shrink away, but he was bound hand and foot, and could scarce cringe under the grasp.

“Iddo, it is I, your brother's son.” Adnah gently lifted up the head of his enemy and rested it upon his knee.

“Mercy—mercy ——” stammered Iddo, trying to draw his head away. “Pity—pity—I am an old man ——”

“Do not fear,” said Adnah, “you are my friend because I am your enemy.”

“*Is it Adnah?*” came the agonized voice.

“Do you not know my voice, Iddo?”

Iddo shrieked again in quavering tones.

“It is Adnah, but much more than Adnah, my friend,—my uncle; it is Adnah with the words of Jesus living in his heart. It is Adnah who has two fathers; one, a slave, the other, the King of Heaven.”

“Adnah—Adnah—I am at your mercy. Oh spare me, do not kill me, who am of your own blood. What will you do to me, Adnah, what will you do? Beat me, despise me as you will, but let me live! I will crawl at your command,—I will kiss your feet,—you shall have my body for your pillow,—but, oh, grant me my life, Adnah! What will you do?”

“I am trying to love you, Iddo; I am trying my very best; but you do make it so hard for me!”

“I accused you falsely, Adnah, I suffered you to be sold into captivity, and carried from the land of our fathers. I suffered a Roman to become your master. I bribed false witnesses. I lied at your trial,—I thought you would never return. I believed you would die in a foreign country!”

“I know all this, Iddo.”

“But spare me, Adnah, hate me, but do not kill.”

“Fear nothing,” said his nephew.

“I made your youth a time of torture. I starved you, beat you, wished for your death. You would not die! You were always sickly, pale, weak,—but you would not die. And I wanted you to die. I hated you. I entombed you in the cave. You said you forgave me.”

“I did forgive you.”

“Then, when you freed me,—after you had given me that blessing,—how did I reward you? I sold you as a thief!”

“Do not speak of that; it is forgiven, too.”

“You mean—Adnah, do you mean that after all,—and though you are here because of me,—*still*——”

“Yes; I forgive you everything.”

“You cannot, Adnah. What is your purpose? What will you do to me?”

“Iddo, I have been very wicked since you stood at my trial; I have forgotten God and craved for vengeance. Yet my Father will forgive me; He has forgiven although there was murder in my heart. But how? Only as I forgive you. There *must* be peace between me and God; but there cannot be peace, unless I love you, too. A man's enemy always stands between him and God. One little cloud of hate will shut out all the glory of heaven. I *must* love you, Iddo, I *will* love you! Now—I kiss your brow, poor Iddo! so unhappy, so weak, so erring, so hard to comprehend! I *do* love you.”

Iddo sobbed. Presently he faltered, “Whence this strange philosophy?”

“From Jesus of Nazareth; but He would not have called His simple words by so hard a name. I

heard His sermon on the Horns of Hattin. He is the Christ. Shall I tell you a few things He said?"

"No, Adnah, I am afraid."

"Afraid of Jesus? Why! He raises people from their deathbeds. He healed Simon the leper. You cannot be afraid of *Him*, for if He has any business, it seems to be just doing good."

"He was not a Pharisee," said Iddo.

"A great man belongs to all parties," said Adnah. "You are a Pharisee with all your heart; but you would be shocked to hear it said God is a Pharisee, —would you not? And Jesus is the Christ."

"No, no, *never!*" cried Iddo violently. "I tell you He is *not* the Christ! Have you not heard what has happened in Jerusalem? Jesus is dead. He was crucified not many weeks ago."

"Jesus is dead?" echoed Adnah in horror. "*Dead?* How could He die? Oh, Iddo, Iddo, these are false words! Can God still ask me to love you, when you slander His son?"

"He is dead," repeated Iddo solemnly.

"Has the hope of ages perished?" returned the other skeptically. "Do you, who know the law, imagine death could overtake the Son of David before He had accomplished His mission? Jesus is the King of the Jews. Soon He will sit in His palace and judge the world. Rome will come under

His dominion; He will rule over empires as well as diseases!"

"But, Adnah, as I pray for mercy at your hands, —Jesus is dead."

"No," was the answer, "it is impossible!"

"But He is not the Christ, Adnah."

Adnah laid the Pharisee's head upon the hard ground and drew away in the darkness.

Iddo's voice sounded with fear. "Mercy—mercy! But I swear to you he is dead. Ask the soldiers, if they come again; ask them if His body was not stolen from the sepulchre. All the world knows He is dead. It is no secret; He was held high upon the mount that men might see Him die!"

"But He is the Christ," cried Adnah, "I know He is the Christ!"

Iddo lay still, his fear of death contending with his inborn prejudices. The Pharisaical spirit gained the mastery, and he said, "Give me a proof, Adnah, —one proof!"

"How can I argue against your wisdom, Iddo?" exclaimed the other in distress. "You know how ignorant I am,—who should know better? Did you never hear Him speak? Did you never see Him heal the sick? Did you never look into His eyes?"

"Yes—but He is dead! One proof, Adnah!"

"Oh, Iddo, if I could tear open my heart, and

give you some of my faith,—the larger share of my treasure;—still I would know He is the Christ!”

“A proof!” persisted Iddo.

“*Here* is a proof!” cried Adnah. He put his arm about the prostrate form and kissed the lips that had so often reviled him. “It is not I, of my own power, who love you, Iddo. But it is I with the power of the words of Jesus, by the grace of God.”

Iddo whispered, “Wonderful is God!”

“Oh, my poor enemy,” cried Adnah excitedly, “have I helped you in any way to see plainer the goodness of God?”

“Yes, my child; when you freed me in the cave; when you prayed for me; and now,—oh, Adnah!”

“I bless you for those words. All the injury you have inflicted upon me is forgotten in the joy you give. For Jesus told me to do something I thought beyond my power. I said, ‘One so ignorant cannot perform a miracle!’”

“Surely,” faltered Iddo, his voice broken by sobs, “whenever one from his heart forgives an enemy, a miracle is wrought in the world! What did Jesus ask that you thought so hard?”

“He said, ‘Let your light so shine that men may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.’”

“You have fulfilled the saying,” said Iddo.

“I can give you a greater proof, after a while,” exclaimed the young man eagerly. “For when the water rushes through the grating which you cannot see,—when it rises in this chamber, as cold as ice,—and it is so dark, you can only hear it—— What would you do without me, Iddo? You could not do without your Adnah then, I think! But I will lift you in my arms and my Father will give me strength——”

“*Who?*” exclaimed Iddo sharply.

“I mean my *other* father, Iddo; not the slave. And I will carry you up the ladder and hold you out of harm till the water has subsided. You will be safe in my arms; you will not be afraid!”

“Now I know,” cried Iddo, “why I was removed from the prison where Barabbas was first confined with me; it was that I might drown here, or perish at your hands. Well do they know that Sextus would never fight with me,—but would sooner die!”

“And why, Iddo? Was Sextus your friend? Sextus is the name of the gladiator; I am to stand before him; there will be short work, then, Iddo! But come, now, tell me Jesus did not die!”

“He died. In truth, and as I prize your mercy, He died. I saw Him crucified, I saw Him taken

from the cross. There was a terrible darkness upon the world, there was an earthquake, the veil of the Temple was rent. But some say He rose from the dead. Some say He proved Himself King over death. He was seen many times and by many people." Iddo added in a whisper that thrilled the listener's soul, "*Lord, I believe!*"

Then he added, "Adnah, Sextus is your father."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE WATCHERS

A THROG of various nationalities lined the road that led from the palace crowning Mount Zion, that pile of imposing grandeur which had been appropriated by Pilate. Above the wall of David towered the three magnificent palaces of Herod, one of them named in honor of Mariamne, whom he had so cruelly loved, and so fondly hated. Below these structures which man had fashioned in the graceful and airy forms of fancy, and then had secured in marble, stood the still more imposing New Palace of Herod, inclosing within its towering walls a great extent of parks and mustering grounds. This was the stronghold of Rome in Jerusalem.

That tranquillity might be secured among the waiting throng,—for insurrection smouldered everywhere, waiting for the breath of a leader to blow it into flame,—soldiers were stationed at safe intervals. Among these was the man dimly known to the reader as the “merry soldier.” He stood fully-armed, good-naturedly chaffing the Jews and bar-

barians about him, and when they saw not the force of his jest, often driving it home with a blow upon a sullen head. Whenever the crowd showed a disposition to come to a standstill, it was his duty to send them upon their way, thrusting forward the wooden handle of a long spear when words proved ineffective. It was the day of the gladiatorial combats, and the city was crowded with foreigners; for, since the downfall of the amphitheatre at Fidenae, Tiberius had forbidden games in Italy. The fame of Pilate's entertainment had gone forth, bringing the pleasure-loving Romans by every road to the Holy City. Just outside the city walls stood the amphitheatre built by the procurator of Judea. The games had already begun, and the blood of beasts and slaves was mingling upon the sands of the Land of Promise.

The Jews, impotent in their anger, but fascinated by the sacrilege now going on, moved in a great loop about the building, whence mad shouts and excited exclamations issued. The merry soldier at last discovered that a party of three passed before him at regular intervals; an old man, a man in his prime, and a maiden. Compassion for the weariness and misery upon their faces prompted him to address them.

“Go home, Jew friends, for you can do nothing

here. Man, take the maiden away. She can scarce stand."

"Do not send us away," cried the maiden, in a voice of keen distress, "for there is one yonder,"—she pointed towards the amphitheatre whose rear looked upon them,—“who is about to die.” The speaker was Miriam. She was accompanied by her father and old Zuph, the faithful slave.

The merry soldier looked closely into the white, drawn face and said abruptly, “Your lover?”

“Yes,” said Miriam.

“You three may stand behind me, out of the press,” said the guard. “But presently yonder rear doors will be thrown open, and the corpses of those who fall before the might of Sextus, the gladiator, will be carried by this road. You will not stay to look upon the bloody sight?”

“It is for that we are here,” said Joel, supporting his daughter tenderly. “Sir, suffer us to remain.”

“Why, so you shall! There is no sight so sweet as that of fresh blood,—but I thought only a Roman had a sweet tooth in his eye.”

Miriam, heedless of the words, strained her eyes upon the amphitheatre, and became lost to the world about her. Her spirit had gone to suffer beside the soul of Adnah. The merry soldier’s atten-

tion was distracted from the sorrowful group by a tumult near at hand.

“Where is Barabbas?” cried a voice. “Here is our opportunity. They are in a trap,—let it be sprung!”

“Silence!” retorted another. “Pilate gave us Jesus,—let him enjoy the games as his reward!”

“They say,” spoke up a woman who had caught a word or two, “that Jesus rose from the dead!”

“I saw Him after He was risen!” shouted an exultant voice.

“It is false, it is false!” exclaimed a priest, lifting his clenched hand above the heads of his companions, and shaking it at a man who was separated from him by a press of men and women. “He was stolen from the sepulchre while the guard slept.”

The man thus threatened by the angry gesture, shouted back in reply, “But I saw Him with mine own eyes, and He walked with Cleopas and me to our home, and as He explained the scriptures, our hearts burned. He sat at meat with us,—He vanished from our sight,—Jesus the Christ!”

There was a scream of fury from the priest and his companions, while the road became jammed. Men struggled to reach the speaker who thus calmly struck at the roots of their superstition and prejudice.

“Do you seek to teach us,” cried one, “you who were born in your sins,—you who sat, a blind beggar, at the gates,—you whom we cast out of the synagogue?”

“Miriam!” whispered old Zuph, “yonder is Rinnah,—our blind beggar. See how bright are his eyes!”

Miriam did not turn her gaze from the amphitheatre; her form shook violently as a roar of applause burst from the crowded tiers that looked down upon the arena.

“Zuph,” said Joel in a low voice, “let us call Rinnah; perhaps it will distract Miriam’s mind from its agony.”

“Not so, my master,” said the privileged slave. “A blind man may get back his eyes; but a beggar never sews up the hole in his bag.”

“Friend Jew,” said the merry soldier, staying Rinnah with his hand, “is it true you were born blind?”

“Sir, I was blind from my birth. But Jesus anointed mine eyes, and now I see. The years of my youth and early manhood were shrouded in gloom, but I am well repaid for all their misery, since I have seen the Christ risen from the grave.”

“It is false!” came the angry chorus from the

rear. "Never yet has the world seen a man risen from the grave."

"Why, look you!" cried Rinnah good-naturedly; "which is more strange: that my parents' sins made me blind, or that the Son of God is conqueror over death?"

The soldier was now obliged to disperse the men, who were becoming every moment more threatening. As Rinnah passed, his eyes fell upon Miriam's face; he paused involuntarily, as if the sight of it stirred dimly the memory of a voice of long ago; the next moment he went on his way, and Zuph sighed with relief.

He had scarcely vanished around the amphitheatre when a sharp voice smote upon the troubled air; "Father! Miriam!"

This time Miriam started, and withdrew her eyes from the wall that stood between her and Adnah. She turned and faced her brother.

"It needed but this! it needed but this!" cried Reuben, who was pale with anger and mortification. "Why are you here? All but my mother conspire to bring about my ruin!"

"*Reuben!*" his father exclaimed reproachfully.

"Maiden," said the merry soldier, "is this fellow displeasing to you? Shall I deal him a sound blow upon his angry pate? Perchance all this fury has

not sufficient cause. Shall I give him fresh cause, maiden?"

"He is my brother," said Miriam, sadly.

"So you acknowledge it, the more shame to you!" cried the young man. "Ah, Miriam, how I have loved you, how I have toiled to honor you! See, yonder stands your future husband, watching you. Go home, go home and forget that a runaway thief, the son of a thief, dies this day! What is this Adnah to you, with his iron collar of shame about his evil neck?"

Miriam's eyes wandered towards the wealthy Sadducee who stood not far away, stroking his snowy beard. The tears rushed to her eyes, and she buried her face in her hands.

"Now you relent," cried Reuben, "now you are restored to your senses! You never loved me, Miriam, as I loved you. You were always cold and selfish, thinking only of your own pleasure. But these tears sue for you. Go home, and all shall be forgiven!"

"Reuben," said Miriam gently, "I weep because your words part us,—not forever, I pray, but until they are forgotten. I must not see you again, Reuben, till the hand of God has wiped from my memory your words concerning Adnah."

“On with you!” cried the merry soldier, pushing Reuben forward with an impatient hand.

“Father,” said Miriam, her eyes again wandering towards the amphitheatre, “oh, *can* there be a chance for Adnah?”

“No, Miriam, there is no hope for him.”

“Are you angry because I love him with all my heart?”

“*Angry*, dear one?” repeated Joel, his voice breaking with a sob.

“You will not be displeased with me?” she murmured; “you will not chide me, father, because my heart is broken? You will not have hard thoughts of me, if I can never be what I was before?”

She paused as there rolled from the amphitheatre a mighty peal of laughter. The sound of unrestrained mirth brought the passers-by to a sudden halt. “Still the world can laugh!” whispered Miriam.

“Take heart, Miriam,” said old Zuph, stroking her hand, “remember you are not one of the common folk. The vulgar herd should never see tears in these noble eyes!”

“I cannot give up hope!” cried Miriam, catching her father’s arm violently. “Still they laugh. It comes as a message, bidding us be of good cheer,

There *must* be a way! Gothinus has promised to do what he can for Adnah. Gothinus loves Adnah."

CHAPTER XXVII

MUST ADNAH DIE ?

THE day of the games was the fifth since the imprisonment of Adnah. Every morning Gothinus had applied at the palace for admission to Pilate. He felt that Adnah's fate rested upon himself, and that through some remarkable turn of circumstances, he might be able to save the prisoner. It had been necessary to state, the first morning, the object of his visit, and Pilate, who had no desire to lose one of his combatants, thereby losing a chance of sport, was too busy to see Gothinus.

On the second day, Gothinus, when politely refused entrance,—for, as the valued officer of Lucius the centurion, he was entitled to respect,—sent a letter to Pilate. It contained a note from his master, showing that the mule had been lent by the Roman to the Jew, and that the charge of stealing was a conspiracy. In his letter Gothinus explained that Iddo was guilty of the crime for which Adnah's father was now in slavery. Had Gothinus known that Adnah's father was Sextus the gladiator, he would have been still more perplexed by the tangle

of circumstances. Pilate paid no attention to this letter. He cared not if Adnah were innocent, or guilty; the prisoner had been brought with trouble and expense from Sicily, and to set him at liberty, for whatever reason, would be a serious loss.

When Gothinus appeared at the palace gates the third day, Pilate was annoyed by the information. He foresaw the worry of excuses and the trouble of explanations, if he did not defend himself. Accordingly, he sent word to the importunate friend of Adnah that if a written confession was brought him from Iddo, declaring the innocence of Adnah and of Adnah's father, the Jew should be set at liberty. Pilate could well afford to make such a promise, for he believed Iddo dead.

After a painful search, Gothinus discovered the dungeon where Iddo had first been confined; but he could not learn whence he had been removed, and no information was vouchsafed him at the palace. The day of the combats was now come; and the German, ill from days of toil and sleepless nights, found all his exertions useless. He mingled with the restless crowd which circled about the amphitheatre long before the time of its cruel sports. In spite of himself, he found a new thought stirring in his mind,—a thought which brought a swift, wild joy, followed by a stinging

pain. It was the thought that he had done all he could for Adnah, yet Adnah must die, and then,—and then, at last, when Miriam had forgotten the unfortunate Jew, —

As the soldiers compelled him to move on,—for in his abstraction, he made no effort to keep himself distinct from the turbulent Jews,—his thoughts dwelt upon the years that were gone. There came vividly to his mind the night when he leaped into the sea to save Reuben. That was for Miriam's sake. He had told her, "I ask no more than to die for you." Did she ever think of those words? Had she ever suspected his secret? It had been his duty to guard it from her heart, for Adnah's sake, for the sake of his own promise; for he had promised to do all he could for Adnah. He felt that he had been true to his trust. During those three long years, while the fate of the Jew was hidden in darkness, and no one save Miriam expected to see the slave's return, that had still been his constant thought: not that he might live happy in her love, but that he might die for her. Never till this day had the dream of his own happiness been allowed to linger in his thoughts.

"Adnah must die." Gothinus spoke the words aloud, and when his voice ceased, they spoke themselves in his brain. He had done all he could for

the unfortunate,—he had even sent him to Miriam,—the hardest duty of all! He had assured him of Miriam's affection; he had risked his life as a pledge for that of the runaway. All had been in vain; Adnah must die. And then?

And then,—perhaps, some reward for years of fidelity,—some paying back on the debt of a life of care and loneliness. No one could ever know how lonely had been this stranger in a strange land,—no one but such another, torn from the proud home of a chieftain, to become a slave. He had been fortunate in such a master as Lucius. He had been blessed by the friendship of such a maiden as Miriam. She had prayed for him, that he might always be her friend. Was it the part of her friend to desire to become something more? His hand sought his bosom and drew forth a coin; it was the shekel her hand had placed in his, that night on Galilee. He kissed it, and his deep blue eyes grew luminous. The light of a great tenderness suffused his face.

But *must* Adnah die? Since Iddo was Pilate's prisoner, he would probably be forced into the gladiatorial matches; in that case, he would be crowded with the others in the small cells under the amphitheatre, situated to the right of the cages where the wild beasts were imprisoned. Gothinus

had made no attempt to gain admittance to the prisoners.

He had not done all he could for Adnah. In truth, he had not thought of this plan. Was it the kissing of Miriam's shekel which had brought a chance for Miriam? In the coming of this new hope, Gothinus smothered the dream which had lit love-lamps in his eyes. An old look of care and resolve settled upon his face. There was no time to be lost, now, in circling about the vast building. He quickly disengaged himself from the throng and bent his steps towards the New Palace.

It was still early, and Pilate had not set forth for the games; but his soldiers were forming the escort, and the great court was a scene of activity. Undaunted by the unseasonableness of his visit, the German sent in a letter to the procurator, craving admittance to the gladiators, and permission to speak privately with Iddo, the Pharisee. Pilate found it easy to accede to this petition, thereby strengthening the tie between him and his centurion; and, cold and impassive as he was, he could not restrain a smile as he wrote the permission.

Gothinus carried the parchment with rapid strides to the rear of the amphitheatre, whose small doors were closely guarded by Roman soldiers.

"Why, look you, friend," said the captain, after

reading the order, "if you would speak privately with Iddo, go seek a new witch of Endor, for it was thus your King Saul, as I have been told, held converse with the dead."

Gothinus shrank back as from a blow. "Is Iddo dead?" he faltered.

"As dead as any Jew," was the reply. "This Iddo was considered some great one by his swine-hating, spoil-sport tribe, and Pilate, by my shrewd guess, had no mind to stir up the people by a new crucifixion. Gothinus, you have heard of the fellow Adnah, Iddo's nephew? I remember you once staked your life upon his return to captivity. It was Iddo who caused Adnah's downfall, and we were ordered to shut them up in the same dungeon, Iddo securely bound, but the young man free to tear his enemy to pieces. The water was turned upon them, that he who did not climb to the ceiling, might be drowned. Thus Iddo perished, if not by Adnah's fingers, then by the water. But in truth, I doubt not Iddo fell a victim to the revenge of Adnah. If it did not happen so, then, by my sword! there is no spirit in the Jew's body."

"Iddo is dead!" Gothinus repeated, still dazed by this unexpected news. Suddenly he understood the irony of Pilate's promise. He added with conviction, "And Adnah must surely die!"

“Surely,” returned the captain, “for who can overcome our Sextus? Not such a weak, emaciated slave, half-starved, and wholly untrained! Take heart, Gothinus, not a dog-Jew of the pack will be left to bark against Rome.”

As the hours passed by, and day drew towards evening, Gothinus, ever mingling with the restless crowd, at last discovered Miriam with her father and old Zuph, standing behind the merry soldier. Miriam's eyes were strained upon the amphitheatre, and the tragedy written in her face, wrecked forever his evanescent hope of love. She was not for him, though Adnah die. This knowledge did not spur him to greater exertions, because he had done all he could, but it caused him to rage against his impotence. He drew near, for misfortune drives men together as flocks and herds are huddled before a northern blast. They did not see him. He had not the heart to impose himself upon Miriam's sorrow, yet it seemed that he could not leave her in this bitter hour.

While he paused, a soldier ran up with a face of distress. “Quintilius! Quintilius!” he cried to the merry soldier, “we are undone! The gladiator's brother has been carried to the amphitheatre.”

“Impossible!” retorted the merry soldier. “He

was given special and private death at the hands of his nephew."

"But his body is not to be found in the dungeon," cried the other in a voice of alarm. "This morning the wardens collected all prisoners from the dungeons to swell the list. I did not look them over, believing Iddo drowned or slain by his enemy. But his body is not to be found. Now comes one who remembers dragging forth both a young man, and a man spent beyond his prime! He tells me the older of the wretches bore heavy chains."

"Then how did he escape drowning, comrade?"

"The young man did hold him up out of the reach of water, every time we sent them a bath. It could have been in no other manner."

The merry soldier laughed. "Iddo was the fellow's deadly enemy. Fear not! Adnah would not so comfort his villainous old uncle in his arms!"

"But he is gone, I tell you; he is in the amphitheatre. Sextus will confront him and instantly recognize Iddo as his brother. Then he will know Adnah to be his son. He will refuse to wrestle with them; then the master of the games will slay him. Pilate will lose his gladiator,—and we shall be blamed!"

"*We?* Nay, you alone, comrade! *My* part of the affair ended when I caged the two rats together.

Make no stir, now, for it is too late for anything but regrets. Home with you, and enjoy them to your fill. The games are by this time nearly ended. Doubtless Sextus has already lost his head from refusing to engage his precious brother!"

Gothinus waited to hear no more. Dizzy from what he had learned, and tortured by the thought that he might be too late, he forced his way through the people, and rushed with extended hands, as if half-blinded, toward the doors that opened upon the vomitories at the rear of the amphitheatre.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE GLADIATOR'S LAST STRUGGLE

ALL eyes in the vast amphitheatre were directed toward one spot in the blood-soaked arena, while a breathless silence pervaded the building. The drama of mockery and despair was drawing to an end. The wild beasts had strewn the sands with the mangled limbs of slaves. Then Sextus the gladiator had become the hero of the day. It was his part of the day's amusement to wrestle with twenty prisoners; he who should cast him upon the ground was promised liberty; and he whom Sextus should throw was promised death. As Gothinus entered the amphitheatre, bearing a letter for Pilate, Sextus was engaged with his eighteenth antagonist.

Gothinus received a stern rebuke when he urged that he be conducted at once to Pilate, who occupied the seat of state, near the wooden rollers which protected the mouth of the bloody enclosure. Gothinus insisted that a life hung upon a moment's delay. He was savagely silenced. When the present match was ended, he might go forward; but

to break the delicious tension of this match by passing between the tiers of benches would be worse than criminal. It was not enough that the spectators should witness the rush of blood and the tearing of flesh; the lions had gratified that ardent craving. It was now necessary that skill and uncertainty should add zest to slaughter. Gothinus did not feel the humiliation that a Jew would have experienced in this desecration of holy ground, but neither had he a Roman's thirst for cruel sports. His heart revolted as his eyes swept the upper seats, filled with gaily dressed women, who leaned forward breathless, their lips parted in rapturous suspense. Romans from Cæserea, Herodium and even far away Italy, made up the countless audience, while a sprinkling of priests of Jupiter, Apollo and Minerva, gave a religious seasoning to the whole.

Gothinus, after sweeping the building with impatient eyes, looked down upon the arena. Sextus and a gigantic Thracian stood with arms locked about each other's waists, their bare limbs motionless. Apparently they were resting, or had just fallen forward in friendly embrace. In reality they were in the throes of a deadly struggle. As Gothinus strained his eyes, even from his distant position at the entrance he could see the muscles knot themselves upon the naked arms.

Sextus was weary. At first it had been an easy matter to cast his opponent headlong upon the sands, there to be dispatched by one of the masters of the games, who in red uniform, even now stood waiting to slay him who should fall. But among the seventeen who had gone before, not a few had been men of powerful build, and if less skilful than a trained gladiator, nevertheless endowed with prodigal strength; and each of the seventeen had been strengthened by the lust of liberty and the despair of death. But every time Sextus hurled a foe upon the ground, he realized that it meant nothing to him but a longer captivity. Now, as he found it necessary to exert all his strength to preserve his equilibrium, the thought came,—Why not fall and receive dismissal from a life of bondage? Defeat must come some time. He believed Adnah enjoying the honors of Herod's court, and Iddo a man of authority among his people. What was there to live for? Yes, he would relax his grasp, and suffer himself to be overcome.

But as he found his form swayed in the Thracian's arms, his old instinct for mastery rushed upon him, and his purpose was forgotten. The deathlike silence was a voice bidding him maintain the prestige of his name. He knew all eyes were upon him, and like a spur to a weary steed, came the memory

of former applause. To hear the air rent with mad shouts of congratulation,—was not that worth the price of living? He thirsted for the applause which he, though a slave, could force from the lips of free Romans.

As Gothinus, fascinated, stared down upon the still picture, he saw it move. One of the Thracian's legs was forced backward. A step was lost, and that step meant a life. The vast concourse sighed in the intensity of its excitement, and the breath sounded like the rushing of a wind over the uncovered building. Another moment and the air was rent with shouts and acclaims.

“Sextus! Sextus! Long life!” The Thracian lay upon his back, while a master of the arena stood with one foot upon the heaving bosom, his sword at the neck from which the sweat rolled. The Roman looked up, to see if mercy sat in the benches. There was a flashing of innumerable jeweled hands, like the rippling of sunbeams from the women's benches to the seat of Pilate. Every thumb was turned down. The sword descended, and the Thracian quivered and lay dead. Sextus stood with folded arms upon his broad bare breast, breathing rapidly, but ready for his next antagonist. The applause had renewed his strength.

Gothinus, who had been compelled to wait for

this moment, now hurried down one of the long aisles, and making his way to the guard who surrounded Pilate, presented his letter. During the intermission in the sports, the audience laughed and talked, and the waves of sound rolled like billows muffled upon the sands. In that letter was Iddo's confession, which Gothinus had without difficulty obtained from the doomed man. Upon Pilate's reading of the letter depended Adnah's fate and the happiness of Miriam,—and the end of the dream of Gothinus.

Leisurely and with his impenetrable look upon his cold and handsome face, the procurator opened the parchment, after one brief disquieted glance at the messenger. Gothinus kept his eyes upon the Roman's face, while the supreme moment brought back the dizziness that had seized him upon learning that Iddo still lived. He did not see what was going forward in the arena. Suddenly the air was shaken by a mighty laugh. It seemed that every voice in the building had found a note of merriment. Even the shrill laughter from the highest benches made itself heard in sharp, broken fragments of ironic mirth. Pilate, who had begun to read, laid the letter upon his knee and looked below.

The last of the twenty prisoners had been brought

in together. They were a middle-aged man, and one of younger years, both clothed in miserable rags, which were wet and grimy from the dungeon, and through which their thin limbs were visible. The elder could scarcely stand, and red scars showed where iron bands had lain with cruel weight. The younger was erect, and sure of foot, but very weak. His long unkempt hair fell about his face, and he made no effort to brush it back. Gothinus groaned. Here were Iddo and Adnah,—and Iddo's confession still unread.

“My lord!” cried Gothinus falling upon his knees before the procurator, “your promise! Read, O, read the confession of Iddo!”

Pilate silenced him with a haughty gesture, his eyes intent upon the strange scene. Adnah in his dress of wild skins with the iron collar of a thief about his neck, stood staring upon the sands, as if he saw no honor and no hope in its writing of blood. Sextus, with arms still folded upon his hairy breast, grinned at the miserable figures, then looked up at the spectators to answer their laughter with a broad smile. Suddenly the young man stepped forward to encounter the gladiator, his eyes still downcast; for he knew this was his father, whose memory had sweetened bitter days; and it was his purpose to fall unrecognized in that

embrace. Still smiling, Sextus threw his burly arms about the other, and looked over at the twentieth prisoner, shouting a jovial promise to soon come to his arms. But the next moment the light died from the gladiator's face; he had recognized his brother. With an inarticulate cry he sprang back, and clutched at the air as if about to fall.

"Iddo!" he cried. The Pharisee made no reply. He had promised Adnah to keep the secret of their identity. Sextus glared upon the wretched form in speechless amazement. Then moved by a sudden thought, he turned upon the young man, and seizing his chin, threw back his head and gazed intently upon his face. The laughter of the throng died away, and a feeling half of awe, half of impatience, swept from heart to heart.

Gothinus, still upon his knees, raised his clasped hands toward Pilate crying, "Read, *read*, READ!"

Suddenly the gladiator threw his arms about Adnah, and lifting him from the ground in a close embrace,—kissed him. Then he turned to those whose applause had been so sweet to him, and held out his arms as if he would embrace their feet for mercy.

First came a shock of indignant surprise. Then rose the fierce cry, "Death! death!" The delay had aroused with fresher fury their thirst for a sight

of blood. They saw Sextus and Adnah whispering in hurried tones, while the young man violently shook his head, and the other as resolutely nodded his purpose. The tumult in the audience grew more rife and Pilate, as if to show himself insensible to all emotions, again began to read the letter.

Suddenly Sextus seized the young prisoner, and for a moment swayed him back and forth, as if in equal contest, then fell as if thrown by Adnah, and clutching his son's foot, held it upon his breast. Adnah in an agony of grief, sank upon his other knee, imploring his father to rise. But the gladiator, holding the foot upon his bosom, turned his eyes towards those who had so often hailed his triumphs, and begged for mercy. The spectators, furious at this termination of the match, screamed in derision. The executioner who strode forward, looked up with a scornful smile, anticipating the fate of Sextus.

The spectators angrily turned down their thumbs, as if pointing Sextus to his grave.

Then the executioner wheeled about and his terrible sword descended, and the blood of the Romans danced in mad joy to see blood as warm and as full of life as that in their own veins, gush out upon the reeking sands. It was such moments of fierce delight that paid them for being Romans.

For it is good to be alive and strong, when one looks upon death. But the blood which stained the arena was not that of the gladiator. He had been saved by a form springing between his prostrate body and the flashing blade of the executioner.

The corpse of him who had given his life for Sextus was dragged aside without pity, and the executioner, impatient of delay, glanced hastily up, shaking the red drops from his hands. At that moment Pilate, who had finished reading the confession, arose.

CHAPTER XXIX

IDDO'S VICTORY

THERE was the sound of the vast audience rising and moving towards the arched entrances of the amphitheatre. The day of sports was ended. Those who stood on the street in the rear, fastened their eyes upon the low doors, through which captives had been dragged to the arena, and through which the corpses of those thrown by the wrestler would presently be borne. Among these watchers were the curious, who had not been able to command the price of admission; the hypocritical, who, because of connection with the Jews, pretended to despise Roman games; and a few friends of the victims. The soldiers allowed the people to stand, for the dangerous element had melted before the approaching scene of horror. Those inclined towards revolution had hurried to the main roads, to glare upon the foreigners returning from their pleasure.

“Miriam,” said her father suddenly, “close your eyes. The rear of the amphitheatre has been thrown open, and death comes this way.”

“That is the first corpse,” said old Zuph. “Some

Thracian, I think, though it is difficult to tell, since his head,—most horrible!”

Miriam clung to her father and buried her face upon his breast. “You are sure it is not—it is not——?”

“Be assured,” Joel answered, “it is not he.”

There was a groan from the watchers, and the maiden whispered, “Another?”

“Yes,—two. . . . Five. . . . Six. . . .”

“You will tell me, father, when Adnah is brought forth?”

“Yes, dear one.”

“I have waited while he passed from life to Life,” murmured Miriam. “I will look upon him in his death. I shall always know that one who loved him stood near in his time of agony. . . . That will be a sweet thought, some day. . . . Is it growing dark?”

“Eleven,” said old Zuph, “twelve.”

“Father—I am growing faint. Support me. Oh! if I should swoon while he is being borne along! My brain seems turning round. If I . . . If I fall, do *you* look upon him, father, and give him a last look of love.”

“Miriam,” cried Zuph, helping to support her, “remember that you are the daughter of a nobleman!”

The air was broken by tumultuous shouts: "Long life! long life to Sextus! Long life to our gladiator!"

"As Jupiter reigns!" shouted the merry soldier in a stentorian voice, relief adding force to his high note, "Sextus survives though his son stood him face to face in the arena!"

"It is the gladiator!" cried Zuph, staring at an approaching form. "But who walks with him? Can it be —— Look, Miriam, look! Hide no longer your eyes!"

"It is Adnah!" said Joel, his voice breaking.

"Sextus is his father," observed the merry soldier. "Ho, ho! maiden, is Adnah the lover for whom you came to mourn? See how erect and proud his head, as he walks beside his new-found father!"

"Adnah lives!" said Joel in a choking voice. "Miriam, can you bear this sudden joy?"

In truth the shock was almost more than she could endure. Her fair head fell upon his shoulder, and for a time it seemed that they must place her upon the ground.

"Father and son," murmured Joel to himself; "father and son, both alive and well. . . . Ah, Reuben, Reuben!"

"Miriam," said Zuph coaxingly, "they draw

near. Have a brave heart. Courage, Miriam, stand firm! Remember your degree!"

"Zuph!" faltered Miriam, lifting her head, "I could not love you better, were I a slave." With one arm about her father's neck, and the other hand resting upon the old slave's shoulder, she faced the road.

There they came, Adnah from whose neck the iron band had been struck, and simple-hearted Samuel,—Sextus the gladiator, never more. A cloak had been thrown about the young man, and as he moved along, his arm about his father, he possessed an air of gentle majesty which suited well the radiant glow of his eyes.

Miriam called, "*Adnah!*"

Adnah stood still. "Listen, my father," he said, "My *other* Father has sent me a voice. Did you hear it? Whence came my name in that tone? Heaven has been about me all this day and—look!—there, *there* is the angel!" He dragged Samuel towards the spot where the merry soldier guarded the road.

"Now," said Miriam to her father with a look of angelic tenderness, "I can stand alone!" She stepped forward.

"Miriam!" said Adnah in a broken voice, looking at her with heaving breast, helpless to utter another

word, unable even to advance. Her form seemed illuminated by an inward light, and he thought her an angel, indeed, the angel of hope which had come to him in his desolate childhood. He seemed to see beyond her fair face and tremulous smile, Sicily for a background,—the sheep in the wild meadows,—the faithful dog,—the lonely path that wound up the mountainside,—the desolate hut with its couch of sodden straw. A sense of her virgin purity and of the darkness through which he had struggled, held him to the spot as if a great gulf lay between them.

“Oh, Adnah, I am so glad, so happy,—what can I say,—a simple maiden who lacks all knowledge! If I could tell you! I came to look upon a corpse,—*your* corpse, Adnah! And you are so strong and tall and well—and walking beside your father,—Adnah, I could kiss you for my very joy . . . and for my very love!”

“I will not say I am too unworthy,” faltered the young man, pale from happiness, “since I, too, am a child of God.” He kissed her.

Samuel turned to Zuph; “I have but found my son,—see how he deserts me.”

“I like this,” said the merry soldier. “Sweet love blesses the day. It is like incense to the gods. But maiden, hide your eyes; here comes another corpse,—surely, the last.”

“Nay, Miriam,” cried Adnah reverently, “hide not your eyes. Let all turn and look upon Iddo as he is borne past—upon my uncle who wronged my father, but who expiated his crime in the arena. He threw his body between the sword and my father's heart. This is for him no dismal funeral, but a procession of triumph. There lies a great conqueror; he subdued himself.”

“Poor, erring brother!” murmured Samuel, the tears streaming down his face. He found himself still unable to comprehend Iddo's real life.

“There is a smile upon his face,” observed the merry soldier. “I never saw such a death-smile!”

“Brave Iddo!” Adnah exclaimed. “He triumphed over his evil nature. Death is glorious when it breathes upon a man and changes him to a hero.”

They stood silently with bowed heads till Iddo had been carried past. Then Adnah looked up suddenly, saying, “But where is Gothinus?”

Zuph muttered to himself, “At least this Adnah is a Jew!” The old slave was the only one who had divined the secret of Gothinus. Since Adnah's poverty and low estate could not but displease the jealous old man, he found what comfort he could in the nationality of Miriam's lover.

Miriam looked towards the amphitheatre and saw

a young man suddenly turn his head from her direction, as if he had been watching her.

“There he is!” cried Adnah excitedly, following the direction of her eyes. “It was he who caused Iddo to write Pilate the letter which saved our lives. As soon as my uncle was slain Pilate arose and read it aloud, and gave my father and me our liberty. We could not believe Gothinus able to gain the ear of the procurator. And now we have forgotten him!”

Adnah raised his voice and called, “*Gothinus!*”

The tall northerner looked over the heads of the intervening crowd, and smiled with wonderful sweetness.

“Adnah!” exclaimed Miriam, “see how he loves you!”

THE END

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